

Use of Green infrastructure products and society engagement

Training Module 4

Deliverable D.T4.2.4 Module(s) for training on use of products from local GIs and society participatory engagement.

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The LUIGI project

The Interreg Alpine space project LUIGI (Linking Urban and Inner-Alpine Green Infrastructure - Multifunctional Ecosystem Services for more liveable territories) brings together 14 partner institutions and 26 observers from Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, and Switzerland with the aim of strengthening the link between mountain ecosystems and urban centres at the foot of the Alps through sound economic and social exchanges.

By recognising the pressures on Alpine ecosystems and the services they deliver to wider areas beyond mountain regions, the project aims to strengthen the link between mountain ecosystems and urban centres at the foot of the Alps. The project's objective is to recognise and valorise the joint benefits of a GI network between mountain/rural and urban areas, as well as their potential for sustainable economic development based on natural resources and ecosystem services, ensuring a higher quality of life and better urban environments for people living in urban centres.

Work Package 4 of the LUIGI project focuses on education and training for sustainable management of green infrastructure elements in LUIGI model regions, leveraging knowledge from the Alpine region and beyond.

Aims and objectives of this module

The aim of this module is the organisation of an engaging event to raise awareness of local GI elements, their importance and products. The module provides tips, suggestions, and to-dos to organisers of a general-public-engagement event on the topic of green infrastructure.

The suggested food-preparation event aims to immerse participants in the most engaging way: through food and discussion of its origins. The event can be part of a broader event promoting local GI-products and raising awareness about the importance of local GI-elements.

Who is this module for?

The first activity is event organisation, which can be applied by any event organising entity. The second activity focuses on the execution of the GI-themed event. The entire module can be adopted and executed by different food production and marketing associations, advisory and educational organisations and administrative bodies with the help of a subcontractor.

Suggested target knowledge end-users

The module aims to make the concepts of GI and ESS more accessible to the general public. Cooks, eaters, and ordinary people are empowered with knowledge about the use of GI-products and other ecosystem services provided by local GI-elements. The food preparation event can be executed with anyone, from primary school children to the elderly, with all interests and target groups in between. Event and local GI promotion will be spread through a network of interested influencers, such as bloggers, journalists and local authorities.

Suggested educational method

The first part assists event organisers in preparing an engaging event from both a content and technical perspective. This part can be used as a checklist for organisers or as an internal training session for them.

The second part provides support with the organisation of GI-related events. The core topic of those events that can be aggregated is a presentation of local GI-elements, their ecosystem services, and opportunities for participants to engage with GI-products.

What is green infrastructure (GI)?

Since there is no widely recognised definition of Green infrastructure GI in the scientific community, we decided to adopt the EU definition and approach within the LUIGI project. According to the European commission, a Green infrastructure is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features that are designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as water purification, air quality, recreational space, and climate mitigation and adaptation (COM/2013/0249). It incorporates green spaces (or blue space in the case of aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features in terrestrial (including coastal) and marine areas. On land, GI is present in both rural and urban settings. It also supports a green economy, creates job opportunities and enables landscapes to recover from biodiversity losses.

Green Infrastructure can provide both socio-economic and conservation benefits at different scales – from local or regional (e.g. wildlife overpasses, migratory corridors, floodplains) to continental (e.g. Pan-European Ecological Network). It is made up of a variety of natural and artificial elements at different scales, from protected core areas to sustainable use buffer zones and green urban and peri-urban spaces (CEEweb).

GI can help us reduce our dependence on 'grey' infrastructure, which is often more expensive to build and maintain for the same function. Grey infrastructure, such as water and wastewater treatment plants, pipelines, and reservoirs, is human-engineered infrastructure that can damage the environment and biodiversity.



Picture 1: A schematic presentation of Green infrastructure elements in the landscape (European Commission, 2013)

The concept of ecosystem services (ESS) is often used to describe the importance of GI. Humans benefit from ecosystems in terms of environmental, social, and economic benefits (MEA, 2005). Humans depend on these services, but the valuation of these life-supporting services is a challenging task. However, only healthy and functioning ecosystems can sustainably provide these services. There are multiple ways to classify, measure, and assess ecosystem services, as described in the LUIGI report WP1.1.1A by Giombini and Egarter Vigl (2020).

Activity 1: LECTURE - Organisation of an engaging event

This activity provides extensive resources for the organisation of engaging events. The key steps for organisation are listed, from conceptualising to final clean-up and follow-ups. The planned engaging event revolves around a GI-related theme.

The provided information may be used as a checklist for organisers or as an outline for the training of organisers.

1 Setting the stage

Establish your event goals, vision and objectives

The main objectives of the event organised in the framework of LUIGI and beyond include:

- GI awareness raising,
- meeting of defined groups,
- intensifying cooperation in a value chain,
- local businesses and value-chains promotion,
- tradition-themed event,
- environmental and charity fundraising,
- social event, learning opportunities, entertaining event...

Goals of a GI-related event may be:

- to raise awareness and promote local GI elements (e.g.: orchard meadows and hedgerows)
- to encourage local GI element product consumption (e.g.: fruit and mushrooms),
- to share knowledge about the traditional growing of food in high natural value farmlands,
- promotion of local growers and products already present in the region,
- exhibition and/or tasting of GI-products and their processed forms,
- plants and cultivars that are more resistant to pests or diseases, as well as plants and cultivars that are native to the region
- preparation and processing of local GI-products

Main objective

To make any event memorable and eventually develop it into a regular event, clear and understandable objectives must be determined. However, even established regular events can benefit from setting clear objectives.

Although a good event may include different happenings and subtopics, the main focus must remain clear and easy to understand.

Target audience

Here, we need to ask ourselves and find the best answers to the questions such as:

- Who do we want to attract to the event in the first place in order to satisfy the event's objectives?
- Who else needs to be attracted to the event for it to have the intended impact?
- What is the minimal number of participants? What is the maximum number of participants?

The general public is the target audience for GI-related events. However, some happenings and subevents are aimed at specific groups.

Safety, registration and insurance

The event organiser is responsible for protecting the health, safety and welfare of all attendees. This includes anyone who is at the event venue, whether they are working, attending or just passing by. More people are better in terms of reaching the event aims and commercial eligibility, but they also carry more risk. Therefore, the event must be organised within a reasonable time frame and strict safety measures must be taken.

According to local regulations, an event must be registered with administrative bodies and a police office. Further instructions and requirements may be received from administration representatives during registration.

It is wise to ensure any damage or injury anyone or anything may cause during the event's preparation, execution and clean up. This may also be required by legislation. It is recommended that everyone have their own insurance if there are more exhibitors, displays, bands or other attractions.

Event date selection

An appropriate date has to be chosen before hosting any event. An autumn date after the main fruit harvest may be the best fit for the proposed event focusing on GI-products. Nevertheless, a different time may be a better choice, depending on the event's goals and objectives.

The following points should be considered when choosing a date:

- ripening time and storability of the GI-products,
- availability of organisers and presenters,
- availability of participants,
- best time of the week and
- other events happening at the same time.

The chosen time of the week can be cluttered with related events. They may compete for participants and venues or they may offer great synergies. Try to obtain as much details as possible about events happening at the proposed time in the event's venue immediate and wider surroundings and evaluate possible interactions.

2 Develop an event master plan

Planning organisation timeline

In addition to the event itself, the organisation of it must be planned too. The organisation timeline may include the following:

- preparation meetings
- correspondence with stakeholders and presenters
- promotional activities
- a venue selection
- collecting promotional materials and products for exhibitions
- venue preparation
- the event (with a detailed timeline)
- event clean-up
- follow-up with participants
- follow-up with organisers and contributors

The event timeline

A detailed timeline of the event is to be created according to previously defined parameters of the event. The event timeline may include points like:

- beginning/opening of the event and welcome greetings,
- performances,
- presentations,
- lectures,
- workshops/demonstrations,
- guided tours/product testing,
- various breaks/lunch,
- event ending and summary

Equipment

If not already present at the venue, different equipment and tools must be collected to effectively execute the event. For an engaging GI-related event a list of required equipment may include:

- tables and chairs,
- hob and oven,
- pots and trays,
- cooking and baking utensils (tools),
- cutlery, cups and plates,
- panels and stands and
- PC and projector

Materials

Materials for the event may be of technical value, such as:

- posters and roll-ups,
- photo-materials,
- signs and direction instructions,
- leaflets and hand-outs

A selection of materials for an event devoted to GI-related topics may also include:

- GI-products such as fruits for exhibition and testing,
- GI products for their use in workshops,
- other thematic decoration such as plants and branches,
- thematic recipes and discussion leaflets for workshops and dissemination

Human resources

It's critical to estimate how many people would be required at various stages of the event's preparation and execution. Teams may be established for the following purposes:

- an organising committee,
- team for setting up and cleaning of the event venue,
- team of presenters and speakers,
- event support staff (registration, security...)

For up to 12 participants in a GI-product preparation workshop, at least one trainer and one assistant are needed.

The event budget

Although society engagement and GI awareness-raising event require a great amount of volunteer work, organisations may be interested in participating as part of their regular work, there may be plenty of costs involved. Careful consideration and calculation of possible expenses and sources of money need to be done. This is a requirement for the smooth execution of the event and reimbursement of the organisers' and presenters' costs.

Possibilities for financing the event include:

- grants and the founding of events through projects,
- sponsorships and donations,
- municipalities and other local organisations with an interest and
- lots of volunteer work

The execution of an event has to be tailored to the available financial and human resources. Otherwise, alternatives for achieving the event objectives need to be considered.

3 Branding and promoting

Technically organising an event is one thing, but attracting the target audience is another. According to the defined target group(s) and target number of participants, appropriate promotion activities must be planned.

It is recommended to prepare an event summary with some graphical and photography materials to share with journalists, authorities and influencers. This, along with thematic webpages on the organisers' web pages, create a presence of the event in the community. However, to get word spread in this oversaturated information-age, appropriate promotion channels have to be chosen to access the target audience while avoiding excessive costs. Additional presence in journals, radio, television and digital social networks may be needed to reach the event objectives.

Activity 2: Event execution

In this activity, the outline for an engaging event on the topic of GI is presented. The aim of this event is to raise awareness of local GI-elements, their importance, and to promote GI-products and their managers or growers. It can be executed independently or in conjunction with other happenings and events.

An event with engaging food preparation activity using local GI-product and recipes is proposed in Annex 1. However, other activities listed below can be executed instead or in combination to address the broader public and achieve event aims and objectives.

Possible event topics:

- demonstrative cooking course using GI-products,
- GI-product processing course,
- exhibition of different products and cultivars from local GI-elements,
- tasting of different local products and processed food (e.g. in case of orchards: dried fruit, juice, vinegar, baked and cooked products...),
- practical demonstrations of GI-product processing (e.g. in case of orchards: fruit juice pressing),
- presentation and promotion of local producers and growers,
- networking of people engaged in local GI-related value chains,
- preparation and processing of local GI-products.

1 Event timeline

The proposed timeline for an engaging event

- Introduction and greeting of host

The organiser opens the event and introduces its purpose and current timeline. This can be followed by greetings from the host and local authorities.

- Presentation of the LUIGI project

If the event is part of the LUIGI project, a short presentation of the project is given; otherwise, this part can be skipped. Use the green box at the beginning of this module to explain what the Luigi project is, what its aims and outputs and how the local community can benefit.

- Description of the local GI-element

Present the local green infrastructure element the event is focusing on. Present how it is defined, what are its ESS and products, why you have selected it and how it interacts with the local community. Use the “information cards” by Giombini et al. (2020); Green Infrastructure for the Alpine Space: from theory to practice, a D.T1.1.1 deliverable from the Interreg Alpine Space project “LUIGI”.

- Presentation of GI product(s)

Present the GI-products on which the event will be focused: why they were selected, why they are important, how they can be used and why it is important to produce and use them locally. Describe how and by whom they were produced to better connect participants to the selected local GI-element.

If a GI-product exhibition or testing is prepared, present all other GI-products and their growers.

Semi-moderated discussion on GI-related topics

As introduced at the event opening, participants are engaged in a discussion about GI-elements and their products presented at the event. Further GI-related topics from other LUIGI project deliverables can be introduced:

- **Different GI-elements.** For this, use part B of D.T1.1.1 - Green Infrastructure for the Alpine Space: from theory to practice (Giombini, et al. 2020a).
- **Different Tools for ESS evaluation.** For this a use D.T1.1.2 - Tools for developing Green Infrastructure Networks; page 7 to 32. (Giombini, et al. 2020b)
- **Participatory engagement knowledge-sources.** For this a use D.T1.1.2 - Tools for developing Green Infrastructure Networks; page 33 to 48. (Giombini, et al. 2020b)

Specific content for a food preparation event

- Introduction to the selected recipe(s)

Choose one of the recipes from Appendix 1 or another GI-product recipe of your choosing, to be used at the event. Shortly present a recipe to connect dots between the GI-element, its products, food you are going to prepare and society.

- Execution of cooking course

Depending on the venue's equipment, the event's objectives and available resources, the course can be executed as a hands-on experience for all participants or as a demonstrative product preparation. While preparing or in breaks a semi-moderated discussion on GI-related topics is to be held.

Appendix WP4_D.T4.2.4: Traditional recipes from the Alpine Space region

Traditional Alpine Space recipes that can be used in the proposed event are specified in Appendix 1. Traditional overtones in recipes suggest a connection to the GI-elements in the local landscape. LUIGI Interreg Alpine Space project partners gathered recipes which included at least one GI-product.

This educational module proposes incorporating recipes into an engaging food preparation event. The event is to be combined with additional activities, such as presentations of GI topics and discussions with participants about GI-related topics, GI-products exhibition and tasting.

References and Sources

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