

L I F E 0 3 T C Y / C Y / 0 1 9

URBAN GUARD

Capacity building for enabling the incorporation of sustainability parameters in urban spatial development and planning policies and practices through the use of indicators in Cyprus

SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

PROJECT PARTLY FUNDED BY THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION



LIFE PROGRAMME – Third Countries

PROJECT BENEFICIARY:



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR
DEPARTMENT OF TOWN PLANNING AND HOUSING

Scope of the URBANGUARD project

The relative lack of detailed spatial evidence, so essential for the transparent documentation of planning decisions, has often been discussed by authorities and stakeholders in the past. Within this on-going debate, it has been widely argued that current indicators and data are far from adequate in addressing the sustainability of territorial and urban policies. This insufficiency of admissible information concerns a wide range of issues, including:

- The assessment and evaluation of the extent, intensity and type of both land use guidance and development sprawl trends
- The capacity of designated residential areas, depending on permitted building ratios and the degree of their capitalisation, as well as population trends, housing market dynamics and the appraisal of desired residential quality characteristics
- The degree of adequacy of designated commercial and industrial areas, ensuring the availability of sufficient space for the sustainable growth of economic activities
- The efficiency of transport networks and the assessment of sustainable mobility opportunities based on traffic volume, commuting time, transport mode and other data at the appropriate spatial level
- The level of attainment of social and community service goals, as well as the adequacy of designated spaces for education, health, culture, recreation, public open space and green area networks, and the extent to which these serve local populations
- The adequacy of designated environmental areas for the protection of nature, biodiversity and landscapes, as well as information on the sustainable management of resources relevant to territorial development, such as water, waste, energy etc.
- The level of attainment of heritage preservation and neighbourhood regeneration goals, as well as information on the sustainable management of cultural heritage and landscapes

The need to support planning decisions with objective, reliable and published information and data is instrumental in enhancing public confidence both in relation to Development Plans in particular and in general to the planning system itself. Moreover, the need to carry out an *ex ante* Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for all published Development Plans now renders the collection of such data and the elaboration of environmental parameters imperative.

It is precisely for these reasons that the continuous collection, evaluation and assessment of sustainability indicators should be considered an elementary obligation of public bodies responsible for plan preparation, and should be made available to decision makers at all stages of policy elaboration. The development of the URBANGUARD planning tool has been promoted to fill this gap by providing the necessary spatial evidence for the improvement of the urban policy decision-making process.

Finally, it must be stressed that within this framework of policy analysis, planning synthesis, alternative scenario provision and decision support the margins for unjustifiable or empirical choices will be radically confined, gradually leading to better governance through the enhancement of the planning system's credibility and, consequently, the increased involvement of citizens in the planning process.

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