

**Interreg
Europe**



Co-funded by
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GIFT

Green Infrastructure for Forest and Trees (GIFT)

Project presentation

June 2024

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GIFT aims to integrate the Green Infrastructure of forest and trees into sectoral policies to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem services

Budget & Funding

80% ERDF

Budget: 1.971.182,00 €

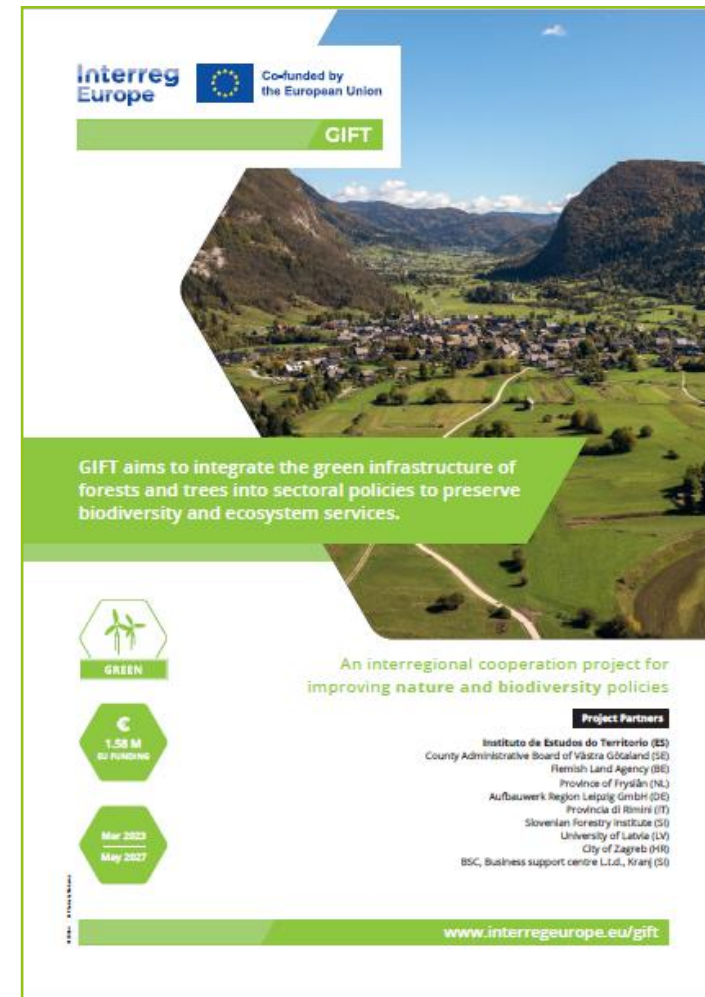
Timeline

4 years: 2023 - 2027

ID: 01C0054

Project website

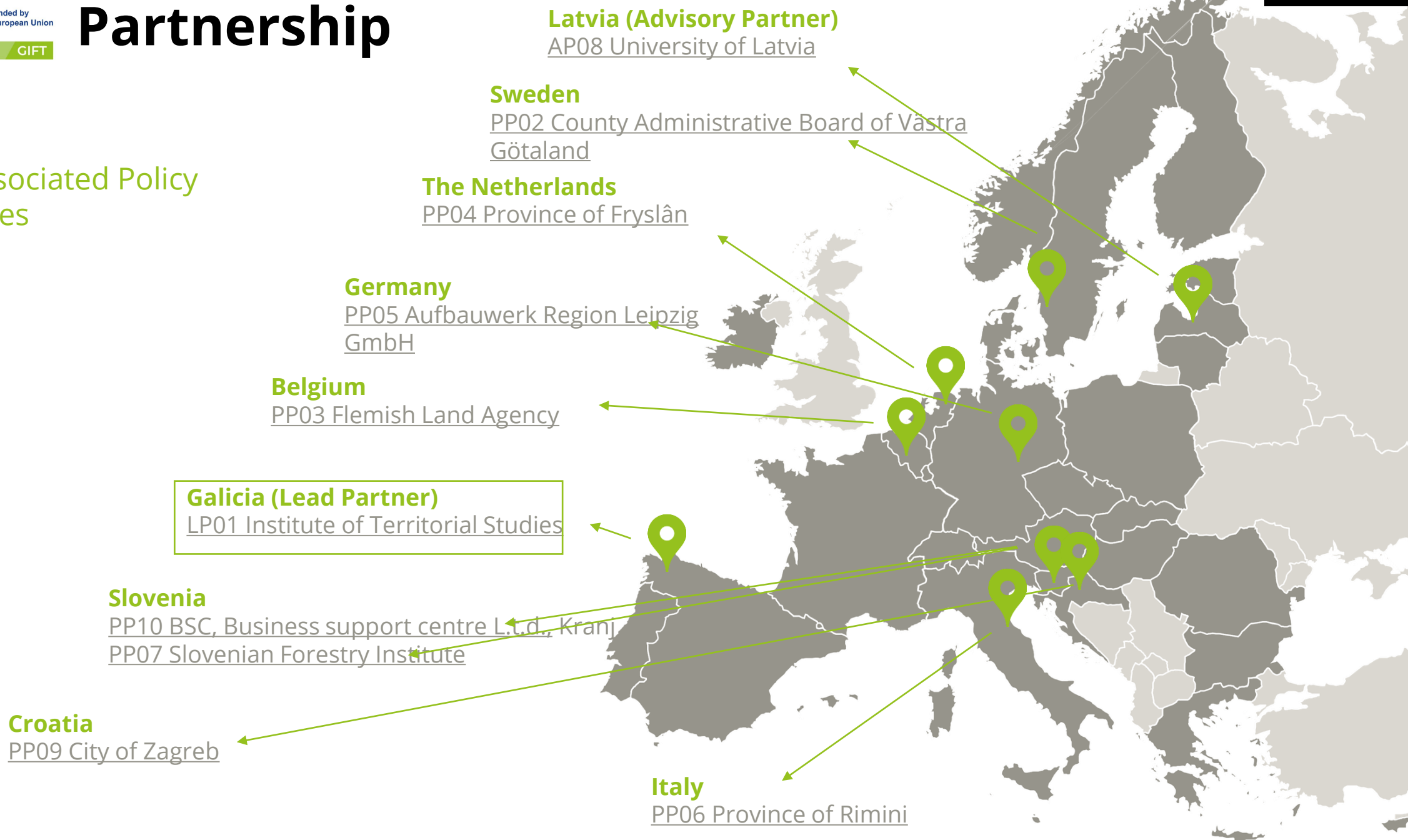
www.interregeurope.eu/gift



The poster features a scenic landscape of a valley with mountains and a small town. It includes the Interreg Europe logo and the text 'Co-funded by the European Union' and 'GIFT'. A green banner contains the project's aim: 'GIFT aims to integrate the green infrastructure of forests and trees into sectoral policies to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem services.' Below this, it states 'An interregional cooperation project for improving nature and biodiversity policies'. A 'Project Partners' list includes: Instituto de Estudos do Território (ES), County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland (SE), Flemish Land Agency (BE), Province of Fryslân (NL), Aufbauwerk Region Leipzig GmbH (DE), Provincia di Bolzano (IT), Slovenian Forestry Institute (SI), University of Latvia (LV), City of Zagreb (HR), and BSC, Business support centre Ltd., Kranj (SI). A timeline shows '1.58 M EU FUNDING' and 'Mar 2023 - May 2027'. The website www.interregeurope.eu/gift is at the bottom.

Partnership

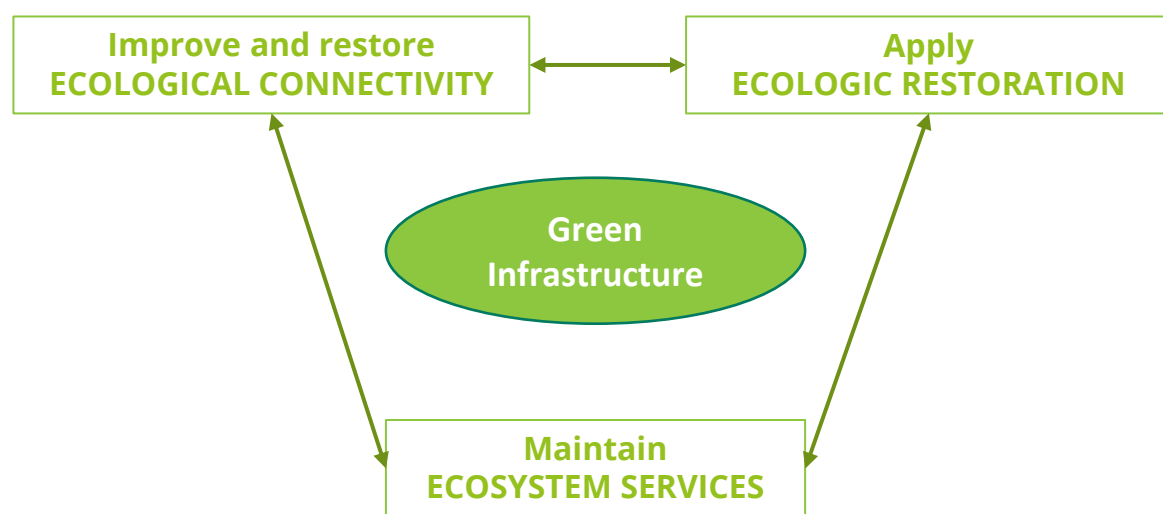
10 +3 Associated Policy Authorities



Green Infrastructure: Definition

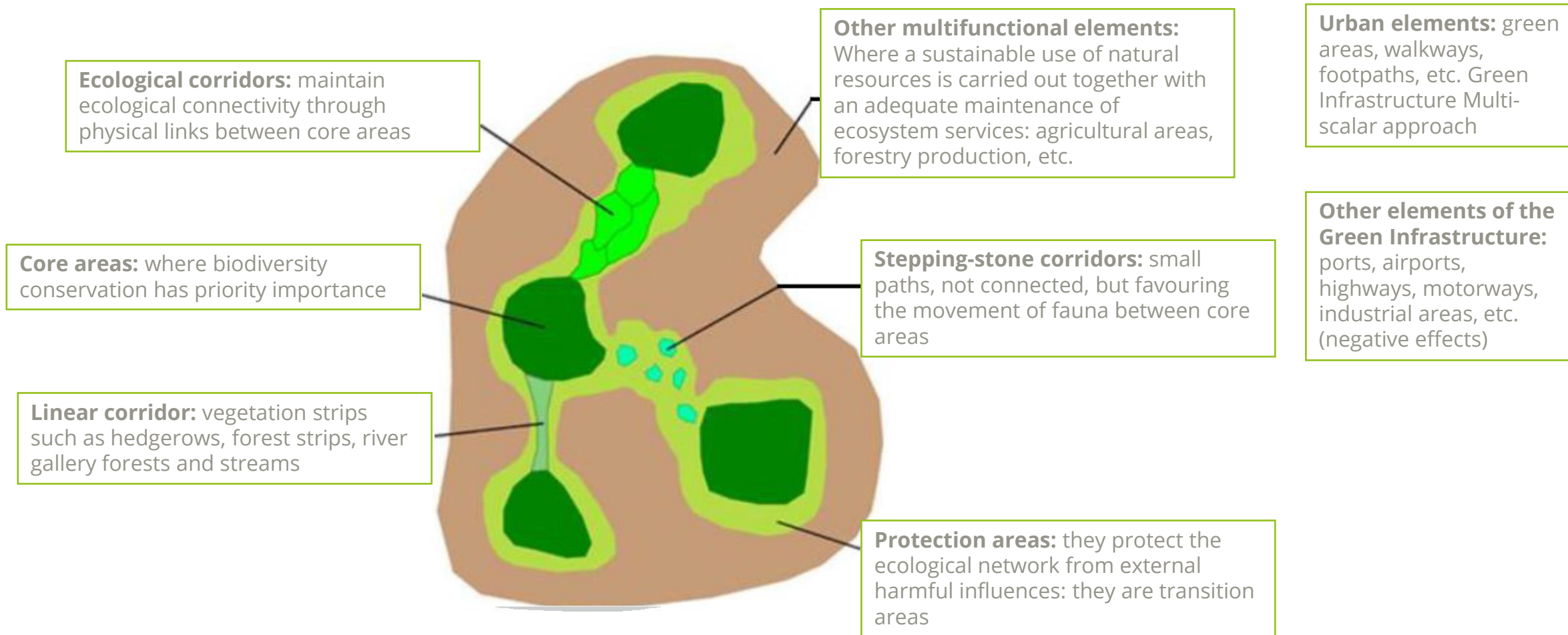


Green Infrastructure is an ecologically coherent and strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas and other environmental elements, designed and managed for the conservation of ecosystems, biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem services, both in urban and rural areas



- Reconnect fragmented natural areas
- Maintain the natural state of ecosystems and ecosystem services
- Promote nature-based solutions to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change or to solve problems instead of grey solutions

Green Infrastructure: Territorial elements



Green Infrastructure: Benefits



Provision of ecosystem services, such as **water, air, climate, carbon, biodiversity, recreation, and health**



Counteract urbanization impacts, such as pollution, heat, floods, and habitat loss, **by increasing tree cover, green spaces, and wetlands in cities**



Support rural development, by improving agricultural and forest systems, providing renewable resources and energy, enhancing quality of life and attractiveness of rural areas, and fostering urban-rural integration and cooperation



Contribute to a green economy and create jobs, by reducing costs and risks of conventional infrastructure, **and generating income and employment** through goods and services, such as food, timber, tourism, and recreation



Strengthen community and social cohesion, by promoting local participation and empowerment, enhancing cultural and aesthetic value of landscapes, and fostering education and awareness of environmental issues

Objectives

Incorporating Green Infrastructure transversally in territorial planning as well as in other sectoral policy instruments

Promoting the role of forests in mitigating the effects of Climate Change and conserving biodiversity

Integrating the urban and rural perspective when addressing the implementation and planning of green infrastructure

Working with different stakeholders on the purpose of the project and its activities in a participatory way

Modification of policy instruments by incorporating the GI dimension

Activities

Training and knowledge	To develop a learning process	Exchange of good practices	Interregional Thematic Seminars
<p>improving institutional and personal capacity in Green Infrastructure through exchange of experiences, study visits and technical meetings (including Peer Reviews)</p>	<p>to promote the modification of the public policy selected by each partner, incorporating the perspective of the Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>between project partners that are useful for the project's purpose</p>	<p>ITS1: Integrated Green Infrastructure and biodiversity conservation</p> <p>ITS2: Integrated Green Infrastructure for forest and trees</p> <p>ITS3: Integrated Green Infrastructure for biodiversity conservation, climate change and ecosystem services</p>



Interregional Meetings

On site meetings of all project partners, every semester in the country of one of the partners

Objective

To show the good practices that are carried out in the country where the meeting is held and that can be applied by the rest of the partners



Peer Reviews

Enabling focused learning between partners. It takes place each semester

Objective

To give advice, recommendations, and an action plan to resolve the challenge of the hosting region and is based on a matrix developed by the partners that describes the state of the art of Green Infrastructure in their region, policy gaps, their offer and demand for the Peer Review



Study Visits

Study Visits are carried out coinciding with each regional and interregional event

Objective

To analyze good practices and apply them by the other partners in their country of destination



Interregional Thematic Seminars

Providing added value to the project. Linked to a greater knowledge in each of specific topics with the involvement of key experts

Objective

The following topics will be discussed:

- Integrated green infrastructure and biodiversity conservation
- Integrated green infrastructure for forests and trees
- Integrated green infrastructure for biodiversity conservation, climate change and ecosystem services



Regional Stakeholder Group Meetings

Partner meetings with their stakeholders to consider the local context and ensure the way forward for the project

Objective

The RSG will focus on supporting the concrete implementation of new practices for integrated GI in their regional policy. The RSG acts as the platform to coordinate roles and tasks of each stakeholder in the implementation of the policy changes under the coordination of the regional partner



Good Practices

Good Practices are the results of partner meetings showing actions to improve green infrastructures applicable to the countries where the partners reside

Objective

To impact on the Policy Instruments of the territories addressed by the project. Each region commits to submit a minimum of 3 good practices in the core phase

Objectives per Partner / Region



IET - Institute of Territorial Studies (Galicia-Spain)

Galicia (Spain)

LP01 Institute of Territorial Studies



► **Political instrument to be improved:** The instruments for the protection, management and planning derived from **Law 7/2008 on the Protection of the Galician Landscape**, incorporating on them the Green Infrastructure dimension.

► **Objectives:**

1. To develop a **methodology for monitoring the evolution of the landscape**, incorporating the Green Infrastructure perspective, reinforcing the criteria of biodiversity, ecological connectivity and ecosystem services.
2. To review **the criteria** for the identification and/or delimitation of the Areas with special landscape interest.
3. To define the content and scope of the **Landscape Action Plans** for the definition of improvement actions in the Areas with special landscape interest and other areas requiring intervention and protection measures.

County Administrative Board of Västra Götaland (Västsverige - Sweden)

Sweden

PP02 County Administrative
Board of Västra Götaland



▶ Political instrument to be improved: The **Regional action plan for green infrastructure**.

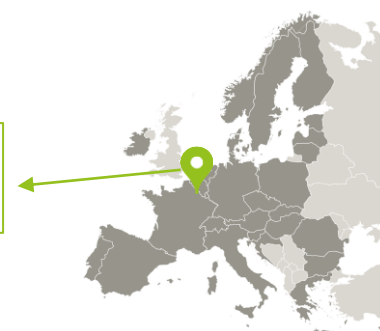
▶ Objectives:

1. Implementing the **action plan by developing a new tree policy for the municipality of Alingsås**. This will be done in a participatory process involving several stakeholder in regard to old and valuable trees.
2. The aim of the new tree policy is **to be multifunctional and to include more aspects of trees than normal**, such as the role of trees in not only biodiversity preservation but also several other ecosystem services. The policy can be positively impacted by GIFT throughout the exchange of experiences regarding related topics within the project.

Flemish Land Agency (Flanders - Belgium)

Belgium

PP03 Flemish Land Agency



▶ **Political instrument to be improved:** The management instruments foreseen in the toolkit of the **Decree on Land Development**

▶ **Objectives:**

1. **Optimise the instruments**, make them more user-friendly and ensure quality (state aid, legal constraints,...)
2. Improve the **management of the instruments**, maximizing uptake (calculation of payments, online application,...)

Province of Fryslân (Friesland - The Netherlands)



The Netherlands
PP04 Province of Fryslân

▶ **Political instrument to be improved:** The **Frisian tree and forest strategy** - A policy instruction for CO2 storage in the existing landscape of Fryslân

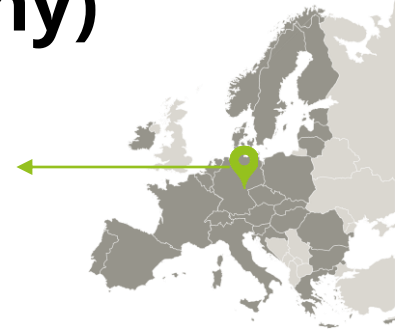
▶ **Objectives:**

1. Effective **ways to incorporate and achieve policy goals** through other existing projects and programmes
2. The use/ effectiveness of the '**Het goede Gesprek**' as a part of the **standard working methodology** in the Dutch nature conservation as a way to achieve the goals
3. The **organisation of administrative processes** for expanding areas for forest and trees.

Aufbauwerk Region Leipzig (Leipzig - Germany)

Germany

PP05 Aufbauwerk Region Leipzig



► **Political instrument to be improved: The Saxon Biodiversity Programme (SBP) - Programme Biodiversity 2030 - Make it easy!** The programme aims to make a regional contribution to halting the global loss of biodiversity and the extinction of species.

► **Objectives:**

1. Steering **administrative action** within the state government
2. **Analysing and (hopefully) remedying deficits in the management** of Objective 1
3. **Raising awareness and motivating stakeholders** outside the state administration.

PoR – Province of Rimini (Emilia Romagna - Italy)

Italy
PP06 Province of Rimini



▶ **Political instrument to be improved:** The policy document concerned is called **ERDF Operational Programme 2021-2027 of the Emilia-Romagna Region**, it identifying green and digital transition as core pillars for economic and social growth. This instrument aspires, in one of its specific objectives, to strengthen nature protection and conservation, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including the one in urban areas, and reduce all forms of pollution

- ▶ **Objectives:**
1. The instrument partially focuses on **green infrastructure**, and we aim to shift more attention to this area by incorporating tools and **measurement parameters** to accurately assess compliance with defined policies.
 2. Enhancing the document with more specific indications to **translate the outlined guidelines into actual legislation**.

BSC and SFI (Gorenjska - Slovenia)

Slovenia

PP10 BSC, Business support centre L.t.d., Kranj

PP07 Slovenian Forestry Institute



▶ **Political instrument to be improved: Regional development program of Gorenjska** priority 6.4. – energy efficient and clean region: Green, low-carbon Gorenjska: Measure: 6.4.2. protection of environment and preservation of biodiversity and adaptation to climate related risks

▶ **Objectives:**

1. To **expand multifunctionality of GI** with forest and trees as a climate change adaptation and mitigation solution.
2. **Connect forested areas with urban/suburban/agricultural areas with GI**, introduce forests and trees into the build up areas
3. Facilitate active involvement and dialogue with citizens and stakeholders - **participatory management of green infrastructure.**

City of Zagreb (Zagreb - Croatia)

Croatia

PP09 City of Zagreb



► **Political instrument to be improved:** Programme Competitiveness and Cohesion for 2021 - 2027 approved by the European Commission November 9th, 2022.
Creation of Program for the assessment and monitoring of the ecological state and biodiversity of urban forests

► **Objectives:**

1. To **develop a methodology for the monitoring** to identify ecological state and biodiversity to incorporate values linked to green infrastructures, reinforcing the criteria of biodiversity, ecological connectivity and the provision of ecosystem services.
2. To **plan the goals and activities of the urban forest management program.**
3. To define **measures for the future management of urban forests** as high-value areas of Zagreb's green infrastructure.

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GIFT

The project GIFT is implemented in the framework of the Interreg Europe programme and co-financed by the European Union.

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