

Green over grey? Exploring the potential of Green Infrastructure for enhancing urban adaptation to climate change

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While local governments are developing their strategies and plans on how to adapt to climate change, one of the key decisions to take will always be whether to 'remain grey' or 'go green'. While 'remaining grey' looks for solutions in conventionally built infrastructure, 'going green' refers to investing in - alternative or complementary - nature-based solutions.

Green Infrastructure (GI) not only enables ecosystem-based adaptation, it also holds multiple economic, environmental and societal benefits: It offers cost effective, more durable solutions; helps conserve nature and biodiversity; and safeguard and improve the quality of life of city dwellers through greening the city. Yet GI also raises complex challenges that directly derive from its main characteristics to which its multi-functionality, its significance across multiple policy areas, and its interaction with conventional infrastructure components belong.

While making reference to the European Union's strategies for adaptation and Green Infrastructure, this workshop will draw on some of the latest research of applying GI for climate change adaptation (CCA) in urban areas. Furthermore, a number of city cases will demonstrate how GI can work in practice and what can be learnt from successes and failures.

Participants in the workshop will therefore:

1. be made aware about the significance of ecosystem services in urban adaptation to climate change;
2. review and match these challenges with GI solutions;
3. discuss their multiple benefits;
4. learn about tools and methodologies for integrating GI solutions into a comprehensive strategy for a climate-proof and resilient city;
5. compare the cost-efficiency of innovative green versus conventional grey solutions; and
6. explore different options of financing GI solutions.

The workshop will be based on projects and publications in which GI for CCA plays a central role such as the GREEN SURGE project (*Green Infrastructure and Urban Biodiversity for Sustainable Urban Development and the Green Economy*, FP 7; 2013 - 2017; led by the University of Copenhagen; www.greensurge.eu) and the *Green Infrastructure Guide for Water Management*, recently published by UNEP in collaboration with UNEP-DHI, IUCN, WRI and TNC. This guide is particularly helpful in identifying GI solutions that support urban climate change adaptation in relation to water resources.

The interactive workshop will be based on a mutual learning process between researchers and practitioners and consist of several input presentations and creatively moderated group discussions.