



# H2020 VARCITIES: Green, healthy and human- centred cities

ISOCARP Regional Event #1

Vienna | 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Federico Aili | ISOCARP Institute



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# Table of content

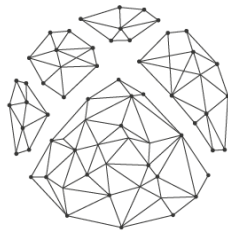
## 1. About ISOCARP Institute

- Overview
- History
- Activities

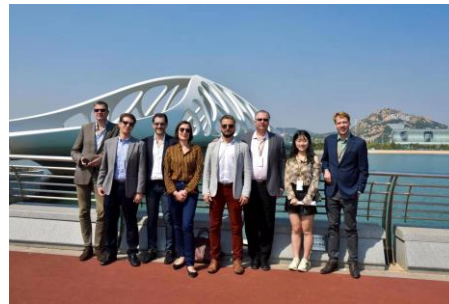
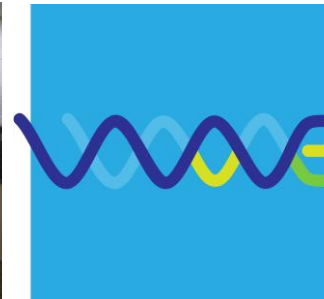
## 2. About VARCITIES project

- Context
- Vision and objectives
- Pilot Cities
- Activities

# 1. About ISOCARP Institute



**ISOCARP INSTITUTE**  
Centre for Urban Excellence



# ISOCARP Institute - history

- **Stichting (Foundation) ISOCARP Institute, Centre for Urban Excellence**
- Project office of ISOCARP, specialised in research communication, citizen engagement, urban advocacy and professional trainings.

1965

## Founding of ISOCARP

*Founded as a global nonprofit association of experienced professionals from academia, governmental organisations and private consultancies.*

2016

## Founding of ISOCARP Institute

*ISOCARP Institute was founded as the practice-centred research spin-off of ISOCARP.*

2018-2021

## First 3 years of service delivery

- *Supporting cross-border collaboration globally;*
- *Upholding professional excellence in planning;*
- *Offering trainings advancing sustainable planning;*
- *Increasing awareness and promoting best practices;*
- *Facilitating the generation and dissemination of knowledge for better cities.*

# ISOCARP Institute - activities

The **mission** of ISOCARP Institute is to enrich the knowledge base and developing the capacity of individuals, organisations and institutions partaking in shaping and developing human settlements.

Focus on a wide range of fields related to urban development, such as climate mitigation and adaptation, urban resilience, public spaces, smart cities, urban culture and heritage, etc.

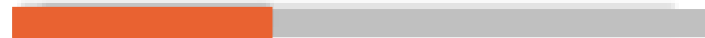
85

With an outreach of 85 countries, ISOCARP Institute participates in a variety of external projects under different programmes (UN-Habitat, European Union) and collaborates with world renowned organisations such as, World Health Organisation, United Nations, etc.

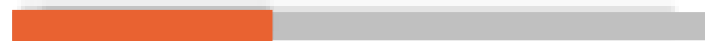
40% Research



30% Academy



30% Practice



# ISOCARP Institute - activities

## 3 Pillars (ISOCARP Institute's services and capabilities):

### Practice



Practical implementation of urban solutions, supported by activities of technical assistance, urban labs and urban charrettes, delivering tangible solutions to local municipalities and governments, as well other entities.

**UPATs, Urban Labs & Technical Assistance**

### Research



Capitalise and expand the urban knowledge of ISOCARP members and urban professionals by initiating, developing and managing research activities related to urban development, exploring research topics, programmes, ideas and urban development trends.

**EU and Global Research Projects**

### Academy



Disseminate the urban knowledge of ISOCARP and upgrade the capacities of urban stakeholders and younger professionals, by initiating and managing different programmes related to training and capacity-building, education and professional experience.

**YPPs, Trainings & Online Education**

# ISOCARP Institute - contacts

## Where to find us?

You can visit us in  
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Netherlands



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info@isocarp-  
institute.org

## 2. About VARCITIES project



**Visionary Nature-based  
Actions for Health, Well-Being  
and Resilience in Cities**

# Introduction

- Ambitious project that acknowledges the challenges of future cities and aims to implement nature-based actions in cities.
- VARCITIES puts the citizens and the “human communities” at the centre of future cities’ vision (**human-centred cities**).
- VARCITIES wants to involve citizens in the needed change towards a **healthier, happier, creative and inclusive future**.
- The project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme.
- Spanning from September 2020 to February 2025.
- Composed of 25 partners, under the lead of Telecommunication System Institute (TSI).
- 8 Pilot Cities will test and implement a series of innovative nature-based actions.

# Context

- Programme H2020-EU.3.5.2. - **Protection of the environment, sustainable management of natural resources, water, biodiversity and ecosystems**

*The aim is to provide knowledge and tools for the management and protection of natural resources, in order to achieve a sustainable balance between limited resources and the present and future needs of society and the economy'.*

- Topic SC5-14-2019 - **Visionary and integrated solutions to improve well-being and health in cities**

*The general goal is 'to deliver visionary and integrated solutions at the intersection of social, cultural, digital and nature-based innovation to increase citizens' health and well-being in cities'.*

# VARCITIES partners



CITY OF  
BERGEN



**Crowdhelix**  
COLLABORATION INTELLIGENCE



**CYCLOPOLIS**  
URBAN MOVE CREATORS



**DECCA**  
technology



**E<sup>2</sup>ARC**  
Architects for future cities

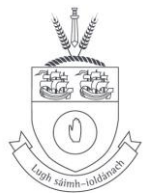
**eurac**  
research



**inlecom**



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Comhairle Contae Lú  
Louth County Council



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI PADOVA



**sensedge**



Technical  
University  
of Crete



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN



**KORONA**

**VARCITIES**



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# A holistic project



**Future-city:**  
Solutions fostering a healthier, sustainable and resilient urban future.



**Green public spaces:**  
Public spaces as people-centred areas supporting creativity, inclusivity, health, and happiness.



**Human-centred:**  
Putting citizens and the human communities at the centre of the cities' vision.



**Smart and resilient:**  
Nature-based Solutions integrated with smart devices and exploited digitally.

# Vision

Implementing visionary ideas and adding value through:

- **Establishing sustainable models for increasing the health and well-being of citizens exposed to diverse climatic conditions and challenges**
- **Advancing innovation across different urban scales by exploiting nature-based solutions from a digital, social and cultural perspective.**

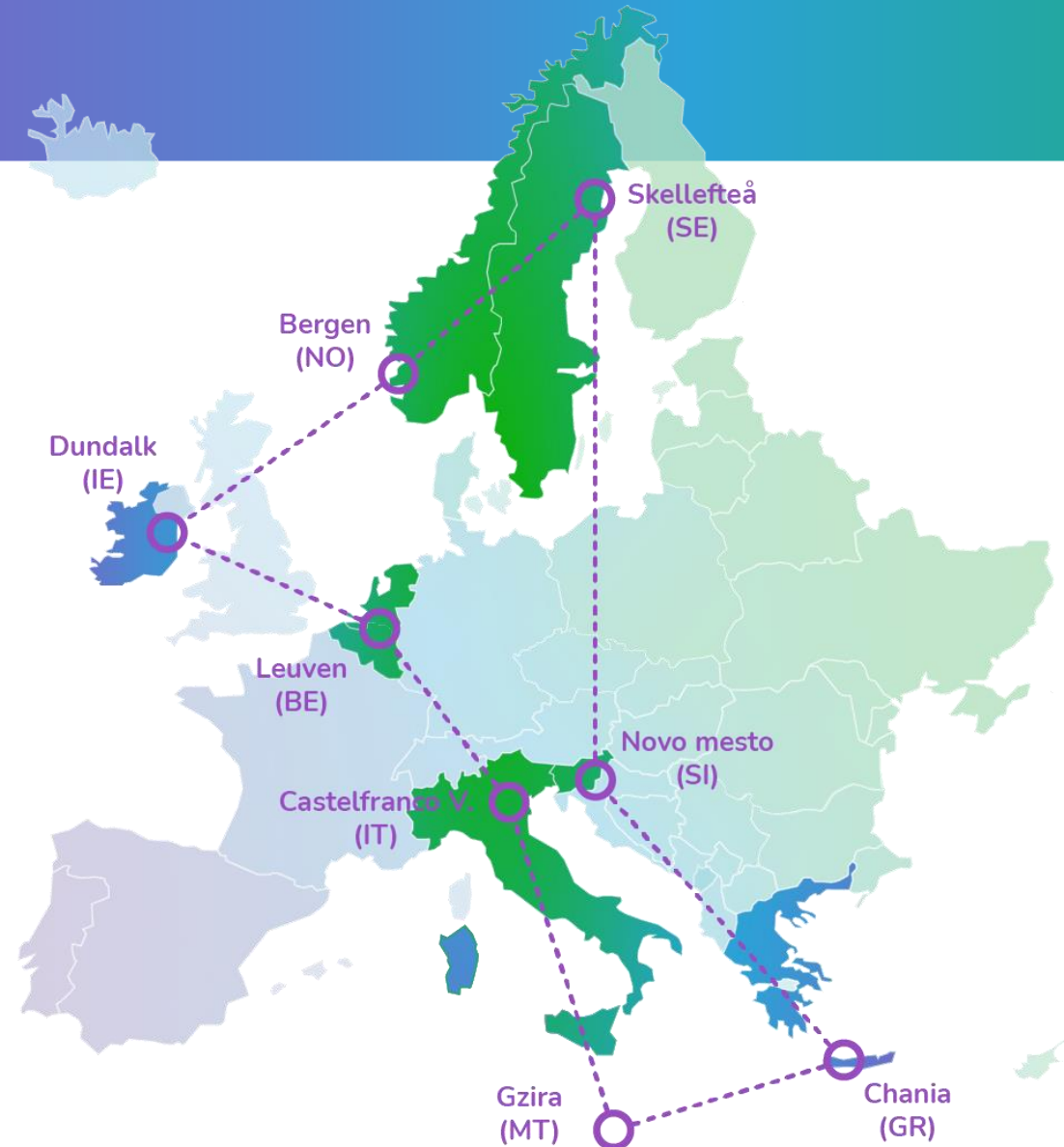


# Objectives

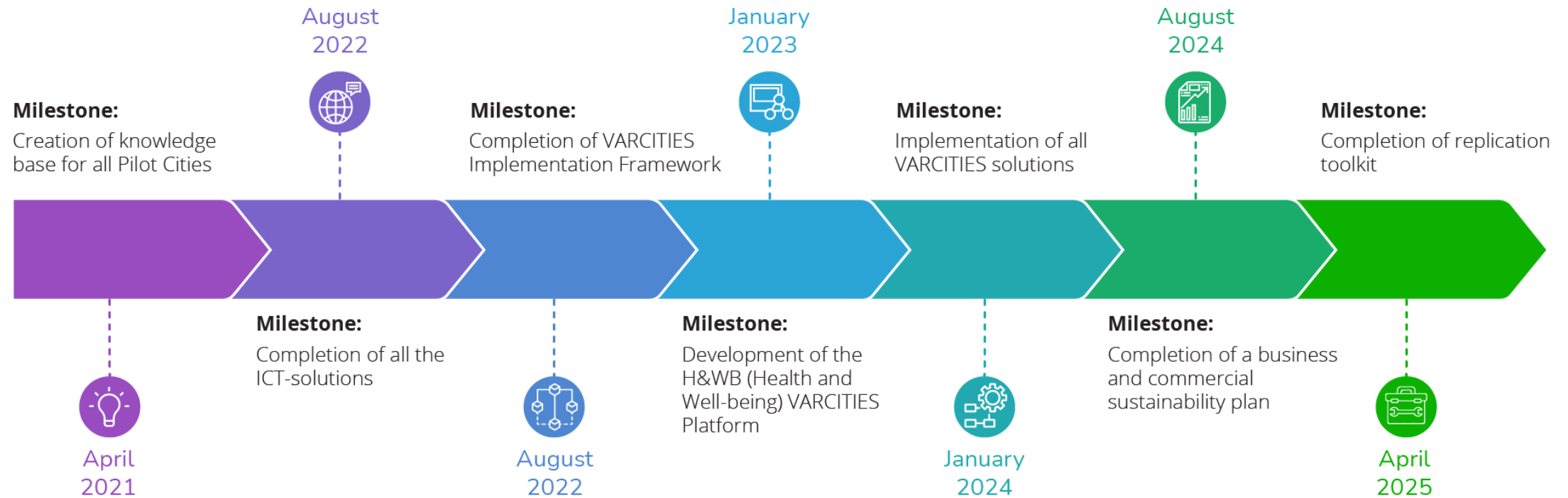
- Design visionary **Nature-Based Solutions**;
- Monitor and assess the sustainability and the impact of interventions through **Key Performance Indicators**;
- Improve the sustainable transition to smart and future cities through a **framework of Governance, Business and Financing**;
- Include and inspire various stakeholders in the **co-design process**;
- Advancement **beyond the state of art** through clustering with other European initiatives and platforms;
- Transfer, upscale and sustain best practices from VARCITIES through the development of a **Healthy Cities Helix**.

# Pilot Cities

- Bergen, Norway
- Castelfranco Veneto, Italy
- Chania, Greece
- Dundalk, Ireland
- Gzira, Malta
- Leuven, Belgium
- Novo mesto, Slovenia
- Skellefteå, Sweden



# Project timeline



# Bergen: Sustainable re-establishment of an urban water park

- Recreation of an urban water park with the goal to become the best park in Bergen for the next 100 years.
- Bergen's new 'green lung' and recreation area, reconnecting all the citizens to nature, physical and cultural activities.

## **VARCITIES Actions:**

1. A digitalized urban water park including city beach
2. AR applications for inspiring more physical activities and area exploration
3. Optimized urban park biodiversity
4. Bergen City Beach Health Effects Assessment.

# Bergen: Sustainable re-establishment of an urban water park



*Images White Architects*

## Castelfranco V.: Healing Garden for elderly people and with Alzheimer

- Establish a local observatory on the therapeutic effect of landscape in the garden of Villa Revelin Bolasco (the Villa borders the main city hospital and structures for elderly people).

### **VARCITIES Actions:**

1. Creation of garden access routes and healing garden
2. Analysis and monitoring of psychological/physiological well-being of elderly people and people affected by Alzheimer
3. Full monitoring of microclimatic conditions in the different areas of the garden
4. Development of green public spaces and establishment of the “Local observatory on therapeutic effects of the landscape”;
5. ICT tools to ensure a rewarding experience for garden users
6. Adaptive and intelligent lighting systems/energy data management.

# Castelfranco V.: Healing Garden for elderly people and with Alzheimer



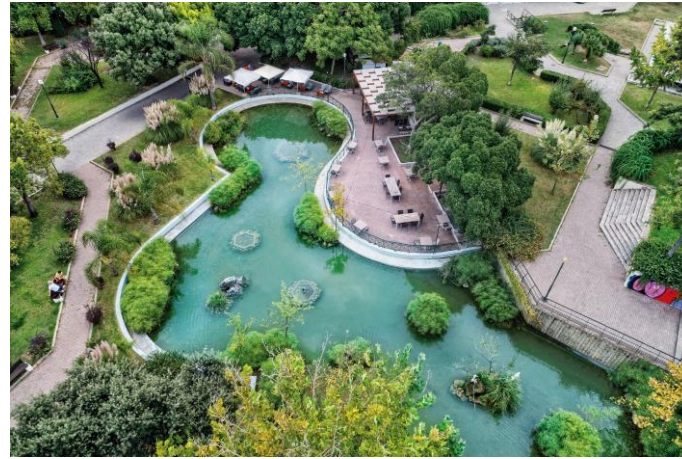
# Chania: Mobile urban living room in open public spaces

- Integrate green public spaces into everyday life of citizens, increasing environmental awareness and urban interaction.
- Create a mobile urban living rooms, flexible and multifunctional, to increase accessibility and use of public spaces, improving health and well-being of citizens.

## **VARCITIES Actions:**

1. Creation of urban mobile living rooms
2. Sensors on bikes and bike-stations.

# Chania: Mobile urban living room in open public spaces



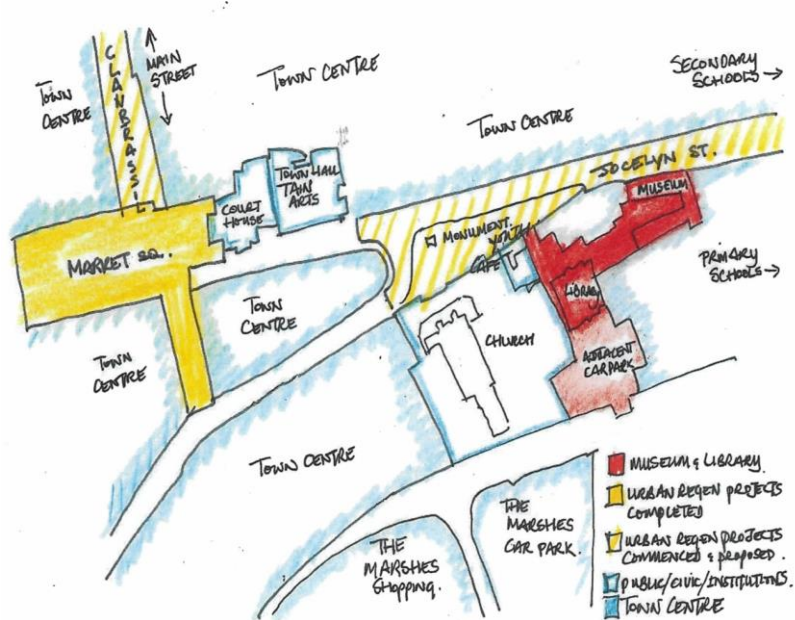
# Dundalk: Library and Museum quarter

- Regenerating the courtyard of the Library and the Museum with an outdoor learning hub, making a diverse, accessible, safe, inclusive and high-quality green area.

## **VARCITIES Actions:**

1. Creation of Outdoor Learning Pod between Dundalk Library and Museum Quarter to showcase the newest technologies and host shared functions
2. Outdoor Urban Green Learning and Sensory Garden for health and well-being
3. Sensors on bikes and bike-stations.

# Dundalk: Library and Museum quarter



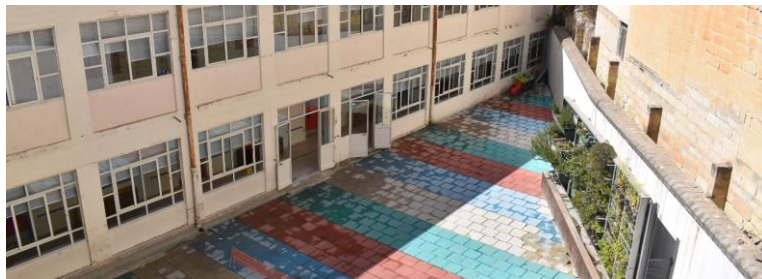
# Gzira: Regeneration of a high traffic road in the centre

- Implement a series of co-designed nature-based solutions to improve health, walkability, sense of place and health for citizens along the high traffic road Rue D'Argens.

## **VARCITIES Actions:**

1. Rue D'Argens: Micro-greening Interventions through a Participatory Design Process
2. Citizen Science on Air/Noise quality to increase H&WB awareness
3. Urban Biodiversity, Education and Engagement through a Co-Created Community Garden Project.

# Gzira: Regeneration of a high traffic road in the centre



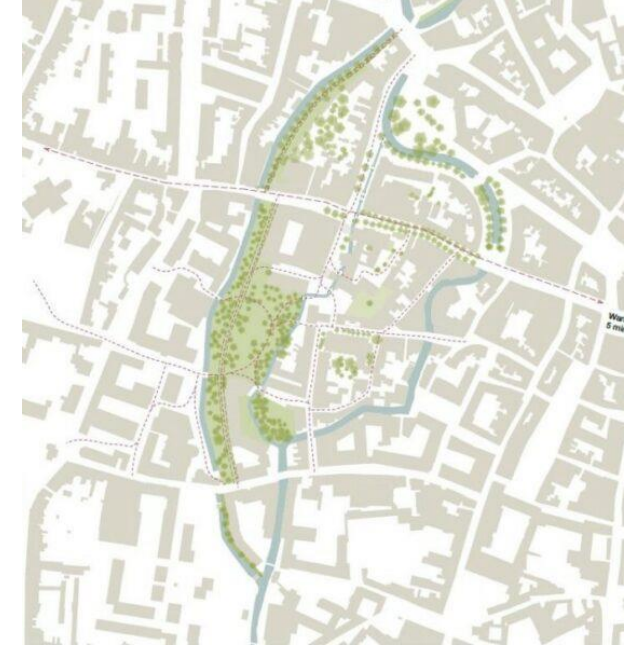
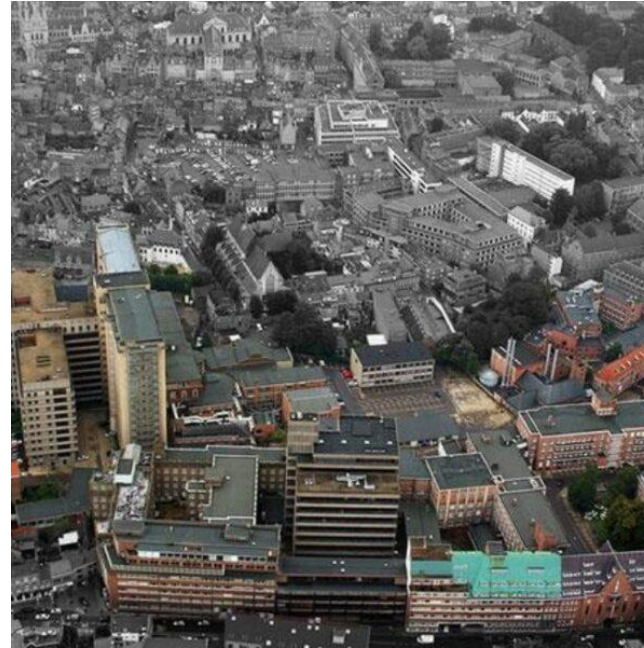
# Leuven: Regeneration of former hospital site

- Transforming the former hospital site into a green multifunctional district in the medieval centre of the city, re-opening the riverbanks and the connection with the city centre.

## **VARCITIES Actions:**

1. Riverside mobile urban living room for cultural activities
2. Sensors for health & water measurements
3. Health trail with the “moving Bench”,
4. Therapeutic sensory garden for elderly people
5. IoT infrastructure for smart lighting and noise reduction
6. Mobility-sensors and intelligent camera for bikes and pedestrians to measure air quality/noise.

# Leuven: Regeneration of former hospital site



# Novo mesto: Sport and recreational park Češča vas

- Develop of a comprehensive sport and recreational complex, operating as Olympic centre with various opportunities for sport, recreation and education.

## **VARCITIES Actions:**

1. Brownfield remediation and greening with indigenous plant species
2. Creation of sustainable forest trails with indigenous plant species
3. Interconnection among sport, recreational and therapeutic facilities
4. ICT platform for integrated management of the facilities
5. IoT solutions for measuring the health and well-being of users and visitors
6. Social and educational events.

# Novo mesto: Sport and recreational park Češča vas



## Skelleftea: Residential area with green&blue infrastructure

- Develop a green residential area by using an old landfill, creating urban resilience through natural infrastructure and improving the sense of safety, recreation and education.

### **VARCITIES Actions:**

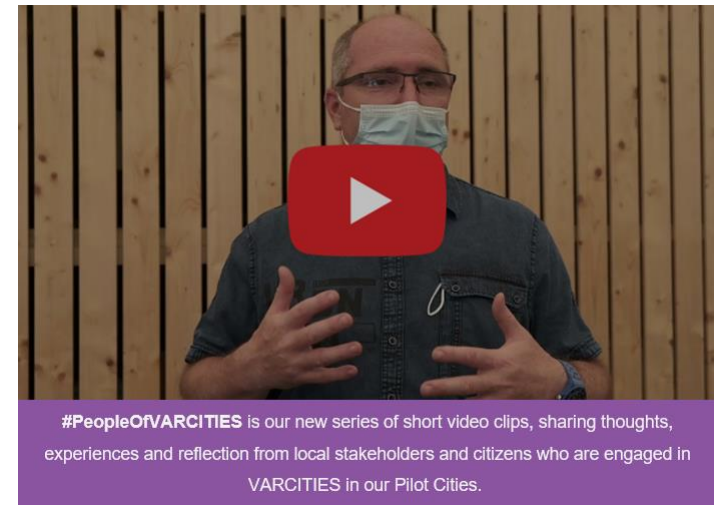
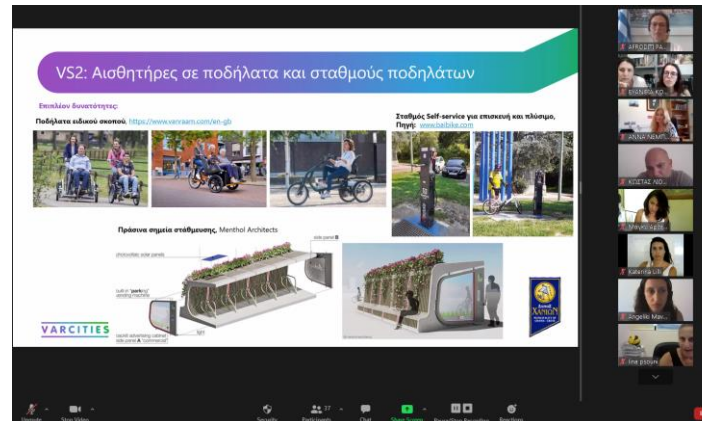
1. Control stormwater flooding by using natural soil as water retention
2. Use stormwater to create wetland bed and foster planting of indigenous species
3. Create inviting and safe surroundings in the park
4. Set up an information plan about green/blue infrastructure together with residents
5. Creation of spaces with bee hotels/insect habitats and permanent school-materials.

# Skelleftea: Residential area with green&blue infrastructure



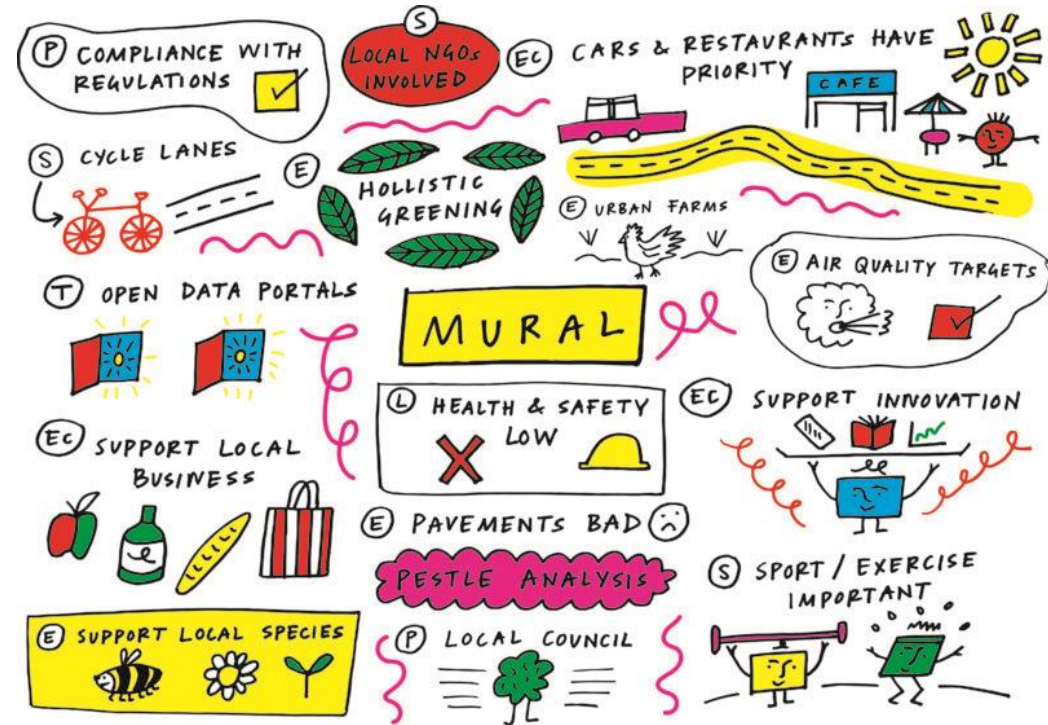
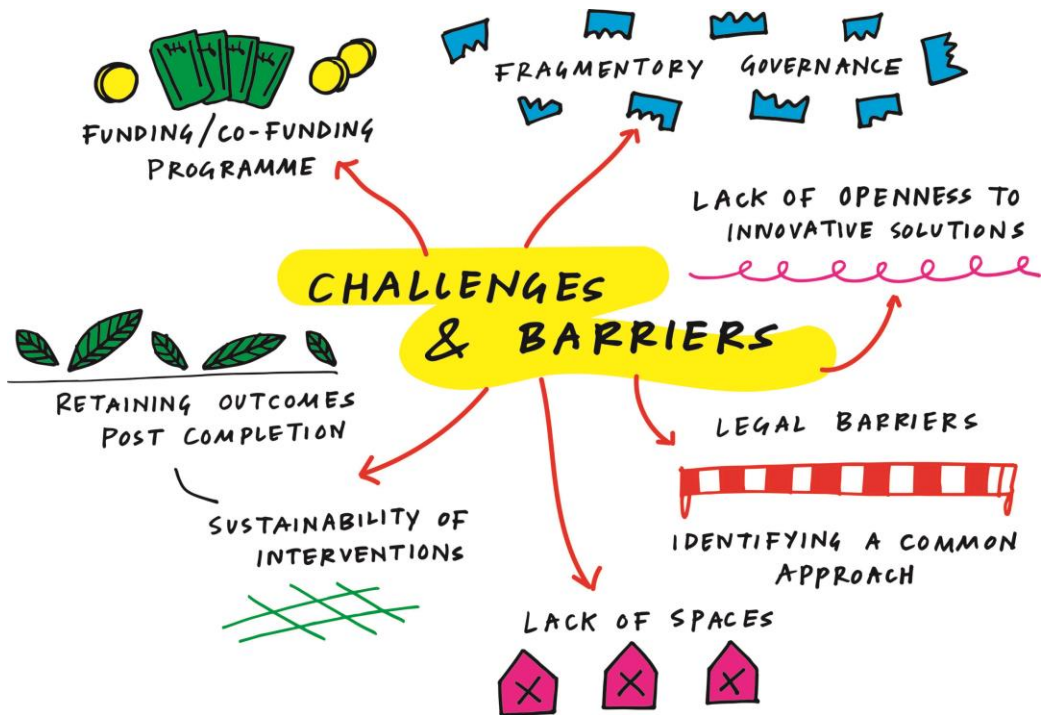
# VARCITIES Co-creation workshops

- Co-creation process with local stakeholders and communities
- 4 series of workshops (2021-2022)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Series in June 2021: present, validate and refine the first drafts of solutions
- #PeopleofVARCITIES



#PeopleofVARCITIES is our new series of short video clips, sharing thoughts, experiences and reflection from local stakeholders and citizens who are engaged in VARCITIES in our Pilot Cities.

# VARCITIES Co-creation workshops



1<sup>st</sup> workshop in Gzira (June 2021)

# VARCITIES Co-creation workshops



*1<sup>st</sup> workshop in Novo mesto  
(June 2021)*

## Task 9.4.1: Outreach and engagement with cities/municipalities and policy makers

### **T9.4.1 Outreach and Engagement with Municipalities/Cities & Policy Makers [M1-M54, Leader – ISOCARP Participants – All]**

... “Each Pilot city will then engage with four other cities in Europe (32 in total) with similar challenges. All pilots, engaged cities, and other cities worldwide, will be invited to join the Healthy Cities Helix, where stakeholders will be clustered and informed about project results and events”.



# Thank you for your attention!

Federico Aili | ISOCARP Institute



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Green Cities are Healthier Cities!

**Contact us!**



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