

Newsletter DECA #2

DECA is preparing its third partner meeting, to be held in April in Kronoberg County, Sweden. In this newsletter, we look back and think for a second about what we've learned so far, during the previous two in person peer review meetings, and the online gatherings in between.

Can we steal your idea?

Interregional learning is all about exchanging knowledge, looking at good practices and avoiding the mistakes already made somewhere else. To bring these exchanges outside the partnership, we made a brochure with 8 good practices, encouraging experts to reach out and pitch in on these cases. Because even good practices can be improved and encourage further learning and piloting.

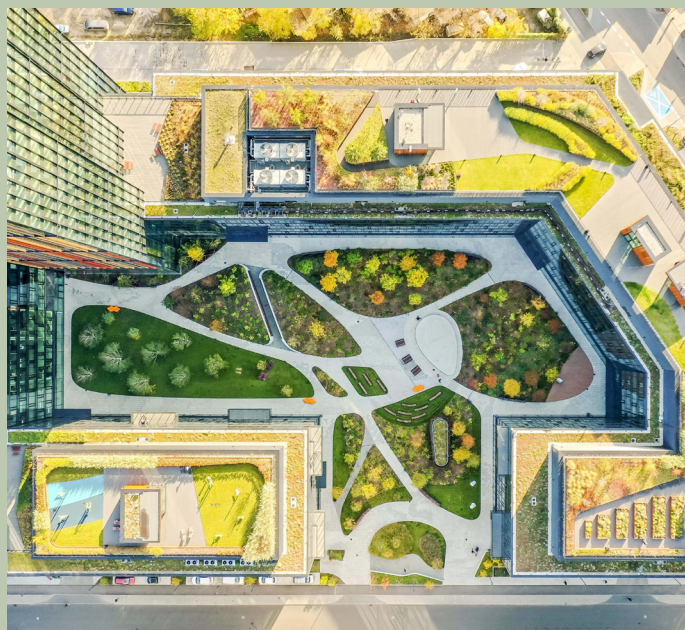
Showcasing the Forest office building as a Good Practice in climate adaptation Peer Review in Warsaw, Poland

In June 2024 a peer review meeting took place in Warsaw, attended by representatives from eight project partners. It was the first in-person meeting, during which key challenges related to the initiative's implementation were discussed, along with an exchange of experiences and knowledge on climate adaptation efforts. As part of the event, participants also had the opportunity to witness a good practice in climate adaptation: the Forest office building in Warsaw, designed by the polish architecture office HRA architekci and completed in 2021.

The Forest office serves as a model example of how urban spaces can be designed to address climate challenges while being open to the needs of the local community. Two key features of this complex particularly stood out: the forest-inspired patio and the rooftop garden.

The forest patio

The forest patio is a public space that seamlessly combines natural greenery with the functionality of an urban setting. It features 200 large trees and 200 shrubs, as well as meadows, which create a welcoming environment for both people and urban wildlife. The irregularly designed pathways gently divide the space, allowing for a natural flow between relaxation zones. A fountain, which provides cooling on hot days, caught the participants' attention as both a practical and aesthetic feature. The forest patio is a place where residents can rest in the shade of trees, take a walk, or relax on deckchairs surrounded by lush greenery.



Source: <https://hbreavis.com/pl/projekty/forest/>



Source: <https://hbreavis.com/pl/aktualnosci/zakonczylysmys-budowe-kampusu-biurowego-forest/>

The rooftop garden

The rooftop garden is another unique area, serving both ecological and social functions. Residents and office employees can plant herbs, vegetables, and flowers, fostering a connection to nature even in the heart of the city. The garden was designed as an open space for the local community, including children from the nearby preschool, who can learn about ecology and plant care there. It also offers panoramic views of Warsaw and serves as a venue for events such as workshops and community gatherings, promoting healthy lifestyles and environmental awareness.

The Forest office building also features advanced ecological technologies. Plants are irrigated using rainwater, and energy-efficient systems ensure optimal heating, cooling, and lighting. These innovations earned the project high marks in BREEAM certification, highlighting its sustainable character.

The visit to Forest was a key element of the Peer Review meeting, demonstrating how responsibly designed spaces can support climate adaptation while enhancing the quality of life for residents. Forest stands as a living example of good practice, combining ecology, functionality, and community engagement in a way that can inspire other cities.

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Visiting the large urban redevelopment of the Gonçalo Ribeiro Telles Urban Park Peer review in Lisbon, Portugal

The second peer review in November 2024 was designed to showcase the partner's good practices, the strengths of the partnership and how to gain the necessary knowledge from other partners.

In Lisbon, we learned from experts about capacity building and citizen engagement in climate action, understanding ecological patterns at the ecosystem level in response to environmental changes and stakeholders' engagement in climate action.



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The DECA partners also had the opportunity to visit the Gonçalo Ribeiro Telles Urban Park in the city of Lisbon, designed by NPK landscape architecture and RUA Architects. This project was centered on the renaturing of public space through Nature-based Solutions aimed at promoting flood peak flow reduction, controlling frequent floods recorded in this location, and cooling the city. This transformation also included the elimination of obsolete spaces, such as the disused Azul market, the relocation of the public transport hub, integration of a cycling network, and improvements to traffic circulation at key entry points into the city.

A 6 hectares green lung

The result of this transformation is a new continuous green space covering an area of 6 hectares, and an extension of the reclaimed water network for irrigation of this public space in the future.

A stretch of watercourse was renatured with the planting of riparian vegetation on the banks. The elevation of the garden near its outer limits seeks to create an acoustic and also visual barrier to hide the traffic, over a thousand trees were planted. A creek is reopened, and ponds were installed to ensure also wildlife and birds can thrive. The area now holds many recreational areas, includes pedestrian paths and a playground. The design of the new park centered on people and climate-proof principles, allowed the connection of previously fragmented urban areas through a consolidated green infrastructure. This promotes efficient water cycle management, and public space cohesion, enables smooth mobility and accessibility, and establishes continuities between neighbourhoods.

Engagement with stakeholders through exhibitions, public debates and an international contest of ideas was essential to build bridges between the public sector and climate change forces. Lisbon needs everyone to act together now. And so does DECA!

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Coming up

The next meeting will be in Kronoberg, on April 2-3 2025. Besides a project meeting, we'll also have the chance to do some site visits and exchange best practices and knowledge with stakeholders, peers and experts:

- Storm water management in urban street: Växjö have integrated a stormwater management system in an urban street. The system stretches from the Linneus street to the Växjö lake and helps reduce flood risks and improve water quality.
- Company visit, VegTech: Visit to a company that develops green roofs and nature based solutions
- Wetlands and nature reserve area: The benefits of wetlands as a climate adaptation solution

And in October, Roermond in the Netherlands will be hosting our fourth meeting with visits. We are definitely looking forward to learning more about the Green-Blue Schoolyard Revolution, a programme for transforming paved schoolyards into green and blue outdoor spaces that contribute to climate adaptation and a healthier living environment! By joining this programme, Roermond manages to turn two school playgrounds a year into child-friendly oases for playing.

DECA is an Interreg Europe project, co-funded by the European Union. It has 8 partners: Energy and Climate Agency of Podravje (Slovenia), Mazovia Energy Agency (Poland), Tartu Regional Energy Agency (Estonia), County Administration Board of Kronoberg (Sweden), Roermond Municipality (The Netherlands), City of Ostend (Belgium), Lisbon Municipality (Portugal) and Province of Treviso (Italy).