



Transnational Report

WP2 Activity 2.1. - Green Views: Interviews and Local Assessment



Co-funded by
the European Union

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1. Introduction

Urban Green and Blue Spaces (UGBS) play an increasingly important role in supporting environmental sustainability, climate resilience, biodiversity protection, and public wellbeing within urban areas. Parks, gardens, urban forests, water bodies, and other green and blue infrastructures contribute not only to ecological balance, but also to social inclusion, recreation, health, and overall quality of life. At the same time, municipalities are facing growing pressures associated with climate change, biodiversity loss, resource constraints, and increasing demands for more sustainable and inclusive urban environments.

Within this context, the (Re)Natured Cities project aims to support municipalities and relevant stakeholders in promoting more sustainable approaches to the management of UGBS. As part of Work Package 2 (WP2), Activity A2.1. “Green Views - Interviews and Local Assessment” focused on analysing current management and maintenance practices (MMP), identifying operational challenges and sustainability gaps, and gathering practice-based evidence from different European contexts to better understand the realities affecting the management of UGBS at municipal level.

This transnational report presents a synthesis of the main findings emerging from the assessments conducted across the partner countries: Cyprus, Denmark, Ireland, Italy and Portugal. Rather than providing isolated national analyses, the report identifies common patterns, recurring challenges, and cross-cutting gaps between policy ambitions and practical implementation realities related to sustainable UGBS management.

The report additionally supports the validation and refinement of the technical modules to be developed under Activity A2.2. “Let's Get Technical - Sustainable Practices for managing and maintaining Urban Green and Blue Spaces”. In this sense, the findings presented throughout the report contribute to ensure that the educational materials to be developed are grounded in operational realities, aligned with municipal needs, and capable of supporting practical and adaptable approaches to sustainable UGBS management and maintenance across different European contexts.



2. Methodological Approach

Activity A2.1 was implemented through a qualitative and practice-oriented assessment process carried out across the partner countries. The activity aimed to gather evidence regarding current MMP related to UGBS, while identifying operational challenges and sustainability needs affecting municipal realities.

Data collection combined semi-structured interviews, field trips, direct observation, and documentary analysis of relevant municipal strategies, policy frameworks, and sustainability-related documents. The interviews involved municipalities and other relevant stakeholders connected to the planning, maintenance, management, or use of UGBS. Field assessments supported the observation of biodiversity-oriented maintenance practices, climate adaptation challenges, infrastructure characteristics, governance models, public expectations, accessibility, and operational capacity within different local contexts.

Following the completion of the national assessments, the partner reports were comparatively analysed to identify recurring themes, shared operational challenges, and cross-cutting trends emerging across different contexts. The transnational synthesis focused on common findings related to the aforementioned topics, such as ecological maintenance, climate adaptation, governance capacity, accessibility, public expectations, and operational constraints, to support the refinement of the technical modules foreseen under Activity A2.2.

3. Transnational Overview of Current UGBS Management Practices

The transnational assessment revealed a broad diversity of approaches to the management of UGBS across the partner countries. Despite differences in local contexts, governance structures, and environmental conditions, several common patterns and recurring challenges emerged: an ongoing shift toward low-intensity, biodiversity-oriented maintenance; mounting water-management pressures linked to climate variability; persistent challenges with invasive alien species (IAS); and tensions between ecological objectives and public expectations for highly “tidy” landscapes. Social inclusion and accessibility are shared priorities, yet implementation is frequently constrained by terrain, heritage conditions, security concerns, staffing, and contractual frameworks. The following subsections synthesise the main transnational trends with concrete examples from the national assessments.

3.1. Governance and Maintenance Models

The assessment revealed that, in all partner countries, UGBS management is organised through a variety of governance and maintenance models combining in-house municipal teams, outsourced contracts, and, in some cases, structured community stewardship. While internal teams can enable faster ecological adaptation where autonomy and skills are present, outsourcing provides scale and cost predictability but may slow change during fixed contract periods.

Spread across green space planning, biodiversity management, roads/parks management, water systems and social services, as well as bureaucratic constraints, recurrently complicate alignment between design intent and day-to-day maintenance, creating coordination difficulties and inconsistencies in implementation practices.

Interview and field trip findings from local assessments

Denmark

Interviewee: Vejle Municipality’s Roads & Parks Department Technical Expert

Concrete example: Denmark Park operations are outsourced under a Quality Handbook and annual work plans. Contract cycles of 5 - 8 years provide stability but limit rapid shifts toward new regimes, requiring incremental adjustments mid-contract and careful interdepartmental alignment (such as roads, utilities, wastewater, traffic safety and others).

Portugal

Interviewee: LIPOR's senior technician from the Department of Education, Communication and Sustainability (Porto)

Concrete example: The municipal company's park maintenance is delivered by external providers under detailed technical specifications and monthly compliance reporting. Ecological goals, such as prioritising mechanical IAS control, limiting chemicals to last-resort foliar applications are upheld through close, on-site technical supervision to ensure practice matches the specifications.

Interviewee: Environmental Engineer and Managing Partner at Engenho & Rio, involved in the "Este" River Regularisation and Renaturalisation Project (Braga)

Concrete example: In the "Este" River case, implementation required flexible and adaptive approaches that were not always easy to reconcile with administrative procedures and conventional public procurement models. Management was further complicated by the involvement of multiple entities responsible for water resources, overlapping legal frameworks, complex licensing requirements and the need to frame interventions at river basin scale beyond administrative boundaries.

Responsibilities sitting in different units or external actors frequently results in weak handovers from construction to maintenance (e.g., planting beds not built to specification or soils compacted after utility works), competing priorities (e.g., tree planting versus parking, or accessible surfacing versus heritage and terrain constraints) and uneven application of ecological standards across contracts and sites.

3.2. Ecological Transition in Maintenance Practices

Across all partner countries, municipalities are progressively adopting more ecological and biodiversity-oriented maintenance practices. Reduced mowing regimes, seasonal meadow systems, selective pruning approaches, retention of leaf litter and deadwood where safe, and a marked reduction or elimination of chemical use were frequently identified as part of ongoing efforts to improve ecological quality and reduce environmental impacts.

The transition towards low-intervention maintenance approaches is often linked to broader sustainability objectives, including biodiversity enhancement, climate adaptation, and resource efficiency, with growing interest in naturalised vegetation structures that support pollinators and habitat diversity.

Interview and field trip findings from local assessments

Portugal

Interviewee: Landscape Architect responsible for the Green Areas Management and Maintenance Service of the Serralves Park (Porto)

Concrete example: The park has operated without phytopharmaceuticals for over a decade, replacing intensive lawn management with seasonal meadows (Fig. 1) and integrating deadwood and mulch to enhance habitat (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1 Serralves Park, Flower-filled meadows mowed seasonally (after flowering in late summer)



Fig. 2 Serralves Park, Accumulation of dead wood and bark from pruning, used in flowerbeds and to encourage the presence of insects

Interviewee: Head of Braga Educational Farm Unit (Braga)

Concrete example: At Braga Educational Farm, management is guided by environmental sustainability and continuous improvement, with practices such as organic waste recovery through composting and the production of compost for internal use as well as distribution to schools and residents. These measures strengthen resource efficiency and reflect a circular management model embedded in day-to-day maintenance.

Denmark

Interviewee: Municipal Biologist from Vejlle Municipality's Nature & Outdoor Department

Concrete example: Twenty-two grazing projects (Fig. 3) function as a core maintenance method, complemented by brushwood hedges, on-site composting and reduced mowing agreed with local councils. Non-intervention woodland management is used in selected areas to increase structural diversity.



Fig. 3 Ågård Local Nature Association, Grazing cattle

Ireland

Interviewee: Cavan County Council's Environmental Caretaker

Concrete example: River-adjacent meadow and semi-natural areas are managed with reduced mowing to support biodiversity at Con Smith Memorial Park (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 Con Smith Memorial Park, River-adjacent meadow

Interviewee: Cavan County Council's Horticulturalist

Concrete example: At Green Lough Eco Park, vegetation is left intentionally unmanaged in some places to support biodiversity (Fig. 5), however, roadside mowing practices consider pedestrians by mowing only a one-metre strip, leaving the rest unmowed, in areas with high footfall (Fig. 6).



Figs. 5 & 6 Green Lough Eco Park, Vegetation management variation balancing social use and biodiversity promotion

Implementation intensity nevertheless varies with local conditions, operational capacity and public acceptance. Recurrent tensions arise where naturalistic aesthetics diverge from expectations of uniformly “tidy” landscapes, and where safety or usage constraints require more frequent interventions in specific zones. In this context, municipalities are navigating a practical balance between ecological functionality, social perceptions and maintenance feasibility.

3.3. Water Management and Climate Adaptation

Across all partner countries, climate variability is reshaping UGBS management. Recurrent droughts and heatwaves, intermittent flooding and changing precipitation patterns were consistently identified as major pressures on vegetation health, maintenance routines and long-term resilience.

In response, municipalities are testing and scaling water-sensitive approaches such as targeted irrigation reduction, retention and infiltration features, permeable surfaces and blue-green integration to relieve stress on water resources and drainage systems.

Interview and field trip findings from local assessments

Cyprus

Interviewee: Nicosia Municipality's Parks Officer

Concrete example: In a structurally water-scarce context, parks rely on manual watering via water trucks, local wells and small retention tanks, while reducing water-hungry and invasive species. Trials to retain soil moisture and improve on-site water capture are underway.

Portugal

Interviewee: Senior Technician from LIPOR's Department of Education, Communication and Sustainability (Porto)

Concrete example: Flood-buffering basins and nature-based riverbank engineering structures, such as live staking, living rockfill, native planting, increase infiltration and stabilize the riverbanks. However, the need for additional overflow areas has been identified after recent high-water events.

Interviewee: Landscape Architect responsible for the Green Areas Management and Maintenance Service of the Serralves Park (Porto)

Concrete example: A lake retrofit introduced native macrophyte beds, a blue-green integration, to curb eutrophication and cyanobacteria (Figs. 7 and 8). In addition to using rainwater, irrigation in the park is digitally controlled and weather-responsive to optimise consumption.

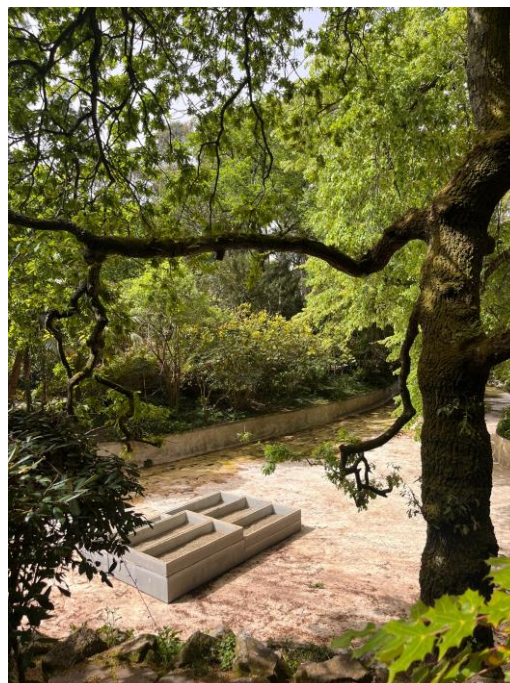
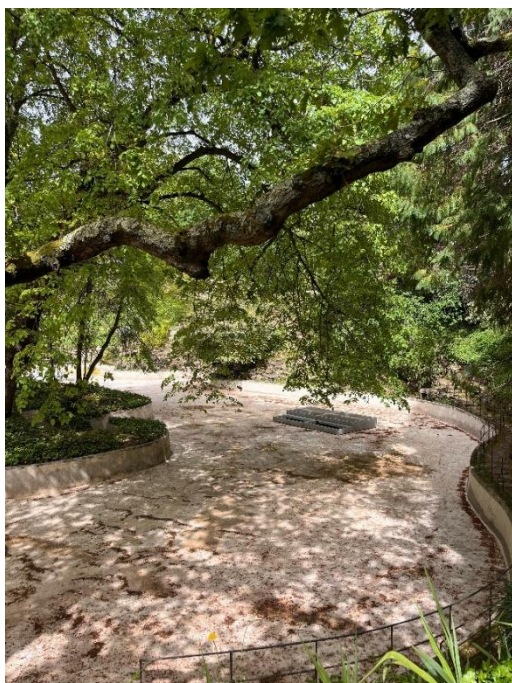


Fig. 7 & 8 Serralves Park, Lake under construction work to for the installation of plant beds containing native aquatic vegetation with the aim of improving water quality (reducing eutrophication and the presence of cyanobacteria)

Interviewee: Environmental Engineer and Managing Partner at Engenho & Rio, involved in the “Este” River Regularisation and Renaturalisation Project (Braga)

Concrete example: In the “Este” River case, the replacement of rigid concrete structures with nature-based engineering solutions (Figs. 9 & 10) improved the river corridor’s capacity to respond to climate-related pressures. Riverbank renaturalisation, restoration of riparian vegetation (Fig. 11) and differentiated management strategies increased bank stability (Fig. 12), enhanced ecological quality and biodiversity, and created a more resilient system better able to cope with extreme weather events.



Figs. 9 & 10 “Este” River, Lagoon before and after the replacement of concrete structures with nature-based engineering solutions

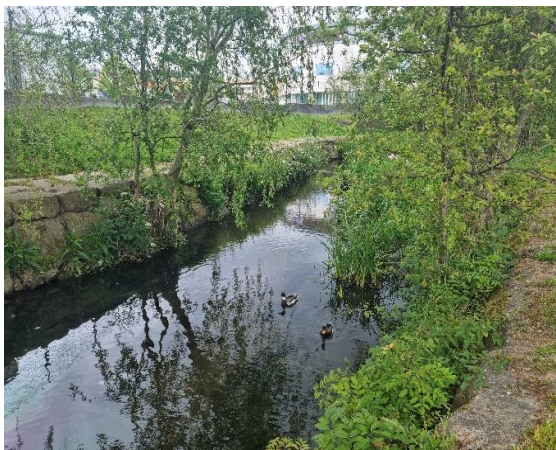


Fig. 11 “Este” River, Riverbank renaturalisation and restoration of riparian vegetation after intervention



Fig. 12 “Este” River, Focus on riverbank nature-based engineering solutions that increased stability

Ireland

Interviewee: Cavan County Council’s Horticulturalist

Concrete example: At Green Lough Eco Park, water-demanding practices have been replaced with drought-tolerant planting and reservoir containers. Wetlands, open water and reed beds act as a natural sponge, supporting flood attenuation and reducing maintenance inputs.

Interviewee: Cavan Adventure Centre’s Manager and Holistic Wellbeing Specialist

Concrete example: Cavan Adventure Centre has invested in a rainwater harvesting system, significantly reducing water use to perform tasks such as rinse off kayaks (Fig. 13), dip wetsuits and water vegetation.





Fig. 13 Cavan Adventure Centre, Leisure activities benefiting from the rainwater harvesting system

At the same time, limited financial resources and increasing maintenance demands continue to constrain the implementation of climate adaptation measures. The findings suggest that municipalities are increasingly aware of the need for adaptive and preventive management strategies, although implementation capacities remain uneven across different contexts.

3.4. Biodiversity and Ecological Management

Biodiversity protection and ecological enhancement emerged as central priorities within the management of UGBS. All partner countries reported efforts to increase the use of native species, control IAS presence, diversify urban vegetation, and support habitat creation within parks, gardens, within parks, riverscapes and peri-urban areas, with a growing emphasis on multifunctional spaces that deliver biodiversity support, climate regulation and wider ecosystem services alongside recreation and wellbeing.

Interview and field trip findings from local assessments

Cyprus

Interviewee: Nicosia Municipality's Parks Officer

Concrete example: Invasive acacias and eucalypts are removed opportunistically while native shares are increased, under water-scarcity constraints. Ecosystem services of the visited sites include microclimate regulation via shade trees, water retention through small tanks/wells, recreational use (playgrounds, dog parks [Fig.14]) and supporting services as native meadows expand pollinator foraging areas (Fig. 15).



Fig. 14 Olympiados 2004 Park, Dog off-leash facilities

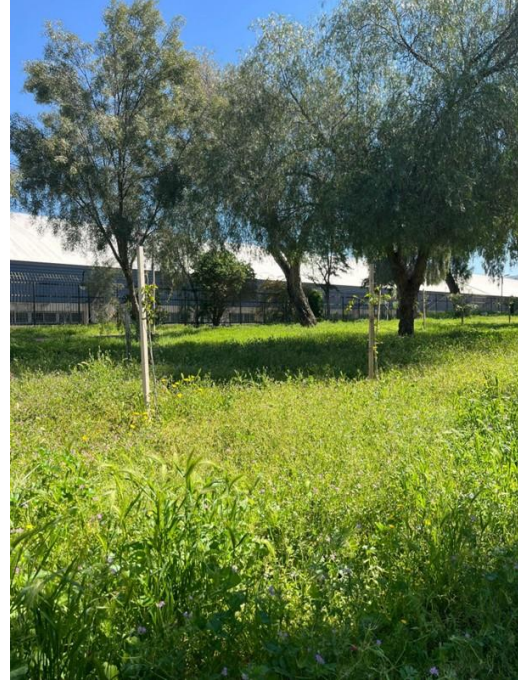


Fig. 15 Olympiados 2004 Park, Natural meadow

Denmark

Interviewee: Municipal Biologist from Veijle Municipality's Nature & Outdoor Department

Concrete example: Grazing is used as a core ecological maintenance method, effectively suppressing invasive species (e.g., knotweed). In the peri-urban rewilding project Tirsbæk Bakker, selected woodland areas are designated as non-intervention to promote natural dynamics and habitat complexity (Figs. 16 and 17), also provisioning high-quality nature contact, enhancing public understanding of wild nature and its influence on everyday life.



Figs. 16 & 17 Tirsbæk Bakker, Woodland areas where a high proportion of native species is present.

Italy

Interviewee: Local Municipal Representative

Concrete example: The “Duvada” represents a revived traditional community-based water management practice that maintains small water intakes/channels connected to the Torrente Noce, combining landscape care with intergenerational learning. While not a conventional management and maintenance task, it supports riparian vegetation, small habitats and water awareness supporting ecosystem services such as water regulation at micro-scale, soil moisture support along agricultural margins, cultural heritage and environmental education.

Portugal

Interviewee: LIPOR’s senior technician from the Department of Education, Communication and Sustainability (Porto)

Concrete example: At LIPOR, IAS management prioritises mechanical removal (eucalyptus, acacia) and replacement with native species, while chemical control is reserved as a last-resort and performed as targeted foliar application. Riverbank stabilisation relies on nature-based solutions (NBS), for example, live staking, living rockfill and native planting, that both stabilise soils and expand habitat (Fig. 18). These NBS also provide ecosystem services such as erosion control and flood buffering (bioswales/retention), water purification (vegetated banks and ponds), carbon storage in woody vegetation and cultural services (environmental interpretation along LIPOR’s Ecological Trail [Fig. 19]).



Fig. 18 LIPOR, Tinto River native vegetation and natural engineering structures



Fig. 19 LIPOR, Tinto River native species planting educational information board

Interviewee: Head of Braga Educational Farm Unit (Braga)

Concrete example: At Braga Educational Farm, biodiversity is supported through the presence of native livestock breeds, regional fruit tree varieties, organically managed agricultural areas and ecological corridors linked to the surrounding stream. Since 2016, practices such as crop rotation, intercropping, green manuring, composting, vermicomposting, biological pest control and natural vegetation regeneration have strengthened functional biodiversity and reduced dependence on external inputs.

Beyond these site-level measures, the national assessments underscore a shared recognition of UGBS as multifunctional nature infrastructures: places where habitat creation, pollination, shade and cooling, soil and water regulation, and cultural/educational values co-exist. At the same time, regarding the topic of ecological management, IAS management emerged as a recurrent challenge across contexts, especially where ecological imbalance, maintenance intensity or climate conditions favour spread, reinforcing the importance of restoration practices and habitat-supportive interventions within wider sustainability strategies.

3.5. Social Use, Accessibility and Public Expectations

UGBS are widely recognised as important social and recreational spaces supporting wellbeing, inclusion, and community interaction. However, the assessments point to recurring challenges around accessibility, inclusivity, public behaviour and differing expectations about how green spaces should look and function, especially where naturalised management contrasts with norms of highly controlled landscapes.

Interview and field trip findings from local assessments

Italy

Interviewee: Municipal Representative

Concrete example: The “Parco del Benessere” combines everyday recreation such as walking, cycling, outdoor fitness, children’s play, sport areas, dog walking, with the river landscape. In the formal park sections used by families and older adults, citizens expect safe, clean, accessible, daily-use conditions, which drives regular mowing, cleaning, pruning, path care, inspections of sport and play equipment, and upkeep of benches and signage. Recent funding earmarks further greening and a dedicated irrigation system, underscoring the dual approach: inclusive, service-intensive design where use is highest, alongside more naturalistic river margins where ecological functions are prioritised.

Portugal

Interviewee: Landscape Architect responsible for the Green Areas Management and Maintenance Service of the Serralves Park (Porto)

Concrete example: Accessibility has been incrementally improved within a historic layout through accessible path strips and inclusive wayfinding (Fig. 20) and raised beds (Fig. 21) while preserving heritage character and working within terrain constraints.



Fig. 20 Serralves Park, Continuous, firm path segments integrated into existing alignments as an accessible path



Fig. 21 Serralves Park, Raised planting beds designed for visibility and reach

Interviewee: Landscape Architect at GreenArq, a landscape architecture firm responsible for the design of the Camélias Park (Braga)

Concrete example: Camélias Park was designed according to the principles of universal accessibility. Its central urban location and proximity to residential areas encourage use by a wide range of social groups, while measures such as accessible pathways, seating areas with benches and shade, improved lighting and spaces suited to different age groups were introduced to strengthen comfort, inclusion and everyday usability (Fig. 22 & 23).

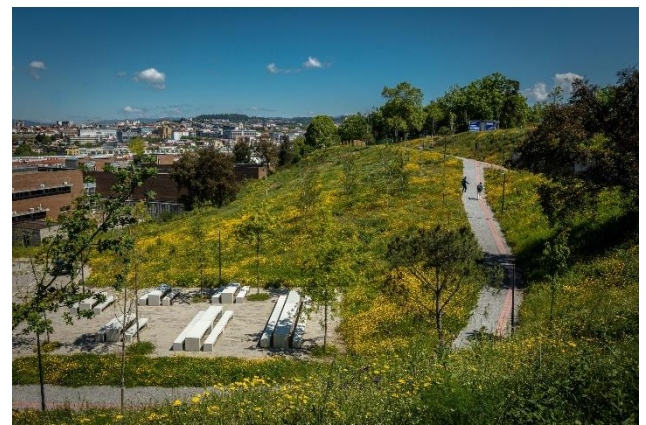


Fig. 22 & 23 Camélias Park, Before and intervention, with a special focus on the accessibility lane (red path at the right).

Ireland

Interviewee: Cavan County Council's Environmental Caretaker

Concrete example: Con Smith Memorial Park provides inclusive paths, ramps, seating and lighting, and is widely used by diverse groups. Persistent night-time antisocial behaviour led to locking the playground overnight, illustrating the balance between access and safety that managers must navigate.

Physical barriers (topography, historic fabric), uneven distribution of quality spaces, and behavioural pressures (vandalism, littering, antisocial use) continue to affect inclusive use of UGBS.

Public perception is a particularly influential factor regarding the implementation of ecological management practices. Naturalised meadows, reduced mowing/ low-intervention maintenance approaches and habitat features are not always positively received by citizens, especially when ecological objectives are not clearly communicated. As the examples above highlight, acceptance of low-intervention practices improves when accessibility is addressed pragmatically, and environmental communication helps residents understand why certain areas look and function differently. The findings therefore highlight the importance of environmental communication and public engagement in supporting the acceptance of sustainable UGBS practices.

3.6. Skills, Training and Operational Capacity

Capacity Operational capacity is a decisive factor for implementing sustainable UGBS management across all partner countries. Municipalities reported staff shortages, rising maintenance workloads and gaps in technical expertise that affect continuity and quality of ecological practices. Contract structures can also constrain pace of change where long tender cycles lock in specifications for multiple years.

Interview and field trip findings from local assessments

Cyprus

Interviewee: Nicosia Municipality's Parks Officer

Concrete example: Staff shortages across departments, exacerbated by recent municipal restructuring, limit technical and managerial capacity. There is a specific need for hands-on training adapted to local drought and IAS conditions, including practical tips and problem-solving methods.



Italy

Interviewee: Municipal Representative

Concrete example: With limited staff and fragmented responsibilities, Tito municipality leans on simple, repeatable routines and community collaboration to extend care beyond municipal capacity. This translates to an identified need for practical tools, such as seasonal maintenance calendars, basic biodiversity/IAS observation sheets and clear volunteer protocols to translate national principles into day-to-day tasks in a small-team context.

Across contexts, the assessments identified limited access to continuous training on ecological maintenance, biodiversity-oriented practices, climate adaptation and sustainable alternatives to conventional methods. At the same time, there is strong demand for practical, directly applicable knowledge that supports day-to-day decisions. This underscores the value of accessible technical resources, capacity-building initiatives and practice-oriented educational materials aligned with municipal operational realities.



4. Cross-cutting Gaps Between Policy and Practice

The transnational assessment revealed that municipalities and relevant stakeholders demonstrate growing awareness of the environmental, social, and climatic importance of sustainable UGBS management. Across the analysed contexts, policy frameworks and strategic objectives increasingly promote biodiversity enhancement, climate adaptation, sustainable maintenance, and inclusive public spaces.

However, the findings also highlighted a series of recurring gaps between strategic ambitions and practical implementation capacities. These gaps are not necessarily linked to a lack of commitment, but rather to operational, financial, organisational, and social constraints affecting the day-to-day management of UGBS.

The main cross-cutting gaps identified through the national assessments are summarised below, in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Cross-cutting Gaps Between Policy and Practice

Strategic Objectives and Policy Ambitions	Operational Gaps and Implementation Challenges
Biodiversity-oriented and low-intervention maintenance practices	Limited staffing, insufficient technical training, fragmented responsibilities, and increasing maintenance demands
Accessibility and inclusive public spaces	Challenges in balancing accessibility improvements with the preservation of historic landscapes and existing infrastructures, technical constraints and budget restrictions
Climate adaptation and water-sensitive management	Irrigation pressures, limited financial resources, and competing operational priorities
Ecological management approaches	Public resistance to naturalised landscapes and insufficient environmental communication
Sustainability strategies and environmental targets	Limited access to practical implementation tools, technical guidance, and applied training opportunities

The assessment additionally demonstrated that municipalities are often required to balance ecological objectives with public expectations regarding cleanliness, safety, accessibility, and the visual appearance of public spaces. In several contexts, resistance towards ecological practices was associated with limited public understanding of biodiversity-oriented management approaches.

Overall, the findings suggest that the transition towards more sustainable UGBS management depends not only on strategic ambition, but also on strengthening operational capacity, technical support, governance coordination, and public engagement mechanisms capable of supporting long-term implementation processes.



5. Validation and Refinement of Proposed Technical Modules

5.1. Purpose of the Module Validation Process

Activity A2.1. enabled the consortium to validate the relevance of the technical themes initially proposed in the project application while identifying areas requiring further practical refinement. The process highlighted the importance of developing technical resources that are applicable, adaptable, and accessible for municipalities and relevant stakeholders operating within diverse local contexts.

In line with the objectives of WP2, the future modules should:

- Support municipalities in adopting more sustainable MMP for UGBS;
- Explain the environmental value of these practices in clear and accessible ways;
- Contribute to eco-literacy and public awareness;
- Support communication between municipalities and citizens regarding sustainable management practices;
- Provide practical guidance adapted to operational realities and resource limitations.

The following sections present the validation of the initially proposed module topics and the resulting refinement of the technical module structure.

5.2. Validation of the Initially Proposed Module Topics

The technical module topics initially proposed in the project application were analysed against the evidence collected through the national assessments.

Overall, transnational findings confirm the relevance of the proposed themes, particularly regarding biodiversity-oriented maintenance, ecological management practices, and sustainable alternatives to conventional maintenance approaches. However, the assessment also revealed differences in the operational relevance and practical visibility of certain topics within the daily realities of municipalities.

Topics related to mowing regimes, pruning practices, water management, biodiversity-oriented planting, reduction of chemical inputs, and climate adaptation emerged consistently across partner countries as priority areas directly linked to current operational needs.

At the same time, some of the initially proposed themes appeared less frequently as standalone operational priorities. Topics such as fallen leaves, deadwood, and urban carbon sinks were generally addressed indirectly within broader discussions related to habitat management, low-intervention maintenance, biodiversity support, and ecosystem functionality.

The findings therefore suggest that several themes would benefit from a more integrated and



practice-oriented framing, allowing ecological concepts to be embedded within broader sustainable maintenance strategies more closely aligned with municipal operational realities.

The validation process also highlighted the importance of complementing ecological content with:

- Practical implementation guidance;
- Climate-responsive management approaches;
- Communication tools supporting public understanding of ecological practices;
- Solutions adapted to limited staff and financial resources;
- Strategies for balancing biodiversity goals with accessibility, safety, and public expectations.

These findings reinforce the importance of ensuring that the future technical modules function not only as informational resources, but also as practical tools capable of supporting behavioural, operational, and organisational transitions in UGBS management.

5.3. Proposed Refinement of the Technical Modules

Based on the evidence collected during A2.1, the initially proposed module topics were refined to better reflect the operational realities, sustainability priorities, and capacity-building needs identified across partner municipalities.

The refined structure does not replace the objectives initially foreseen in the project proposal. Instead, it represents an evidence-based operational refinement aimed at improving the practical applicability, coherence, and transnational relevance of the future technical modules.

The proposed refined module structure is presented below, adopting an integrated and place-based approach aimed at translating sustainability principles into practical and operationally feasible tools adaptable to diverse municipal contexts, including smaller municipalities with limited staff capacity and fragmented responsibilities.

Module 1: Sustainable Mowing and Pruning Practices

A module focusing on sustainable vegetation maintenance approaches, including, for example, reduced mowing regimes, grazing, meadow systems, seasonal maintenance strategies, pruning practices, leaf litter management, and biodiversity-supportive interventions. The module would respond to recurrent findings related to excessive maintenance intensity, public perception challenges, and the need to balance ecological functionality with aesthetic expectations and operational feasibility.

Module 2: Sustainable Planting and Biodiversity-Oriented Species Selection

A module addressing plant selection strategies that support biodiversity, climate resilience, and long-term sustainability. Key themes could include the use of native and drought-resilient species, reduction of IAS, diversification of urban vegetation, and ecological planting design. The module



would also consider the importance of selecting species adapted to changing climatic conditions and local ecological contexts.

Module 3: Water-Sensitive Management of Urban Green and Blue Spaces

A module focusing on water management challenges increasingly affecting municipalities, including drought, flooding, irrigation pressures, and soil water retention. It could explore sustainable irrigation practices, nature-based water retention solutions, blue infrastructure integration, ecologically sensitive river and waterside maintenance practices, and climate-responsive maintenance strategies aimed at improving urban resilience and reducing resource consumption.

Module 4: Ecological Habitat Maintenance and Nature-Based Practices

A module addressing ecological maintenance practices that contribute to habitat creation, ecosystem functionality, and biodiversity enhancement within urban spaces. Topics could include deadwood management, habitat support measures, soil health, pollinator-friendly practices, non-intervention woodland management, ecological restoration, and multifunctional ecosystem management. The module would seek to strengthen understanding of how maintenance practices directly influence urban ecological quality.

Module 5: Citizen Engagement and Environmental Communication

A module responding to the strong need identified for improving communication between municipalities and citizens regarding sustainable UGBS management practices. It could explore, for example, strategies for environmental awareness, eco-literacy, participatory approaches, behavioural change, litter prevention in high-use urban green spaces, the use of low-cost communication and behavioral nudging tools, management transparency, and public engagement. Attention would be given to addressing resistance to ecological practices, challenges of antisocial behaviour, and improving public understanding of biodiversity-oriented maintenance interventions while balancing accessibility, safety, and environmental protection. The module could also explore structured community stewardship approaches and participatory models that support citizen involvement while maintaining clear municipal responsibilities.

Module 6: Adaptive Governance and Practical Management for Sustainable UGBS

A module focusing on governance, coordination, and operational capacity challenges identified across the partner countries. Topics could include interdepartmental coordination, monitoring practices, maintenance continuity, staff training, procurement and funding challenges, outsourcing dynamics, practical comparisons of sustainable maintenance alternatives, and the use of simple operational tools such as maintenance calendars, monitoring templates, and decision-making support tools. The module would aim to strengthen municipalities' capacity to implement



sustainability objectives through practical governance-oriented approaches and improved awareness among municipal decision makers regarding the long-term benefits of sustainable UGBS management.

Overall, the refined module structure reflects the need for a more integrated and practice-oriented approach to sustainable UGBS management. The proposed adaptation strengthens the capacity of the future technical modules to support municipalities and relevant stakeholders in addressing ecological, climatic, operational, and social challenges through applicable and context-sensitive solutions.

6. Conclusions

Overall, the assessment highlighted the importance of integrated, context-sensitive, and operationally feasible approaches to support the long-term transition towards more sustainable UGBS management across diverse European contexts. In this regard, the proposed refinement of the module structure strengthens the capacity of the technical modules to assist municipalities and relevant stakeholders in addressing ecological, climatic, operational, and social challenges through practical and adaptable solutions.

7. Annex

This transnational report was developed based on the national findings collected by all partners of the (Re)Natured Cities consortium within the framework of Activity A2.1 “Green Views - Interviews and Local Assessment”.

The national reports provided the evidence base for the transnational analysis presented throughout this document, by including summaries of the interviews conducted, key findings from the assessed sites, general descriptions of the analysed UGBS, and visual documentation of the local contexts evaluated during the activity.

The complete national assessment reports consulted for the preparation of this transnational report are available below.



Local Assessment Summary		
National Findings (National Report)	Interviewee	Field Visit Site
Cyprus	Nicosia Municipality's Parks Officer	Olympiados 2004 Park
		Agion Panton Park
		Katadromeon Park
Denmark	Vejle Municipality Municipal Biologists and volunteers from Verdens Skove	Tirsbæk Bakker
	Vejle Municipality Municipal Biologists and Maintenance staff from the Roads & Parks Department	Højen Å. Standardized
	Vejle Municipality Municipal Biologists	Ågård Naturlaug
Ireland	Manager and Holistic Wellbeing Specialist & Retreat Facilitator	Cavan Adventure Centre
	Cavan County Council Environmental Caretaker	Con Smith Memorial Park
	Cavan County Council Horticulturalist	Green Lough Eco Park
Italy	Municipal Representative	Parco del Benessere, Parco Fluviale and Parco delle Nascite
	Local community representative	Duvada
Portugal	Landscape Architect responsible for the Green Areas Management and Maintenance Service	Serralves Park
		"Lameiro de Serralves" Pond
	Department of Education, Communication and Sustainability senior technician	"Tinto" River at LIPOR's Ecological Trail
		LIPOR's Adventure Park
	Environmental Engineer and Managing Partner at Engenho&Rio	"Este" River
	Head of the Educational Farm Unit	Braga Educational Farm
	Landscape Architect at GreenArq	Camellias Park



