URBAN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURES TO SUPPORT THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND WELL-BEING OF CITIZENS: A PARTICIPATORY PATH BASED ON SCIENTIFIC CAFÉS

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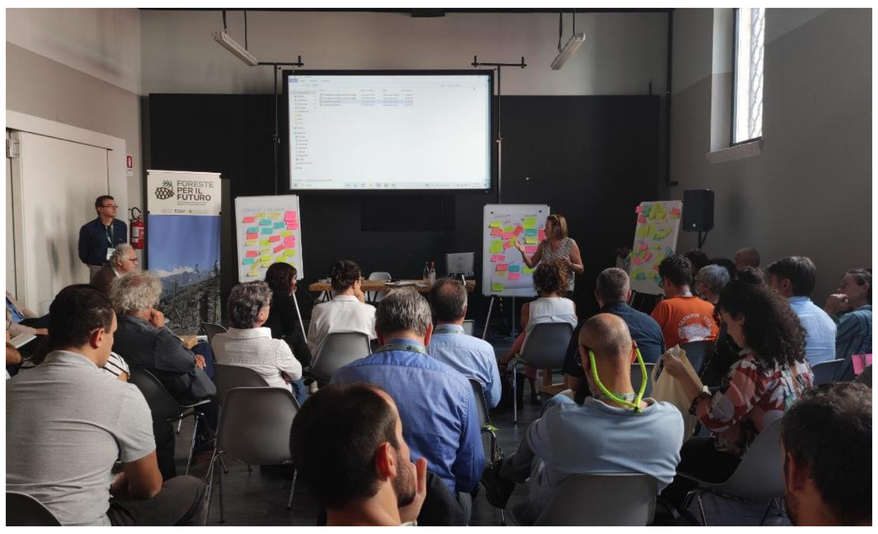
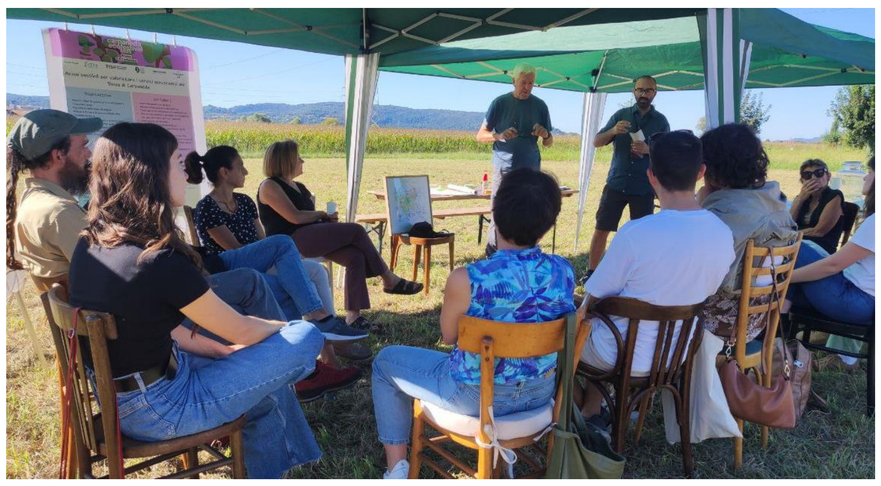
INTRODUCTION

Urban Green Infrastructures (UGIs) play a key role in enhancing citizens' quality of life and well-being. They provide multiple **ecosystem services (ESs)**:mitigation of heatwaves and urban heat islands, noise reduction and air quality improvement, flood protection and stormwater regulation, microclimate regulation, recreation, cultural and aesthetic value.

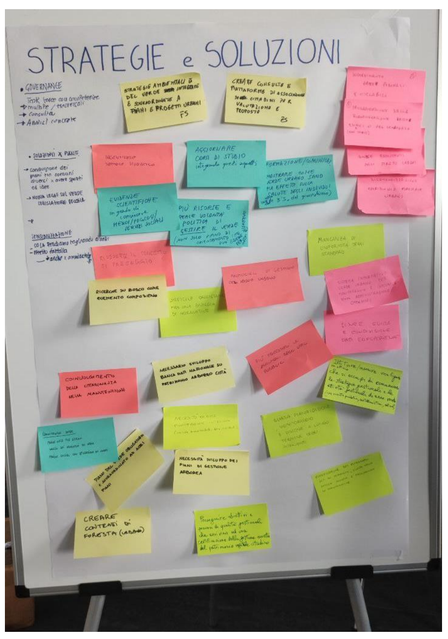
At the European level, the **EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030** and the **Green City Accord (2021)** highlighted the importance of integrating UGIs into policy agendas to accelerate the Green Deal and improve urban resilience.

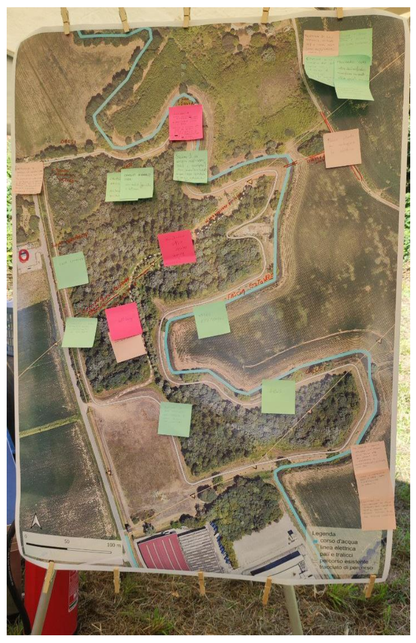


Padua (PD), September 2024



Carpaneda Forest (VI), September 2025





Support tools used during participatory events.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study – developed within the Horizon Europe ForestValue2 project – was to activate a participatory process with stakeholders and citizens in the Veneto region, to define the priorities and actions to be included in the planning and management of UGIs.

METHODOLOGY

Two participatory approaches were implemented:

SCIENTIFIC CAFÉS
informal public discussions to encourage dialogue between experts, professionals, public administration,..

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Tested in Padua, Sept. 2024, during the SISEF Confgress and in Vicenza, Sept. 2025, during the Carpaneda ECOFestival

CO-DESIGN WORKSHOPS
group sessions where participants collaboratively developed project proposals

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Tested in Vicenza, Sept. 2025, during the Carpaneda ECOFestival).

RESULTS

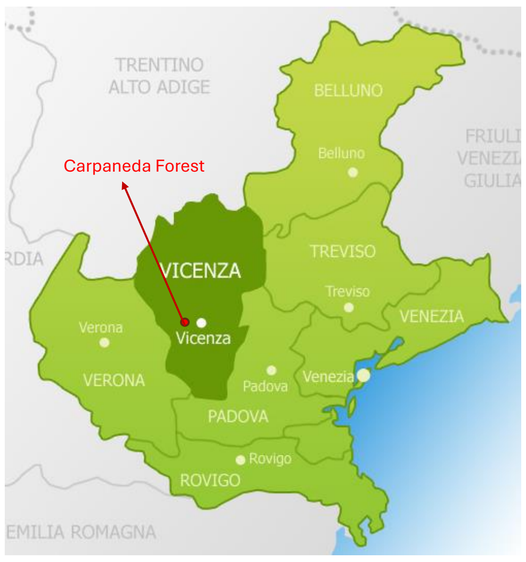
During the Scientific Café held in Padua, stakeholders, working in small facilitated groups, prioritized key ESs and identified strategic point to improve for the maintenance and enhancement of UGIs, including:

- stronger **governance** models that include citizen participation.
- stable **financial resources**
- appropriate **terminology** to define roles and places
- **planning and management**
- **professional Training and Education**
- **communication**: transparent decision-making; effective information tools

The Scientific Café with stakeholders and a co-design workshop with citizens took place in Vicenza, focusing on *Bosco di Carpaneda*, an urban forest.

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of:

- **long-term planning and monitoring;**
- **enhancing the educational, scientific, and training role of the area;**
- **mitigating the urban heat island effect;**
- **creating an ecological network, including water-related connections;**
- **improving accessibility;**
- **strengthening citizen involvement.**



Through on-site mapping and group discussions, citizens collaboratively refined practical strategies for ESs valorization in Carpaneda forest, reflecting local preferences and needs (e.g., creating a cycling connection, installing information panels, designing activities for all age groups, involving volunteers in maintenance).

The outcomes will serve as a basis for defining guidelines for the multi-ES management of UGIs.

CONCLUSIONS

- UGIs are essential for ecosystem services and citizens' well-being.
- Sustainable management requires stronger governance, long-term planning, and inclusive participation.
- Guidelines will support the integration of ecological, social, and cultural values into future UGI strategies.