



Best Practices from BiodivERsA projects - URBANGAIA

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António Dinis Ferreira

[with Jorg Priess, Sander Jacobs, Paulo Pereira, Juan Martinez Murillo, Luis Pinto, Carla Ferreira, Inês Leitão, Ieva Misiune, Michael Leone, Julia Palliwoda, Paloma Huesos]

CERNAS – ESAC – IPC, Coimbra Portugal

aferreira@esac.pt

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The UrbanGaia Project

URBANGAIA



- Funded by
- Involves five countries with different cultural and governance frameworks.
- Aims at developing strategies based on the participatory involvement of all citizens that will be able to express their opinions using advanced IT and communication technology to express their preferences on the planning and management of the green and blue infrastructure, aiming at more sustainable cities.



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Participation: a touchstone to build Europe

- Participation is a touchstone in European Environmental Legislation framework:
 - Directive (85/337/EEC) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment [1986].
 - Aarhus convention (on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters) [1998].
 - Directive 2001/42/CE on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment [2001]
 - Kiev protocol (on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context) [2003].



Principles for good governance

- **Openness.** The Institutions should work in a more open manner. This is of particular importance in order to improve the confidence in complex institutions.
- **Participation.** The quality, relevance and effectiveness of EU policies depend on ensuring wide participation throughout the policy chain – from conception to implementation. Improved participation is likely create more confidence in the end result and in the Institutions which deliver policies.
- **Accountability.** Roles in the legislative and executive processes need to be clearer. Institutions must explain and take responsibility for what it does.
- **Effectiveness.** Policies must be effective and timely, delivering what is needed on the basis of clear objectives, an evaluation of future impact and, where available, of past experience. Effectiveness also depends on implementing policies in a proportionate manner and on taking decisions at the most appropriate level.
- **Coherence.** Policies and action must be coherent and easily understood. Challenges cross the boundaries of the sectoral policies; and regional and local authorities are increasingly involved in EU policies.

Participation in a Biodiversity context

- Since no structural mandatory legislation is in force at European level on urban biodiversity, an analysis of all relevant EU documents is being performed for a set of indicators, including the good governance principles and the citizen science dimension.
- Preliminary results show:
 - In what concerns Participation, there are references and prescriptions from 1995 onwards
 - Citizen Science is merely referred to in more recent documents (from 2011 onwards).

Relevant principles to governance

- Openness, accountability and equity are seldom referred to and even more rarely characterized or prescribed.
- Effectiveness is measured as a function of vertical and horizontal coordination (between different sectors and scales of intervention), and appears in about 30% of the documents so far.
- Coherence is assessed as the integration with funding programs. Many of the European Union documents refer to the funding lines, more than 70% of them so far.

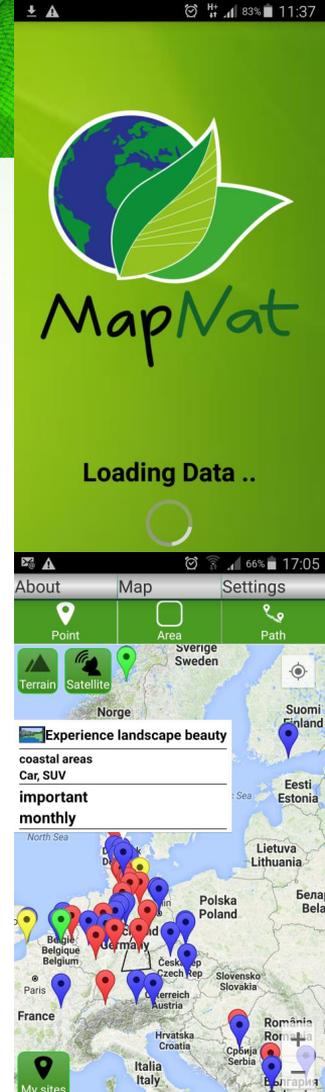
Country governance comparative analysis

- UrbanGaia encompasses 5 countries with distinct governance frameworks, traditions and processes.
- Some of the indicators used for the European level are being used to characterize the systems at country level. We hope to demonstrate how different settings meet the European requirements.

– Malaga		
– Coimbra		
– Genk		
– Leipzig		
– Vilnius		

MAPNAT app implementation

- MapNat smartphone app (**m**apping **n**ature's services) is designed as a tool for citizens and / or scientific research to map nature's services, which the person mapping them is currently using or studying.
- MapNat provides information about the environmental services provided by the green infrastructure, both at city and rural/wild locations, that can be used by citizens to plan and develop their activities.
- The records are sent from the phone to a server, that collects and processes the records of all users.
- Opening the map view of MapNat, users are enabled to identify spots or regions providing nature's services they may be interested in, which have been mapped by other users.



Future challenges

- Participation and Citizen Science are key to deepen Democracy, through the reinforcement of citizenship and commitment of individual citizens.
- Science, planning and governance are activities at reach for the new opportunities provided by IT.
- Nevertheless, for the process not to be discredit in the future, several issues have to be meet.
 - Citizens need to have full access to information
 - Citizens' contributions need to be considered and used
 - Feedback needs to be provided
 - Access to the final information
- This will contribute to increase commitment, self-awareness and citizenship.



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Thank you very much for your attention
For further information, please contact:

António Ferreira

aferreira@esac.pt