

## EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING OF GREEN SPACES

### WHAT'S THE PROBLEM

The problem is related to a generally estimated lack of adequate instruments to guarantee the real effect of the infrastructure's work. The types of projects concerned are these of the urban **green structure management and maintenance** aimed at increasing the efficiency of its functioning.

This is the only sector, the efficiency of which cannot be directly estimated by the expenses made by each citizen or family for using it. Local taxes are the source for financing the system and people pay them no matter if they use the urban green areas or not. Biological, health, social and psychological impacts are to be considered when evaluating the efficiency of functioning.

There are many European projects dealing with the issues of **institutional approaches and policies and related to the interaction of the three sustainability aspects** in the green/blue sector (GREENSCOM, URGE, The Green Poster, UGST etc.). Some of them consider a new classification of urban green spaces to be a relevant basis for their efficient planning and management (PETUS case study: *Urban green space differentiated management* (Rennes, FR) while others prefer approaches based on increasing public participation in traditional management and planning. (PETUS case study: *Open space planning* (Graz, AUS).



### TIME AND SPACE SCALE CHARACTERISTICS

PETUS case-study projects cover city and region scales and include all life-cycle stages.

<b>Stage(s) concerned</b>						
	Inception of project idea	Design	Design assessment	Construction	Operation	Demolition

Scale investigated	Component	Building	Neighbourhood	City	Region
				<b>X</b>	

### CONFLICTING AREAS

- The need for increasing the efficiency of the existing urban green/blue spaces within the generally modest financial framework provided by local taxes.
- The public – private relationship – how to motivate private business to get involved into the management of the urban green space without losing its public character.

### CASE STUDIES LINKED TO THIS ISSUE

- Open space planning (Graz, AUS)
- Urban green space differentiated management (Rennes, FR)

### WHAT SHOULD BE ENHANCED IN THIS CASE, WHAT IS GOING TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY

**Communication problems** are to be carefully considered in both aspects (with the public and at the expert level with other sectors). The urban green/blue system has direct spatial relations with all the other urban infrastructure sectors. **A detailed investigation on the interdependence with other sectors** is still needed to provide for more effective collaboration and coordination between them. Monitoring and continuous evaluation tools of all the effects are to be discussed - social (needs, mode and frequency of use, influence on health status, etc.), economic (triple bottom line approach, etc.) and environmental (biodiversity, urban air quality, etc.).

### HOW CAN THESE "SOLUTIONS"/IMPROVEMENT BE DEVELOPED

Improvement could be achieved by proposing **relevant communication procedures**. A range of analysed practical solutions and evaluation tools (frameworks, checklists, matrix etc.) can be adapted to the particular

problem context and end-users needs. All the frameworks proposed for the green/blue sector (GREENSCOM, URGE, The Green Poster, UGST etc.) provide relevant considerations and approaches as a starting point for the development of PETUS output. The establishment of effective partnerships among local citizens, public authorities and private sector is needed in order to provide real public participation and to avoid hidden agendas in open discussions.

### **GENERAL SUGGESTIONS:**

- The green/blue urban system is the only living system among all the sectors investigated. The long-term consequences for the system are often difficult to estimate and to correct; they could be often irrecoverable. Although sometimes underestimated, expert role and responsibilities are crucial there; a broad range of experts are to be involved in planning and management (from technical to biological sciences);
- The process of communication concerns numerous groups (experts of different professions and institutional levels, citizens of different social positions, etc.) it should be considered an important factor to guarantee the management efficiency. Public opinion survey could be regarded as an important starting point in the process. An exchange of information in both directions should be provided – for planners and decision-makers to be aware about people's needs and for citizens to be informed about particular initiatives coming.
- GIS implementation could be discussed in addressing any of the outlined key-issues in the green/blue sector. It could be expected to contribute for a much clearer problem visualization and analysis, as well as for a more effective communication process.

