



DIVAIRCITY

The power of Diversity & Inclusion for Climate Neutral Cities

First Report on Clustering Activities

Deliverable 7.9 - Public

Lead beneficiary: UniverCities

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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AB	Advisory Board
AI	Artificial Intelligence
BF	Belmont Forum
CA	Consortium Agreement
CFH	Crowdfunding Hub
CNR	Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche
DoA	Description of Actions
DTI	Danish Technological Institute
DUT	Driving Urban Transition Partnership
EC	European Commission
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EN-SUGI	Eranet Sustainable Urbanisation Global Initiative
EUSEW	European Sustainable Energy Week
FP7	Seventh Framework Programme
GA	Grant Agreement
GDE&I	Gender, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
GeA	General Assembly
H2020	Horizon 2020
IA	Innovation Action
IAI	Inter America Institute
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
JPI	Joint Programming Initiative
JRC	Joint Research Center



LOS	Letter of Support
M	Month
KoM	Kick-off Meeting
NBS	Nature Based Solutions
PC	Protected Categories
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
RTBF	Radio-télévision Belge de la Communauté Française
RTO	Research and Technology Organisation
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation
ULL	Urban Living Labs
UPV	Universitat Politècnica de València
WP	Work Package
WR	Week of the Regions



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Executive summary

The objective of this document is to provide an overview of the state of the art of the clustering activities conducted during DivAirCity, and to outline the ones planned for the future.

The First Report on Clustering Activities (D7.9) aims at highlighting how the Project, through its Consortium members, has set the basis to the creation of linkages, cluster activities and liaison moments with other EU-funded projects, institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

DivAirCity aims at moving research into action, while promoting its upscaling and replication. To achieve this objective, it builds on previous successful H2020 projects and intends to exploit synergies with existing projects, networks and initiatives in Europe and beyond.

Thus, the clustering activity of DivAirCity is not only related to its EU “sisters projects”, but expands wider into global synergies with urban R&I landscapes.

These “Clustering” activities have been divided into four tiers of activities with:

1. **“sisters’ projects”**, i.e., the other projects which were awarded under the call “Innovative nature-based solutions for carbon neutral cities and improved air quality” (Topic ID: LC-CLA-11-2020), namely “*Activation of NATURE-based solutions for a JUST low carbon transition*” (**JUST Nature**) and “*City-centered approach to catalyze nature-based solutions through the EU Regenerative Urban Lighthouse for pollution alleviation and regenerative development*” (**Upsurge**);
2. **other EU funded projects**, specifically projects funded under the H2020 “Smart and Sustainable Cities” topic, before and after DivAirCity
3. **networks and policy groups at EU level**, including the relevant JRC activities and other EU cities initiatives (e.g., Covent of Mayor, DUT, City Science, Innovating Cities, Cities Mission, the Smart Cities Community); networks and policy groups at international level, focusing on urban inclusion for the 6+1 protected diversity categories.

As such, this deliverable is structured as following:

1. **Overview of the activities:** a summary of the activities for each tier carried out up until M12 and an outline of the activities which are being currently planned for the future are presented;
2. **Progress indicators:** features an overview of the project indicators relevant to the Clustering Activities and their current progress;
3. **Summary of findings and recommendations:** this section includes an overview of the results of the clustering and outreach activities.



Overview of the activities

This section provides an overview of the activities carried out within the four tiers indicated above between M1 and M12.

Activities with sister projects

As indicated in the GA, the aim of the annual meetings with the two set sister projects (JUST Nature and Upsurge) is “to identify synergies, set-up common indicators and frameworks, create joint communication and dissemination activities”:

1. **JUST Nature:** the project aims at activating NBS in Bolzano, Chania, Leuven, Gzira, Munich and Szombathely by ensuring an equitable transition to low-carbon cities which guarantee clean air and indoor/outdoor thermal comfort for human health, while thriving biodiversity and ecosystems. The Project’s contact person is Sonia Gantioler;
2. **Upsurge:** is also a an NBS centred project, with solutions being adopted by the citizens of Belfast, Breda, Budapest, Maribor and Katowice impacting their environment, renaturation of spaces, and social, gender and equality aspects. The Project’s contact person is Darko Ferčej.

Current activities

During the first twelve months of implementation of DivAirCity, the three sister projects had several opportunities to discuss and exchange views.

Each project took part either in person or online to the kick-off meetings (KoMs) of the sister projects (Upsurge KoM on September 21st, 2021, JUST Nature KoM on September 30th, 2021 and on 1st of October 2021 DivAirCity’s KoM). During these meetings, the teams from the three projects were able to understand the rationale and the planned activities of the other initiatives, serving as a basis to align whenever synergies are possible.

Following the KoMs, the three sister projects met online on February 24th 2022, in the first yearly cluster meeting. The aim of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for alignment. During the meeting, synergies between DivAirCity and the other two sister projects (in particular JUST Nature) emerged. The common grounds here result in knowledge sharing on both indicators and quantitative data (Upsurge), and on rethinking and analysing the urban policy, planning and framing of justice. The projects were still at a very early stage and it was agreed that after the Project Advisor consensus, the first deliverables on data and co-creation activities would have been shared, in order to align methodologies and results. This is a work in progress process. The sister projects also agreed on the possibility of joint deliverables (when this can create significant synergies and impact, in particular for the Twinning programmes)



and for an active contribution in the GDE&I Taskforce (see below for more information). The three projects further agreed on keeping each other informed of relevant public deliverables that may be relevant for their activities. Finally, a common communication approach may be designed, to project externally the linkages between their actions.

The sister projects met regularly during the NetworkNature activities in particular in relation to the Co-creation Taskforce.

Upcoming activities

As a result of the LC-CLA-11-2020 Clustering event organised by JUST Nature in September 2021, a follow-up online event is tentatively being envisaged in autumn 2022, possibly in November (tbc), by a third party, Crowdhelix. The latter is an open innovation and collaborative platform that forges links between researchers and innovators, to plan and deliver new pioneering collaborative projects through the application. By applying AI technology, they connect businesses, universities and research centres, and in general new potential partners for DivAirCity's enhancement. The Project Manager and contact person is Marco Lopes. During the event, DivAirCity aims at further exploring the common grounds of NBS with other potential partners.

The above event is the result of the open communication channel between Daniela Melandri (DivAirCity), Darko Ferčej (Upsurge) and Sonia Gantioler (JUST Nature). DivAirCity is pursuing the possibility of resharing updates of the three projects by rescheduling a meeting between the three Project Managers, later this autumn. During this meeting, the three Projects plan to involve their respective Project Advisors from the European Commission to discuss and agree on a strategy with joint actions and deliverables to inform the decision-making process at EU level.

Activities with other EU funded projects

One of the objectives of DivAirCity is to move theory to action, by consolidating results of previous projects and building on other running EU funded projects. As such, the Project will establish connections with relevant initiatives within the EU other than its sister projects.

A list of the planned activities with other EU funded projects as per GA, and their status is presented in the Table below.

**Table 1:** Activities with other EU funded projects

Key EU R&I in DivAirCity	Main aspects	Area of application in DivAirCity	Supporting evidence of collaboration	Collaboration happened
Nature4Cities	NBS in cities	Data and Management Framework and Impact assessment	The KPIs, impact assessment methodology and ICT tool	Yes, by common partners (namely EcoWise), this project feeds into the DivAirCity Data framework
Crunch (EN-SUGI)	Interconnected knowledge platform with cross-sectorial indicators	DivAirCity will build on this platform to develop its assessment tools for decision making	The overall SUGI EN is coordinated by the same coordinator of DivAirCity (Dr Daniela Melandri) and CNR member of the Belmont Forum	Engagement through Daniela Melandri, SUGI coordinator
Creative Interface (EN-SUGI)	Develops an opensource tool for citizen science	The Citizens science open data tool developed by Creative Interface for citizen science will be feed into the M&V activities of DivAirCity and in the definition of the D&IGCI	As above	Engagement through Daniela Melandri, SUGI coordinator
Eclipse	Impact evaluation framework	Eclipse IEF will be the baseline to the D&I	DTI and CNR partners in Eclipse	Yes, by common partners, this project feeds into the DivAirCity data and co-creation frameworks
GrowGreen	Co-design, complementation and co-development of NBS	Grow Green will be the baseline of the co-design activities of DivAirCity, in terms of models and results identified.	LOS from Manchester city	Yes, by common partners UPV and Bipolaire



Key EU R&I in DivAirCity	Main aspects	Area of application in DivAirCity	Supporting evidence of collaboration	Collaboration happened
Urbinat	NBS catalogue, urban spaces, healthy corridors, citizen engagement, business cases and marketing	Co- participatory activities and health and wellbeing assessment	DTI is a partner and leads the citizen engagement WP	No
DiverCity (FP7)	Policies and City strategies	Diversity guidebook and findings have already been used to articulate and understand the state of the art of social inclusion in this excellence part of the proposal. DivAirCity, will build on those findings and trial some of the actions suggested (as participatory governance) in the five selected cities.	Free Access to its results on the Cordis Portal. Identified as a key project for DivAirCity	Yes, in the lessons learnt for co creation activities
Naturvation		Business models results from Naturvation will be used as baseline to the financial part of DivAirCity	CFH is a key partner in both projects	Yes, by common partners in the Business Models and Citizens Engagement
CleverCities	Co-creation Models	DivAirCity will be inspired by CleverCities participatory approaches	Joint stakeholders	Not directly yet
UNalab	NBS co-created with and for local stakeholders and citizens; establishing ULLs	DivAirCity will study the use of the results of the project regarding the “development of a European NBS Reference Framework on benefits, cost-effectiveness, economic viability and replicability of nature-based	Castellon involved as a follower not	No



Key EU R&I in DivAirCity	Main aspects	Area of application in DivAirCity	Supporting evidence of collaboration	Collaboration happened
		solutions". UNlab results will be considered in particular in the WP4 Urban living labs.		
IN-HABIT	NBS and more resilient small/medium cities	Social inclusion and equality in data	Prof. Marina Della Giusta is part of the Advisory Board	Yes, IN-HABIT is in the DivAirCity Advisory Board and regular meetings are held with their partners. On top of this a partnership between Orvieto and Lucca is under development.

Source: Partial reproduction and readaptation of table in Paragraph 1.3.5, page 168-170.



Moreover, through UPV, DivAirCity took part to the event *Retos de innovación urbana en València para el programa Horizonte Europa en 2023-2024*¹ on June 21st, 2021. The event presented the main lines of action of Valencia's objective to become one of Europe's climate-neutral cities by 2030. Based on these lines of action, previous experiences in innovation projects of the city's ecosystem were presented in order to offer new opportunities for public-private collaboration in the field of European projects. During the event, DivAirCity was presented. The presentation and the event were then followed by establishing a contact with *Ayuntamiento de Valencia*² to discuss good practices and tracking of the project GrowGreen. This will also bring to the organization of an event in November 2022³ with Ayuntamiento de Valencia and GrowGreen, on energy poverty and NBS. The DivAirCity team will present the project and discuss how NBS can tackle energy poverty.

Activities with EU networks

DivAirCity aims at participating to relevant existing EU networks, with the twofold objective of establishing the EU's leadership in a new global network for NBS' and for the generation of new economic opportunities.

Current activities

As of the present date, DivAirCity has actively participated to events organized by the EU network Taskforce Gender, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (GDE&I) and by NetworkNature.

Taskforce Gender, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: DivAirCity took part to the EU Taskforce Gender, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (GDE&I) Clustering activities on the 4th of November 2021 hosted by European Commission Policy Assistant Ugo Guarnacci and VARCITIES. A general overview of the Project was presented under the hat of H2020 IAs on Innovative NBS for carbon neutral cities and improved air quality. The meeting was particularly fruitful as it provided an opportunity for the Project to establish contact with the following entities:

- Tesserae (Laura Colini & Lorenzo Tripodi)
- IN-HABIT (Marina Della Giusta & Giovanni Razzu)
- INTERLACE (Nicolas Salmon – YES Innovation)
- JUST Nature
- Upsurge

Each entity had a different perspective on the four areas of the Taskforce (Gender, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) and how they may be included in Innovative NBS for

¹ Translation: *Challenges of urban innovation in Valencia for the Horizon Europe programme in 2023-2024*

² Translation: Municipality of Valencia

³ Date to be confirmed.



carbon neutral cities and improved air quality, such as in DivAirCity, JUST Nature and Upsurge.

NetworkNature: is a resource for NBS communities and a hub for opportunities of creation for local, regional and international cooperation, and enhances the impact and dissemination of NBS. Out of this specific event, DivAirCity has developed an open communication channel with the entity and has contributed to the revision of the *EU R&I roadmap for NBS* publication, to be published in 2023. DivAirCity's Consortium members participated to several Taskforce meetings organised under the lead of DTI 4, specifically EcoWise to the Data and Knowledge Sharing Taskforce meeting on the 26th of January 2022, RTBF to the Communication taskforce meeting, and both UniverCities and Bipolaire to the co-creation one.

Four meetings and regular emails updates since the start of the Project have seen a cross exchange of information and knowledge sharing with the NetworkNature.

Upcoming activities

In order to widen and strengthen its participation in EU networks, DivAirCity is tentatively planning to participate to relevant institutional, mentoring programmes and thematic events, such as:

- The Zero Pollution Stakeholder Conference, which will take place on December 14th, 2022;
- The EU Green Week, which is expected to take place in May 2023;
- The European Research and Innovation Days, which is expected to take place in September 2023.

Activities with international networks

Current activities

The Project's WP8 focuses on Twinning, scalability, and internationalisation, with the intent to upscale the project's results and collaborations within Europe and internationally at different levels. The 5 cities (Aarhus, Bucharest, Castellon, Orvieto and Potsdam) are the starting point for the Project's upscaling at international level, to replicate the principles of more sustainable, healthier and inclusive cities, specifically in the post COVID-19 phase.

Within this context, scaling up at international level, by creating a community with an interdisciplinary and inclusive approach, has led to enhancing its outreach activities by contacting Erica Key (Future Earth) and the Belmont Forum. The two organisations are

⁴ DTI is also one of DivAirCity's Consortium member.



part of DivAirCity's Advisory board, together with other organisations such as UN Habitat and the InterAmerican Institute for Climate Change. To be reminded that CNR, who is part of the Consortium, is also a Belmont Forum Member too.

Furthermore, the Project has kick started the Twinning Programme and set the basis to replicate its goals with *InAfrika*, one of the Consortium's members, that will support its outreach to 3 African cities: Accra (Ghana), Freetown (Sierra Leone) and Nairobi (Kenya). The three cities have already experienced Twinning with EU cities in the past 15 years, and have the common requirement of being eligible for Horizon Europe funding (EC Europa, 2020), and wanting to reduce air pollution in the three Capitals.

Also, conversation to create knowledge sharing opportunities has started with *Ecoprune Africa* and the *Tianjin University*, to enhance the Project's scalability to 7 additional cities in 4 distinct continents: New York City and San Jose (North America), Sao Paulo (South America), Taipei and Shanghai (Asia), and Melbourne and Sydney (Australia).

Central America was also targeted by the Project's outreach and clustering activities. DivAirCity has liaised with Tecnológico Nacional de México (Veracruz's public University), the State Energy Agency of Veracruz, the City Council of Boca del Río and the Colegio de Ingenieros Mecánicos, Electricistas y ramas afines del Estado de Veracruz, from June 9-11 2022, during *XII CONGRESO INTERNACIONAL DE INSTALACIONES ELECTROMECAÑICAS PROGRAMA DE CONFERENCIAS* in Veracruz (Mexico). DivAirCity was represented by Elisa Peñalvo López (UPV) and Iván Valencia Salazar, who held a presentation of the Project and illustrated the different possibilities of replicability, and conducted discussions on how to participate the Project.

Excellent results were registered post to the event as a national ecosystem was created with the City of Veracruz, the Colegio de Ingenieros Mecánicos, Electricistas y ramas afines del Estado de Veracruz, and the local university, Tecnológico Nacional de México, with the possibility of further extending its participation to other associations and entities. Further to the open discussion with the ecosystem's participants, the City of Veracruz manifested its interest in being part of DivAirCity's Twinning programme.

[Upcoming activities](#)

The Twinning Programme is expected to start having more impact and speed up its implementing phase as of M12 to M48. It will further support its outreach and partnering into new clustering scenarios, and results will be presented in the following Cluster Reports, which will report the status of the work from M13 to M30.



Progress indicators

This is the first out of three Cluster Reports (D7.9, D7.10 and D7.11) envisaged by the Grant Agreement.

Clustering activities fall under WP7 Communication and Dissemination Activities.

With regards to the *Measures to maximise impact*⁵ in the GA, the Project has envisaged a measuring system to the progress made under the clustering activity, with the following progress indicators: *Grant indicators* and *Additional indicators*.

Grant indicators express the only GA requirement concerning clustering activities, while the latter are extra progress indicators included by DivAirCity, which may be summarised as following:

Table 2: Status of the progress indicators

Indicator	Indicator Type	Description	Target	Progress
Cluster meetings	Grant indicator	Organization of and participation to the yearly cluster meetings with sister projects	3	1
European Events	Additional indicator	Participation to the EU Week of Regions and Cities, to the EUSEW and other key EU events, including JPI UE events and the EESC Diversity Europe Group.	>10 EU international event 1 main event during the WR	2
International (events outside EU)	Additional indicator	Participation in events and workshops with Belmont Forum Inter America institute (hosting the BF secretariat) and UNOSCC in the City to Cities	>5 events Internationally + 1 joint main event organized with BF and IAI	1

⁵ GA DivAirCity PART B, 2.2 Measures to maximise impact, pp 48



Indicator	Indicator Type	Description	Target	Progress
		Partnership” Programmes (see LOS). Virtual events with African cities linked to the Covenant of Mayors.		
RTOs	Additional indicator	Link to existing EU projects and knowledge sharing Activities. Participation in events organized by twinning H2020 projects.	>5	2

Source: Partial reproduction and readaptation of table in Paragraph 2.2., b) Communication Activities, page 52-53.

Summary of findings and recommendations

As of the beginning of GA, DivAirCity has already interacted with sister projects and other entities at international level (both EU and global), laying the grounds for the future Twinning programme. The first informal outcomes are starting to be registered in terms of new potential participating cities to DivAirCity’s Twinning programme and the outreach activities carried forward with NON-EU entities are proving to be a valid tool to support the Projects upscaling and replicability.

Co-creation activities which fall under WP3, are also providing interesting linkages to new potential contacts, as the benefitting cities ecosystems may furnish possible new explicit and latent linkages to other existing projects, entities and cities interested in upscaling DivAirCity.

Evident conceptual proximity and theoretical contamination has been highlighted with the sister project, Just Nature. Furthermore, being in its first year of its implementation phase, it is starting to partner and create linkages, which may be developed within the next 12 months and up to the next Cluster Report.

Conclusion

The present document, First Report on Clustering Activities (D7.9) to the GA, highlights how the Project, through its Consortium members, has set the basis to the creation of linkages, cluster activities and liaison moments with other EU-funded projects, Institutions (EU and non), RTOs, Institutions and other relevant stakeholders.



During its first year, DivAirCity set the foundations for its clustering activities. A solid framework of cooperation has been established between DivAirCity and its “sister projects”. Collaboration with several other relevant EU-funded projects has taken place. DivAirCity’s participation in other EU and international networks has taken place and it is expected to continue throughout M13 to M30, picking up its first informal expression of interest to its replicability in non-EU cities.

Follow-up meetings are envisaged in the course of the second year of the Project’s life, and will be reported on the Second Report on Cluster Activities (D7.10), formally envisaged by the GA on M30.

The general objective of knowledge sharing on NBS has started to be carried forward with a positive impact considering the Project is in its first year of implementation.

First linkages and sharing of knowledge events have taken place, and follow-up meetings are envisaged in the course of the second year, and will be reported on the Second Report on Cluster Activities (D7.10), formally envisaged by the GA on M30.