

# NEWSLETTER

## January 2022 | #05



# PROSPERA

Interreg Europe



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PROSPERA project is funded by the Interreg Europe programme of the European Union to promote attractiveness and sustainable development in peri-urban areas.

*Dear Reader,*

*Welcome to the fifth edition of the PROSPERA newsletter! PROSPERA is the acronym of 'PROmoting Sustainable development and regional attractiveness through PERi-urban Areas'.*

*The COVID-19 has been still affecting the project implementation, but we got used to this new situation and we have organised two other study visits in this semester; one to Varberg (SE) and the other one to Aristoteli (GR). These non-travelling meetings could be hold totally virtually or a hybrid way, when the local stakeholders could meet and deliver the information online to the foreign partners.*

*After PROSPERA partners have organized all the online Study visits foreseen by the project, ILVO researchers Anna Verhoeve and Jeroen De Waegemaeker collected the knowledge developed during this process and created a guideline for online field visits, to illustrate the methodology and share tips and tricks for interregional learning in an online setting.*

*In this newsletter you can read about the study visits and meetings held in this semester and about the Guidebook for online study visits.*



## Activities implemented during Semester 5

### *Study visit to Varberg (10<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September)*

The fourth study visit was organized in September 2021 in Varberg, Sweden.

Varberg is located on the west coast of Sweden in the Region of Halland. Varberg Municipality is 1703 km<sup>2</sup> (both land and lakes) with a land area of 874,40 km<sup>2</sup>. In the whole Municipality lives 64 374 inhabitants and the city of Varberg has 35 125 inhabitants. The region of Halland has 329 352 inhabitants and compared to other regions it has the third highest population growth in Sweden.



A bit simplified one could describe it as: in the west is where Varberg meets the sea with a long coastline, highly attractive for both recreation and housing, and in the east, the municipality is characterized by woodland and rural areas. In between these, one will find the farmland with the important agricultural sector. From north to south go the highway and the train, connecting and

making Varberg easily accessible to bigger cities as Gothenburg, Malmö, and Copenhagen. Even though urbanization is at its strongest in the city at the coast some towns and villages also grow facing similar problems of land-use, balancing economic interests with environmental needs as well trying to be competitive for both new citizens and new companies.

*“We chose our Good practices because they had a wild range of leverages in the PROSPERA project. We thought that it was important to have good practice in each of the leverages of ecological value chains, public-private partnerships, and from smart to wise government. The Good practices we chose to present in the Study visit were the Lassabacka landfill, Grasslands, Rural Development Village Strategy, and the EMC and Arena project. We chose these good practices because we thought that they were good examples of effective practices that could be useful for the other countries in the project and there are some success stories here in Varberg.”*  
*/Ulrika Rylin, Development Strategist, Business and Destination Development Office, Municipality of Varberg/*

#### **Lassabacka landfill**

*“For Lassabacka we took an opportunity that was there, and we made it work for both natural cultural heritage and a place for recreation.”*  
*/Ulrika Rylin/*



## Grasslands

*"The Lassabacka landfill and the Grasslands have the leverage ecological value chains as primary leverage. They have taught us a lot about the knowledge of the value of natural heritage. They have given us tools to work with this and to appreciate the value especially of our Grasslands where we can describe and value our different environments in Grasslands and this we can use as knowledge in our work ahead."/Ulrika Rylin/*

*"In my opinion, GRASSLANDS was the most interesting experience, both for its implementation in Varberg and for its feasibility also in Reggio Emilia province. I particularly appreciated the willingness to preserve, identify and evaluate local biodiversity. By classifying it and make it available for the citizens, Varberg managed, besides preserving biodiversity, also to enhance and make culture."/Sabrina Campani, Press office and external relations of Coldiretti Reggio Emilia/*

## Rural village development strategy

*"The Rural Village Development Strategy is a good example of from smart to wise governance. This has become an integrated part of our local policymaking and has a positive effect and that is why we chose that good practice. It has also been an effective way to involve stakeholders, which is a big part of the PROSPERA project."/Ulrika Rylin/*



*"There could be a holistic approach in our Municipality and in the region, most specifically the public-private partnership created for the EMC could also be implemented here, under the study of Aristotelian philosophy connecting the ideas served by the philosopher with nature and sustainability in tourism. Local authorities are already in this road and stakeholders earn the continuation of the efforts made in a sustainable and a holistic approach."/Panagiotis G. Tsolakidis, Project Manager, Δήμος Αριστοτέλη/ Municipality of Aristoteli/*

## EMC and ARENA

*"The EMC and ARENA project is a good example of a public-private partnership and this public-private partnership of companies that want to be sustainable, that work together with the public side, the municipality and the region, and together we can make innovative solutions for a more sustainable future."/Ulrika Rylin/*

## Study visit to Aristoteli (7<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October)

The fifth study visit was organized by Municipality of Aristoteli Chalkidikis, Greece. They shared their good practices online with the foreign partners.



Aristoteli is a municipality in the Chalkidikis regional unit, Central Macedonia, Greece. The size of the area is 739,9 km<sup>2</sup>. The seat of the municipality is the town Ierissos. The municipality is named after the ancient philosopher Aristotle, whose birthplace, Stagira. The municipality also includes the area of the mining villages, known as Mademochoria. The municipality Aristoteli was formed at the 2011 local government reform by the merger of the following 3 former municipalities, that became municipal units: Arnaia, Panagia, and Stagira-Akanthos.

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*“What our Municipality wants to transfer to the PROSPERA partners through these good practices, is that, by promoting natural and cultural heritage and strengthening public and private actors of the tourism sector, engaging them in the protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, a local authority can promote sustainable development, revitalize the peri-urban areas and protect the natural environment.” /Nikolaos AVGERINOS, Vice Mayor on Administrative - Financial Services and Social Policy, President of the Committee of Touristic Promotion and Development of Municipality of Aristoteli/*

### **Aristotelis Grove**

*“Healthier environment for citizens is also addressed by PROSPERA. Aristotelis Grove is the starting point of 12 cultural and natural routes and a place where cultural and creative activities take place in nature, aiming at increasing people’s relationship with nature and to promote the Aristotelian philosophy and education.” /Nikolaos AVGERINOS/*



*“In Aristotelian Route Good practice, we see also the link with our Greenways and open space Ghent. We love the approach of Aristoteli, their efforts for place branding of the peri-urban area, combining elements of both natural heritage and cultural heritage and co-working with local bodies and volunteers-residents. The idea of working with a QR-code is certainly something we will see if it’s possible to implement also in our territory.” /Erika Decock, Consultant for the Department of Economics for the City of Ghent/*

### Heritage Hikes

*“The 12 hiking and cycling routes aim to provide creative and unique experiences and activities for visitors, other than those related to the sun and sea touristic approach, promoting a sustainable tourism model. Protection of natural heritage, increase awareness on environmental issues and learning of local flora and fauna species are also among the objectives set by our Municipality and its tourism strategy by implementing these activities.” /Nikolaos AVGERINOS/*

### KOUZINA project

*“The KOUZINA project is considered very successful and innovative, not in terms of concept only, but by the way it has been promoted and the participation of volunteers. Approximately 1000 volunteers participate in the KOUZINA project, not only from Greece but from other European countries. Volunteers from the local women’s cooperatives, restaurants, cultural associations, as well as the community, become part of the event, by helping with the administration, preparations, preparing local dishes, introducing their local products, and sharing their expertise in gastronomy.*

*It is also a project that supports the preservation of traditions, promotion of natural local products, the importance of protecting nature and the benefits of local gastronomy to health, the promotion of local SMEs of the gastronomy and wine sector, and promotion of Aristoteli as a sustainable tourism destination.” /Nikolaos AVGERINOS/*

*“Like the Kouzina Project, there are various gastro-festivals in Debrecen, but they are seasonal. We also try to take advantage of local gastronomic specialties, but it’s so amazing for us how Aristoteli’s team does! We can gain a lot of inspiration about how the local entrepreneurs are using the brands produced in the region, and also about the multi-stakeholder approach, that is how the municipality staff, the tourist organizations and hundreds of volunteers can collaborate efficiently in order to implement those remarkable gastro-festivals.” /Erika Jacsmenik, Senior Expert of Urban Development EDC Debrecen Non-profit Limited Company/*





### Women's cooperatives

*"The Women's cooperatives and KOUZINA project good practices are related to the gastronomy heritage of Aristoteli Municipality and play a crucial role in the preservation of the local gastronomy and customs. Their success lay upon the participation of several local actors of the gastronomy sector, such as the women's initiatives, local restaurants, and most importantly of hundreds of volunteers."/>* /Nikolaos AVGERINOS/

### **Online cooking workshop**

During the study visit, in connection with the Women's cooperatives good practice, project partners cooked together with the Greek partners and the women from the Varvara Agricultural Association. While cooking, members of the Association presented the good practice and the Aristoteli gastronomy, highlighting the Greek cultural heritage.



### **Stakeholder meetings**



#### **Varberg, online, 24/01/2021**

During the meeting, the selected good practices of PROSPERA were presented: Hortobágy (HU), Greenways (IT), Green climate axes (BE), and Urban reforestation plan (IT). Participants discussed the similarities between the city and the good Practices, and how Varberg could implement some aspects of them.



#### **Reggio Emilia, personal, 16/12/2021**

The meeting was introduced by Deputy Mayor for Sustainability, Carlotta Bonvicini, who outlined the long-term vision of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia regarding the sustainable development of peri-urban areas. In the second phase of the meeting, an initial in-depth analysis workshop was organized to enable local stakeholders to comment and propose concrete ideas on the implementation of LAP. Finally, the next commitments of the PROSPERA project were discussed and illustrated both at the local and partnership level.

### **Intra-organisational meeting**



#### **Debrecen, personal, 21/01/2022**

The main goal was to present the good practices of the Varberg and Aristoteli study visit and the process of developing the Local Action Plan to the colleagues of EDC Debrecen. During the meeting, participants discussed how these good practices could be implemented in Debrecen.

## PROSPERA guideline for online field visits



As the PROSPERA partners prepared for the project's first field visit at the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 crisis and the resulting travel restrictions dramatically altered the initial plans. The PROSPERA partners had to organize the field visits in an online setting. Since the field visits are keystones of the interregional learning process, it was crucial that the online field visits did not lose their essence of inspiring events that inform participants, provoke discussion, and foster collaboration.

Now that PROSPERA partners have organized all the online Study visits foreseen by the project, ILVO researchers **Anna Verhoeve** and **Jeroen De Waegemaeker** collected the knowledge developed during this process and created a guideline for online field visits, to illustrate the methodology and share tips and tricks for interregional learning in an online setting.

The PROSPERA guideline for online field visits includes tips for organizing a study visit in a hybrid or an online format, including, among others, how to define the agenda, timing and organizing process; how to maintain the enthusiasm of participants and stakeholders; and how partners and stakeholders can make use of the knowledge acquired in the field visits to draft their Local Action Plans.

The guideline is available for reading and downloading in the Interreg [PROSPERA Library](#).

**ONLINE FIELD VISIT GHENT - WORKSHOP**

**TRANSFERABILITY OF GP** Green climate axes

Fill in the name of the good practice that is being discussed.

**STEP 3 - WHY IS THIS GP INTERESTING? WHICH ASPECTS?**

Good conditions to adapt/develop this in Yverberg (See map below)

Yverberg is already today working with a similar concept to connect urban and rural areas to each other. We value the possibility to learn from others in the issue.

It's important that citizens value their outdoor possibilities higher today than before the outbreak.

Offer an input how to integrate different ecosystem services in the development of our Axis (i.e. recreation, waste water, pollution, etc.)

Would be interesting to have more about how the private and public in urban collaboration in connection to a Green Axis.

How does this development take shape?

**STEP 4 - WHERE TO IMPLEMENT?**

**STEP 5 - WHO CAN (HELP) IMPLEMENT?**

Private landowners and other actors is crucial to move for impact and implementation.

Publics are essential to back this up for working with the asset.

In what way could Region Flanders support and promote this approach? For example with Nature Tours. Might be more suitable areas in other parts of Flanders.

**FEEDBACK TO GHENT**

REFLECTIONS: Give your opinion on the possibility to use your knowledge in other cities. It might be useful to use in your own city and work in the area.

SUGGESTIONS: How do you think different stakeholders/ EU or other actors can help?

QUESTIONS: What are your main concerns for implementation? Tools, methodology for engaging with the private sector? How do you work with the implementation aspect? We need to get stuck in planning.

**European Union European Regional Development Fund** **ILVO** **PROSPERA Interreg Europe**

Source: PROSPERA guideline for online field visits (2021)



## Forthcoming activities in the next semester



*Transfer Workshops in  
Reggio Emilia, Ghent, and  
Varberg*



*Stakeholder and intra-  
organisational meetings*



*International Thematic  
Workshop in Reggio  
Emilia  
28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> of March*



*PROSPERA Final event  
in Ghent  
10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> of May*

## How can you get involved?

- Participate in our [local stakeholder groups](#)
- Participate at [study visits](#)
- Let us know about [your own project or event](#) related to PROSPERA
- Reach out to us by [email](#) or on our [social media](#)

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