Common Action Plan on clustering activities

Deliverable 1.3

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1. Introduction

This deliverable presents a summary of planned joint activities among the cluster of projects funded under the EU Horizon call H2020 SC5-14-2019 (Visionary and integrated solutions to improve well-being and health in cities). These projects are: GoGreenRoutes, EuPOLIS, IN-HABIT and VARCITIES. The EU Commission has identified these four projects to work as a cluster to maximise the H2020 programme impact within the context of other networking and clustering opportunities outlined in Figure 1 below.
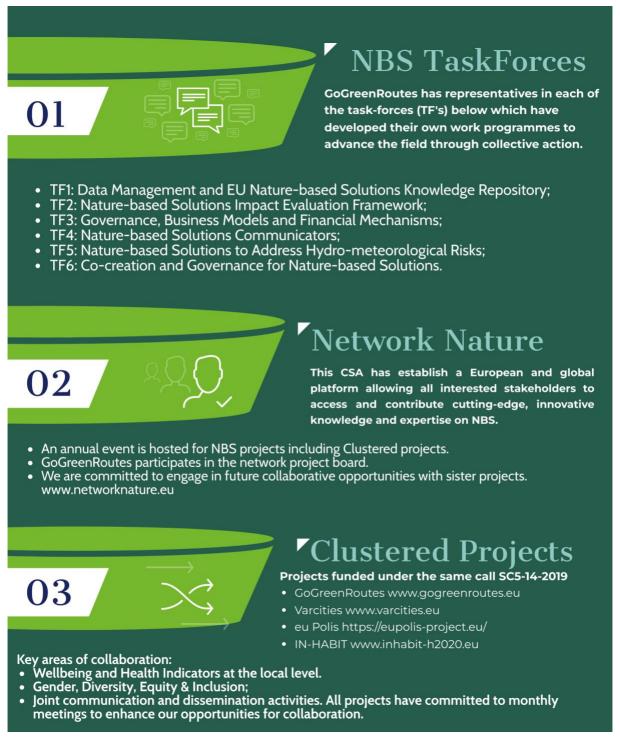

NBS TaskForces

01

GoGreenRoutes has representatives in each of the task-forces (TF's) below which have developed their own work programmes to advance the field through collective action.

- TF1: Data Management and EU Nature-based Solutions Knowledge Repository;
- TF2: Nature-based Solutions Impact Evaluation Framework;
- TF3: Governance, Business Models and Financial Mechanisms;
- TF4: Nature-based Solutions Communicators;
- TF5: Nature-based Solutions to Address Hydro-meteorological Risks;
- TF6: Co-creation and Governance for Nature-based Solutions.

Network Nature

02

This CSA has establish a European and global platform allowing all interested stakeholders to access and contribute cutting-edge, innovative knowledge and expertise on NBS.

- An annual event is hosted for NBS projects including Clustered projects.
- GoGreenRoutes participates in the network project board.
- We are committed to engage in future collaborative opportunities with sister projects. www.networknature.eu

Clustered Projects

03

Projects funded under the same call SC5-14-2019
- GoGreenRoutes www.gogreenroutes.eu
- Varcities www.varcities.eu
- eu Polis https://eupolis-project.eu/
- IN-HABIT www.inhabit-h2020.eu

Key areas of collaboration:
- Wellbeing and Health Indicators at the local level.
- Gender, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion;
- Joint communication and dissemination activities. All projects have committed to monthly meetings to enhance our opportunities for collaboration.

Figure 1: Clustering and Networks linked to all projects funded under SC5-14-2019.

2. The Clustered Projects

The four clustered projects present a wealth of visionary and integrated solutions to improve well-being in cities through approaches including Nature-Based Solutions (NBS), digital nature, engineered urban systems and the creation of inclusive and accessible urban spaces. The projects span cities across the EU, and include urban areas such as capital cities Riga, Belgrade, Tallinn, the city of Versailles in the Yvelines region of Paris, Gzira, in the Maltese conurbation, which is linked to both GoGreenRoutes and Varcities projects. The potential impact is vast with a total of 26 cities engaged in innovation across the four projects.

2.1. GoGreenRoutes

How can nature-based solutions contribute to health? The EU-funded GoGreenRoutes (GoGreen Resilient Optimal Urban natural, Technological and Environmental Solutions) project will address this issue in common with the other sister projects. The transdisciplinary consortium of this project is pioneering a unique approach to NBS by creating green corridors and cultivating nature connectedness among citizens to promote their engagement with nature, activity in green space and environmental concern. The project's goal is to position European citizens as global ambassadors of urban sustainability. Advancing mental health and well-being, the project's components will focus on nature-based enterprise, sustainable physical activity and digital, cultural and knowledge innovation. Knowledge ecosystems will operate at different levels with City Clusters for sharing experiences across our cultivating cities (e.g. target cities), urban health and well-being labs for co-creation and co-evaluation with citizens and local task forces and the Academy Cluster, to promote knowledge-exchange across the early stage researchers and innovators across the consortium.

GoGreenRoutes, similar to the sister projects is ambitious in the aim to empower urban communities with the solutions to solve problems that relate to both human and environmental

health. In a break from traditional approaches to NBS, the GoGreenRoutes approach shifts the focus from benefits for the ecosystem and the environment to benefits for health, with co-benefits for the urban environment. The primacy of our approach is thus focused on multidimensional health-termed 360-Health. One dimension of this approach is to promote a positive human-nature relationship which is predicted to promote citizen engagement through digital, educational and behavioural innovation. At a work package level, GoGreenRoutes components focus on nature-based enterprise (WP4: GROW), sustainable physical activity (WP5: MOVE), digital, cultural (WP6: FEEL) and knowledge innovation (WP7: KNOW). Through our innovations and interventions GoGreenRoutes fosters mental health and well-being by optimising human-nature interactions for all citizens. These innovations will increase the uptake and acceptability of NBS across "Cultivating Cities" (Burgas, Lahti, Limerick, Tallinn, Umea & Versailles), "Seed Cities" (Munich, Murcia region & Gzira, Malta) and a "Cross-Pollination Network: (Beijing, Mexico, & Tblisi). An urban well-being lab, based on the living lab methodology couples participatory approaches (e.g. WP's 3-8) with the Big Data analyses of social sentiment analysis of social media (WP6). To advance knowledge in this novel approach to NBS on best practice, GoGreenRoutes will link with H2020 projects including those involving our partners (e.g. proGIreg, RWTH; bluehealth2020, ISGlobal; Connecting Nature, TCD). In addition, linking all open-sourced data to the OPPLA and Think Nature Hubs, delivering online resource (e.g. Urban 360-Health Toolkit, MOOC's) and empowering citizens in an iterative process of co-creation will ensure perpetuation beyond the end of the project. More details are available on the project official website at **www.gogreenroutes.eu**

2.2. VARCITIES

Visionary nature-based actions for health, wellbeing and resilience in cities (VARCITIES – Grant Agreement 869505) is the second project in the cluster. In an increasingly urbanising world, governments and international corporations strive to increase productivity of cities, recognized as economy growth hubs, as well as ensuring better quality of life and living conditions for citizens. Social services and health facilities are significantly negatively affected due to the increase in urban populations (70% by 2050). Air pollution and urban heat islands effects are growing. Nature will struggle to compensate in the future City, as rural land is predicted to shrink by 30% affecting liveability. The VARCITIES project puts the citizen and the "human community" in the eye of the future cities' vision. Future cities should evolve to be human centred cities. VARCITIES vision is to implement real, visionary ideas and add value by establishing sustainable models for increasing health and well-being of citizens (children, young people, middle age, elderly) that are exposed to diverse climatic conditions and challenges around Europe (e.g. from harsh winters in Skelleftea-SE to hot summers in Chania-GR, from deprived areas in Novo mesto-SI to increased pollution in Malta) through shared public spaces that make cities liveable and welcoming.

VARCITIES actions is delivering a multitude of interventions, methods and innovative practices based on an extendable platform, measurement framework, and methodology, supported by customisable and extendable plugin solutions. The NBS interventions aim at becoming an underlying customisable fabric of an entire ecosystem of fully connected intelligent sensors and devices, capable of delivering several co-benefits, transforming the daily lives of European citizens.

The expected impacts include:

- High quality and multifunctional public spaces, converted into safe, inclusive and accessible places to ensure citizens' Health and well-being.

- Co-design and participatory planning and governance in Pilot Cities and follower cities with digital, social and cultural dimension.

- Network with the Healthy Cities Helix and Ambassadors for gender dimensions.

- Innovative monitoring and key performance indicators.

- SMEs in this project will support the "capitalisation of over 30 years of investment in transnational EU research and innovation on sustainable urban development".

https://www.varcities.eu/

2.3. EuPOLIS.

Integrated NBS-based Urban Planning Methodology for Enhancing the Wealth and Well-being of Citizens: the euPOLIS Approach (Grant Agreement 869448) is the third project in the cluster. Urban planners and engineers are integrating nature-based solutions (NBS) to address contemporary environmental, social and economic challenges. The EuPOLIS project will deploy natural systems to enhance public health and well-being and create resilient urban ecosystems. It applies a structured approach that integrates existing natural and engineered urban systems and define their joint social, cultural and economic effects. The project aims to regenerate and rehabilitate urban ecosystems to create inclusive and accessible urban spaces by addressing key challenges such as low environmental quality and low biodiversity in public spaces, water-stressed resources and undervalued use of space. The project's solutions will be tested in four cities: Belgrade, Lodz, Piraeus and Gladsaxe.

EuPOLIS aims to: (a) replace the traditional perception in which engineering systems are built to protect the environment at significant costs. The project aims to deploy natural systems to simultaneously enhance Public Health (PH) and Well-Being (WB), and create resilient urban ecosystems at lower Life-Cycle Costs; (b) propose a structured approach to activate the hidden possibilities and services of existing Natural and Engineered urban systems, integrate them and define their joint social, cultural and economic effects, as a main vehicle for Ecosystem Business Services and Investment; (c) regenerate and rehabilitate urban ecosystems, while in parallel addressing key challenges such as low environmental quality, fragmentation and low biodiversity in public spaces, water-stressed resources, undervalued use of space in deprived areas and therefore improving urban liveability; (d) improve urban resilience (operational, social and economic) through interventions designed using a set of proper urban planning matrices, which catalyse stakeholder participation, with a special attention to gender, age and disability perspectives within the process; (e) create inclusive and accessible urban spaces by systematically implementing gender mainstreaming strategies and novel participatory tools into all phases and processes of project development to ensure that the needs of diverse groups are considered. The project aims to stimulate active communities' participation throughout the process; (f) to improve citizens' quality of life providing them with pleasant socializing open areas that stimulate social exchange and inclusivity; (g) monitor and validate the impact of all interventions to physical health and well-being of citizens. EuPOLIS solutions will be demonstrated in four European cities: Belgrade, Lodz, Piraeus and Gladsaxe. We have

also included some follower cities (Bogota, Palermo, Limassol and Trebinje) in order to replicate and demonstrate the advantages of our innovations via mentoring and coaching.

https://eupolis-project.eu/

2.4.   IN-HABIT

Inclusive Health And well-Being In small and medium size ciTies (IN-HABIT – Grant Agreement 869227) is the fourth project in the cluster. Access to health and wellbeing may be difficult for people due to their gender, disabilities or minority status, and especially if they live in a peripheral small town or city. To solve this problem, modern approaches are needed to integrate communities and achieve inclusive health and well-being. With this in mind, the IN-HABIT project aims to design integrative actions that will be shaped according to the needs of local vulnerable groups in four cities: Cordoba (Spain), Riga (Latvia), Lucca (Italy), and Nitra (Slovakia). They are based on culture, food, art and bonds with nature and animals combined with technological and digital means. IN-HABIT is also supported by the city of Bogotá's (Columbia) former experiences.

IN-HABIT's visionary approach consists on the innovative mobilization of existing undervalued resources (culture, food, human-animal bonds and environment) to increase inclusive health and well-being. The integrated approach is based on the combination of technological, digital, nature based, cultural, and social innovations in selected urban public spaces. These solutions will be co-designed, co-deployed and co-managed with and by local stakeholders. The effects on mental health, wellbeing and healthier lifestyles of these solutions will be evaluated and a sound scalable evidence-base and monitoring framework delivered. A systemic urban planning framework will be developed based on innovative gender and diversity approaches to boost inclusive health and well-being that will represent a unique reference for small and medium-sized cities. IN-HABIT actions are focused on underserved areas and vulnerable target groups existing in each city (such as, children, elders, women, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities), and on the integration of 'hard' and 'soft' visionary solutions articulated around heritage and culture (as a nexus for inclusive societies), food (nurturing daily healthier lifestyles), animals (human-animal bonds as new relational urban goods) and art and environment (to connect places and people). Bogotá city will share know-how and replicate experiences. These actions have attracted the interest to be replicated by other twin-cities and networks of cities, that have shown their interest in establishing synergies with IN-HABIT and replicating actions.

https://www.inhabit-h2020.eu/

3. Cluster Activities Plan

The GoGreenRoutes project coordinator has taken part to date in two cluster meetings with the coordinators of VARCITIES, EuPOLIS and IN-HABIT projects in addition to members of Commission (e.g project officers supporting clustering). The following section summaries the activities which have taken place in these two cluster meetings:

3.1. Follow up to first cluster meeting 12.11.2020

Main Areas of Cooperation

1.   Baseline and Indicators for Wellbeing and Health Main output:

A list of joint indicators (defined together also taking into account the current NBS Handbook on Indicators and Assessment) and new innovative approaches (e.g. 360 health).

2.   Gender, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (GDE&I) Main outputs:

- A GDE&I Manager in each project to monitor all co-creation and co-deployment activities;

- A common co-creation strategy to include and effectively engage diverse groups of citizens according to a diverse set of personal characteristics (i.e. sex, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, etc.). This common set of personal characteristics will need to be identified ex-ante by the four GDE&I Managers;

- New technologies to monitor progress and bottlenecks in GDE&I (i.e. AI to tackle unconscious bias, AI for emotion recognition, biosensors, etc.). The proposed new technologies could be included in the common co-creation strategy.

3. Joint Communication & Dissemination Activities Main outputs:

- A common glossary (to be consistent both for internal communication between the 4 projects and for external communication).

- Joint events (at least 2/3 conferences/workshops annually); these consortium meetings co-hosted with major conferences (e.g. Urban transitions 2022); symposia at stand-alone conferences (e.g. European Congress of Psychology 2022), and further opportunities as they arise across the timeline of the project.

- Joint publications, specifically relating to the gap that our projects fill in the NBS literature with our primary focus being on human health.

- Synergies with the new projects funded under the H2020 SC1 Health, demographic change, and wellbeing.

3.2. Follow up to second cluster meeting 27.01.2021

Main Areas of Cooperation

1. **Wellbeing and Health at the local level.**

Main output:

- Manifesto with a common narrative on the subsidiarity principle applied to wellbeing and health. How can we define health and wellbeing at the local level? What is "locality" in this respect? Are we considering the whole city, just a district, or a

neighbourhood? Could we use GPS coordinates? This Manifesto could complement the work that the OECD is doing on wellbeing at regional level.

- A joint deliverable based on a list of common indicators (*defined together also taking into account the current NBS Handbook on Indicators and Assessment*). This list should also include the definition of "bottom-up" and "place-based" indicators resulting from the co-creation process with citizens. When defining these indicators, one could envisage the *creation of a matrix for the 4 projects*. For instance, such a matrix could be based on the type of solution (*not only NBS but also social, digital and cultural ones*); general impacts on health; general impacts on wellbeing; place-specific impacts.

- In order to be updated on the work carried out on NBS Indicators and Assessment, one representative per project should participate in the existing Taskforce 2.

2. Gender, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (GDE&I)

Main outputs:

- Each project should nominate a GDE&I manager + the main lead on co- creation and co-deployment activities. The GDE&I managers and the leads on co-creation will define *common modalities to engage diverse citizens remotely due to the current COVID-19 pandemic*. This will allow them to address the *digital divide* not only in terms of rural/urban cleavage but also in terms of different abilities that citizens have when using online technologies and tools. The results of these co-creation activities to engage diverse citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic could also be reflected in a joint deliverable on co-creation in order to harvest the richness of process.

- A common strategy to define the set of personal characteristics (i.e. sex, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, etc.) to be included when engaging diverse citizens. The work carried out in this respect could result in a joint deliverable on *GDE&I toolkit for health and wellbeing in cities*. This toolkit could reflect similar work done by other international organisations on DE&I for the labour market. See for instance World Economic Forum (2020) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion 4.0: A toolkit for leaders to accelerate social progress in the future of work. Concerning *age as a personal characteristic*, please have a look at the new Commission Green Paper on Ageing: Fostering solidarity and responsibility between generations (27 January 2021).

- A joint deliverable/ positioning paper on AI and GDE&I (i.e. AI to tackle unconscious bias, AI for emotion recognition, biosensors, etc.). Such a deliverable should also take into account the current debate on AI and discrimination. See for instance **AI NOW (2019) Discriminating Systems: Gender, Race and Power in AI.**

3. Joint Communication & Dissemination Activities

Main outputs:

- A common glossary of key terms (to be consistent both for internal communication between the 4 projects and for external communication) is to be co-created and applied across all four sister projects.

- Joint deliverables (i.e. the ones mentioned above)

- A timeline for joint events (at least 2/3 conferences/workshops). A calendar with main events for 2021 will be shared on Teams to prepare the joint events of the projects and the WP leads for Communications across each project will liaise regularly to exploit any available opportunities.

- Synergies with the cluster of projects H2020 SC5-20-2019 on Transforming historic urban areas into hubs of entrepreneurships and social and cultural integration. To realise these synergies, these projects will be invited to join our meetings in 2022/2023 in the first instance. Potential for collaboration will then be discussed.

- Synergies with the new projects funded under the H2020 SC1 Health, demographic change and wellbeing. Working through the **https://www.urban-health.eu/** our project and sister projects will pursue joint activities in dissemination, in the first instance.

- Application for Dissemination and Exploitation Booster Funding to be pursued jointly in 2023.

SYNERGIES ACROSS PROJECTS
- **Covid-19 related questions**
- **City survey**
- **360 health indicators**
- **Co-creation and inclusion strategies**
- **Digital innovations**
- **Joint webinars and dissemination activity**

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