

**Interreg
Danube Region**



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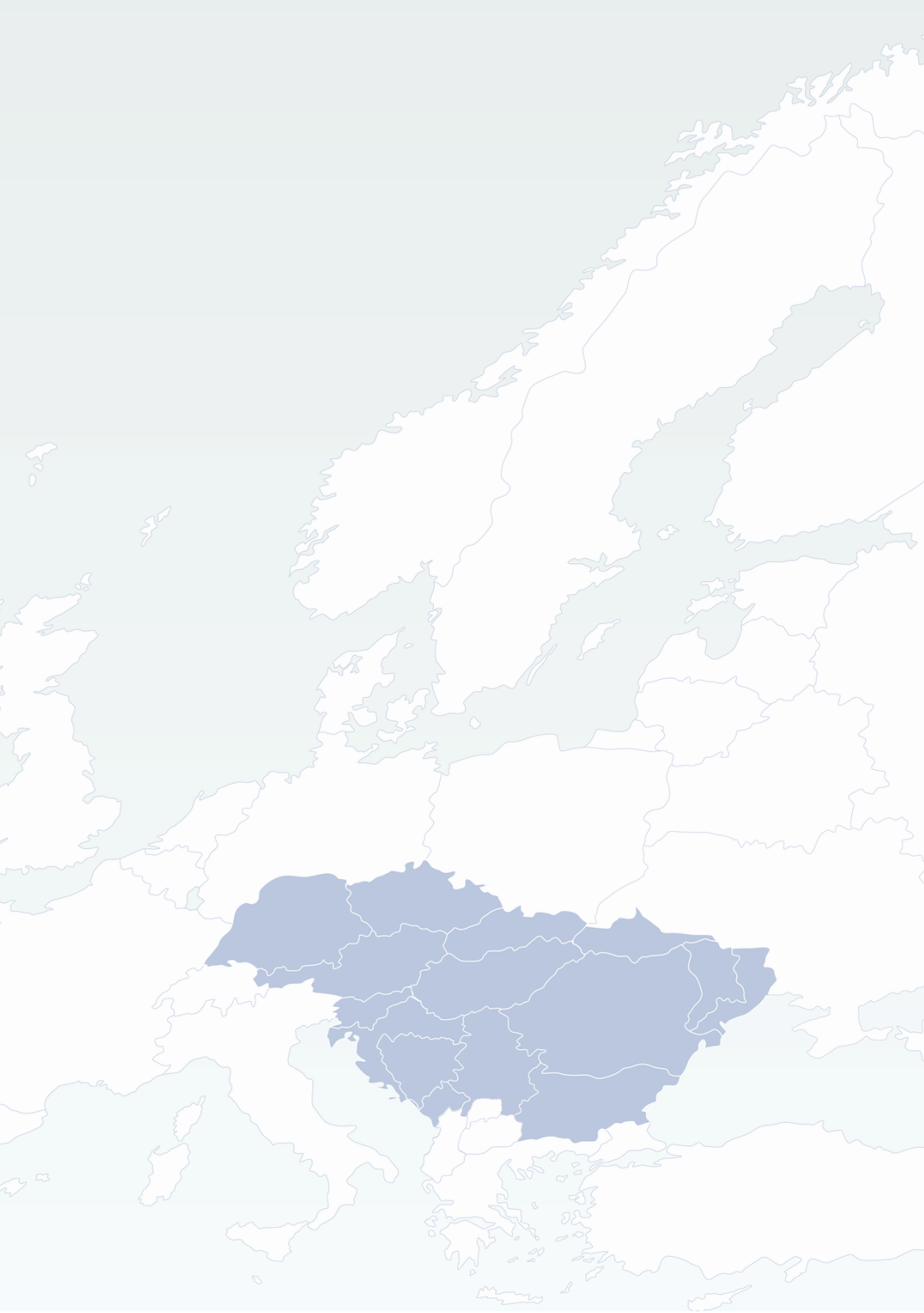
HARMONMISSIONS

Best Practices Brochure

**Supporting EU Missions under
Horizon Europe 2021–2027**

Mission 1: Adaptation to Climate Change

**Mission 4: 100 Climate Neutral and Smart
Cities by 2030**



HARMONMISSIONS Best Practices Brochure for Climate - Oriented EU Missions 1 & 4

Showcasing practical examples from the Danube Region

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Foreword

The European Green Deal sets a clear path towards a climate-neutral and resilient future, with **EU Missions** playing a vital role in engaging citizens and local communities. The Danube Region, with its diversity and strong cooperation potential, is well positioned to support this transformation.

This publication presents a selection of **best practices from the Danube Region**, demonstrating how **Mission 1 (Adaptation to Climate Change)** and **Mission 4 (100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030)** are being implemented across the region. These examples provide practical and innovative responses to climate challenges, reflecting the strength of local and regional action.

Alongside the project's achievements, the publication also features **inspiring cases** from other relevant initiatives in the Danube Region. Together, they offer valuable insights for stakeholders aiming to contribute to the EU Climate Missions.

Beyond showcasing achievements, this publication highlights **opportunities** to further improve the governance model of the Missions — particularly through **stronger cooperation, broader stakeholder inclusion, and enhanced policy alignment**.

We hope this publication will serve both as a source of inspiration and as a practical guide for those committed to building resilient and climate-neutral communities.

About the HARMONMISSIONS project

An effective response to climate change requires collective implementation that transcends national borders. The **HARMONMISSIONS project** facilitates cooperation between partners in the framework of the European Missions:

1. **Adaptation to Climate Change**

4. **100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030**

with the aim of achieving greater impact, particularly in the Danube Region.

The main objective of the project is to harmonise the implementation of the European Missions at the Danube Region level. Significant disparities persist among European regions in terms of understanding, governance structures, and implementation of the Missions. Therefore, the project seeks to reduce these disparities and support the development of an effective governance model for the Missions at the Danube Region level. The project aims to establish structured channels for cooperation among stakeholders involved in Missions 1 and 4.

Climate change cannot be confined to a single country; it transcends national borders. For this reason, cross-border cooperation is essential to effectively address climate challenges. The project therefore aims to create a platform that facilitates cooperation between partners and raises awareness of the Missions among the wider public.

Short introduction to EU Missions

The EU Missions were established as bold and coordinated responses to some of the most pressing challenges of our time. In particular, Mission 1 (Adaptation to Climate Change) and Mission 4 (100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030) are designed to accelerate **the transition towards resilient communities and sustainable urban environments**.

This brochure presents a selection of **28 best practices** illustrating how these **two Missions are being implemented across the Danube Region**. The examples have been collected from project partners and other relevant initiatives, with the aim of fostering knowledge exchange, inspiration, and practical learning.

By showcasing a wide range of actions — from nature-based solutions and resilience planning to smart mobility and carbon-neutral strategies — **this publication demonstrates that meaningful change is already taking place at local and regional levels**.

The Danube Region, as one of Europe's most dynamic transnational areas, provides strong potential for collaboration, innovation, and **the replication of successful models**. This brochure serves both as a reflection of ongoing progress and as a resource for stakeholders seeking to engage in or support the EU Climate Missions.

EU Mission 1: Adaptation to Climate Change

The EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change aims to support at least **150 European regions and communities** on their **path towards climate resilience by 2030**. Recognizing that the effects of climate change are already being felt across Europe — including increasing floods, droughts, wildfires, and extreme heat — the Mission highlights the urgent need for local preparation, adaptation, and action.

While efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions remain vital, adaptation is no longer optional. The Mission assists regional and local authorities in assessing climate risks, developing clear adaptation plans, and implementing innovative, context-specific solutions. These include nature-based measures, infrastructure improvements, risk assessments, and early warning systems.

The Mission not only operationalises the **EU's Climate Adaptation Strategy**, but also supports the broader objectives of the European Green Deal. Through the Mission Charter, an increasing number of regions and organisations across Europe have committed to collaborating, sharing knowledge, and co-developing solutions.

Regions are encouraged to integrate adaptation into planning, governance, and infrastructure, using evidence-based approaches and publicly available knowledge to guide action. The Mission thus acts as a catalyst for more coordinated, ambitious, and effective climate adaptation efforts across the EU.

Biogas Plants in the Fight Against Climate Change

Zrenjanin, Serbia

Best practice example:

Enhancing the sustainable use of biomass to contribute to greenhouse gas emission reduction and support rural development.



Best practice objectives:

- Reduction of CO₂ emissions at the local level
- Minimisation of agricultural waste generation and disposal
- Establishment of a sustainable and resilient biomass supply chain
- Strengthening stakeholder trust through public-private partnerships.



Best practice financial support:

- Initial funding from the Government of the Netherlands
- Regional funding provided by the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina
- National incentive schemes of the Government of Serbia
- Technical assistance delivered by GIZ – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit.

Positive effects of the best practice :

- ✓ Biogas plants are one of the ways to use renewable energy sources for the production of both electricity and thermal energy. In this way, the share of fossil fuels used in Serbian heating plants is reduced, as well as air pollution.
- ✓ This is an excellent example of an “agricultural” biogas plant, where most of the renewable feedstock used in the biogas production process originates from various agricultural activities (i.e. farmyard manure, residues from agricultural production, plant-based food industry waste, energy crops, etc.). In this way, the biogas plant also contributes to environmental protection.
- ✓ This best practice has opened a dialogue with the local self-government in order to establish a partnership on how to use the produced heat instead of “throwing it away”, which is a predominant practice in Serbia.



Safe Planting of Healthy Trees in Urban Environments – Košice

Košice, Slovakia

Best practice example:

Revitalisation of the cemetery with the aim of converting paved areas into permeable surfaces, thereby reducing the heat island effect through innovative tree planting solutions.

Best practice objectives:

- Supporting biodiversity in urban areas
- Providing solutions for rainwater drainage at the source
- Improving the local microclimate.

Best practice financial support:

- City of Košice.



Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ The TreeParker system provides large volumes of high-quality, non-compacted soil and maximises usable underground space, allowing unrestricted root growth while simultaneously supporting traffic loads.



It is ideal for new trees in areas such as pavements, car parks, plazas, green roofs, and even green walls. ✓

The TreeParker system manages rainwater runoff at the source. After purification, the water returns to the retention tank and is used for the automatic irrigation of greenery and trees. ✓

Landscape Restoration Program for the Košice Region

Košice, Slovakia

Best practice example:

Development of a comprehensive plan "Landscape Restoration Program for the Košice Region" to guide climate adaptation, landscape restoration, and sustainable water management at regional level through coordinated, evidence-based planning.

Best practice objective:

Define strategic priorities, identify measures, and establish a coordinated framework for implementing climate resilience actions across sectors and administrative levels within the region.

Best practice financial support:

- Regional budget of Košice Self-Governing Region
- EU funding programmes (e.g., Interreg, Horizon, Operational Programmes)
- National public funding schemes
- External projects and international cooperation initiatives
- In-kind contributions from regional stakeholders and partners.

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Provides a clear strategic framework for coordinated climate action at territorial level.
- ✓ Supports evidence-based decision-making through integrated analyses and assessments.
- ✓ Aligns regional, national, and EU policies (e.g., EU Missions, Danube Strategy).
- ✓ Enhances multi-level governance and stakeholder coordination.
- ✓ Identifies priority investments and measures for climate adaptation and resilience.
- ✓ Facilitates access to funding by clearly defining priorities and project pipelines.
- ✓ Strengthens capacity of local and regional authorities.
- ✓ Encourages cross-sector cooperation (water management, land use, energy, biodiversity).
- ✓ Serves as a replicable model for other regions preparing territorial action plans.
- ✓ Contributes to long-term sustainable regional development and resilience.

Sustainable Climate Outcomes for Residents of Eastern Slovakia through the CLIMAAX Framework

Best practice example:

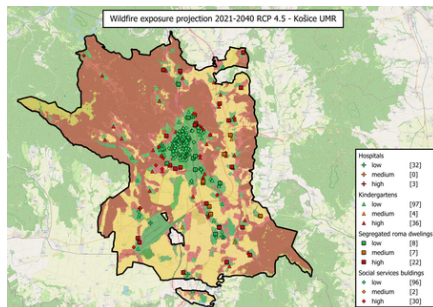
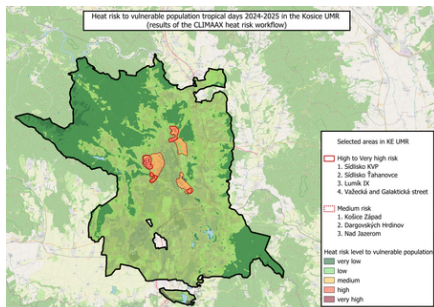
The project aims to provide a robust, locally grounded climate risk assessment for the Košice Region, translating European climate data into actionable insights to support equitable and evidence-based adaptation planning.

Best practice financial support:

- Horizon Europe – CLIMAAX project
- Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) under HORIZON-MISS-2021-CLIMA-02-01
- Co-financed through the institutional capacities of the City of Košice.

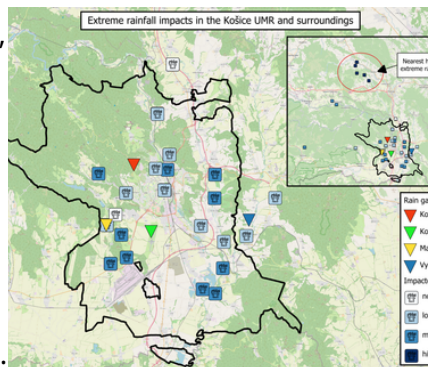
Best practice objectives:

- Refining climate risk assessments using local data
- Identifying priority climate risks and vulnerable groups
- Supporting adaptation planning and funding decisions.



Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Strengthened local climate risk assessment by integrating European climate projections with national observations and local datasets.
- ✓ Identified priority climate hazards (heatwaves, extreme rainfall, wildfires, droughts) relevant to the Košice Urban Development Area.
- ✓ Improved spatial targeting of vulnerable population groups (children, elderly, socially disadvantaged communities) and critical infrastructure.
- ✓ Enhanced decision-making capacity of the City of Košice and surrounding municipalities for adaptation planning.
- ✓ Established an evidence base to support applications for climate adaptation funding at national and EU levels.
- ✓ Increased stakeholder engagement and awareness through surveys, consultations, and public presentations
- ✓ Improved alignment between local, regional, and national adaptation strategies.
- ✓ Developed a transferable methodology demonstrating how harmonised EU climate risk frameworks can be effectively applied at local and regional scales.



Prnjavor City:

Businesses Against Climate Change

Prnjavor, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Best practice example:

Prnjavor City, Bosnia and Herzegovina, focuses on engaging local businesses to lead initiatives in reducing the carbon footprint by 2030, supported through extensive investments in solar and hydropower.

Best practice objectives:

- Research and invest in geothermal energy at Banja Kulaši Spa
- Research and invest in biogas production from cellulose agricultural, animal, and farm waste
- Further invest in solar and hydropower.

Best practice financial support:

- UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Green Climate Fund (GCF)
- Global Environment Facility (GEF)
- Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology of the Republic of Srpska
- Fund for Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency of the Republic of Srpska
- EU4AGRI Programme.



Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Prnjavor City is the most ethnically and culturally diverse city in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This cultural diversity, dating back to the 19th century, forms the basis for the city's vibrant and dynamic private entrepreneurship over the last century. The population is approximately 33,000 inhabitants, with over 920 registered companies, most of which export to EU countries.
- ✓ Prnjavor is one of the leading cities in the country regarding EU Mission 1 goals, focusing on engaging businesses to lead in climate action initiatives. The city hosts some of the first larger solar farms in the country: Novaković with an installed capacity of 250 kW, and Topinox d.o.o. with 396 kW. Many other companies producing for the EU are in the process of installing their own large solar farms, which will further reduce the city's carbon footprint.
- ✓ The city is also accelerating support to the agricultural sector, particularly fruit production and dairy farms, with four ongoing projects through EU4AGRI investments. These initiatives aim to reduce the sector's carbon footprint through digitalisation and increased application of green production principles.



Greening and Nature-Based Solutions in Maribor

Maribor, Slovenia

Best practice example:

The mission of this best practice was to strengthen the urban resilience of Maribor (Slovenia) to climate change through greening and nature-based solutions that reduce heat stress, enhance biodiversity, and improve environmental quality and well-being.

Best practice objectives:

The goals were to deploy scalable nature-based solutions to mitigate the urban heat island effect and manage other climate risks, enhance ecosystem services, and support food security, biodiversity, and healthy urban living.

Best practice financial support:

- Climate Fund (part of the state budget), replenished through EU ETS auctioning of emission allowances
- Various European funds and projects, such as Urban Innovative Actions, Horizon 2020, and ERDF.



Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Reduced urban heat island effects through expanded green and blue infrastructure.
- ✓ Increased urban tree cover, green corridors, and pocket parks across multiple neighbourhoods.
- ✓ Improved biodiversity, ecosystem services, and carbon sequestration.
- ✓ Enhanced air quality, noise reduction, and microclimatic comfort.
- ✓ Strengthened local food systems through organic urban gardens and circular soil use.
- ✓ Increased community engagement through volunteer participation and courtyard competitions.
- ✓ Higher resilience of vegetation due to locally grown, climate-adapted saplings.
- ✓ Improved recreational spaces and public health benefits.
- ✓ Robust monitoring and maintenance systems ensuring long-term effectiveness of interventions.



Climate Office in Slovenia

Maribor, Slovenia

Best practice example:

The Climate Office supports climate adaptation in municipalities and regions and helps the state understand local needs and conditions. Through targeted knowledge transfer, it strengthens understanding, awareness, and support for climate adaptation.

Best practice financial support:

- Climate Change Fund for 2025–2026 under Measure 2570-24-0028, Local Climate Office, in accordance with inflows of resources to the Climate Change Fund.



Best practice objectives:

The goal is to provide expert support to municipalities and regions in addressing climate challenges, strengthen climate adaptation capacity, and connect local needs with national policies to foster resilient regional development.



Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Provides expert guidance and systemic support to municipalities and regions in tackling climate challenges.
- ✓ Strengthens local capacities for planning and implementing climate adaptation measures.
- ✓ Improves understanding and awareness of climate risks and resilience solutions at the local level.
- ✓ Enhances coordination between municipalities, regions, and national authorities.
- ✓ Translates national climate policies into practical actions tailored to local needs.
- ✓ Supports long-term, sustainable integration of climate adaptation into spatial and development planning.
- ✓ Encourages knowledge transfer, exchange of good practices, and stronger cooperation among stakeholders.
- ✓ Contributes to more resilient communities, reduced vulnerability, and better preparedness for future climate impacts.



Mobilizing External Expertise for the Sustainable Recovery Plan of the Residential Sector in Bucha

Bucha, Ukraine

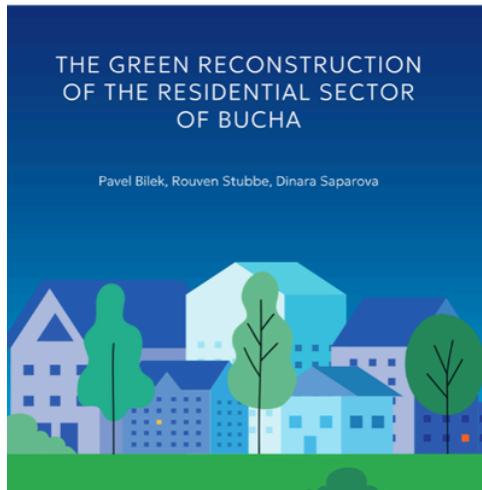
Best practice example:

Creating a vision and a detailed plan for the sustainable reconstruction of Bucha's residential sector.

Best practice objectives:

Following the key principle of Ukraine's recovery, "Build Back Better," Bucha aims to assess climate risks—particularly in light of the impacts of the Russian

invasion and occupation—and to identify strategies to address current and future environmental challenges.



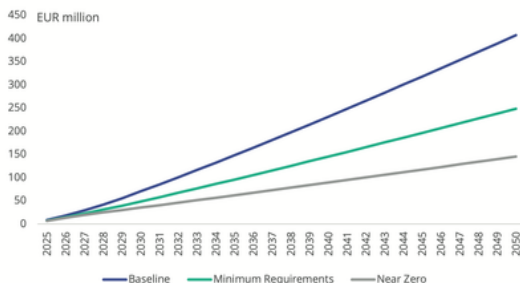
Best practice financial support:

- Center for Environmental Initiatives "Ecoaction" (Ukraine)
- BE Berlin Economics GmbH (Germany)
- iC Ukraine
- European Climate Foundation.

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Provides a systemic, evidence-based framework for post-war housing recovery, guiding local authorities from emergency repairs to climate-resilient development.
- ✓ Translates the “Build Back Better” principle into technical and financial scenarios, improving decision-making, prioritization, and fundraising readiness.
- ✓ Generates major social and economic benefits: under the “Minimum Requirements” scenario, energy consumption drops 45% and residents save over EUR 3.2 million annually; under “Near Zero,” savings reach 73% and over EUR 10 million annually, with 64% lower utility bills.
- ✓ Delivers environmental and energy security gains, including potential savings of 15 million m³ of natural gas and 31,500 tonnes of CO₂ annually.
- ✓ Demonstrates how local government leadership combined with national and international expertise creates a transferable model for sustainable recovery in Ukraine and the Danube region.

Cumulative monetary spending in Cost-covering Prices scenario



Revitalization of Orchards in Lučenec with a Positive Impact on the Local Ecosystem and Climate

Lučenec, Slovakia

Best practice example:

Revitalization of orchards in Lučenec to enhance local biodiversity, promote climate change adaptation, and create a community green space for education and recreation

Best practice objective:

Support biodiversity in the urban area, improve the local microclimate, promote sustainable rainwater management, and increase citizens' awareness of climate adaptation needs.

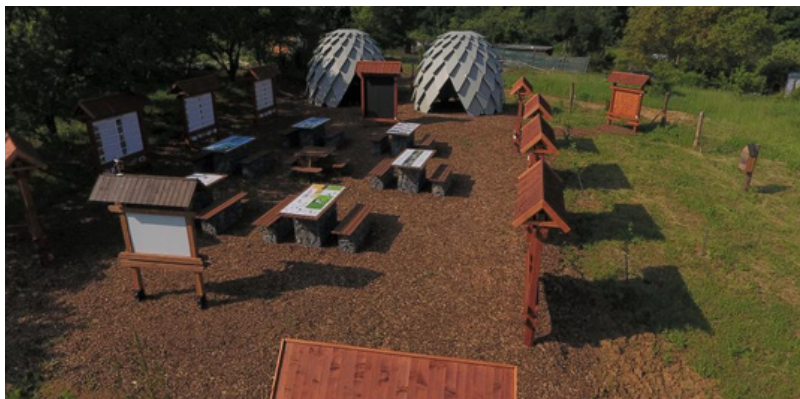


Best practice financial support:

- Funded by the Town of Lučenec within local and regional environmental initiatives
- Co-financed through municipal resources and regional environmental grants supporting sustainable urban development.

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Creation of a new, attractive green space for leisure, environmental education, and community gatherings in Lučenec.
- ✓ Preservation and planting of traditional fruit tree varieties from the Novohrad region, supporting local biodiversity and heritage.
- ✓ Implementation of nature-based solutions such as rainwater harvesting and energy-efficient maintenance practices to mitigate climate change impacts.
- ✓ Strengthened connection between citizens and nature, promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing consumerism through community orchard activities.
- ✓ Establishment of an apidom with eight bee colonies, improving pollination, supporting bee populations, and providing a unique relaxation and educational experience through nature therapy.
- ✓ Increased public awareness of sustainable lifestyles and the role of urban green spaces in climate adaptation.



Project DELIVER: DEveloping resilient, low-carbon and more LIVable urban Residential area

Bratislava, Karlova Ves Municipality, Slovakia

Best practice example:

Strengthening climate resilience and reducing carbon emissions in urban housing estates through nature-based green and blue solutions that improve the microclimate, public spaces, and residents' quality of life.

Best practice objectives:

- Increase the resilience of housing estates to climate change
- Reduce the local carbon footprint
- Improve public spaces through green and blue infrastructure
- Raise public awareness and engagement in climate adaptation.

Best practice financial support:

- European Union funding – LIFE Programme
- National public funds of the Slovak Republic
- Municipal budget of the Bratislava–Karlova Ves Municipality
- Co-financing by the Local Government Office of the Bratislava–Karlova Ves Municipality.



Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Improved urban microclimate through new green areas, tree planting, green roofs, permeable surfaces, and water elements.

- ✓ Reduced vulnerability of housing estates to heat waves, droughts, and heavy rainfall.

- ✓ Enhanced rainwater retention, infiltration, and sustainable water management.

- ✓ Increased biodiversity and the ecological value of residential and school areas.

- ✓ Improved the quality, usability, and attractiveness of public spaces.



- ✓ Reduced energy consumption and operating costs of renovated public buildings.

- ✓ Supported evidence-based decision-making through microclimate monitoring and data analysis.



- ✓ Increased public awareness and strengthened resident participation in climate adaptation.

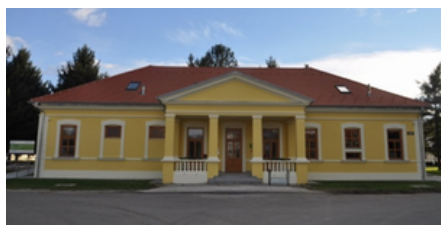
- ✓ Developed a transferable methodology applicable to other cities and housing estates in the Danube Region.

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Brownfield area revitalised using synergy between public, educational and supportive institutions.
- ✓ Improved quality of life for the local community.
- ✓ Preserved biodiversity and local ecosystem, while achieving European Commission climate goals.
- ✓ Increased energy savings and reduced greenhouse gas emissions - contribution to energy efficiency.



Renewed flora by planting indigenous plants and trees, with the aim of preserving the natural ecosystem and biodiversity, minimising urban heat island (UHI) effect, reducing soil and air temperature and increasing the green area. ✓



GoNaturePositive!

Bulgaria

Best practice example:

Adaptation to climate change, aiming to generate comprehensive and lasting improvements in climate resilience.

Best practice objective:

- It is dedicated to accelerating awareness and action toward a nature-positive economy among all societal stakeholders.
- The goal is to provide clear guidance on nature-based solutions and enterprises across climate-related sectors, supporting the adoption of nature-positive practices.

Best practice financial support:

The initiative is funded by the Horizon Europe programme.



Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Produced three informative and accessible reports on the nature-based economy.
- ✓ Delivered two milestones outlining operational indicators and a roadmap for Europe with key data and analyses.
- ✓ Proposed policy changes to support nature-positive practices.
- ✓ Provided clear guidance on the benefits of nature-positive practices for both the environment and citizens.
- ✓ Developed a conceptual framework for nature-positive enterprises.
- ✓ Created and engaged multiplier networks to advance the long-term vision of a nature-positive economy.



SMART-WATER PROJECT

Enhancing Biodiversity and Water Quality Management

Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia

Best practice example:

The SMART-Water project aims to safeguard key inland waterbodies in Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia by using AI and multi-sensor systems to enhance water quality monitoring and management.

Best practice objectives:

- Improve inland water monitoring using AI models and multi-sensor integration with geospatial data
- Develop a shared web GIS platform for cross-border decision-making
- Engage citizens through participatory awareness-raising activities.

Financial support source:

- Interreg VI-A IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro 2021-2027.

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IPA Croatia – Bosnia and
Herzegovina – Montenegro

 SMART-Water

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Improved water quality monitoring using AI models and multi-sensor technologies, enabling accurate real-time data collection and analysis.
- ✓ Enhanced protection of biodiversity in ecologically sensitive inland waterbodies, supporting the long-term sustainability of lakes and surrounding ecosystems.
- ✓ Strengthened cross-border cooperation among Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia through shared data, joint decision-making, and coordinated water management.
- ✓ Increased transparency and accessibility of water quality information via a collaborative web GIS platform, supporting evidence-based policymaking and governance.
- ✓ Improved capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to address transboundary and climate-related water challenges.
- ✓ Raised public awareness and citizen engagement in water quality protection through participatory monitoring and awareness-raising initiatives.
- ✓ Developed a transferable technological and governance framework applicable to other transboundary waterbodies in the Danube Region facing similar environmental pressures.



Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania M100

Romania

Best practice example:

M100 supports Romanian cities in developing decarbonization strategies across energy, transport, buildings, industry, and other relevant sectors, to achieve climate neutrality by 2035.

Best practice financial support:

M100 is supported by various national and international funding sources, the first two major initiatives being funded through the EEA and Norway Grants:

- Supporting small, medium, and large Romanian cities in developing Climate City Contracts (CCCs)
- Enhancing the capacity of three Romanian municipalities to achieve climate neutrality.

Best practice objective:

M100 supports cities in developing decarbonization strategies across energy, transport, buildings, industry, and agriculture to achieve urban climate neutrality by 2030.



Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ M100 serves as a promising example for the wider Danube region to follow in aligning with the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change.
- ✓ Through inter-ministerial collaboration and innovative governance models, M100 demonstrates how Danube countries can adopt similar strategies to build resilience, access funding, and develop pathways toward climate neutrality, contributing to the mission's broader objectives of regional adaptation and resilience.
- ✓ In line with the Communication on Managing Climate Risks, through M100, Romania mitigates the risk ownership in governance processes, as it is coordinated at inter-ministerial level.



EcoCartier Initiative

Romania

Best practice example:

The EcoCartier initiative provides a methodological framework to assist local authorities in designing resilient, inclusive, and adaptive neighborhoods. It addresses climate impacts by rethinking urban planning within environmental limits.



Best practice objective:

The initiative aims to adapt the EcoQuartier methodology to the Romanian context, supporting local authorities in implementing integrated, participatory, and climate-resilient neighborhood projects across five pilot territories.



Best practice financial support:

- Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (MDLPA)
- French public partners (French embassy, Expertise France, French Ministry for Ecological Transition, Centre for Studies and Expertise on Risks, the Environment, Mobility and Development of France (CEREMA)).

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Improved climate resilience: provides a robust methodological framework for designing neighborhoods that are resilient, inclusive, and environmentally adaptive.
- ✓ Targeted vulnerability reduction: successfully addresses local climate risks, including the restoration of degraded public spaces, reduction of traffic pressure, and mitigation of ecosystem fragmentation.
- ✓ Enhanced urban planning: rethinks development ensuring environmental limits and climate risks are integrated into modern governance.
- ✓ Scale and replicability: delivers proven, scalable solutions tested in diverse settings—from major cities like Bucharest and Galați to municipalities like Târgu Mureș, Gherla, and Rășinari.
- ✓ Social cohesion & inclusion: promotes inclusive governance and active citizen participation, ensuring that climate-adaptive transformations also improve the general quality of life.
- ✓ Environmental protection: demonstrates the success of integrated planning by combining sustainable mobility with ecosystem restoration and reduced environmental pressure.

Project NATALIE

Bucharest, Romania

Best practice example:

Enhancement of urban resilience in Bucharest through nature-based solutions by restoring ecosystems, improving water management, and protecting biodiversity in Văcărești Natural Park.



Asociația Parcul Natural București

Best practice objective:

- Implement and test nature-based interventions
- Conduct environmental monitoring
- Improve hydrological processes
- Promote biodiversity conservation and environmental education in an urban natural area.

Best practice financial support:

- NATALIE Project (EU-funded research and innovation initiative)
- Technical studies conducted between 2024 - 2025 (topography, hydrology, climate, soil, water quality, runoff models)
- Institutional collaboration for environmental assessment and urban planning
- Local expertise provided by Parcul Natural București Association.

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Improved water management through hydraulic modelling and analysis of rainwater and surface water.
- ✓ Increased climate resilience based on climatic and hydrological modelling.
- ✓ Protection and restoration of habitats, including amphibian breeding areas.
- ✓ NBSs development (Sun Plaza and Debarcader) for ecosystem restoration.
- Enhanced landscape quality and ecological connectivity. ✓
- Implementation of biodiversity monitoring activities in the site. ✓
- Environmental education activities focused on local fauna. ✓
- Replication potential in other urban parks such as Lumea Copiilor. ✓



Asociația Parcul Natural București

EU Mission 4: Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities

The EU Mission on Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities supports 100 European cities in becoming climate-neutral by 2030, positioning them as pioneers and innovation hubs for sustainable urban transformation across the continent.

Urban areas account for over 70% of global CO₂ emissions, making them central to achieving the goals of the European Green Deal. This Mission recognises that meaningful climate action must happen locally—by rethinking how we build, move, and consume in cities.

To achieve this, participating cities commit to developing and implementing **Climate City Contracts**. These outline clear roadmaps toward climate neutrality, including targets across key sectors, supported by investment and citizen engagement plans. The contracts are co-created with local stakeholders to ensure ownership and inclusiveness.

The Mission encourages a **demand-driven, cross-sectoral approach**, enabling cities to tailor solutions to their specific contexts. It promotes strong political commitment, participatory governance, and collaboration across all levels.

By **empowering cities** to lead through innovation and partnership, the Mission helps create cleaner, more inclusive, and resilient urban spaces—setting a path for other European cities to follow on the journey to climate neutrality by 2050.



Closing of the City Centre and Shared Space in Ljubljana

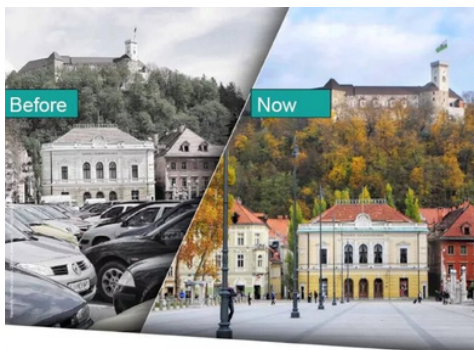
Ljubljana, Slovenia

Best practice example:

The mission was to transform Ljubljana's city centre into a people-centred, low-carbon shared space by reducing car traffic and prioritising walking, cycling, and public transport, thereby improving urban quality of life.

Best practice objective:

The goals were to reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions by shifting mobility patterns toward walking, cycling, and public transport while improving air quality, noise levels, safety level, and accessibility of public space.



Best practice financial support:

- Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) mechanism – partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and partly by the Republic of Slovenia's national budget and the City of Ljubljana (co-financing 20 % of eligible costs).
- European cooperation projects – including CIVITAS, Interreg, and other EU-funded programmes.

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ More than 10 hectares of the city centre transformed into a car-free pedestrian zone.
- ✓ Significant modal shift toward walking, cycling, and public transport.
- ✓ Black carbon concentrations reduced by up to 70% on redesigned streets.
- ✓ Noise levels from private vehicles decreased by approximately 6 dB.
- ✓ Improved ambient air quality without displacing pollution to surrounding streets.
- ✓ Enhanced road safety and reduced traffic accidents.
- ✓ Increased attractiveness and accessibility of public spaces for residents and visitors.
- ✓ Growth in tourism and expansion of outdoor cultural and social activities.
- ✓ Strong international recognition, including the European Green Capital Award (2016) and EU Mission Label (2024).
- ✓ High transferability potential to other cities with political commitment and participatory planning.

Sarajevo's Traffic: Rolling to Smart City Status

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Best practice example:

Between 2018 and 2025, the City of Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, implemented significant projects contributing to air pollution reduction, primarily through the modernization of its public transport system.



Best practice objective:

Citizens' awareness of air pollution increased, and overall air quality improved due to a reduction in the number of private vehicles on the streets, thereby lowering the city's carbon footprint.



Best practice financial support:

- European Bank for Development and Reconstruction
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- European Commission, NEAR – Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Between 2018 and 2024, the City of Sarajevo implemented significant projects that collectively contributed to a substantial reduction in traffic emissions. With the support of the EBDR, the city purchased 25 of the newest trolleybus models, modernizing its existing network and expanding it to the Vogošća area. In addition, the city carried out a large-scale renovation of the tram lines from Baščaršija to Ilidža and purchased 25 new trams, all of which are now in operation across Sarajevo. At the same time, a convenient public transport tracking application, NEXT, was developed, implemented, and promoted.
- ✓ A SIDA-supported project enabled air pollution monitoring by establishing four new measuring stations and setting up an online air pollution tracking system and corresponding application through the “Zrak u BiH” project. These improvements were closely synchronized with the public transport renovations.
- ✓ These measures have also triggered a number of other positive initiatives, most notably a large-scale project for an intercity tourist panoramic bicycle route, the “Sarajevo – Pale Cycling Trail.”



Thermomodernization of Social Infrastructure in Rivne

Rivne, Ukraine

Best practice example:

Modernisation of social infrastructure in the city of Rivne in terms of energy efficiency (Ukraine).

Best practice objective:

To increase the energy efficiency of municipal social infrastructure, with a particular focus on preschool education facilities.



Best practice financial support:

- Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO)
- European Union (Neighbourhood Investment Platform – NIP).

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Rivne demonstrates the positive effects of a long-term, systemic approach to climate and energy policy at the municipal level. Despite wartime pressures, the city has maintained a clear decarbonisation trajectory, already reducing CO₂ emissions by 20% compared to 2010 and advancing a further 30% reduction target by 2030. This demonstrates strong institutional continuity and strategic commitment.
- ✓ A key positive effect is the modernisation of social infrastructure through energy-efficiency investments. With support from NEFCO and the EU Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP), Rivne has implemented multiple projects that improved schools and preschool facilities through thermomodernisation (insulation, roof upgrades, and the replacement of windows and doors). These measures reduce energy consumption, improve indoor comfort, and lower operating costs for municipal institutions.
- ✓ The practice also has a strong social inclusion impact. The thermomodernisation of Preschool No. 35 directly supports internally displaced children and children with special needs, combining energy efficiency with improved service conditions for vulnerable groups.
- ✓ Finally, Rivne's results have created a scaling effect: successful implementation has helped justify additional funding for further building upgrades and energy-efficient street lighting. This makes Rivne a transferable model for many Danube-region cities with similar climate conditions and infrastructure needs.

Sustainable Urban Mobility in the City of Zagreb

Zagreb, Croatia



Best practice example:

By receiving the title of Smart City, the City of Zagreb has included sustainable urban mobility among six strategic development areas within smart management, thus demonstrating awareness of urban transport challenges and a commitment to improving the overall traffic situation in the city.

Best practice objective:

- Increasing the attractiveness of public city passenger transport as a key measure.
- Introducing a system of integrated passenger transport.
- Introducing a unified ticketing system for all providers of public transport services.
- Introducing a real-time passenger information system and reducing overcrowding in public transport vehicles.

Best practice financial support:

- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
- European Commission – Directorate - General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR).



Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ The framework that the City of Zagreb has established to achieve its Smart City strategic goals can serve as a roadmap for other large cities in the Danube region when planning strategies and implementing actions to become Smart Cities.



Community - Driven Climate Change Adaptation

Municipality Horné Srnie, Slovakia

Best practice example:

To strengthen local climate resilience through community-driven adaptation measures addressing public spaces and municipal infrastructure, while implementing a smart eco-village concept based on the community's self-learning, co-design, and co-creation potential.

Best practice objective:

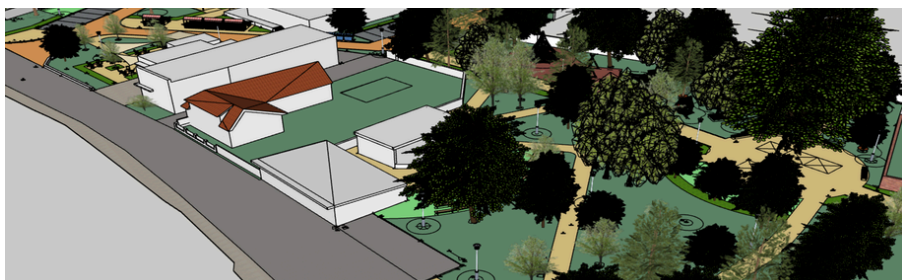
- Implementing climate change adaptation and mitigation measures through integration into the smart eco-village concept
- Improving public spaces and municipal infrastructure
- Strengthening inclusion and community engagement
- Involving stakeholders in co-creation processes.

Best practice financial support:

- Interreg Central Europe Programme
- Interreg Danube Region Programme
- Municipal budget of Horné Srnie
- STICS project, supported by EU Future Generation Fund, Resilience and Recovery Plan Slovakia, project partner, Living Lab Horne Srnie
- Expertise support from SPECTRA Centre of Excellence, Comenius University Bratislava, via transfer of know-how
- Project Making City, Horizon Europe project, via transfer of know-how in the field of Positive Energy Districts.

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Reduced negative impacts of climate change through green adaptation measures.
- ✓ Strengthened resilience of the community, its infrastructure, and households.
- ✓ Increased efficiency in the implementation of innovative solutions through their integration within the smart eco-village development concept.
- ✓ Improved sustainability, resilience, and adaptability of the community by strengthening its capacity to develop and implement place-based and evidence-based solutions addressing local challenges and problems.
- ✓ Improved quality and functionality of public spaces linked to schools, social and community facilities, and local infrastructure.



Reducing the Carbon Footprint through Energy Management of Buildings in the City of Košice

Košice, Slovakia

Best practice example:

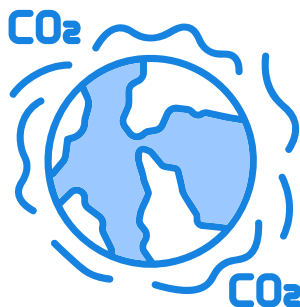
Energy management is a key process for improving the energy efficiency of cities. As part of its energy management system, the City of Košice uses a dedicated application for the collection and evaluation of data on energy consumption, costs, and emissions.

Best practice financial support:

- The project „Building Power: Reducing Building Emissions & Energy Use in Bratislava & Kosice“, Pilot Cities Programme, funded by Horizon Europe
- City of Košice.

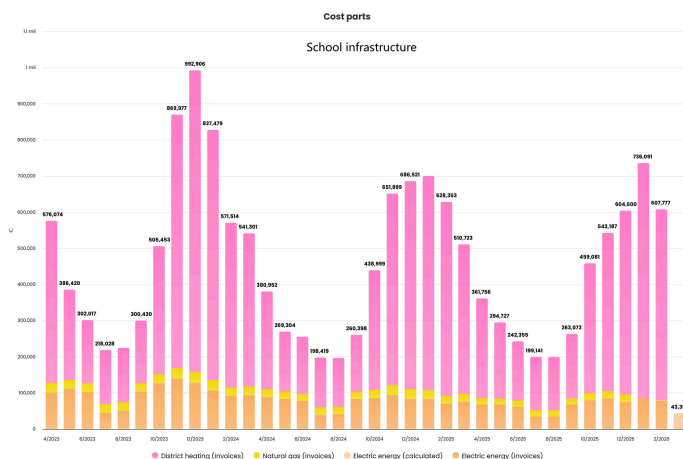
Best practice objectives:

- Monitor energy consumption, costs, and emissions.
- Notify users of malfunctions, accidents, or anomalies.
- Manage meter passports, including photos and technical documentation.
- Export platform data.
- Visualise and analyse energy consumption and cost trends.



Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Improved energy efficiency - Smart energy platform provides real-time data on energy consumption, allowing city managers to identify inefficiencies and optimize usage. This leads to reduced energy waste and more sustainable building operations.
- ✓ Cost savings for the municipality- by monitoring and managing energy consumption more effectively, the city can significantly lower utility costs. Savings can then be redirected to other public services or development projects.
- ✓ Enhanced environmental sustainability - reduced energy consumption directly contributes to lower greenhouse gas emissions. This supports Košice's environmental goals and aligns with broader EU climate policies.
- ✓ Data-driven decision making - the system collects valuable data that helps city officials make informed decisions about renovations, investments in energy infrastructure, and long-term urban planning strategies.



Biomass as a Tool to Improve Air Quality in Urban Areas

Priboj, Serbia

Best practice example:

Reduction of the carbon footprint and promotion of sustainable thermal energy through biomass combustion in the City of Priboj, aiming to fully replace fossil fuels with renewable energy sources.

Best practice objectives:

- Replace the old fossil fuel-based heating plant with a biomass-based facility providing green thermal energy
- Improve air quality
- Strengthen the local economy
- Ensure rational management of the local government budget.



Best practice financial support:

- Serbian government funds
- GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) - German Organization for International Cooperation (technical assistance)
- KfW – German development bank.

Best practice positive effects:

- ✓ Biomass-based heating plants provide a way to use renewable energy sources for district heating. This reduces the reliance on lignite and other fossil fuels in Serbian heating plants and decreases air pollution in urban areas during the heating season.
- ✓ The best practice significantly contributes to the development of the local biomass energy market where the heating plants are located.
- ✓ The establishment of a sustainable long-term demand for biomass supports the local labour market, which is particularly important for smaller cities in less developed areas to improve their overall economic situation.
- ✓ This practice demonstrates effective cooperation between local governments and private wood owners, establishing sustainable biomass supply chains.
- ✓ The model has been adopted and implemented in other Serbian cities, becoming a recognised best practice.



Smart Parking Systems

Podgorica, Montenegro

Best practice example:

To improve urban mobility using smart parking sensors, digital tools, and real-time information, reducing congestion, optimising parking, lowering emissions, and enhancing citizens' convenience.

Best practice objectives:

- Promote sustainable urban mobility through smart infrastructure.
- Reduce congestion and CO₂ emissions by optimising parking availability and minimising unnecessary driving.
- Enhance citizens' convenience and urban life quality through advanced digital solutions.



Best practice financial support:

- Primarily funded by the budget of Parking Service Podgorica
- Supported by the Capital City Podgorica
- Technical and partnership collaboration with Crnogorski Telekom (Montenegrin Telekom).

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Improved urban mobility and reduced traffic congestion through real-time parking availability information.

- ✓ Optimised parking reduces time spent searching for spaces, lowers CO₂ emissions, and supports climate-friendly urban transport.

- ✓ Enhanced citizen convenience through advanced digital solutions.

- ✓ Supports sustainable urban mobility by integrating digital infrastructure with broader city planning.



Encourages behavioural change in drivers, promoting efficient parking use and reducing unnecessary vehicle circulation. ✓

Scalable model replicable in other medium-sized cities across the Danube region facing similar urban mobility challenges. ✓

Provides a foundation for integration with other smart city initiatives, including public transport and traffic management systems. ✓

Energy Efficient, Sustainable & Smart Strategy for Ministry of Health

Slovakia

Best practice example:

Development and implementation of an energy-efficient, sustainable, and smart strategy for the Ministry of Health, aiming to reduce energy consumption and carbon footprint while promoting climate-neutral operations.

Best practice objectives:

Optimize energy efficiency, evaluate water consumption, and reduce CO₂ emissions using data-driven and GIS-supported methodologies to enhance sustainability in public administration buildings.

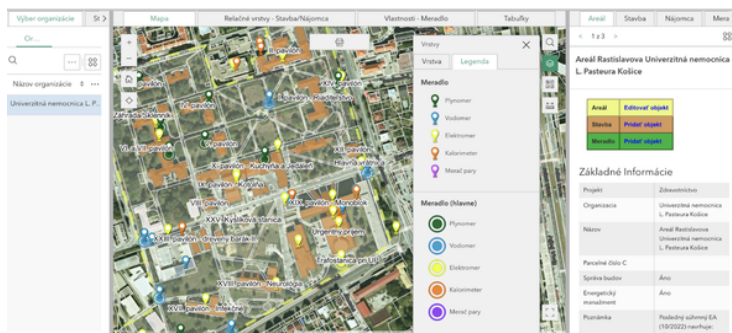


Best practice financial support:

- Supported by the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic through the Operational Programme Effective Public Administration
- Implemented within project code ITMS2014+: 314011CIN6, Activity 1.3 – Implementation of selected energy efficiency optimisation measures.

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Comprehensive analysis of energy consumption (electricity, natural gas, central heating, and water) in Ministry of Health buildings during 2020–2023.
- ✓ Identification of investment and non-investment measures to reduce energy use and operational costs, addressing the energy and climate crisis.
- ✓ Calculation of the CO₂ carbon footprint following the AR5 methodology of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), ensuring scientifically accurate emissions evaluation.
- ✓ Implementation of a GIS-based approach for detailed energy data collection and visualisation, enhancing transparency and understanding of building energy performance.
- ✓ Strengthened decision-making capacity within the Ministry through modern software tools and data-driven analysis.
- ✓ Contribution to national and EU climate-neutrality targets by promoting energy efficiency and sustainability in public sector infrastructure.



Romania

M100 is a national project through which Romania coordinates its efforts to achieve the climate neutrality targets set at the European level.

Best practice financial support:

M100 is supported by various national and international funding sources, the first two major initiatives being funded through the EEA and Norway Grants:

- supporting small, medium, and large Romanian cities in developing Climate City Contracts (CCCs);

enhancing the capacity of three Romanian municipalities to achieve climate neutrality.

Best practice objective:

M100 serves as a Mirror Mission of the EU Mission "100 Smart and Climate-Neutral Cities by 2030," assisting Romanian cities in their green transition process.



Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ M100 symbolizes a commitment to a broader vision—one that extends beyond individual cities and creates a wave of sustainability and innovation across Romania.

National platforms like M100 drive collaborative efforts among cities to achieve climate neutrality by 2030 and beyond.

Lessons learned from the M100 initiative can be adapted and applied to other Danube-region cities, encouraging a collective approach to climate neutrality through:

- Inter-ministerial collaboration
- Sharing of best practices
- Community engagement
- Funding opportunities.



DivAirCity Initiative

Romania

Best practice mission:

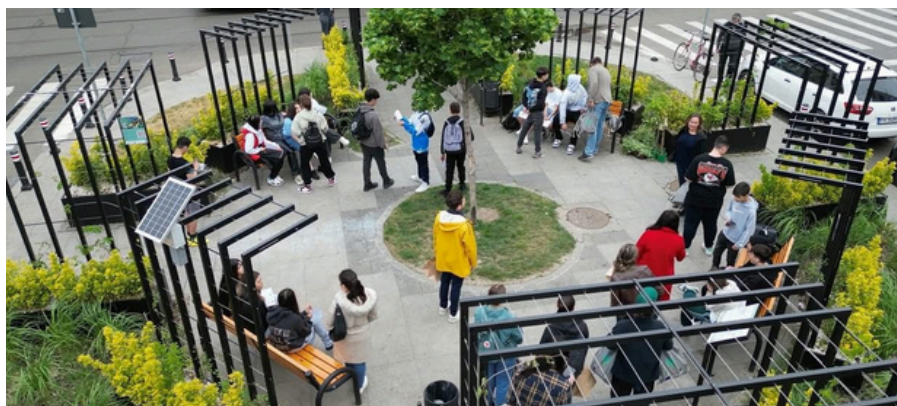
DivAirCity recognizes, accepts, and celebrates differences, turning urban diversity into an asset to tackle air pollution and climate change through specific Nature-Based Solution (NBS) interventions.

Best practice objective:

The main objective is to tackle social inequality and pollution by leveraging diversity and inclusion, implementing carbon-neutral, replicable pilot projects across five global cities, including Bucharest, through 24 partner organizations.

Best practice financial support:

DivAirCity is a four-year initiative funded by the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 program, being strategically aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Positive effects of the best practice:

✓ Inclusive data ecosystems: establishes a comprehensive framework for "diversity in urban data," utilizing d&i green cities indexes and geospatial mapping to ensure marginalized voices inform urban planning.

✓ Democratic co-creation: empowers residents through "participatory governance & design," utilizing living labs (temporary and permanent) and a pan-european contest to foster inclusive urban co-creation.

✓ Collaborative innovation: builds a robust "community of practice" that bridges the gap between diverse urban data and on-the-ground green interventions.



Empowered community ownership: facilitates innovative "finance community ownership" through the implementation of smart city contracts, ensuring local stakeholders have a direct stake in urban transitions ✓

Targeted environmental health: delivers measurable improvements in air quality through co-designed nature-based solutions (NBS) specifically tailored to the needs of five pilot EU cities. ✓

Global knowledge exchange: promotes widespread "replicability and dissemination" via a global twinning mechanism and extensive mass media campaigns, allowing successful models to be adopted worldwide. ✓



Mobile Waste Centers

Burgas, Bulgaria

Best practice example:

The Burgas mobile waste centers are a key measure supporting the implementation of Mission 4: Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities.

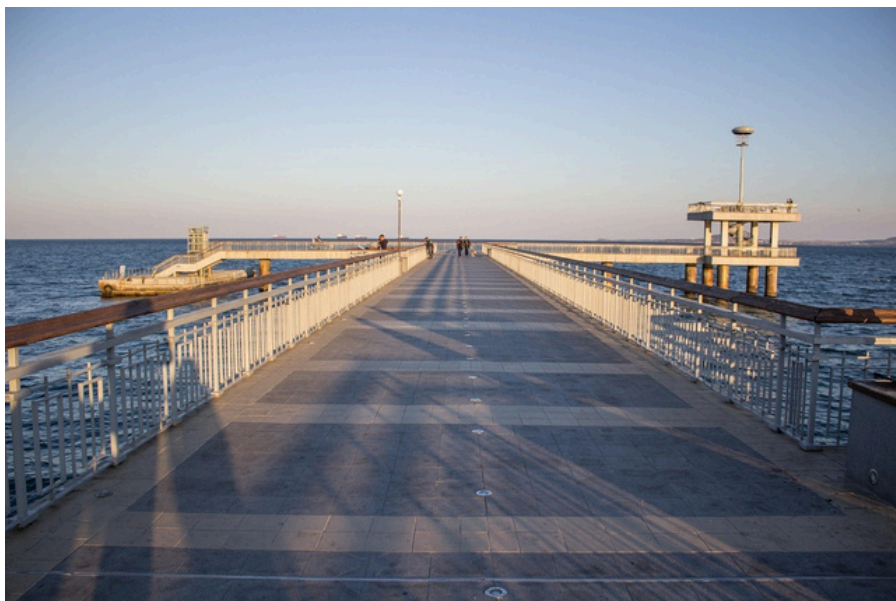
Best practice objective:

The goal of this practice is to increase the efficiency, accessibility and simplicity of separate waste collection. All types of waste can be delivered to the mobile centers, from the main forms of household waste to electrical equipment, dangerous substances, expired medication and hazardous waste. The initiative provides 19 mobile centers on the territory of the city.



Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ 136,822 tonnes of waste fractions collected separately through the mobile centers.
- ✓ Promotion of a safe and environmentally friendly waste management.
- ✓ Provision of a sought-after service that improves citizens' quality of life.



Energy Community

Gabrovo, Bulgaria

Best practice example:

Gabrovo's first energy community was established through the municipality's participation in Mission 4: 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, as part of its commitment to the Climate City Contract.



Best practice objective:

The goal of the energy community is to ensure a fair and accelerated energy transition with broad stakeholder engagement. 73 members are currently involved in the initiative, already benefitting from the first 10kWh solar park on the roof of the Regional Landfill. Its expansion is still underway.

Best practice financial support:

- The investment in the Gabrovo Energy Community has thus far amounted to 80,000 €, managed by six professionals.
- Upcoming solar energy projects are expected to mobilise at least 500,000 € in civic investment.

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Providing clean energy to inhabitants of the municipality.
- ✓ Engaging the community in all aspects of the green energy transition.
- ✓ Involving stakeholders with clear and comprehensible messages.
- ✓ Transforming the energy market through increased independence and reduced costs.



Sofia Waste Management

Sofia, Bulgaria

Best practice example:

As a signatory of the Climate City Contract, Sofia Municipality demonstrates its commitment to Mission 4: Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities through targeted waste management actions.

Best practice objective:

This practice seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce the landfilling of biodegradable waste.



Best practice financial support:

The financial support for the provided facilities is provided through the municipal budget, primarily through waste taxes.

Positive effects of the best practice:

- ✓ Reduces greenhouse gas emissions and increases the percentage of recycled biodegradable waste.
- ✓ Enhances citizen participation through digital tools and pilot collection schemes.
- ✓ Reduces landfilled biodegradable waste by approximately 95 %.
- ✓ Provides opportunities for resource recovery through renewable energy generation and compost production.
- ✓ Implements circular economy elements, such as closing loops between waste management and energy.
- ✓ Supports the production of soil improvers.
- ✓ Provides opportunities for the replicability of the practice in other regions.



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The HARMONMISSIONS partnership

Slovak Centre of
Scientific and
Technical
Information



Applied
Research and
Communication
s Fund



Institute of modern
technologies
Montenegro



City of Košice



LIR Evolution



Public Institution
for the
Development of
Međimurje
County REDEA



Regional Agency for
Socio – Economic
Development – Banat
Ltd



Slovak
Organization for
Research and
Development
Activities



Executive Agency for
Higher Education,
Research,
Development and
Innovation Funding



Ukrainian
Institute for
International
Politics



Digital Innovation
Hub Slovenia





HARMONMISSIONS

SHARED PLATFORM

The **SHARED platform** connects stakeholders across the Danube Region to resources, projects, and insights supporting EU Climate Missions. Together, we're working toward a more sustainable future through knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and innovation.

SHARED is a comprehensive digital platform designed to support and accelerate the EU Climate Missions. Through tools like the Project Repository, Event Calendar, and Knowledge Base, SHARED connects stakeholders to vital resources and insights, making collaboration easier and more effective in achieving climate adaptation and sustainability goals. Discover new projects, learn best practices, and engage with others working towards a greener future.

EUROPEAN MISSION OBSERVATORY (EMO)

The **European Mission Observatory (EMO)** platform is a dynamic hub designed to support and enhance engagement with the European Union's Mission policies across the Danube Region (DR). The EMO platform provides a central space for collaboration, information sharing, and community building among stakeholders from various sectors.

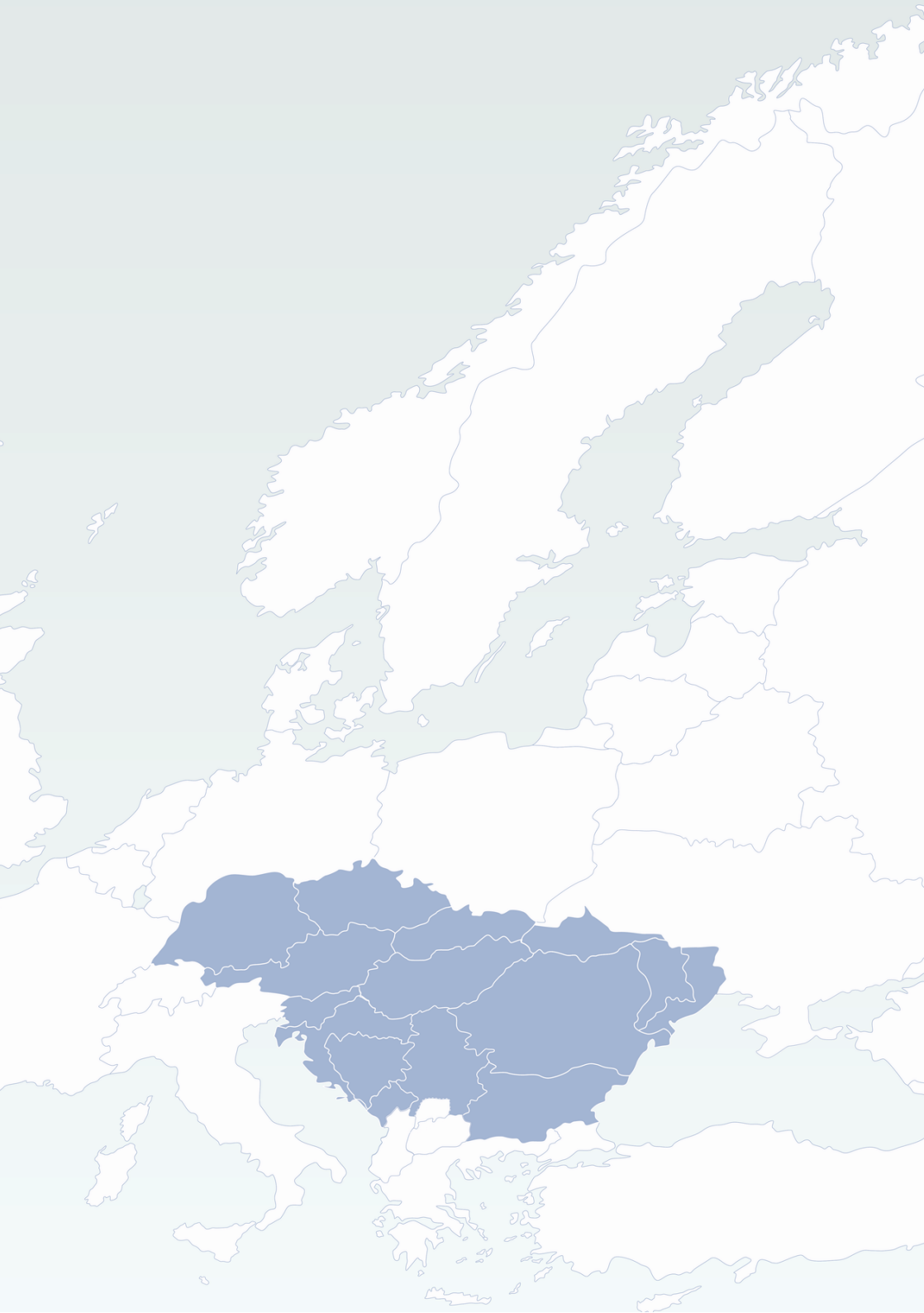
The EMO platform is dedicated to fostering active involvement in EU Missions, helping stakeholders from the Danube Region connect, collaborate, and drive impactful projects. By providing up-to-date information and facilitating partnerships, the EMO platform ensures that DR actors remain at the forefront of EU Mission initiatives.

**HARMONMISSIONS****CLIMATE CITY CONTRACT (CCC)**

The **Climate City Contract (CCC)** is a governance innovation tool designed to help cities collaboratively overcome barriers to achieving climate neutrality by 2030. It is part of the European Union's Cities Mission, which aims to support 100 cities in their transition to climate neutrality.

The CCC is the result of an iterative co-creation process involving multiple stakeholders, including local, regional, and national governments, as well as private and civic sectors. The contract is structured around three main components

1. **Commitments:** This includes a shared 2030 ambition and a strategy to achieve it, along with specific commitments from stakeholders.
2. **Actions:** This component identifies the strengths and gaps in existing strategies and policies, creating a coordinated portfolio of interventions to achieve the 2030 goals.
3. **Investments:** This involves developing a long-term economic and financial strategy to mobilize public resources and attract private capital for funding the pathways to climate neutrality.



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