



## 5<sup>th</sup> Progress Meeting in Skellefteå

Officially started in September 2020, the EU-funded project **VARCITIES** aims to implement real, visionary ideas and to add value by establishing sustainable models for increasing the health and well-being of citizens who are exposed to diverse climatic conditions and challenges in and around Europe. Project partners met in Skellefteå, Sweden on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February and Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March at the occasion of the 5<sup>th</sup> progress meeting.

Representatives from the seven cities and 17 organisations that compose VARCITIES' consortium met face to face to review the progress made in the project over the past six months and discuss the implementation of the different visionary solutions developed in VARCITIES' seven Pilots. Currently, in its third year, the project is halfway through its co-implementation phase.



### First day

Project partners reviewed the work performed in the last 6 months. Each Work Package leader took the floor and gave an update on tasks implementation.



Prof. Denia Kolokotsa from the Technical University of Crete (TUC), VARCITIES's project coordinator, reviewed the general management of the project and the main milestones that were achieved.





Prospex Institute (PI) presented their activities regarding stakeholder engagement in the co-creation of the Visionary Solutions, with several study visits and Town Hall Events organised in five Pilots between November 2022 and January 2023. PI will continue to structure Pilots' engagement activities during the co-implementation phase to ensure that stakeholders' feedback is collected and taken into account.



Integrated Environmental Solutions (IES), SENSEEDGE and KORONA presented the progress made with regards to the ICT components of the projects, and CYCLOPOLIS presented the development status of the bike-sensors developed specifically for Chania's Pilot. All custom sensors developed within VARCITIES are now ready for deployment in Pilots, the middleware used to collect data is up and running and digital twins of Pilots have been generated. This work will feed into the development of the local Health & Well-Being Platform as well as the creation of VARCITIES VR/AR Go Nature application, which will support gamified dissemination of the project.



E2ARC, who leads the challenging task of guiding the implementation of 28 Visionary Solutions in seven Pilots presented the current stage of the process, now that the implementation framework is ready and the co-implementation phase has begun. While some Pilots are more advanced than others with the implementation of their solutions all are on track for successful implementation.



University of Malta presented their on-going work devising a methodology for Monitoring and Evaluation. This will be used to synthesise implementation data from Pilots across a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and to extrapolate findings. Identifying VARCITIES' challenges, successes and lessons learnt will support the develop a replication toolkit. To complete the discussion on evaluation of results, the EURAC team also presented the result of the social return on investment (SROI) analysis performed in Castelfranco Veneto's Pilot.



Following an outdoor lunch to discover Skellefteå's Pilot site, INLECOM and Crowdhelix updated partners on VARCITIES's innovation management strategy, which aims to support the commercialisation of the developed solutions and also to protect the project's IP. In the past six months INLECOM identified VARCITIES' products and services with patent potential, the key drivers beyond these innovations and the potential markets for successful commercialisation. Crowdhelix presented the progress made



with the Healthy Cities Helix, VARCITIES' key platform for commercial outreach, and their plan to organise Helix events to increase visibility of the (above-mentioned) results.



Finally, Crowdhelix, the ISOCARP Institute and University of Malta presented on-going communication and dissemination activities and their plan to ramp up dissemination towards specific target audiences now that the co-implementation phase of Visionary Solutions is at full speed.

### Second day

The second day was focused on the implementation of the Visionary Solutions and each Pilot city together with their Pilot experts were given the opportunity to present their progress. Castelfranco Veneto (Italy), Chania (Greece), Dundalk (Ireland), Leuven (Belgium), Gżira (Malta), Novo mesto (Slovenia) and Skellefteå (Sweden) discussed their updated designs for each Visionary Solutions, showcasing the real progress made on the ground following the co-design phase.



While each Pilot has different Visionary Solutions and faces different challenges, this second day was a great sharing experiences. This was also an opportunity for all partners to better understand local implementation successes and difficulties and discuss how to replicate the former and solve the latter.

To conclude VARCITIES' 5<sup>th</sup> Progress Meeting, project coordinator Prof. Denia Kolokotsa was happy to report that VARCITIES' successful implementation is on track. Project partners will be meeting again physically in September 2023 for the 6<sup>th</sup> Progress Meeting.



Stay tuned for the next updates on the project!

<https://www.varcities.eu/>

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