

MID-TERM PILOT STATUS REPORT

Tree Council at Hegyvidék: transparency and advocacy creating conditions for better governance - Municipality of Hegyvidék

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1. Activities

Please

1. summarize the progress of your pilot implementation
2. add a list of activities you have already performed for the implementation of the pilot
 - describe each activity you performed with a few sentences (this can include how, what, when, with whom was done - include references to the pilot activity concept - especially chosen elements of the model, planned measures and individual steps)
 - please use the individual steps you provided for the pilot activity concept to structure your activities in this chapter
3. add a list of activities you have not performed yet, but should have: please give an explanation about the delay and how the catch-up will be done.

Total chapter [2-4 pages] if you have a large number of activities keep the description shorter, if you have a fewer number of activities go in greater detail in describing. The length of the text is quite depending on how far you already got in your implementation, thus the option of a large range of possible page numbers

1. Brief summary

Despite the recognition at the municipality that urban green spaces are important not only for leisure and improving air quality, but also for advocating pro-environmental behaviour, there is no tree replacement strategy in Hegyvidék, and – what is perhaps more important – replacement and maintenance activities are rarely followed by proper communication from governmental bodies towards the public (e.g. sign-board informing residents why the cutting out was relevant; why the appropriate tree is /not/ resilient toward climate change). The main aim of the pilot action at Hegyvidék was to establish a Tree Council providing a visible and transparent answer for the above challenges. The Tree Council is not necessarily a formal and additional body, it also can be a “consultation forum”, or putting simpler, a communication channel. The aim of the pilot action is to create a mid-term strategy for the renewal of tree alleys in the district, a strategy that also consists strong elements related to how to communicate “about trees”, their replacement and “about climate change in connection with trees” (a communication plan).

The majority of the activities have not been fulfilled yet as most of them are planned for spring 2018. As conceptualisation of the Tree Council took some time, some related activities (point 3 and 7) will be slightly delayed. The pilot consists of 10 steps and the below numbers follow the structure of the pilot plan.

2. Activities performed

1. Situation analysis through interviews (how the recent cooperation works) / 2. internal meeting at the municipality to clarify and explain the Tree Council concept, to get commitment from colleagues and to prepare the first meeting

Relevant colleagues from the Green Office indeed discussed the concept of the Tree Council with all relevant actors: vice-mayor, key colleagues (especially Mr László Torma), and related institutions. The result of the (long) discussions is that there is no need for an additional administrative body, but the idea on having a communication plan along the tree-replacement strategy is strongly supported, however further internal sensitisation is also key, both in terms of the municipality and residents.

6. Development of a local strategy by the members of the Tree Council: ca. 5 year plan of the replacement of trees (where to put new ones, where to replace) and how to communicate the replacement process towards the public which is a completely new element within the existing cooperation

Municipality of Hegyvidék contracted the Szent István University – Faculty of Horticultural Science to create the above mentioned strategy (according to the contract they provide it until 31 March 2018). It does not consist of any communication elements, this part will be written by the Green Office until end April, based on and in line with the capacity building actions, and mainly the different stakeholder meetings to be organised after the publication of the strategy.

4. Capacity building 1. for municipal employees and 5. Capacity building for Tree Council members

A focus group discussion was organised in November 2017 with invited experts in REC to detect the possible directions and expected impact of the capacity building through analysing the training programme prepared by REC. As the Tree Council will not be an official body, the first training session on 8 February 2018 is dedicated to senior municipal officers (sensitisation training), while the second session (most likely on 1 March 2018, but due to the elections in the beginning of April the date might change) will be a practical training for head of units and municipal colleagues participating in the UGB project (including collecting inputs for the communication plan).

+1 - Study Visit for Czech colleagues

We organised a study visit for colleagues from Prague and we introduced several initiatives and policies linked to TWG3 and partly to TWG2: 1. tree replacement strategy and the related communication potential – realisation of the Tree Council (the TWG3 pilot itself); 2. challenges linked to multilevel governance; 3. how to use the already known tree measuring equipment along with the tree replacement strategy and the operation of the Tree Council (see the top picture about visiting one of the key green spaces of the district); 4. the Stewardship Programme including a visit to some spots (see the picture on the right with a spot in the background). We also took them to Kispest (district XIX of Budapest) highlighting the main features of one of the case studies we presented along the pilot concept (see the picture on the left below).



3. Activities not started

3. Establishment of the Tree Council, explaining its role and signing a joint declaration

It took some time to clarify the concept on the Tree Council thus the establishment has not been done yet. It will be elaborated after the second training and the publication of the strategy, and after the draft communication plan (thus in end April).

7. Selection of potential action areas through internal discussions and by channeling residents' opinions

It was planned for March-April, but it is likely to have a slight delay as the selection process can be started after having the communication plan. The deadline is mid-May.

8. Piloting the establishment of one Local Action Team.

This can be implemented in line with the pilot concept, in May 2018, or with a slight delay in June 2018 (creating an action plan for a selected area together with residents).

9. Open demonstration events

This can be implemented according to the pilot concept, in late June 2018. At least 5 small events on green playgrounds, other green spaces are foreseen, in line with the strategy and the communication plan.

10. Finalisation of the strategy and evaluation

The strategy will be finalised in July, after embedding inputs from the above pilot activities.

2. Status and Prospect

Total chapter [approx.2 pages] depending on how many difficulties you face

Evaluation indicators

Please add here those indicators defined in your pilot concept (Chapter 2), which you could fully/partly fulfill so far, such as: 'Number of events organized: 2' and describe the fulfillment of the indicator shortly!

- number of meetings and participants (so far): 30 persons during 5 events (internal meeting, REC meeting, Study Visit, two meetings with the university)

Budget

Please summarize the external, equipment and infrastructure costs occurred so far, please add extra lines, if needed!

<i>Costs description</i>	<i>Budget line (external/equipment/in- frastructure)</i>	<i>Status (procurement in pro- gress/contracted/paid)</i>	<i>Amount of the costs</i>
<i>Tree Replacement Strategy</i>	<i>external</i>	<i>contracted, but not paid yet</i>	<i>€3208,59 (1.000.760 Ft)</i>

Assessment

Give a short assessment on the implementation, whether it goes as planned or if you have to amend planned activities, whether you are on schedule or in a delay. Please describe what method/instrument has worked, what has not.

The only deviation has been detected so far is that the Tree Council had not been established yet. The reason behind is the long process of clarifying the concept. Now, along with the recent mid-term evaluation the clarification has been done, and a new time plan has to be created.

Challenges and amendments

State challenges, deviations and potential amendments to the original plan stated in the pilot activity concept that have already risen

The pilot action is on the right track, but it is very important to clarify the biggest challenge (and risk): the Tree Council can be an informal group, but it has to be a group of people and organisations (stakeholders) responsible for the maintenance of tree-alleys and rows in the district. These organisations have to understand the “educative opportunity” along the maintenance process. The result of the pilot is proper and systematised communication about trees and their importance along the maintenance tasks – this would be unique in Hungary. So less is more – no need for a new body, but there is a strong need to communicate along the maintenance works and motivate people in this way to change.

Potential future risks

State any risk for the implementation of future activities within the pilot implementation

See above under challenges.