



CONTENT

P01	Introduction
P08	Thematic Insights
P76	Study Visits
P102	Case Studies
P124	Final Reflections

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

With the rapid global growth of urbanisation and the dramatic rise of megacities, cities and regions have become important forces driving human development, responding to social, economic, and environmental challenges, and providing prosperity, innovation, culture, and entrepreneurship. At the same time, many cities and regions are under tremendous pressure to transform, and local governments are committed to ensuring the fulfilment of the needs of citizens in such areas as urban environment, energy, transportation, communications, health, and education. Cities and regions are rooted in a common ecosystem and share resources. They become the driving force of social-, economic-, and environmental-related transitions.

To promote the inter-city and regional cooperation, learning and innovation between the EU and its key partner countries, based on the successful experience of the International Urban Cooperation (IUC 2016-2020), the International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC 2021-2023) programme was launched. Composed of two sections, "Inter-city cooperation on sustainable urban development" and "inter-regional cooperation on innovation", the programme supports pilot cities and regions in implementing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the local development agenda through an intensified exchange of experience and knowledge. The International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) is a global network that brings together 138 cities and 50 regions from 36 countries to collaborate with the public and private sectors, research and innovation institutions, civil society organisations and citizens to promote an inclusive and win-win approach towards sustainable urban development and regional innovation.

This publication shares the outcomes of cooperative activities in IURC-China, where the pilot cities and regions from the EU and China exchanged experience and knowledge in three thematic networks: Ecological Transition and Green Deal, Urban and Regional Renewal and Social Cohesion, and Innovative Sustainable Ecosystems. In thematic clusters, pragmatic cooperation and strategic partnerships were established to explore common solutions and create a sustainable future for all.

IURC-China Pilot Cities and Regions in China

IURC-China Pilot Cities and Regions in the EU

- Regions
- Cities



Thematic Clusters

Cross-cutting Challenges



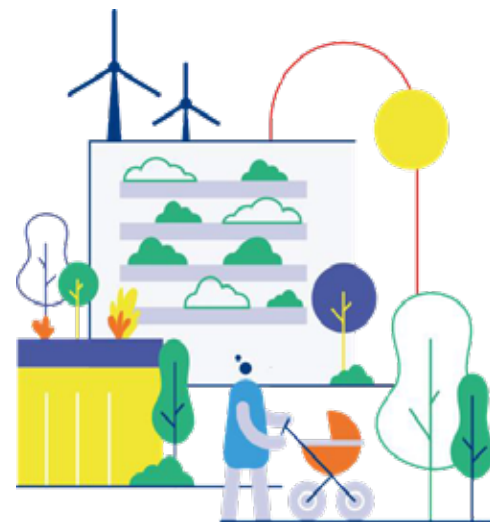
Digital Transition & Smart City



Climate Change & Energy Transition



Post-COVID Recovery – social justice and social inclusion



- Circular Economy, Waste Management
- Nature Based Solutions, Greening, Water Management
- Sustainable Urban Agriculture, Healthy Food, Urban Gardens
- Renovation Wave, Decarbonized & Energy, Efficiency in Buildings



- Sustainable Urban Agriculture, Agrofood Chain, Foods Systems
- Technologies 4.0

- Urban Agendas / planning, SUD Strategies, Public Space, Urban Model
- Mobility & Transport, Street for People, Superblocks, Metropolitan Connections
- Urban Poverty, Deprived Neighbourhoods, Housing, Social Cohesion



- Industry 5.0, Bigger Competitiveness, Productive Diversification

- Tourism & Culture
- Health, Life Science, Silver Economy, Bio Economy
- Education, Jobs & Skills, Innovation Centres, Business Clusters



- Tourism & Culture, Diversification-Slow Food & Supplies
- Regional Innovation & Smart and Sustainable Specialization Strategies(RIS 4)
- Education, Jobs & Skills



- Greening Industry
- Greening Agriculture
- Greening Services
- Greening Infrastructure

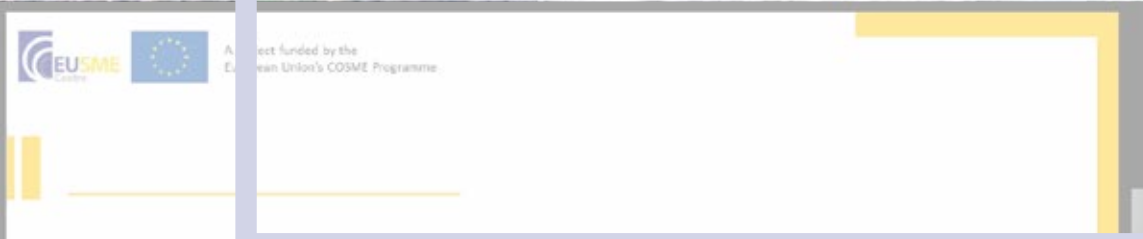


THEMATIC INSIGHTS

Thematic Insights: The Knowledge Exchange Network

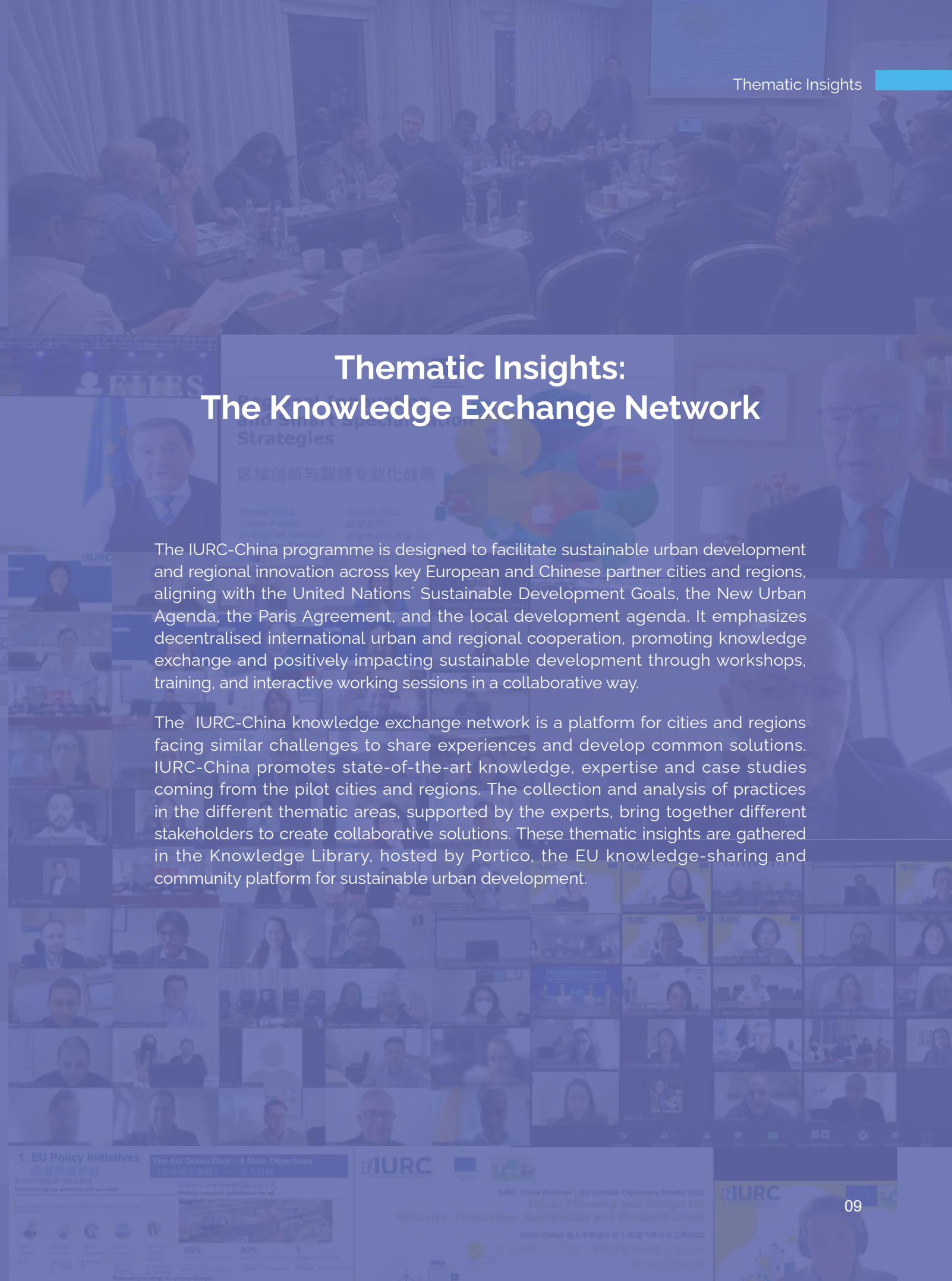
The IURC-China programme is designed to facilitate sustainable urban development and regional innovation across key European and Chinese partner cities and regions, aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the local development agenda. It emphasizes decentralised international urban and regional cooperation, promoting knowledge exchange and positively impacting sustainable development through workshops, training, and interactive working sessions in a collaborative way.

The IURC-China knowledge exchange network is a platform for cities and regions facing similar challenges to share experiences and develop common solutions. IURC-China promotes state-of-the-art knowledge, expertise and case studies coming from the pilot cities and regions. The collection and analysis of practices in the different thematic areas, supported by the experts, bring together different stakeholders to create collaborative solutions. These thematic insights are gathered in the Knowledge Library, hosted by Portico, the EU knowledge-sharing and community platform for sustainable urban development.



Interest of EU SMEs in the Chinese market and role of EU SME Centre

- China market entry strategies
- Tips to prepare for the Chinese market and avoid mistakes



IURC-China Webinar

Tourism & Culture in Green and Digital Transition

04 March 2022

This webinar sought to discuss how cities and regions achieve green and digital transformation and resilience of the tourism & culture sector.

Strategies for Smart and Sustainable Tourism

- 1 Implementing the regulations in environmental objectives, digitalization
- 2 Tackling the specific local challenges, e.g., climate mitigation and adaptation needs, the infrastructure needed to improve sustainability, pressures on biodiversity, water resources or pollution
- 3 Focus on specific local strengths: natural resources, cultural heritage and the potential to provide unique and authentic tourism experiences
- 4 Inclusiveness and accessibility, including for persons with disabilities
- 5 Supporting SMEs and cultural & creative industries in their key role in the tourism ecosystem



Our strategy for Bielsko-Biala focuses on harmonising green and digital transformations to elevate our tourism and cultural offerings. We aim to showcase our ski and spa resorts, mountain trails, and gliding experiences while digitising our rich cultural heritage through 3D technologies and films. Our initiatives are designed to foster sustainable tourism, protect our cultural heritage, and promote sport tourism.



- Jan Sienkiewicz
Proxy Regional Development Agency
in Bielsko-Biala



Yangzhou

The historical city Yangzhou, known for its canals and exquisite cuisine, has made efforts to strengthen the green development of cultural tourism. Fangxiang Town has been selected as a national rural tourism village and the 2021 International Horticulture Expo showcased the importance of horticulture and greening for future urban planning and the development of sustainable lifestyles.

Future perspectives on cooperation with Europe include:

- Cultural exchange activities
- Joint online and offline tourism programmes
- Learning of international standards in tourism and related services



Bielsko-Biala

Bielsko-Biala shared its best practices on digitalization of the tourism sector. Through modern 2D, 3D and virtual technology, innovative projects have been carried out.

The goals of digitalization projects:

- Preserving valuable cultural assets
- Increase tourist attractiveness
- Develop sustainable solutions
- Unite common culture and cultural assets and heritage

Cooperation potentials lie in:

- Organizing partnering festivals
- Common promotion and project development of Active Tourism
- Preservation of cultural heritage



Case studies for green and smart transformation of the tourism & culture sector



Beijing

The city presented the digital platforms: "Beijing Tourism Expert", "Beijing Trade Connect B2B Hub", and "Webinars and online Roundtables", with e-learning resources, trade information and suggestions. Official digital certificates are being awarded, to enhance the quality and digitalization of tourism.

Example of the Forbidden City marketing matrix:

- Digital marketing through social media
- Video marketing
- Integration of online and offline methods

Beijing also focuses on the development of a sharing economy in the tourism industry.



Ioannina

This city has gained experience in establishing modern information platforms and cooperation between private organizations and municipal institutions.

Digital applications in tourism development:

- Virtual guided tours
- Online Campaigns / SEM

Additionally, sustainable business tourism is being promoted by establishing a Green Science and Technology Park.



Chengdu

Chengdu presented its best practices on the development of Tianfu Digital Cultural and Creative City, which aims to put new innovations and green development into practice.

The ecological environment is important in the design of the area, as well as creating a smart city,

Cooperation perspectives:

- Nature-based solutions for urban development
- Support enterprises in the innovative ecosystem
- Develop smart living communities



Region of Valencia

Valencia was appointed as European Capital of Smart Tourism in 2022 for its efforts to promote smart tourism, networking and the development of innovative, sustainable and inclusive tourism.

The focus cooperation areas:

- Improving sustainable and climate-consciousness
- Inclusive and accessible tourism
- Business opportunities of digital tourism



Kunming

Kunming has broad experience in creating digital solutions, such as cloud services, online marketing platforms, intelligent application scenarios and virtual reality displays. These developments concentrate on media, supply and demand.

Potential cooperation areas:

- Cultural exchange
- Joint tourism programme
- Introducing international top brands in culture and tourism industry



Case studies for the balance between tourism, cultural heritage, and creativity

A greener and more resilient tourism ecosystem has synergies with the sectors:

- 1 Agri-food for improving food systems and services, creating reliable local supply chains and reducing food waste
- 2 Construction for building and renovating more sustainable and resilient tourism infrastructures
- 3 Cultural and creative industries for developing innovative tourism based on cultural heritage, traditions, arts and authentic cultural experiences
- 4 Digital industries for developing digitalized processes, use of AI and new technologies, empowering consumers' sustainable choices and data-based innovative tourism services
- 5 Health for ensuring access to healthcare
- 6 Mobility, transport and automotive for developing sustainably and reducing emissions
- 7 Proximity, Social economy and Civil security for platform-based services and providing local transportation, food, and cultural and active tourism experiences
- 8 Retail for providing more sustainable and quality shopping opportunities and contributing to the livelihood and attractiveness of tourist areas



Santiago de Compostela

This city leads the BODAH project, which stands for Big and Open Data for the development of new processes towards Atlantic Heritage management.

Objectives:

- Stimulating innovation and competitiveness
- Strengthening the transfer of innovation to facilitate the emergence of new products, services and processes
- Promote research and innovation activities in public research centers and centers of competence including networking

Development of transnational knowledge and strategy is of key importance, just as the identification of good international practices.

Haikou

Three core concepts dominate Haikou's vision on how to boost sustainable tourism development and attract innovation and creation:

- Cultural heritage protection and promotion
- Intangible cultural heritage protection
- Exchange of cultural relics and artworks

In order to achieve a balance between tourism, cultural heritage and creativity, several projects and policies have been created.

Cooperation potentials:

- Sharing knowledge on best practices
- Identifying local initiatives
- Developing international standards and frameworks



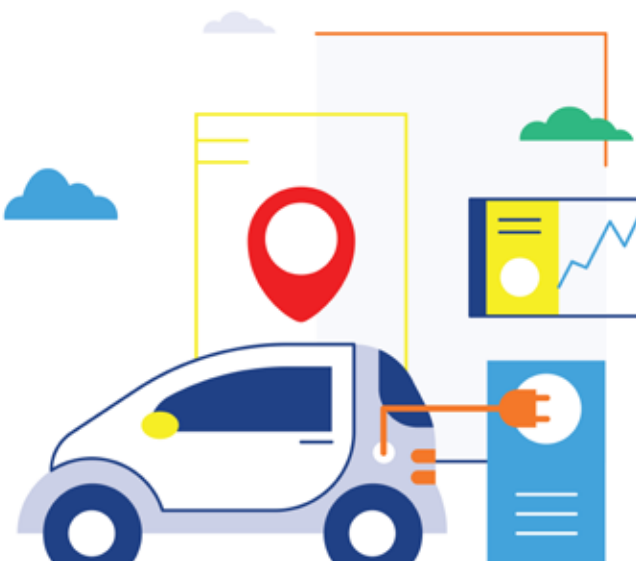
Case studies for the balance between tourism, cultural heritage, and creativity

“ Digitalization creates new models and forms of businesses. Digital solutions and the use of big data can help us achieve the transition to a green, digital and resilient tourism and culture sector. ”

— Kunming

“ Our strategy focuses on leveraging our cultural heritage and green technology to foster tourism and economic growth, by creating job opportunities and drive digital applications in tourism, including virtual guided tours and online campaigns. These efforts, combined with our centuries-old traditions infused with new energy, aim to welcome visitors from around the globe to experience Ioannina's unique blend of history and modernity. ”

— Alexia Gidari
Municipality of Ioannina



Nuovo Circondario Imolese - Bologna



Best practices of this Italian region include the Joint Green Design Research Center Imola-China, the creation of a network of urban parks, the structural conservation of compositional biodiversity and creating innovative ideas on connecting culture and nature in cities.

Areas for international cooperation:

- Nature based solutions, ecological transition and Green Deal
- Smart and sustainable cities with technology and culture as pillars
- Green design and automotive research center

Liuzhou



Liuzhou has experience with boosting tourism through cultural heritage.

The city strives to

- Safeguard and pass on intangible cultural heritage
- Stimulate cultural creativity to design new intangible heritage IP
- Develop cultural heritage tourism products
- Establish a cultural tourism city

Western Greece Region



The region shared its good practices on tourism, culture, creativity and entrepreneurship. This comprises political commitment to strengthening the creative industry and culture in the area, supporting creative enterprises, encouraging smart specialization and the use of big and open data to improve tourism management.

Cooperation proposal:

- Promote cultural and creative regional ecosystems
- Share best practices on cultural heritage
- Develop tourism management through technology

Case studies for the balance between tourism, cultural heritage, and creativity



Zhengzhou

Zhengzhou's strong point is education to foster science and technology. Combined with rich cultural heritage, education teaches people to become more creative.

The city hosted the 2021 China's International Mayor's Forum on Tourism to discuss sustainable urban tourism and share knowledge and solutions on the subject.

Cooperation areas:

- Cultural tourism exchange
- Research and development
- Sustainable tourism innovation



Murcia

Murcia has successfully developed concrete action plans to achieve green and digital transformation and resilience of the tourism and cultural sector.

- Street invasion, atomization and cultural reactivation: revising public space, incentivizing peri-urban areas for culture consumption, structured public cultural procurement model
- Cultural hubs for innovation, modernization and enhancement (CHIME): strengthen production and innovation, support local economy and cultural offer, activate local networks

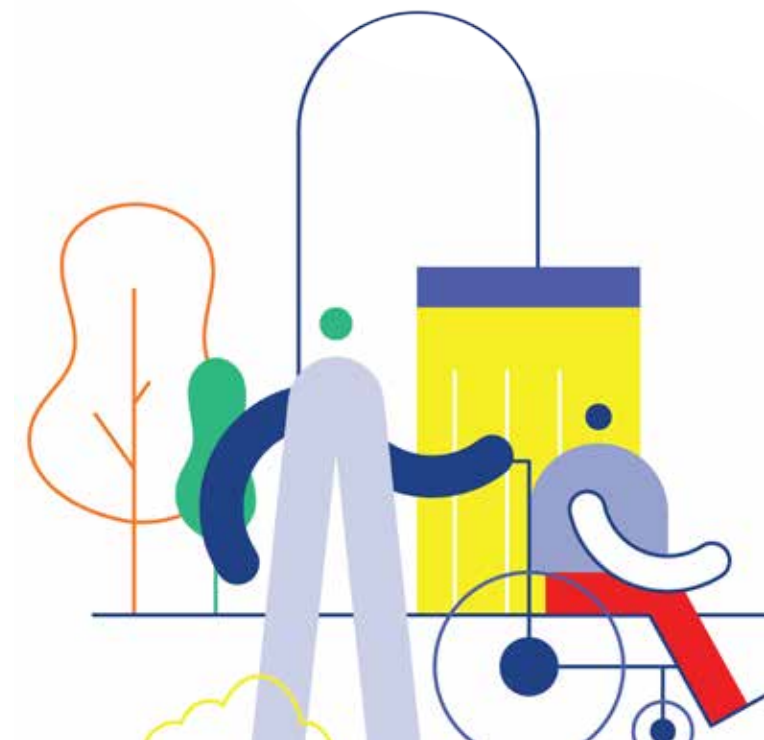


Lazio Region

Lazio region has experience with restoring and preserving rural heritage and landscapes, with the goal to promote sustainable and efficient tourism and cultural fruition of this important asset. The improvement of rural tourism has successfully been promoted through numerous enterprises.

Cooperation focus points:

- Rural tourism and cultural- natural heritage
- Link rural development with economic development
- Policies and regulations on heritage restoration and preservation



Local opportunities

“ Cultural heritage recovery is one way to develop sustainable and resilient tourism. Additionally, it creates opportunities to educate young people on their cultural heritage and link green cultural development to the local economy. ”

— Lazio Region

Challenges

“ The cultural sector is always hit hard in crises, so we must focus on post Covid recovery to make sure this sector does not die out. ”

— Murcia

IURC-China Webinar
Nature-based Solutions
 25 March 2022

This webinar focused on how cities and regions can create sustainable low-impact urban areas inspired and supported by nature.

What are Nature-based Solutions?

Solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions. They benefit biodiversity and support the delivery of a range of ecosystem services. They are:

- 1 Cost-effective: NBS projects develop replicable intervention and financial models
- 2 Providing environmental, social and economic benefits: citizens can participate in the co-design and co-creation of their cities, livability of cities improves, new jobs are being created
- 3 Helping to build resilience: NBS projects carry out innovative research that leads to open scientific knowledge and green growth



"Integrating blue-green infrastructure at the local level has a significant impact on people's health and the prosperity of cities."

— **Sebastien Goethals**
 IURC-China expert

"Nature is a vital ally in the fight against climate change. Planting trees and deploying green infrastructure will help us to cool urban areas and mitigate the impact of natural disasters."

— **EU diversity Strategy for 2030**



Sebastien Goethals
 Cluster manager of IURC-China

Both Europe and China have long histories and broad experience when it comes to urban planning, so it is interesting to learn from each other. Contributing to healthier, greener cities and creating synergies to improve urban metabolisms are common goals.

China has launched the national Sponge City Program (SCP) as a holistic, ecosystem-based approach to address urban water and environmental issues. The program is characterized by

- low impact development methods combined with grey infrastructures
- large-scale flood control projects
- rehabilitation of ecologies
- reduction of run-off and pollution

In Europe, efforts have been made to create integrated resilient streets and urban ponds within urban canal networks. Transforming streets and public spaces into Blue-Green Infrastructure (BGI) can absorb the impact of cloudburst events. Spatial design plays a key role in Europe's strategy to create resilience.

Case studies for integrating nature-based solutions in urban areas

Suggestions on the NBS Cooperation Areas

Some NBS cooperation areas are given higher priority including:

- Urban green spaces and green infrastructure
- Nature-based solutions for flood-drought risks mitigation
- Technologies for water management (e.g., black and odorous water management)
- NBS for healthy ecosystem (e.g., Biodiversity, food and water security, air quality)



Nuovo Circondario Imolese-Bologna

NCI-Bologna has launched several projects regarding NBS:

- Networks of urban parks make the city more livable and mitigate the heat in central areas
- Urban reforestation reduces pollution and improves the climate situation
- ECO industrial parks including greenery promote environmental quality

Challenges include fighting climate change through NBS and bringing back biodiversity.

Cooperation perspectives lie in sharing knowledge on creating greener cities and experimenting with NBS industrial symbiosis.

Stuttgart

Multifunctionality is key in developing NBS projects with three main principles:

- Multifunctional use of space
- Generate synergy effects
- Create added value

Green belts and corridors reduce heat stress and air pollution, create an interconnected network of ecological value and foster recreation.

Lessons learnt based on data from their regional climate atlas are the localization of regional hotspots and prioritizing where climate change adaptation should primarily take place.



Haikou

Haikou has broad experience in strengthening ecological urban planning, preserving wetland and biodiversity, accelerating the promotion of new energy vehicles and planning a resilient water supply and drainage system.

One goal is to build a world-class zero-carbon new city.

Future cooperation:

- Sharing valuable experiences and practices
- Developing low-carbon industrial parks
- Cooperating in ecological conservation and restoration
- Collaborating to promote new energy vehicles



IURC-China Webinar

Circular Cities and Regions Initiative

25 March 2022

This webinar explored different perspectives and methods of planning, designing and implementing a circular economy at the local level

The Circular Economy in the 14th Five-year Plan of China

The plan focuses on industry, social life and agriculture.

- 1 Build a resource recycling industrial system and improve resource utilization efficiency by promoting green design of key products, strengthening cleaner production in key industries.
- 2 Build a recycling system of waste materials and build a resource recycling society by improving the recycling network of waste materials.
- 3 Deepen the development of agricultural circular economy and establish a circular agricultural production mode.



The EU's new circular action plan

The action plan established concrete and ambitious actions, with measures covering the whole life cycle: from production and consumption to waste management and the market for secondary raw materials and a revised legislative proposal on waste.

- 1 Make sustainable products the norm in the EU
- 2 Empower consumers and public buyers
- 3 Focus on the sectors that use most resources and where the potential for circularity is high such as: electronics and ICT, batteries and vehicles, packaging, plastics, textiles, construction and buildings, food, water and nutrients
- 4 Ensure less waste
- 5 Make circularity work for people, regions and cities
- 6 Lead global efforts on circular economy



Sebastien Goethals

Cluster manager of IURC-China

Circular economy can be defined as an economic system of exchange and production which aims at increasing the efficiency of resource use and decreasing the impact on the environment, while developing the well-being of individuals.

China has integrated the circular economy in the 14th five-year plan. Opportunities for developing a circular economy in Chinese cities have been identified in five focus areas:

- Built environment
- Mobility
- Nutrition
- Textiles
- Electronics

The EU introduced the new circular action plan and emphasizes that a circular policy is beneficial for the economy, the environment, and the citizens and will additionally reduce the need for resources.



Case studies for planning, designing and implementing circular economy at the local level



Fuenlabrada

Participation of all stakeholders is of key importance for this city, which focuses on four areas in circular economic strategy:

- Urban development
- Circular economy
- Natural environment
- Energy efficiency

Several action plans have been developed on urban regeneration, reducing emissions, recycling waste and creating greener space to support future development of a sustainable city.

Key actions:

- Improve energy efficiency awareness through education
- Engage communities for resilient urban development



Lazio Region

Lazio region has experience in advanced technologies. The region launched a pilot project on digital and precision farming to increase sustainability and competitiveness in the agri-food sector.

Agri-food waste is being used to produce bioplastic for innovative packaging solutions, create a natural sun filter and develop bio-ink.

Opportunities:

- Using advanced technologies for precision farming
- Developing theoretical frameworks
- Integrating the academic system with production and policy makers



Suzhou

Suzhou presented its best practice on the circular development model of modern agriculture and animal husbandry.

Challenges:

- Striking a balance between urbanization and agricultural production
- Waste recycle management and ecological performance control

Potential for cooperation lies in:

- Creating synergies to share knowledge
- Developing tools and guidelines for action plans
- Supporting innovative initiatives



Liuzhou

Liuzhou shared its best practices on green industrial transformation, with increased resource reutilization and minimized waste and emissions.

Efforts have been made in:

- Energy efficiency
- Low carbon energy mobility and construction
- Development of city parks

Further steps can be made in promoting new energy vehicles, carrying out projects of forest city, sponge city and recycled water utilization and establishing a pollution weather monitoring system.

Case studies for planning, designing and implementing circular economy at the local level



Suggestions for Circular Economy Cooperation Areas

Some circular economy cooperation areas are given higher priority including:

- Waste prevention and reduction
- Waste management, increasing recycling and upcycling (household waste, plastic, e-waste etc.)
- Sustainable product design (e.g. eco-design)
- Energy efficiency in urban districts
- Industrial symbiosis



Murcia

Murcia implemented a smart city strategy and shared best practices on their value waste project, which turns urban biowaste in either food, feed or bio-based fertilizer.

Challenges:

- Lack of awareness
- Municipal ordinance

Future focus lies on the sustainability of urban spaces, which includes:

- Increasing energy efficiency
- Optimizing the urban system
- Improving resilient, self-sufficient and connected green spaces

Valencia Region

Valencia region shared best practices in industrial symbiosis. An industrial observatory has been created to promote the concept of circular economy, support synergies and understand barriers and problems.

The main goal is to make industrial symbiosis feasible and a large pillar of the circular economy.

Cooperation potential:

- Exchange good practices
- Promote innovative projects
- Collaborate on research and development



Zhengzhou

Zhengzhou has broad experience in dealing with urban trash and green utilization. They built an integrated network of urban trash disposal as a holistic environmental service provider.

Challenges:

- Increasing education on environmental protection
- Implementing comprehensive environmental governance

Future steps:

- Strengthening cooperation
- Focus on waste energy power generation
- Recycling and reuse in the solid waste industry
- Comprehensive ecological restoration



IURC-China Webinar

Technologies 4.0, Industry 5.0 & Innovation

29 April 2022

This webinar sought to share views, policy initiatives and best practices to achieve the transition to a sustainable, human-centric and resilient industry.

What is Industry 5.0?

Industry 5.0 as a concept focuses on comprehensive innovation in deciding factors not only in economic or technological, but also environmental, social, and fundamental rights' dimensions.

A sustainable, human-centric and resilient industry places the production limits of the planet and the well-being of the worker at the center of the production process and uses new technologies to provide prosperity beyond jobs and growth while respecting the production limits of the planet.

New technologies supporting the transition to a green and smart industry

- Internet of Things
- Industrial Software
- Robotics
- Additive Manufacturing (3D Print)
- Cloud Computing
- New Material
- Big Data Analysis
- Digital Twin
- Augmented Reality
- 5G
- Green Energy



Yuanlai GUO

Cluster manager of IURC-China

In the process of promoting green industrial development and integrating smart solutions into the digital economy, both Europe and China emphasize

- technological innovation
- humanized improvement
- green sustainability

China has launched the 14th Five-Year Plan, which focuses on R&D, shortening the production cycle of products and promoting pilot projects. Other key topics include the stimulation of talent, building innovation centers and protecting intellectual property.

The policy Made in China 2025 aims at creating a smart manufacturing industry.

Europe proposed the concept of "Industry 5.0". The goal is to reposition the role of workers, improve the utilization of industrial energy resources, strengthen the use of green technology and integrate manufacturing digitalization. Eventually, resilient industrial chains and supply chains need to be built.

Cooperation potentials exist on industrial parks, through university exchanges, between enterprises and on capital and funding.

Best practices on sustainable technologies and industrial innovation

Digitalization has greatly improved the efficiency of urban management and provided strong support for industrial development.

— Liuzhou

Teaching is the foundation of future development.

— Bielsko Biala



Sisak Moslavina County

Sisak Moslavina County has strengthened its competitiveness in the fields of

- Technology
- Industry
- Innovation

Cooperation areas within the strong gaming industry have been detected:

- Systematic education and practice-oriented teaching
- Exchange of experience and best practices
- Use of Artificial Intelligence for game production
- Develop a safe and secure environment through green technology



Guangzhou Development District

Several projects have been developed to promote industrial digital transformation. The promotion of 5G technology, application, industry and platform in an all-round way is a key focus point.

Main goals:

- Promoting high quality development of manufacturing industry
- Improving the service level of industrial internet
- Promoting digital application integration and innovation

Cooperation perspectives:

- Strengthen intergovernmental exchanges
- Knowledge exchange on digital laws and regulations
- Exchange best practices on training talent



Sofia

Sofia shared its best practices on energy efficiency, digitalization, innovation and sustainability. Several pilot projects have been launched to test technological solutions related to urban challenges, which focus on environment, education, e-government, innovations and entrepreneurship.

Challenges:

- Implementing smart urban solutions to promote a healthier future
- Utilizing big data to generate policies

Cooperation potential:

- Strengthen capacities through sharing best practices
- Supporting smart solutions on digitalization

Wuhan

Wuhan has experience in:

- information infrastructure
- industrial digitalization
- software service industry

Continuous improvements on policies are carried out to advance the integration of digital technology in the real economy.

Focus areas in the service industry include smart logistics, e-commerce retail, online education, online medical care, smart tourism, online design and business exhibitions.

Cooperation areas:

- Establish urban partnerships
- Policy exchange/dialogue
- Support university initiatives
- Deepen cooperation in talent training



Best practices on sustainable technologies and industrial innovation



Mannheim

Mannheim is a city of inventions and innovations. Initiatives on mobility and energy have been developed, with the goal to create a climate neutral future.

Strengths lie in the fields of green tech, medical technology and a favorable start-up ecosystem.

Cooperation perspectives:

- Support expanding tech companies
- Create technological solutions to achieve climate goals
- Integrate scientific research in new business models



Valencia Region

Valencia Region presented strengths in digitalization, their start-up ecosystem, dynamic innovation and research ecosystem. Many startups specialize in AI, Big Data, IoT and Cloud Computing.

Keys to success include:

- Educational system
- Support of the public administration
- International events

Cooperation areas:

- Collaboration between companies and professionals
- Support entrepreneurs and innovative SMEs



Chongqing Liangjiang New District

Liangjiang New District has three innovation platforms:

- Digital economy industrial park
- Collaborative innovation zone
- Lijia Yuelai smart park

Focus lies on big data, industrial internet, AI, block chain and scientific research cooperation.

Challenges:

- Strengthening production chains

Cooperation areas:

- Building research institute platforms
- Exchange talent and knowledge



Zhengzhou

Broad experience has been gained in creating smart factories and developing digital solutions to establish a healthy industrial ecology.

5G plays a key role in quality checks, data collection and increasing productivity.

Strong capabilities:

- Cloud computing
- Big Data
- Information system integration

Perspectives for cooperation:

- Jointly enhance industry 5.0 development
- Share best practices on governance tools



Ljubljana Urban Region

Ljubljana shared best practices on smart factories, digital innovation hubs, green transformation and artificial intelligence.

Challenges:

- Utilizing systems innovation to generate radical transformations in order to fight climate change
- Raise competitive advantages in the industry based on digitalization

Cooperation potential:

- Create synergies between academia and companies
- Share systemic and strategic solutions

Suggested Cooperation Directions

- 1 Industrial policy exchange
- 2 Technology 4.0 or Industry 5.0 case study
- 3 Cross-border training, workshops
- 4 Industry Park co-construction
- 5 Industrial upgrading experience sharing
- 6 Talent training and mentorship
- 7 Open innovation platform cooperation
- 8 SME joint incubation
- 9 Joint exhibition and conference
- 10 Joint industrial technology activities



Liuzhou

Three key strategic sectors have been identified:

- Industrial transition
- Automated manufacturing
- Technology in Green City

Several projects have been launched, such as tests on remote driving and remote operation and the promotion of unmanned logistics.

Technology has supported the resumption of work and production during the pandemic.

Potential for cooperation:

- Exchanges on advanced green technologies
- Joint pilots on cross cutting themes
- Enhance the implementation of carbon neutrality



Western Greece Region

This Western Greece Region holds a leading position in advanced materials, nano-technology, microelectronics and bio-products and focuses on design, simulation, software and integrated circuits.

Challenges:
Accelerate blue economy development to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Cooperation potential:

- Create linkages to exchange innovation concepts
- Support relevant initiatives towards a more sustainable industry
- Promote exploration of Blue Growth opportunities



Beijing

Beijing E-town has been created to build a visionary and happy city. The Economic-Technological Development Area aims to enhance core technology competitiveness and develop a leading ecosystem of technology and innovation with focus on:

- new generation information technology
- new energy smart car
- biotechnology & big health
- robotics & smart manufacturing

Future perspectives:

- Create a "global talent attraction field"
- Link the innovation chain, industrial chain and supply chain system
- Improve overall capacity for the commercialization of scientific research



Bielsko-Biala

As a digital innovation hub, Bielsko-Biala has launched several projects to promote industry 4.0 related activities. These include:

- 3D technologies
- Artificial Intelligence
- Augmented Reality
- Blockchain and cyber security

Key focus lies on education to develop new skills and innovative ideas. Additionally, start-ups are being heavily supported.

Cooperation potential:

- Set up common projects based on competencies
- Share best practices on talent recognition
- Cooperate in design, testing and production

IURC-China Webinar

Regional Innovation & Smart and Sustainable Specialization Strategies

02 June 2022

This webinar seeks to discuss the regional innovation strategies, domains of interest and flagship projects of European regions and Chinese cities in order to identify areas for cooperation.

Regional Innovation in the EU and China similarities and differences

- 1 The EU regions and Chinese provinces share similar objectives and challenges, including Green Recovery, Decarbonisation, Digital Transition, Circular Economy, and Internationalisation.
- 2 The territorial dimension: Difference in size and definition of regions
- 3 Prioritisation: Differences in the role of the different stakeholders, including authorities
- 4 Entrepreneurial Discovery Process
- 5 Role of universities and research centers
- 6 Research capacity
- 7 Role of civil society
- 8 Interregional cooperation

“Cooperation at the regional and local levels between Europe and China in the field of innovation, therefore, in addition to focusing on sectors, must primarily take into account these cross-cutting challenges that are common to both parties.”

— Ronald Hall



Ronald Hall

Senior Advisor, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission

Innovation plays an important role in regional competitiveness, realized through emerging important components.

The regional policy framework of the Art. 174 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and regulations on the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund aim for a more competitive, smarter, greener, more connected, and social Europe, which is closer to local citizens for integrated sustainable development.

The new Smart Specialisation Platform provides advice to EU countries and regions for the design and implementation of their Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3), connecting regional ecosystems:

- Industrial Modernisation
- Agri-food
- Energy
- Sustainable blue economy



Amadeo Jensana

Cluster manager of IURC-China

Regional innovation is a bottom-up and inclusive process, centred on entrepreneurial discovery. The strategy embraces a broad view of innovation, supporting technological and social innovation, and calls for constant review and agile response. The scope of innovation includes not only science and technology, but also design, services, business models, and social solutions.

The EU-China cooperation opportunities:

- Traditional industries: transformation
- Regional inequalities: Leaders and followers
- Multi-stakeholder involvement
- Interregional cooperation
- Civil society
- Green dimension of smart specialization
- Incorporation of SGDs
- Funding and monitoring
- Post COVID19: Recovery and transition
- Strong contact point
- Action plans

Case studies: place-based strategies in innovation ecosystems



Yangzhou

Yangzhou is a major transportation hub due to its location at the junction of different bodies of water including the Grand Canal. Yangzhou seeks to protect, develop and utilize the Grand Canal heritage and to cooperate with European canal cities:

- Integral Protection of Cultural Heritage
- EU-China cultural dissemination
- Ecological Evaluation and Protection of Canal areas
- Canal Tourism development



South Bohemia Region

South Bohemia's goals in the Smart Specialization Strategy are to support Smart solutions in public administration, entrepreneurship, boost innovation and research and encourage the upgrading of traditional industries. The region also stands out for having one of the most important water reserves in the Czech Republic, with numerous canals and ponds crossing its territory.



Haikou

Haikou's strongest areas are tourism and services, agriculture, and strategic hi-tech industries. Development of the port, international trade and the blue economy are strategic sectors. There is strong interest in:

- low-carbon industry and service sector
- Circular city
- Wetland restoration and biodiversity conservation
- Attract green and low-carbon companies

Western Greece Region

The Western Greece region supports its place-based strategies in innovation ecosystems. the region has set up horizontal priorities:

- Sustainable Energy
- Information & Communication Technologies
- Sustainable Growth and Circular Economy

and vertical priorities:

- Agrofood and Food Industry 4.0
- Materials, Microelectronics and Manufacturing
- Tourism, Cultural and Creative Industries



Suzhou



Suzhou seeks to cooperate with European regions for the development of the Yangze river Delta Eco-Green Integrated Development Demonstration Zone in the Wujiang District, focusing on the creation of industrial innovation clusters in the area and on building a livable district for the citizens:

- Eco-city development
- Research and industrial innovation
- Digital Economy
- Green and blue infrastructure

Conclusions and recommendations:

1

In addition to the areas in which each region or city has specialized, there are in particular two cross-cutting areas that should be addressed in the collaboration and are of interest to all the participants:

- Transition to a sustainable economy and environmental protection: in the case of Europe, for example, the regional and local level play a significant role for an effective implementation of the European Green Deal. In the case of China, cities and provinces have also environmental targets to fulfill.
- How regions/cities are boosting digital transformation from different perspectives: education, skills and talent, infrastructure, digital transformation of SMEs, etc.

2

It may also be of interest to share information and best practices in areas such as multi-stakeholder involvement, industry-academia collaboration, interregional cooperation, incorporation of SGDs at the local level or the implementation of monitoring systems to evaluate the performance of the regional/local innovation strategy.

In particular, there is a common challenge in both China and the EU at the local level in the transfer of technology from universities to the private sector, which has not been successfully solved in many cases. Knowing first-hand the reality of the regions and cities participating in this cluster can be very useful.

3

Social challenges should also be taken into account, among which one of the most important is the aging of the population. In both China and Europe, the fertility ratio of women is around 1.3, so both countries will have to face a marked transition towards a much older population structure.

4

In order to achieve concrete results in the collaboration between European regions and Chinese cities, it is important to develop action plans shared by both parties, as well as to have a focal point of contact for each region/city with decision-making power.



IURC-China Webinar

Sustainable Agriculture and Agri-food System

23 June 2022

Goal of this webinar is to share perspectives, policy initiatives and best practices on how cities and regions can effectively achieve the transition to green, circular and bio-based agriculture and resilient agri-food systems.


Rita Merkle

Cluster manager of IURC-China

Sustainable urban agriculture in the EU and China

- 1 Both China and the EU prioritize the development of a sustainable agricultural system
- 2 Similar challenges for agriculture: Food security challenges and environmental challenges
- 3 Differences in the role of the different stakeholders, including authorities and civil society > collective approach to transition in the EU
- 4 The concept of Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture is relatively new in both the EU and China
- 5 In the EU metalevel benefits of Sustainable urban agriculture are more important than pure production, objectives are mostly linked to environmental and social objectives
- 6 In China, the promotion of a resource-efficient and ecologically sustainable agriculture has to be productive, social value is secondary, and few bottom-up experiences



“ Sustainable agriculture as a topic has not yet fully found its way into policies in both regions. However, there are innumerable opportunities to be discovered in the cooperation between Europe and China on how to effectively achieve our mutual goals. ”

— Rita Merkle
IURC-China expert

Developing sustainable agriculture and resilient agri-food systems is essential to reduce environmental impact, challenge climate-change and increase food safety. Numerous stakeholders are involved in this transition, which creates the need for strong and complex coordination.

The EU designed many targeted and cross-cutting policies that influence urban and peri-urban farming, food systems and sustainable agriculture development directly and indirectly. Examples are the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Farm to Fork Strategy and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

China designed many targeted and cross-cutting policies to foster a productivity-centered sustainable agriculture system that also influence urban and peri-urban farming. For example:

- National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan (2015-2030)
- Development Plan of Digitalization of Agriculture and Rural Areas (2019-2025)
- Modern Agricultural Industrial Parks (MAPs)

Suggestions for future cooperation lie in the fields of urban agricultural planning, shortening food chains, multi-stakeholder involvement, holistic and integrated land use planning and synergies between waste, energy, water and food.

Case studies: for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly agri-food system



Zhengzhou

The city of Zhengzhou has broad experiences in the promotion of "leading enterprises" to expand the scale of agricultural industrialization and has established 28 agricultural industrial clusters, for example, important measures to foster vertical food chain integration and agribusiness clustering.

Science and Technology (S&T) development and the promotion of a green agricultural development are other important intervention fields of Zhengzhou.



Lazio region

Lazio region has presented two best practices that could be considered for further cooperation:

- Assessing and strengthening the food control system
- Combining peri-urban food production with sustainable tourism

Consumer awareness and information are a crucial basis on which the relation between consumers and producers is built and should be supervised by authorities. Sustainability of production and food security sometimes compete, so counterbalancing these factors is key.



Hohhot

Hohhot also has extensive experience in the development of vertical chain integration and agribusiness clustering. Dragon head enterprises lead the vertical integration focusing on five industries, namely pig, maize, potato, dry crop miscellaneous grains and oilseeds as well as beef cattle, meat sheep and meat donkeys.

The construction of agribusiness clusters is focused on the dairy sector. Major challenges are:

- forage security
- the equipment with modern agricultural machines



Western Greece Region

The Region of Western Greece can share a multitude of experiences in collaborative projects and initiatives to foster sustainable agriculture and agri-food systems including the fisheries and fish farming sector, for example:

- multistakeholder cooperation measures
- promotion of local food quality
- facilitation of innovation transfer



Case studies: place-based strategies in innovation ecosystems



Haikou

Haikou pursues five focal points of agricultural development with the development of large-scale projects focusing on locally adapted fruits, vegetables, crops, pigs and broilers, the establishment of modern agricultural parks also integrating tourism services, and a greener development of the sector.

The global need to evolve into sustainable agriculture is being recognized and sets Haikou's goal to transition into a green circular eco-friendly agri-food system.



Valencia Region

The Valencia region presented two best practices:

- Certified organic farming
- Green enterprises

Organic land has expanded rapidly and an upward trend towards green farming has been detected.

These experiences could be further explored together and taken to a higher level through vocational training cooperation, Research & Development cooperation and other knowledge transfer projects.

Beijing

Beijing is creating an agricultural "Zhongguancun" through the development of an Agricultural Science and Technology Innovation Demonstration Zone with the Pinggu Agricultural Science and Technology Innovation Highland being one of its five innovation clusters.

It is based on a collaboration between government, research and business:

- Government-led
- Market-operated
- Research-supported

The municipality is striving to integrate more partners to create win-win collaboration.



Suzhou

Suzhou is fostering the "Circular Development Model of Taicang" based on mixed crop-livestock farming with organic fertilizer from sheep manure and rice and wheat straw as feed. Local organizations are actively involved in these processes.

The major challenge is seen in introducing more modern techniques.



Cooperation should address the common challenges on the way to a robust and resilient agri-food system, namely the challenge of food security, the challenge of the environment and climate, and the challenge of complexity resulting from the high level of organization and coordination required between the different actors and policies. The following focus areas are suggested for further discussion and exploration for collaborative actions:

1

Food policies and governance:

- Developing urban food policies and plans
- Developing coordination mechanisms to foster multi-stakeholder involvement and knowledge transfer
- Identifying, mapping and evaluating local initiatives

2

Urban food production and value chains:

- Holistic and integrated land use planning enhancing access to land and resources
- Promoting urban and peri-urban food production by supporting innovative farming systems
- Support of short food chains linking urban and nearby rural areas
- Assessing market demand and linking producers with consumers, e.g. in combination with tourism services
- Develop local multi-stakeholder cooperation mechanisms
- Building local capacity


3

Food supply and distribution:

- Assess, review and/or strengthen food control systems
- Review public procurement to foster short supply chains
- Assess the flows of food to and through cities to improve sustainable transportation and logistics planning, etc
- Developing sustainable dietary guidelines to inform consumers, food service providers, retailers, producers and processors

4

Climate resilience and sustainability:

- Develop a disaster risk reduction strategy to enhance the resilience of the urban food system
- Developing frameworks and assessments to monitor and evaluate resilience
- Supporting urban agriculture models for climate-change mitigation and adaptation

5

Resource recovery and reuse:

- Ensuring the safe use of waste and wastewater in (peri-) urban agriculture
- Supporting enterprises, jobs and circular business models
- Supporting technical innovations on waste, food and energy
- Developing municipal resource recovery strategies combining productivity with reduced environmental impacts

6

Social and economic equity:

- Developing school feeding programmes providing healthy and local/regional food
- Promoting youth employment and training and support of young farmers

IURC-China Webinar

Education, Jobs and Skills

28 September 2022

The webinar brought together representatives from 10 cities and regions in Europe and China to discuss how to promote synergies between education, jobs, skills and entrepreneurship.



Floriske Deutman
Cluster manager of IURC-China

Skills Agenda for Europe

5-year action plan to equip European people and businesses with more and better skills. Progress is aimed at 12 flagship actions:

- 1 Pact for skills - a call to join forces in a collective action
- 2 Strengthening skills intelligence
- 3 EU support for strategic national upscaling action
- 4 Future-proof Vocational Education and Training
- 5 Rolling out the European Universities Initiative and upskilling scientists
- 6 Skills to support the green and digital transitions
- 7 Increasing STEM graduates, fostering entrepreneurial and transversal skills
- 8 Skills for life
- 9 Initiative on individual learning accounts
- 10 A European approach to micro-credentials
- 11 New Europass platform
- 12 Improving the enabling framework to unlock Member States' and private investments in skills



“ Education is central for a sustainable, competitive and innovative society. ”

— **Floriske Deutman**
IURC-China expert

Sharing our challenges and solutions on education and innovation will greatly benefit development and resilience in IURC pilot cities and regions and help us to face similar challenges.

- Green and digital transitions that shape the way we live, work and interact
- An ageing population
- Covid-related challenges of the job market

Competitiveness can be strengthened through three key factors:

- Research and development: universities and research labs
- Vocational education and training (VET) and life-long learning: training providers and business
- Entrepreneurship and innovation: start-up acceleration and mentoring

Specialization and engagement are the only way to reach our goals. In this process, the triple helix has a central role to play. When stakeholders from the government, businesses and educational institutions cooperate, chances are higher that goals will have a lasting impact.

Case Studies: New Skills Agenda for Sustainability, Competitiveness, and Innovation

Sofia



Sofia has launched projects to enhance new skills and education through digitalization and to support sustainable entrepreneurship and innovation.

- Argentum strengthens the silver economy
- DIGITAL SOFIA connects different stakeholders to develop sustainable solutions together
- Compass for Entrepreneurship informs start-ups about finance to become more innovative and competitive
- Smart Garden makes kids aware of sustainability and climate change

Cooperation possibilities lie in Vocational Education and Training and entrepreneurship and innovation.

Hangzhou

The city shared best practices regarding cross-border e-commerce talent cultivation.

Activities include an innovative curriculum, entrepreneurial programmes and competitions, multi-level training projects and promoting innovation among students.

Future cooperation opportunities:

- Joint curation pilot cases
- Shared talent pool
- Promote training together
- Academic exchange

“ There is a need for global minded talent, as well as professionals with deep local knowledge. ”



Nuovo Circondario Imolese - Bologna

Broad experience has been gained in educational and training events through programmes of:

- Urban reforestation
- Green cities: The network of urban parks and eco-industrial parks
- Improving environmental quality and biodiversity
- Outdoor education
- Public-private collaboration

Future possibilities are sharing best practices on educational projects for specific target groups (e.g. children), establishing new joint green design centre and laboratories and exploring industrial symbiosis together.

“ Job and capacity building lie at the center of NCI's activities. ”



Xi'an

Xi'an presented good practices including:

- The 'opening up' of education
- Developing the iHARBOUR innovative campus
- Industry-education integration in line with the innovation-driven strategy
- Developing Joint School of Design and Innovation
- Cooperation with European countries and universities

Further steps can be made in extending academic exchange and partnerships.

“ 'Build a better future together' is the goal of Xi'an. Cooperation and innovation are key factors. ”



Lazio Region

Cooperation is based on three fundamental pillars:

- Training
- Innovation
- Participation

Lazio region proposes a cross-cultural approach with partners, focused on R&D particularly in the fields of:

- Energy transition
- Design and deployment of specific training actions
- Environmental Rural GIS-based analysis
- Digital Twin tools for construction and heritage architecture innovation solutions



Case Studies: New Skills Agenda for Sustainability, Competitiveness, and Innovation



Zhengzhou

Zhengzhou adopted an innovation driven development strategy, which includes expanding vocational education in order to upscale the entire labor force.

Successful efforts have been made in creating pilot schemes, partnerships between businesses and universities, cooperation on the global level and establishing innovation centers.

Cooperation potential lies in strengthening:

- scientific development by fostering academic exchange and synergies
- the qualification of teachers through training
- policy support by sharing best practices



Ioannina

Ioannina presented best practices on the creation of the new established Convention & Visitors bureau -which focuses on sustainable tourism- and how to build a correct operation of the organization through composing a formal business plan and introducing regular training for staff members. Multiple local stakeholders are being involved in this process.

MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conference & Events) experts are considered a key factor.

Future steps are exchanging international knowledge and cooperating with universities for training in digital and management skills.

Haikou

Haikou has experience in vocational education training and guidance on employment and entrepreneurship. Best practices of the Vocational Tourism School were shared, which include setting up classes with enterprises, implementing training policies and international cooperation.

Cooperation areas include:

- Cooperative development of courses and innovative majors
- Set up smart solutions for tourists
- Carry out targeted promotion of tourism concepts
- vocational training
- Set up joint platform for infant care, health care industry and tourism sector
- Promote improvement of high-quality professional groups



Ljubljana Urban Region

The region shared the best practices of the SMART factory demo center.

Proposed cooperation areas:

- Distributed systems and edge computing
- Flexible, agile, reconfigurable robotic and cobotic cells
- Smart production, manufacturing
- Modelling, simulation and data analytics
- AR and VR
- Architectural models, communication protocols

“ We educate people from the industry to raise digital awareness and teach them skills that are important in the digital transformation. ”



Wuhan

Wuhan presented Jianghun University's research and development efforts.

Goals of cooperation include:

- tapping into high quality international education resources to explore innovation and cultivate talent with innovative spirit
- increasing quality and quantity of trained faculty members
- strengthening multilateral scientific research
- recruiting international students
- pairing one-to-one with colleges and universities



IURC-China Webinar

Urban Planning and Design

26 October 2022

This webinar aims for pilot cities to share perspectives, policy initiatives and best practices for inclusive, productive, and resilient cities through urban planning and design practices and tools.

The EU Green Deal - a road map towards green and resilient cities

- 1 **Transforming our economy and societies**
By reducing emissions, creating green jobs, addressing energy poverty and improving wellbeing
- 2 **Making transport sustainable for all**
By reducing emissions from cars and promoting sustainable mobility
- 3 **Renovating buildings for greener lifestyles**
To save energy, renovate/build self-sufficient buildings, protect against extreme weather conditions and tackle energy poverty
- 4 **Cleaning our energy system**
By transitioning to renewable energy sources
- 5 **Leading the third industrial revolution**
By creating green jobs and developing a green economy



China Policy Initiatives

- 1 **Guidance on Complete and Accurate Implementation of Carbon Peak and Neutrality Objectives** (State Council, Oct 2022) In order to achieve sustainable development
- 2 **Action Plan for Carbon Dioxide Peaking Before 2030** (State Council, Oct 2022) Outlines measure to gradually lower emissions, transition to renewable energy and reduce waste
- 3 **National Climate Change Strategy 2035**, (17 ministries, Jun 2022) Focuses on strengthening the monitoring and assessment of climate risks
- 4 **Guidelines on Urban-Rural Green Development** (July 2021) Include promoting integrated development of urban and rural construction, transforming the development mode of urban and rural construction and developing innovative working methods



Sebastien Goethals
Cluster Manager of IURC-China

Good practice in EU-China cooperation to date has focused on

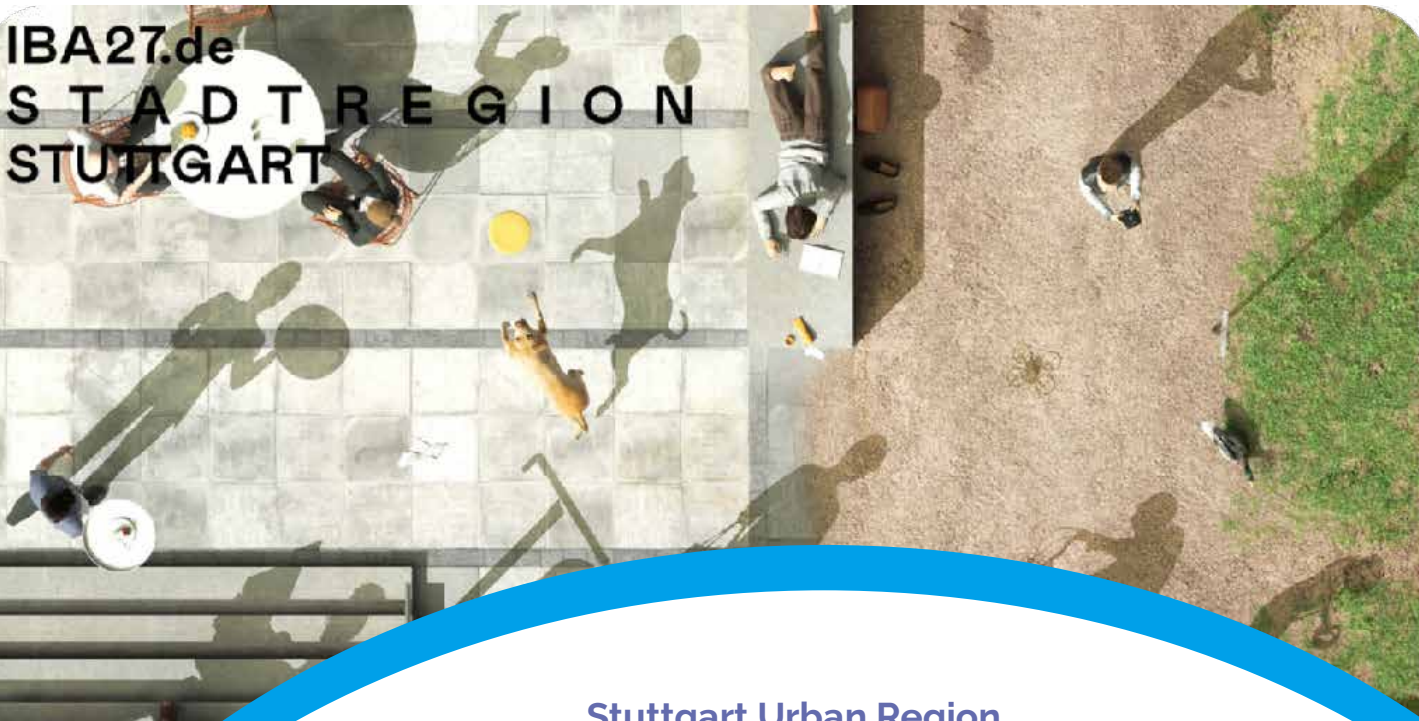
- Providing technical assistance
- Building urban resilience
- Promoting urban agriculture
- Increasing sustainability through nature-based solutions
- Providing policy guidelines
- Developing sustainable mobility

A cross-sectoral integrated approach is recommended to reach our goals. We aim for more bilateral dialogue between European and Chinese cities regarding policy dialogue, knowledge exchange and pilot projects.

The application of technology is necessary to achieve our sustainable goals, and we need smart technology to use resources better and reduce emissions. It also means a more interactive and responsive city.

“Urban planning is not only about physical design or practical planning, but also about governance, digitalisation in service provision, smart urban management and monitoring climate change.”

Case studies: inclusive, productive, and resilient urban planning practices



Stuttgart Urban Region

The Stuttgart urban region shared hands-on experience in different projects which are part of the IBA'27. This exhibition is not just showcasing architecture and urban planning but also experimenting and creating models for the city of the future. It provides toolkits that can be applied in different projects.

Stakeholders from the municipalities, institutions, academics, companies, social organisations and private initiators provided small and large proposals to be included in the IBA'27 Network.

Key themes for IBA'27 include:

- The Productive City: reinventing the city with digital transformation in manufacturing, farming, housing and education
- The Future of Centres: new strategies for regenerating city centre for meeting, culture & community, working and emerging experiments
- Places for Moving and Meeting: sustainable and smart traffic infrastructure for better quality of living and working
- The Legacy of Modernism: a collaborative strategy for renewal, densification and improvement of Stuttgart Weissenhof Estate (1927 IBA in Stuttgart)
- The Neckar River as a Liveable Space: innovative solutions for urban waterfront space, transport arteries, and industrial environment – creating productive yet liveable riverside

Suzhou

Suzhou presented the development of a Sino-German innovation city. The framework includes a science and education innovation zone, smart manufacturing zone and a strong international community. Besides, it enables the integration of an industrial city and stimulates technology transfers between universities and businesses.

- Research has been carried out in the fields of sustainability, energy resilience and sponge city development.
- Besides, low carbon mobility is being pursued through integrated transport planning and the development of smart infrastructure.

“ *We are trying to improve energy efficiency and promote the use of renewable energy.* ”



Case studies: inclusive, productive, and resilient urban planning practices

Ioannina

The vision for the development of a climate neutral and smart city is being driven by cooperation of the government, universities, and local citizens.

Focus lies on sustainable energy and green transport.

Ioannina prioritises:

- Urban Design and Planning Proposals towards Climate Neutrality: updating and enhancing existing green areas, creating greenways for pedestrians and bicycles, creating thematic networks that connect and update existing buildings through carbon-neutral public space
- Sustainable Mobility actions towards 2030: milestones are walking, bicycles and public transport
- Digital Transformation: Intelligent lighting management system, energy consumption monitoring system in buildings, upgrading municipal buildings to make them energy efficient and energy-positive
- Waste management: continuous upgrading of a cyclical model of growth and economy as a lever to promote climate neutrality and combat climate change, energy upgrading of wastewater treatment facilities, production of energy from waste management

“Urban design is part of the mission to create a climate neutral and smart city.”



Haikou

Haikou shared the good practice of Jiangdong New Area and lessons learnt.

- The Guidelines for the Design of Ecological Civilization and Zero Carbon New City address the goal to achieve zero carbon in 2035.
- Renewable energy is being developed and equipped in new buildings.
- New energy vehicles are being developed and charging infrastructure for electric vehicles is continuously improved
- Green building application demonstration areas are being developed. Pilot projects for prefabricated buildings, low-energy buildings and low-carbon buildings are implemented.
- Green and low-carbon industrial enterprises are being promoted and a competitive modern industry zone is being developed.
- Blue and Green Carbon Sequestration actions have been carried out to focus on protecting core ecological resources.
- The overall construction plan of 'Smart Jiangdong' has been formulated and Phase I is under construction.



The exchange of best practices is key to developing and improving urban planning policies and interventions. In this regard, IURC-China facilitated dialogues between the cities and suggested the following cooperation areas:



Guidance on cooperation

Green financing is an important part of urban development policies. Besides, smart governance on the community level, city level and national level is key in order to set up smart urban infrastructure.

A cross-sectoral approach should be implemented in the following cooperation areas:

- 1 Green building, including full-life-circle emission monitoring
- 2 Clean energy, focused on energy storage technology and hydrogen energy
- 3 Green transport, through developing clean energy vehicles, driverless vehicles and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP)
- 4 Water management, by expanding Nature-Based Solutions, sponge city projects and water sensitive city planning
- 5 Ecological system, with a focus on Gross Ecosystem Production (GEP), Blue and Green Infrastructure, biodiversity and ecological restoration
- 6 Circular economy, guided by 'urban-mining' waste management, smart manufacturing and industrial symbiosis

“ To reduce, stabilize and adapt to climate change, we need to think globally, but act locally. ”

— **Sebastien Goethals**
IURC-China expert

IURC-China Webinar

Urban Renewal and Renovation Wave

28 October 2022

This webinar aims for pilot cities to foster cooperation on climate change through sustainable urban renewal and regeneration.

EU Policy Initiatives

- 1 Urban Agenda for the EU aims at realizing the full potential and contribution of urban areas
- 2 Urban Innovation Actions provides urban areas with resources to test solutions to address urban challenges
- 3 Urban Development Network strengthens integrated and participatory approaches to sustainable urban development and provides a stronger link to EU policies
- 4 URBACT (IV) helps cities to develop pragmatic sustainable solutions and integrate economic, social and environmental urban topics
- 5 The Renovation Wave aims to measure renovation benefits, minimum energy performance standards (MEPS), encourage green mortgages and support more renewables
- 6 The BUILD UP Portal brings together new practitioners and professional associations to exchange best practices, tools and resources
- 7 Level(s) assesses and reports on the sustainability performance of buildings throughout the life-cycle.

China Policy Initiatives

- 1 Guidelines for regeneration of old residential communities in city and county focuses on renovating old residential areas that have been built before the end of 2000
- 2 Instructions on preventing massive demolition and -rebuilding in urban renewal restricts massive demolition area <20%, re-building and re-location.
- 3 Strengthening protection of historical heritage and heritage in urbanization aims at effectively protecting and fully utilizing urban and rural historical and cultural heritage by 2035
- 4 Announcement on the first round of national urban renewal pilot explores action plans and policy options regarding sustainable urban renewal
- 5 Announcement on further clarifying the requirements for the renovation of old urban residential areas specifies the role of communities in renovation projects



DAI Guowen

Cluster Manager of IURC-China

Good practice in EU-China cooperation to date has been bilateral programmes such as Technical Assistance projects which have fostered synergies between Chinese and European Cities. Examples are:

- Europe-China Eco Cities Link which highlighted participative urban renewal and energy efficiency for existing buildings
- Trans-Urban EU-China research & Innovation on Urban Transition which aims to create socially integrative cities in an environmentally friendly and financially viable way
- ProGInreg stands for 'productive Green Infrastructure for post-industrial urban regeneration

Cooperation areas can be categorised by

- Sector, for example, green financing, green building, renewable energy, sustainable urban mobility, water management or social service
- Theme, namely NBS, CE or SUD
- Activity, such as policy dialogue, piloting, technology application, academic research and capacity building

Case studies: livability and resilience in urban renewal



Santiago de Compostela

This city shared best practices on improving habitability, revaluating real estate and increasing appreciation of heritage by inhabitants through

- Urban scale interventions conserving the quality of the city
- Housing refurbishment in the entire city
- Business premises refurbishment improving use and functions of the city
- Agent training fostering cooperation between stakeholders
- Maintenance programmes for energy efficiency and heritage conservation
- Social housing serving heritage and society
- Investment in restoration of monuments improving the historic city

“ We prepare society to become more self-conserving without constant pushing of the government. ”



To improve the quality of life and the environment, cooperation is proposed in different areas:

- Turning the touristic over-exploitation into respectful, sustainable tourism
- Re-connecting the historical city with its physical matrix through strategies and models of resource management
- Re-naturalising the city, using the historic city as a model, by producing non-polluting urban models of life
- Considering the urban flows, such a integral water cycle, facilities, and mobility through inter-administrative cooperation on planning and technical solutions



Case studies: livability and resilience in urban renewal



Bari

Bari shared its urban regeneration strategy based on 4 pillars:

- grand urban transformations and redevelopments, e.g. waterfront redevelopment, tree planting, city design, strategic projects
- creation of new public space in neighborhoods through participatory approaches on tactical urban planning
- greening city and climate mitigation measures through large green infrastructure projects, community gardening and urban forestry
- energy efficiency of buildings by producing solar energy

“ We strongly believe in the value of our city and communities. ”



Nuovo Circondario Imolese - Bologna

The city presented good practices in design for a green city, underlining the close relationship between technology, culture and environment through different projects.

Cooperation areas lies in:

- Regeneration of historical city centers through a mix of culture, art and sustainability
- Innovative projects in a New European Bauhaus perspective
- Education, capacity building, peer review, staff exchange
- Urban regeneration through culture mix project



Yangzhou

Yangzhou implemented steps to regenerate the historical and cultural block in Renfeng District to improve living conditions, upgrade facilities, and enhance vitality.

Guidance by the government and autonomous participation of citizens are key to form bottom-up mechanisms.

Results of regeneration:

- Integrated regeneration and protection
- Environmental upgrade
- Guide principles and financial resource for urban revitalisation
- Public engagement

“ Follow the philosophy of small scale, gradual progress, micro-regeneration, enriched culture and sustainability. ”



Case studies: livability and resilience in urban renewal



Zhengzhou

The city shared strategies of the urban regeneration by:

- Improving road facilities and optimizing traffic
- Renewal and renovation of old neighbourhoods and communities, enhancing public services
- Improving rural and suburban areas, while facilitating environmental protection
- Micromanagement of urban areas, smart management and smart industries

Additionally, Zhengzhou introduced the good practice of ZMJ 1958 Science & Culture Park, a cluster of innovation and entrepreneurship. Specialization lies in integrating industrial heritage into revitalised urban spaces.

Future planning focuses on urban integration between cities, ecological environment, intelligent technology development and synergistic growth.

“ We facilitate urban renewal to build a beautiful home and a friendly environment. ”



Murcia

Murcia presented the Sustainable Integrated Urban Development Strategy. In addition, good practices on engaging citizens in waterfront renewal, creating synergy between different urban programmes, and applying circular economy principles to the entire waste chain within the city were shared.

Proposed areas for cooperation include:

- Green, competitive and resilient urban planning
- Ecological transition
- Energy efficiency in buildings
- Low emission energy project
- Valorisation of bio-waste .

“ Informing and engaging with citizens provides a co-governance model that can directly impact the quality of life. ”

The exchange of best practices is key to developing and improving urban regeneration policies and practices. In this regard, IURC-China facilitated dialogues between the cities and suggested the following cooperation areas:

Cooperation Approaches

- Policy dialogue: regulatory support and financial instrument
- Pilot projects: 'Living labs'
- Academic research: theoretical and applied research
- Capacity building: knowledge sharing, workshops and training, study visit

"We should focus less on Development Aid as a developing country and more on equal dialogue and international cooperation."

Suggested Areas for Cooperation include several interdisciplinary themes

- 1 Nature-Based Solutions (NBS)**
 - "Sponge City" and green corridors
 - Water Sensitive City focused on planning, governance and smart management
 - Urban Agriculture to support biodiversity and green roofs
- 2 Sustainable Urban Development (SUD)**
 - Climate Resilient Community consisting of flood management, design and emergency management
 - Low-Carbon Mobility Infrastructure Update
 - Electric & Automated Mobility including integrated planning, parking management and TOD
 - Diverse Culture & Art spaces focused on integrated planning and parking
- 3 Circular Economy (CE)**
 - Eco-Smart Industry Park targeting planning, governance and smart grids
 - Waste circularity, urban mining
 - Smart City along with BIM, CIM and Big-data tools
 - Public Service & Inclusive Space counting children, elderly and animal friendly



STUDY VISITS

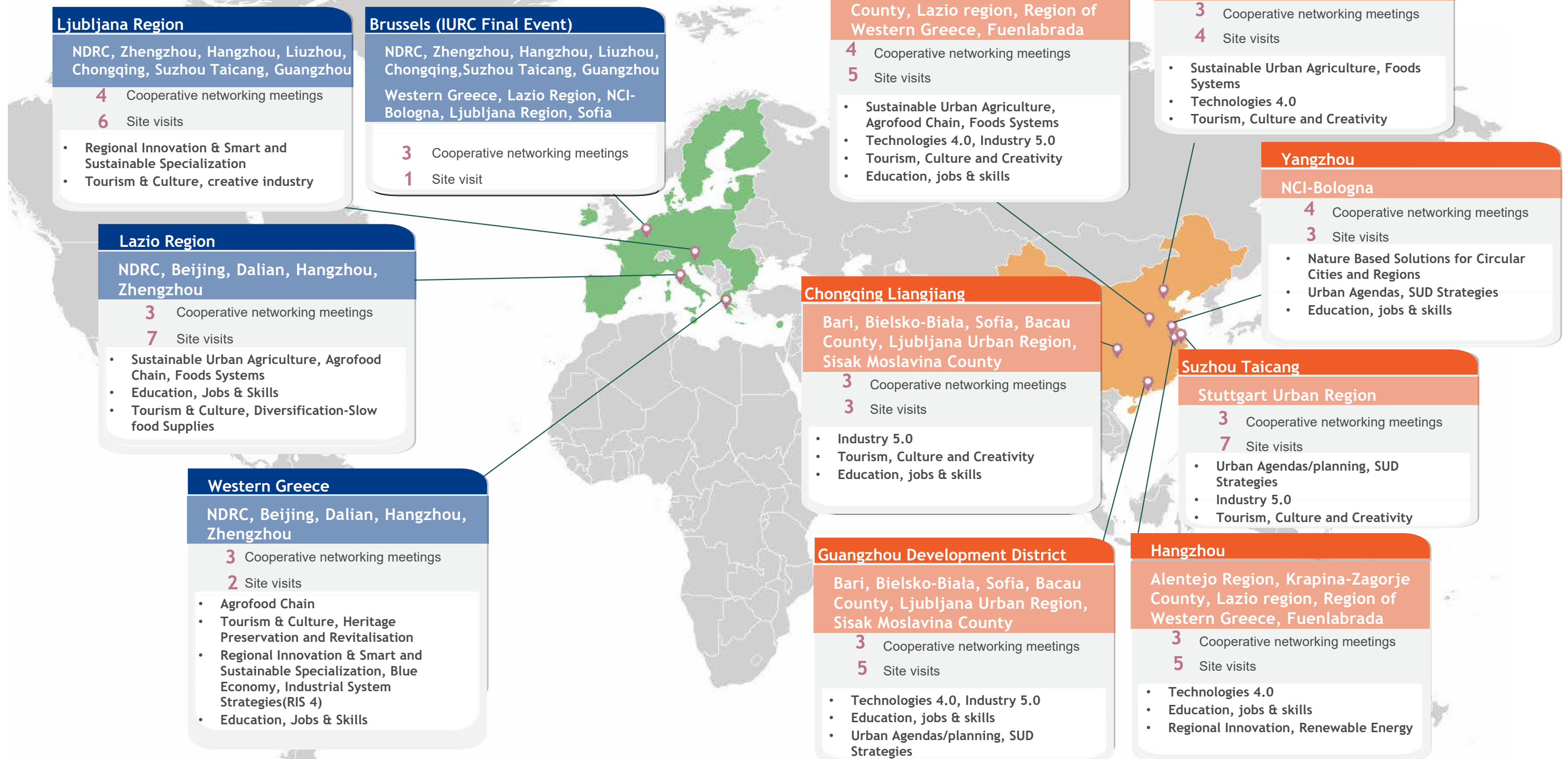
Study Visits: Enhancing Exchange and Cooperation

The IURC-China programme completed 6 batches of study visits to 4 European cities and regions and 7 Chinese cities. These visits facilitated firsthand knowledge exchange, mutual learning, and the development of cooperative projects and initiatives in urban planning, agri-food supply, creative ecosystems, industry, and other key areas. These interactions enhanced understanding of best practices in urban management, sustainability initiatives, and policy innovation.

One of the innovative approaches of IURC-China in study visits, including technical visits, is the adaptation to digital formats due to the COVID pandemic. This shift has not only maintained the momentum of international exchange before, during and after the study visits but has also expanded the reach and inclusivity of these activities.

The study visits fostered long-term partnerships, enhancing capacity building among officials and practitioners. They effectively bridged social and administrative differences between the European and Chinese cities and regions, promoted economic and cultural ties, and enhanced mutual understanding and networking that led to concrete cooperation and contribution to the achievement of sustainable urban agendas and regional development action plans.

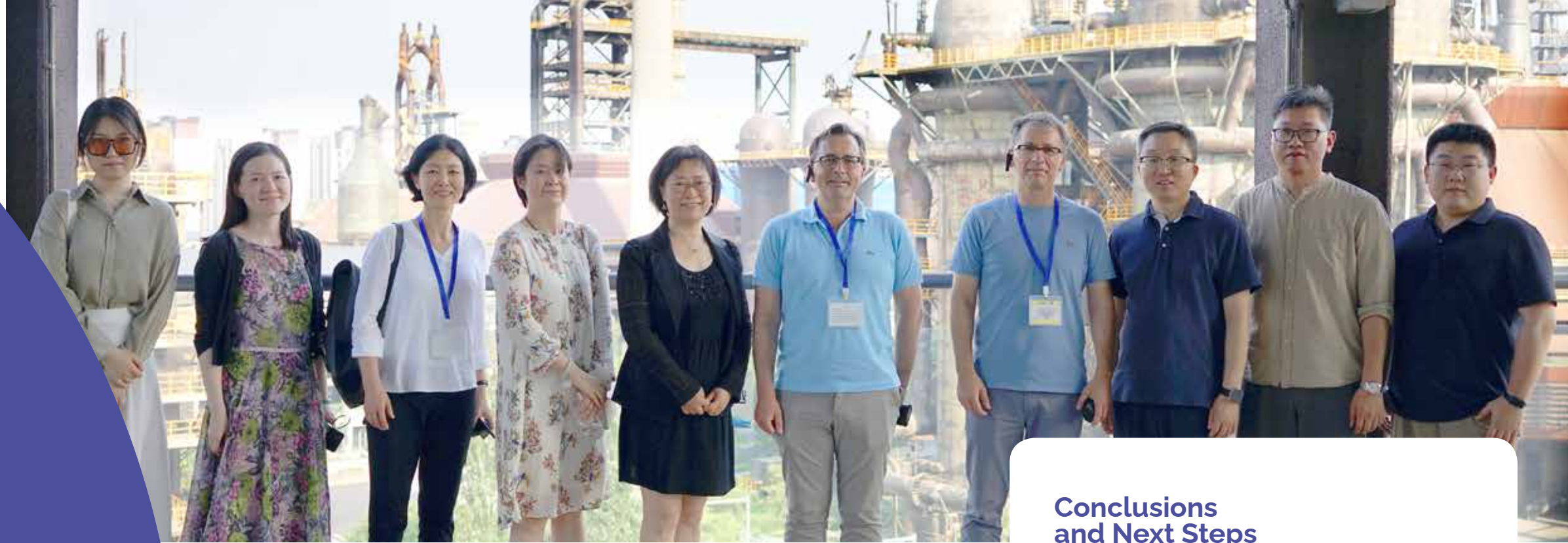
The Study Visits



Urban and Agricultural Transformation: Five European Cities and Regions Visited Beijing

02nd – 03rd July 2023

The delegation visit to Beijing, part of a kick-off study visit from the EU to China, aimed to facilitate dialogue and knowledge exchange on sustainable agriculture, cultural tourism and industrial transition between European and Chinese cities and regions. Delegates from Fuenlabrada, Lazio Region, the Region of Western Greece, Alentejo Region, and Krapina-Zagorje County visited the pilot projects in Beijing, which showcased Beijing's strategy for urban development and technology integration, such as Shougang Park, Zhongguancun Agricultural Science and Technology Park, and the Beijing Yizhuang Economic & Technological Development Area. The projects highlighted Beijing's role as a "Dual Olympic City" and its endeavours in modern agriculture and the digital economy. The visit facilitated cooperative discussions on urban regeneration, modern agriculture, and digital economy ecosystems. The Beijing visit highlighted the importance of shared knowledge, economic synergies, and cultural exchange, offering insights into the socio-economic context of the solutions for sustainable urban development in Europe and China.



Conclusions and Next Steps

- 1 **Agriculture:** Exchanging regulations and standards, customising good practice models for local contexts, and engaging diverse stakeholders.
- 2 **Urban Regeneration:** Exchange of best practices and the development of urban revitalization projects that incorporate cultural heritage.
- 3 **Post-Olympic Development:** Exchange global experience on sport tourism, infrastructure development, cultural events and economic cooperation.

"The study visit enabled me to identify solutions to the challenges we had been facing, primarily due to the recognition of the importance of utilizing new technologies as an opportunity to optimize and enhance our projects."

— **Monica Sebastian Perez**
Deputy Mayor of Fuenlabrada Municipality

Agriculture, Culture, and Creativity: Delegation of European Cities and Regions in Zhengzhou

04th-05th July 2023



The delegates from Fuenlabrada, Lazio Region, Region of Western Greece, Alentejo Region, and Krapina-Zagorje county visited Zhengzhou, focusing on sustainable agri-food supply, culture and tourism, and SME incubation. Through institutional meetings and site visits, including Wanbang International Agricultural Products Logistics City, Zhengzhou International Cultural and Creative Industry Park, Henan Museum, and Henan Zhongyuan Organic Agriculture Research Institute, the visit highlighted the importance of knowledge exchange, sustainability initiatives and trade partnerships in agri-food supply, cultural tourism, and creative industry. These exchanges offered insights into enhancing efficiency, quality, safety, and reducing environmental impacts in agri-food supply chains, as well as exploring potential cooperation on cultural heritage preservation and creative industry.



Conclusions and Next Steps

- 1 Promote educational, training, and talent exchange programs as foundations for lasting cooperation across thematic areas.
- 2 Initiate cross-border projects within the cultural and creative industries to foster economic synergies.
- 3 Develop joint sustainable agricultural initiatives to enhance eco-friendly practices and improve productivity.
- 4 Facilitate the sharing of expertise and practices in eco-friendly urban agriculture for sustainable urban development.

“ The programme was comprehensive, providing a wealth of knowledge and facilitating the exchange of best practices. It was enhanced by an engaging social agenda, which allowed for a deeper understanding of the cultural nuances of each city. This experience underscored the significance of integrating best practices with cultural exchanges when interacting with Chinese cities or regions. Such a holistic approach is crucial for fostering mutual understanding between the parties involved. ”

— Daniel Janeiro
Alentejo Region

Digital and Cultural Bridges: European Delegation Visit to Hangzhou

06th – 07th July 2023

The delegation's visit from Fuenlabrada, Lazio Region, Region of Western Greece, Alentejo Region, and Krapina-Zagorje County to Hangzhou focused on VET in e-commerce and cultural exchange. The delegation engaged in roundtable discussions, visited Global Cross-border E-commerce Knowledge Service Center, and explored key e-commerce players like Wuyou Media Company and the China (Hangzhou) Cross-border E-commerce Institute, and Alibaba Group. The visit concluded an immersive cultural experience at the National Tea Museum, Xiling Seal Art Society, and West Lake. During the delegation's visit to Hangzhou, preparations for the Asian Games were underway. The study visit highlighted Hangzhou's e-trade expertise and cultural heritage, setting the stage for future cooperation in vocational education, SME internationalisation, and cultural and sport tourism initiatives.



“ My participation in the study visit enriched my understanding of best practices, collaboration ideas, and core competencies from Chinese cities/regions, alongside new technical solutions, talents/SMEs, and networking opportunities. The experience was particularly enlightening in exploring tools that support the internationalization of businesses, alongside training programmes for business digitization. Furthermore, it introduced new educational initiatives aimed at enhancing higher education curricula in the field of e-commerce.

— **Soledad Martin Hernandez**
Deputy Mayor of Fuenlabrada Municipality

“ I have commenced the process of proposing a collaborative project. Discussions have been launched focusing on partnerships within the realms of digital media and digital commerce. Our aim is to put forward a proposal for a joint project.”

— **Chrysostomos Stylios**
Industrial Systems Institute/ Athena Research Centre

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 1 Exploring cross-sector cooperation in the e-trade, social inclusion, culture, and media.
- 2 Focusing on advancing digital economy ecosystems, and developing training and education programmes as key discussion points.
- 3 Identifying collaboration opportunities with the eWTP to enhance the global presence of European agricultural and cultural tourism products and facilitate trade between Europe and China.
- 4 Facilitating the exchange of best practices in cultural heritage and sport tourism initiatives.



Peri-Urban Agriculture and Cultural Heritage: Chinese Delegation Visit to Lazio Region

17th – 18th July 2023

The delegation visit to the Lazio Region, a follow-up to a European delegation's trip to China, was a leap forward in fostering bilateral relations and exploring cooperation between Chinese municipalities and the Lazio Region. The delegation, including representatives from Beijing, Dalian, Hangzhou, and Zhengzhou, aimed to deepen mutual understanding and exchange best practices in the areas of organic farming, circular economy, and heritage revitalisation.

The delegation visit included multiple stakeholder meetings and site visits, for example, Circle Farm and Agricoltura Capodarco for insights into organic farming practices, Biosolidale for an understanding of organic agri-food supply chains, educational insights from Sapienza University of Rome and the Animal Health and Food Safety Institute, along with a cultural exploration at the Regional Park of Appia Antica.

These exchanges involved key stakeholders from government, academia, business, and social organisations, and were instrumental in identifying synergies and potential areas for cooperation. It supported a solid foundation for future cooperation, particularly in organic farming, circular economy, and heritage revitalisation initiatives.



Conclusions and Next Steps

- 1 **Organic Agriculture & Agri-food Supply:** Continue exchanging knowledge and techniques on organic farming and the agri-food supply and exploring cooperative models in organic farming, educational initiatives, and multifunctional farming practices.
- 2 **Circular Economy:** Collaborative efforts with local institutions in circular economy in agriculture, focusing on organic waste valorisation.
- 3 **Cultural Heritage & Tourism:** Cultural heritage management, food cultural and culinary exchanges, promotion awareness of organic food initiatives.
- 4 **Education & Training:** Acknowledging the critical role of education in sustainable development and proposing young talent exchange initiatives.



Agri-Food, SMEs, and Cultural Tourism: Chinese Delegation Visit to the Region of Western Greece

20th - 21st July 2023

The representatives from Beijing, Hangzhou, Zhengzhou and Dalian visited the Region of Western Greece with the goals of nurturing mutual understanding and exploring cooperation areas in agri-food supply, SME accelerating, and culture & tourism - the crucial sectors for regional development. The delegates participated in meetings and discussions focusing on regional development policies, SME acceleration, and cultural heritage revitalisation.

Sites visited included Patras Science Park for exchanging experience on technology business incubation, and Mesologhi to learn about the agri-food production, cultural heritage and tourism in the city.

The visit showcased the region's efforts in integrating sustainability with economic growth, identified key cooperation areas, and facilitated multiple stakeholder engagement for cooperation.

"The study visit proved instrumental in identifying solutions to the challenges I had been grappling with. Despite the differences in scale and context between the challenges faced in my region and those observed during the visit, the insights I acquired prompted a re-evaluation of strategic priorities, as well as the solutions and approaches that should be pursued."

— **Spyridon Papaspyrou**
Region of Western Greece



Conclusions and Next Steps

- 1 Agri-food supply:** Focus on promoting sustainable agri-food production, trade in local agri-food products, and sharing expertise in the agri-food sector and blue economy.
- 2 Start-ups:** Share best practices in startup support, incubation, mentorship, and facilitating access to venture capital.
- 3 Education and Exchanges:** Exchange for student and faculty to foster educational cooperation.
- 4 Renewable Energy and Green Technology:** Discuss initiatives for renewable energy and energy efficiency, supporting the regional low-carbon development agenda.
- 5 Tourism and Eco-tourism:** Explore cooperation in creating joint tourism packages, exchanging knowledge on eco-tourism, and promoting environmental education.

The Green Design Centre and Urban Renewal Initiatives: NCI-Bologna Delegation Visit to Yangzhou

23rd – 25th August 2023

NCI-Bologna's delegation visited Yangzhou to revitalise their long-term cooperation, share experiences, and discuss future cooperation projects. The delegation engaged in various meetings and site visits, participated by multiple stakeholders, to discuss cooperation on urban renewal, heritage protection, resilient urban development, green tourism, nature-based solutions, cultural and creative industries, education, and training.

In Yangzhou, the NCI-Bologna delegate visited Yangzhou University, Guangling Old District and the Yangzhou International Horticultural Expo Site.

- 1 Potential cooperation between academic institutions in NCI-Bologna and Yangzhou University was discussed for student and faculty exchanges, joint academic endeavours, and the mutual hosting of cultural events and exhibitions.
- 2 The Guangling Old District exemplifies Yangzhou's dedication to urban regeneration and social cohesion, presenting a good opportunity for exchanging best practices in the planning and implementing urban regeneration initiatives with cultural, environmental and social perspectives.
- 3 During a visit to the 2021 Yangzhou International Horticultural Expo Site, home to the Bologna Pavilion, the inaugural exhibition for the jointly Green Design Centre was discussed, an initiative receiving endorsement from governmental bodies and support from the IURC-China program.

"My participation in the study visit has enriched my understanding of best practices, innovative collaboration concepts, and key competencies within various Chinese cities and regions. I gained insights into their development strategies, networking opportunities, and cooperative ventures in green solutions, cultural heritage, and the arts. The visit provided a comprehensive overview of the city's master plan, its priorities, and introduced methodologies, conceptual frameworks, and innovations in critical economic and cultural sectors for potential bilateral cooperation. Currently, we are collaborating with the city of Yangzhou to formulate a new action plan, aiming to establish novel partnerships in green initiatives, cultural heritage, food culture, artistic and creative endeavors for youth, and support for startups."

— **Marino Cavallo**
NCI-Bologna

Conclusions and Next Steps

The joint Green Design Centre is an initiative by NCI-Bologna and Yangzhou to foster long-term cooperation in architectural and urban design. This initiative prioritises green design and educational programmes, which contribute to the redevelopment of historical sites with a focus on nature-based solutions. Key initiatives include:

- 1 **Joint Pilot Project - Nature-Culture:** Create garden designs that reflect the unique environmental and cultural heritage of Yangzhou, potentially leading to a public exhibition and an international conference.
- 2 **Development of Joint Policies for Nature-Based Solutions:** Formulate policies supporting the creation of green urban districts, eco-industrial parks, and initiatives in urban reforestation, agriculture, and social inclusion.
- 3 **Academic Cooperation:** Facilitate joint academic projects, cultural event exchanges, and academic partnerships, enhancing educational and cultural ties between the two entities.



Urban Competitiveness through Industrial Design: European Delegation Visit to Chongqing Liangjiang New Area

18th – 20th September 2023

The delegates from Bari, Bielsko-Biala, Sofia, Bacau County, Ljubljana Urban Region, Sisak Moslavina County and South Bohemia Region visited Chongqing Liangjiang New Area focusing on industrial transition and competitiveness of the cities. The delegation engaged in institutional meetings, visited key pilot zones such as the Yuelai International Convention and Exhibition City, Yufu Industrial Development Zone and Shuitu High-Tech Industrial Park. The visit highlighted Chongqing Liangjiang New Area's integration of technology in urban development and its commitment to the creative industry. The delegates explored the cooperation areas in industrial design, technology exchange, and trade. The visit highlighted the importance of public-private partnerships and set the foundation for future cooperation. The delegates from Sisak-Moslavina County also visited Chongqing Zhongxian to explore cooperation in gaming industry, aligning with both regions' strategies for industrial transition through education, SMEs, and cultural exchange in the gaming sector.



The programme effectively merged formal and informal sessions, fostering deep discussions and meaningful networking in an educational and organized setting, leaving us eager for similar future opportunities. Our recent study visit highlighted exemplary practices in Chinese cities, sparking ideas for collaboration in smart city initiatives, smart manufacturing, and creative industries. These insights, showcasing technological and industrial prowess, pave the way for potential partnerships and necessitate further analysis to tailor these solutions to our specific challenges.

While the visit inspired valuable ideas, their implementation and effectiveness in our context remain to be fully assessed. The potential for cooperative ventures and leveraging new networks is significant, but requires detailed exploration to ensure their relevance and impact.

— Mr. Tina Pezdirc Nograšek
the Ljubljana Urban Region

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 1 **Cultural and Creative Industry:** Synthesize the shared interests in fostering technological advancement and cultural diversity.
- 2 **Healthcare and Industrial Development:** Focus on the healthcare industry and elderly care.
- 3 **Public-Private Partnerships:** Cooperate between government, education, and business sectors.
- 4 **Networking and Knowledge Exchange:** Provide opportunities for long-term cooperation and sharing best practices.
- 5 **Gaming Industry:** Focus on education & training, and entrepreneurship.



"During my visit, I had the opportunity to exchange experiences and best practices with representatives from Chongqing Zhongxian, focusing primarily on the sectors of gaming and tourism. As of now, we have established valuable connections and facilitated an exchange of experiences. Looking forward, we are optimistic about finding solutions to the challenges we have encountered thus far."

— Mr. Nikolina Radić
Sisak Moslavina County

Industrial Transition and Sustainable Development: Study Visit in Guangzhou Development District

21st – 22nd September 2023

The European delegation's visit to the Guangzhou Development District, including representatives from Bari, Bielsko-Biala, Sofia, Bacau County, Ljubljana Urban Region, Sisak Moslavina County and South Bohemia Region, aimed at cooperative networking and identifying cooperation areas within Guangzhou Development District, in the context of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. The potential cooperation focuses on high-end manufacturing, healthcare, and entrepreneurship. Through high-level discussions and site visits, including the China-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City, Zhiguang Energy Storage Technology, and the Guangzhou Development District Exhibition Hall, the delegation explored synergies and partnerships in industrial transformation. The visit highlighted the district's strategic direction towards a knowledge-based economy, emphasising future cooperation in green technology, healthcare, and SME acceleration programmes.

“

The study visit notably enhanced collaborative opportunities with Chinese cities, reinforcing the sister city relationship between Bari and Guangzhou. We engaged in valuable exchanges on creative industries, automotive, and urban mobility, enriching our understanding of city management, sector-specific industrial evolution, local governance, and stakeholder dynamics. This experience highlighted the importance of EU-China relations and offered profound insights into urban management via big data, along with technological innovations in the automotive, education, and mobility sectors.

— Vitandrea Marzano
City of Bari

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Conclusions and Next Steps

During the delegation's visit, several key sectors emerged as focal points for future cooperation:

- 1 **Industrial Transition and Start-Up Ecosystems:** Enhance dialogue with key stakeholders for cooperation in emerging industries through shared laboratory spaces, cooperative ventures, and incubation platforms.
- 2 **Advanced Manufacturing and Green Energy Technologies:** Explore partnerships in advanced manufacturing and green energy technologies, focusing on renewable energy storage, grid stabilisation, and energy management to enhance energy efficiency and sustainability.
- 3 **Healthcare and Elderly Care:** Highlight opportunities for exchanges and cooperation in healthcare, aiming to advance pharmaceutical manufacturing and establish a knowledge exchange platform.

中欧 地区合作交流会 EU-China Regional Policy Cooperation Pilot Cities and Regions Working Conference





Key Takeaways:

- 1 The visit has laid the groundwork for continued dialogue and strengthened partnerships, emphasising the importance of engaging with global cities and regions to build sustainable urban and regional ecosystems.
- 2 Inspired by the synergies from other partnered cities and regions, the integrated approach of sustainable and inclusive development is highlighted.
- 3 Beyond urban sustainability, there's an interest in expanding cooperation into the technology, education and commerce sectors, contributing to broader goals of sustainable development.

Showcase EU-China Urban and Regional Cooperation at the IURC Final Event in Brussels

23rd – 24th October 2023

The achievements and prospects of the International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) in China were showcased at the IURC final global event in Brussels. The event was attended by the delegates from the EU, including the Lazio Region, Region of Western Greece, NCI-Bologna and Sofia, and Chinese cities of Zhengzhou, Hangzhou, Liuzhou, Chongqing Liangjiang New Area, Suzhou Taicang and Guangzhou Development District, together with participants from across the globe, including high-ranking officials from the European Commission and UN-Habitat. The delegates actively engaged in cooperative discussions on themes of Ecological & Energy Transition, Urban & Regional Renewal, and Innovation Ecosystems & Digital Transition. The event highlighted the importance of decentralised, pioneering solutions to local challenges, showcasing international cooperation case studies that emphasised not only solutions but also their long-term impact. The IURC-China partnership of the Region of Western Greece – Hangzhou, and Lazio Region – Zhengzhou shared their successful story of cooperation. The event served as a valuable opportunity for direct dialogue and networking between European delegates and their Chinese peers.



"The most advantageous aspect of my participation in the study visit was the exchange of contacts with other European delegates and our Chinese counterparts. This facilitated numerous discussions on potential future collaborations. Following the study visit, we plan to organize additional online meetings to further explore these opportunities."

— **Elitsa Bozhidarova Panayotova**
Sofia Green



Partnerships in Green, Cultural, and Creative Industry: The Chinese Cities Visited Ljubljana Urban Region

26th - 27th October 2023

The Chinese delegation from Zhengzhou, Hangzhou, Liuzhou, Chongqing Liangjiang New Area, Taicang and Guangzhou Development District visited the Ljubljana Urban Region. Marked by strategic meetings and site visits, the journey aimed at cooperation in green infrastructure, industry, and culture and creative ecosystem. The Chinese delegates were involved in discussions at the Ljubljana City Hall, Jožef Stefan Institute and the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and gained insights into pioneering solutions providers such as EKWB. Cultural and creative exchanges were highlighted through visits to Center Rog and Cukrarna Cultural Center. The delegates identified synergies in cultural and creative sectors, especially by the representatives from Chongqing Liangjiang New Area, setting a path for a long-term partnership for cooperation.



The visit has established a strong foundation for future collaborations and ventures, with mutual anticipation for the realisation of discussed cooperative projects. As we move forward and these collaborations take shape, we look forward to initiating active engagement in creative industries and SME accelerations with Chinese cities, aiming to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, resources, and expertise for mutual benefit. This engagement is expected to enhance the interaction between our work domains and the innovative approaches observed in the visited Chinese cities.



— **Mr. Tina Pezdirc Nograšek**
Regional Development Agency
of the Ljubljana Urban Region

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 1 Advancing cross-sectoral cooperation through pilot Projects in the cultural and creative industry integrating technological solutions.
- 2 Fostering policy dialogues and best practice exchanges between Chinese cities and the Ljubljana Urban Region, aligning urban development efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals.
- 3 Strengthening technological partnerships and business collaborations with key Slovenian institutions, such as the Jožef Stefan Institute and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, facilitating mutual economic growth.

Transit-Oriented Development for Sustainable Urban and Industrial Transformation: The Stuttgart Urban Region Visited Suzhou Taicang

01st - 03rd November 2023

The Stuttgart Urban Region delegation conduct the study visit to Suzhou Taicang, focused on partnership in Transit-Oriented Development, low-carbon urban districts, and industrial ecosystem transition. The intensive study visit included official meetings, seminar, workshop and site visits, showcasing Suzhou Taicang's commitment to low-carbon infrastructure development and green economic growth. The Stuttgart Urban Region delegation explored key sites such as the Taicang City Planning Exhibition Hall, the Sino-German Cooperation 30th Anniversary Exhibition Hall, United Automotive Electronic Systems Co., Ltd., and Donglin Town as a model for circular agriculture, providing insights into Suzhou Taicang's good practices in urbanisation, industrialisation and environmental initiatives. The highlight of the delegation visit is the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), strengthening the mutual commitment to knowledge and expertise exchange in Transit-Oriented Development, low-carbon urban district planning, and green building design, reflecting a comprehensive approach to sustainable urban development and industrial growth.



I express our deep appreciation for this opportunity to foster dialogue and cooperation, especially vital in today's conflict-ridden world. The concept of building bridges, symbolized by the EURO currency, highlights the importance of international connections. We emphasize the value of Sino-German partnerships, particularly between Taicang and Stuttgart, as foundations for wider collaboration. Our shared commitment to tackling urban development challenges promises innovative and robust outcomes. We're grateful for the hospitality and excited about future exchanges, extending special thanks to the IURC programme for its indispensable support.

— Thomas Kiwitt
the Stuttgart Urban Region

Conclusions and Next Steps

- 1 Sharing expertise and knowledge, the Stuttgart Urban Region provides support to implementing Transit-Oriented Development strategies in Loujiang New Town.
- 2 Providing technical support, fostering the development of low-carbon urban districts and facilitating the construction of green buildings in the area.
- 3 Engaging collaborative learning on the development of industrial parks to facilitate the transition towards green growth-oriented industrial ecosystems.
- 4 Address policy tools, technological solutions, and stakeholder involvement in the pilot projects.
- 5 Share socio-economic success factors and challenges, enhancing mutual understanding and supporting localisation of good practice models.

CASE STUDIES

Case Studies: Pioneers and Leadership

The case studies in the IURC consolidate knowledge shared among the European and Chinese cities and regions to adapt and adopt best practices effectively. In this publication, 5 case studies in IURC-China are chosen to highlight successful urban and regional cooperation and well-developed actions, contributing meaningful transformation towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda.

They are categorised into three thematic networks that are subdivided into clusters to address specific issues in sustainable urban development. This enables IURC to drive focused, practical changes by addressing the diverse challenges faced by European and Chinese cities and regions. In this publication, 5 chosen case studies spotlight well-developed actions and pilot projects included in IURC-China.

Joint Green Design Centre NCI-Bologna (IT) – Yangzhou (CN)

NCI-Bologna and Yangzhou collaborate to exchange knowledge and foster cooperation in sustainability, green design, and urban development through a joint Green Design Centre, emphasizing nature-based solutions, ecological transition, and cultural heritage preservation.



Thematic Network(s): Innovative, Sustainable & Carbon Neutral Ecosystems & Strategic Sectors

Thematic Cluster(s): Innovation Centres, Tourism & Culture, Urban Renewal

Cross-cutting challenge(s): Energy Transition - Climate Change

Topic keywords: Joint Design Centre, Green Infrastructure

MAIN CHALLENGE AND SOLUTION

Yangzhou is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Due to rapid urbanization, industrialisation and increasing energy consumption, the city needs a rapid transition to a resilient and low-carbon city. The city is seeking nature-based solutions for various urban regeneration projects. Key issues include sustainable transportation, energy efficiency, waste management, water management, preserving green spaces, and promoting public awareness.

Climate change profoundly affects NCI Bologna with hotter temperatures, increased rainfall, and heightened flood risks. The city prioritizes sustainability and green services, focusing on nature-based solutions, ecological transition, cultural heritage, and technological interventions for sustainability.

“ *Together we can create fruitful cooperation for green and resilient cities.* ”

— **Marino Cavallo**
NCI-Bologna

NCI Bologna and Yangzhou City have signed an MOU to start a joint green design centre. The partnership includes knowledge exchange and projects on sustainable and low-carbon initiatives, focusing on nature-based solutions and ecological transition, as well as joint efforts towards smart and sustainable cities. The actions also involve projects on riverfront development, preservation of cultural heritage, and community-centric projects.

The joint green design centre initiative has selected a site within a significant redevelopment project in NCI Bologna, formerly a hospital established in 1890. The project has been included in the NCI Bologna Municipal budget and is actively seeking additional financial support. Additionally, a parallel site for the initiative will be established at Yangzhou University in Yangzhou.



RESULTS AND IMPACT

The joint green design centre between NCI Bologna and Yangzhou is a promising initiative that aims to foster cooperation and innovation in the field of green city and sustainable urban development. The centre will involve stakeholders from both cities, including universities, social organisations, enterprises, and municipal governments, and will focus on designing and implementing projects on nature-based solutions and smart cities with cultural and ecological aspects. The result of this collaboration is to create a network of academic and professional partners that can exchange knowledge, best practices, and joint projects. The impact of this cooperation is to enhance the environmental performance, social inclusion, and economic competitiveness of both cities.

The joint green design centre initiative between NCI Bologna and Yangzhou resulted in:

- Establishing a strong long-term knowledge network between the two cities.
- Implementing innovative and replicable nature-based solutions for a resilient city.
- Enhancing green infrastructure addressing the climate adaptation challenges and the life quality of citizens.
- Protecting cultural heritage and ensuring the unique cultural legacies of both cities are safeguarded.



KEY FIGURES

2

Parallel Design Centres established in NCI Bologna and Yangzhou

2 million

Investment of resources and funding

1

Pilot project of renewal of historical urban centre identified

LESSONS LEARNED

Continuous city-to-city cooperation is crucial in creating strategies and tools to solve global issues such as environment and climate change.

Sharing and disseminating project outputs through knowledge networks such as awareness-raising events & exhibitions and education & training will reach wider range of target groups.

The implementation of the innovative green design provides valuable support for urban climate risk management planning.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the strong commitment among stakeholders enables cooperation and concrete results.



Organic Agriculture

Lazio Region (IT) – Zhengzhou (CN)

The Lazio Region – Zhengzhou cooperate on the sustainability and competitiveness of local organic agriculture.



Mr. Wang from 500px.com

Thematic Network(s): Ecological Transition & Green Deal

Thematic Cluster(s): Sustainable Urban Agriculture – Agrofood Chain

Cross-cutting challenge(s): Climate Change

Topic keywords: Organic Farm, Multifunctional (peri-)Urban Farming

MAIN CHALLENGE AND SOLUTION

Both the EU and China policies promote sustainable and safe agri-food supply, supporting urban-rural integrated development and knowledge-driven innovation for sustainable agriculture.

The (peri-)urban agriculture in Zhengzhou faces challenges in achieving economic viability while balancing biodiversity, expanding organic farming practices, overcoming knowledge barriers, and sustaining community participation.

The Lazio Region in Italy has long been supporting agricultural cooperatives that prioritise sustainable farming, healthy food production, and environmental preservation. The region has expertise in developing an urban agriculture model that emphasises ecological concerns, respects labour, and highlights the social value of agriculture. It collaborates with the Slow Food movement in Italy.

Lazio Region and Zhengzhou cooperation on Sustainable Agriculture and Agri-food System includes several key initiatives. A cooperation framework agreement was signed, with both regions' commitment to regional dialogue, knowledge sharing, fostering innovation in sustainable and safe agri-food supply, and addressing related issues such as heritage protection, agri-tourism, upcycling, and carbon sequestration. With knowledge exchange activities such as study visits, forums, conferences, and training programmes, these initiatives aim to promote sustainable and safe agri-food supply.



“ *The shared interest and cooperative engagement are acknowledged. Essential is the allocation of required resources and in-depth dialogue with local stakeholders.* ”

— **Rita Merkle**
IURC-China expert

RESULTS AND IMPACT



The cooperation between Lazio Region and Zhengzhou achieves positive outcomes in terms of sustainable agriculture, food safety, environmental protection, and economic development for the benefit of both regions.

- Enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of local organic agriculture.
- Promote circular economy principles in agriculture, which is crucial for mitigating climate change impacts.
- The establishment of a long-term cooperation mechanism and direct communication channels facilitates mutual learning and capacity building.
- Joint actions focus on integrating existing knowledge and resources to develop peri-urban agriculture.
- The "triple-helix" approach can drive technological advancements, education and job creation.

KEY FIGURES

9

Working sessions on key topics of agri-food supply chains

3

Training programmes on peri-urban agriculture, sustainable supply of urban food, and urban agriculture

1

Demonstration field for carbon sequestration and emission reduction in organic farming

LESSONS LEARNED

Long term cooperation between the regions is important to achieve common goals.

A multi-faceted approach is essential, integrating economic, social, and environmental aspects in agriculture.

Investing in scientific knowledge is key to achieving sustainable agriculture, rural resilience, and food security.



Transit-Oriented Urban Development Stuttgart Urban Region (DE) – Suzhou Taicang (CN)

The Stuttgart Urban Region-Suzhou Taicang cooperate to create attractive, productive, and low-carbon cities through innovative TOD projects.



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Thematic Network(s): Urban & Regional Renewal

Thematic Cluster(s): Urban Planning, Mobility & Transport, Nature-Based

Solutions Cross-cutting challenge(s): Energy Transition - Climate Change

Topic keywords: TOD, productive city, low-carbon city

MAIN CHALLENGE AND SOLUTION



“ Sustainable development is a top priority in urban planning to make our regions future-proof. ”

— **Thomas Kiwitt**

Deputy Director, Stuttgart Urban Region

Both Suzhou Taicang and the Stuttgart Urban Region face challenges in their urban development agendas. Suzhou Taicang must address obstacles in establishing efficient transportation networks, aligning urban plans with transport management strategies, and balancing economic growth with ecological space planning. Likewise, the Stuttgart Urban Region encounters challenges in achieving a balance between land use, transportation, housing, environmental sustainability, and brownfield revitalization.

In response to these challenges, Suzhou Taicang and the Stuttgart Urban Region have initiated cooperative efforts with a specific focus on Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and the development of low-carbon urban district. This collaboration involves engaging in municipal government dialogues, exchanging knowledge, implementing joint projects, and providing technical support to achieve green and low-carbon development objectives. The ultimate goal is to create attractive, productive, and environmentally friendly urban districts by adopting the Low Carbon City concept principles and implementing the TOD model.

Three pilot projects in Suzhou Taicang have been identified: 18 Gang Road TOD, China-Germany Phase VI, and North Hongqiao China-Germany Innovation Corridor. These projects aim to integrate green transportation planning, establish low-carbon urban districts, and create landscape ecological corridors. Activities such as study visits, seminars, workshops, and consultations with Stuttgart Urban Region’s experts are planned to exchange knowledge and experiences. The projects will undergo continuous evaluation, improvement, and necessary adjustments to ensure successful implementation.

RESULTS AND IMPACT

Stuttgart Urban Region – Suzhou Taicang cooperation is multifaceted involving municipal government dialogues, exchanging development strategies, policies instruments, financial incentives, and regulatory frameworks related to urban planning, transportation, and energy. They also engage in knowledge exchange among institutions, industry associations, and enterprises. Implementation of the three pilot projects, the 18 Gang Road TOD project, the industrial district in Sino-German Zone Phase VI, and the Beihongqiao Sino-German Innovation Zone, focuses on the application of green technology and contributing to the realization of liveable, productive and low-carbon development goals.

The partnership between Suzhou Taicang and Stuttgart Urban Region achieved in:

- Sustainable urban development with Transit-Oriented Development (TOD): implementing the TOD model in Suzhou Taicang and integrated energy planning for low-carbon urban districts are critical for mitigating climate change.
- Green growth with industrial ecosystem transition: the support of the industrial symbiosis and the promotion of green transition of SMEs contribute not only to the productivity and competitiveness of the city but also set a model for sustainable economic practices that can be transferable in other contexts.
- Long-term partnership and knowledge sharing: A structured consultation mechanism engages in continuous knowledge exchange, capacity building, and collaborative learning that is crucial for strategic partnership for long-term development outcomes.



KEY FIGURES

3

Pilot projects as demonstrations for Zero-Carbon Experiment

300,000

Estimated population

2

Carbon goals: CO₂ emissions peak by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2060

LESSONS LEARNED

Effective decision-making and implementation are critical to achieving integrated transit-oriented urban development.

Policy, institutional, and partnership supports are crucial to make TOD work.

Improving understanding of TOD concepts among stakeholders is important.

Distance travelled can be reduced by mixed-use development, high densities of housing and employment, pedestrian/bicycle-friendly network, park and last-mile solutions.



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Gaming Industry

Sisak Moslavina County (HR) – Chongqing Zhongxian (CN)

Sisak Moslavina County and Chongqing Zhongxian Establish Cooperation for the Digital Economy in the Gaming Industry.



MAIN CHALLENGE AND SOLUTION

Sisak-Moslavina County, historically a key industrial area, launched the "Sisak Moslavina County – A Center of Gaming Industry" initiative in 2016 to pivot towards a climate-friendly economic model. This initiative focuses on education to cultivate gaming industry experts, aiming to bolster the entrepreneurial sector through exports. The county has implemented a revitalisation programme to enhance regional competitiveness, including the PISMO business incubator tailored for game development. An expanding gaming campus will feature the region as the Balkans' video gaming hub.

In Chongqing Zhongxian, "Zhongxian E-sports" was planned to be the economic driver. This initiative integrates knowledge in green tech, sustainability, and climate enhancement in an ecologically sensitive area. Meanwhile, it confronts challenges such as the gaming industry's entrepreneurial ecosystem and the social acceptance of gaming in education.

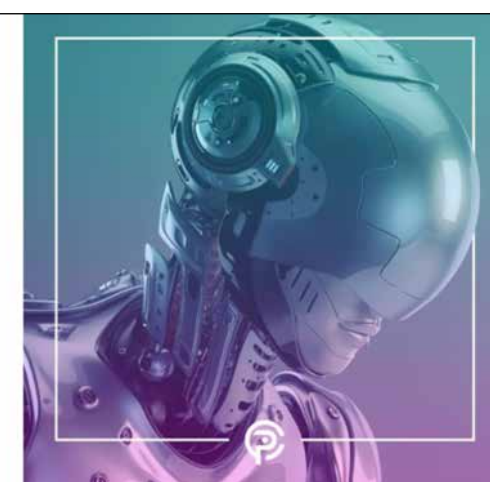
- Gaming Industry Exchange: Initiate a platform for exchanging ideas through regular meetings and seminars.
- Education and Training Collaboration: Develop joint educational programmes for schools and universities focused on the gaming industry.
- E-Games and E-Sports Events: Mutual participation and hosting of e-games and e-sports events in each other's regions.
- Incubators and Accelerators: Jointly manage incubators and accelerators to support SMEs' internationalization in the gaming industry.
- Faculty and Student Exchanges: Support reciprocal visits for faculties, students, and interns, along with joint financial incentives for startups.

Thematic Network(s): Innovative, Sustainable & Carbon Neutral Ecosystems

Thematic Cluster(s): Technologies 4.0, Education, Jobs & Skills

Cross-cutting challenge(s): Digital Transition

Topic keywords: Gaming Industry, Industrial Transition



“ We want to technologically transform our economy and push it in another direction. ”

— **Andreja ŠEPERAC**

Director, Sisak Moslavina County Regional Development Agency

RESULTS AND IMPACT



The cooperation between Sisak-Moslavina County and Chongqing Zhongxian has had a significant impact on the development of green and digital economic growth.

- Enhanced game industry education and training, creating a sustainable talent pipeline.
- Establishment of a gaming industry exchange platform for continuous collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- Fostering a sustainable gaming culture, organizing vibrant e-games and e-sport events, positioning both regions as key players in the global gaming market.
- Joint operation of gaming industry incubators and accelerators, driving economic growth and innovation.
- Long-term economic benefits, job creation, and technological advancements.

KEY FIGURES

4

Joint education and training programmes

2

International events

1

Cross-border incubation collaboration in the gaming industry

LESSONS LEARNED

Building strategic partnerships through a cooperative working group, regular communication, and dedicated personnel allows both parties to effectively address needs and achieve mutual benefits.

Collaboration in game industry education and training is crucial for nurturing talent and promoting innovation.

Jointly operating gaming incubators and accelerators supports the growth of SMEs and facilitates their internationalization.

Supportive mechanisms, like incentives and streamlined funding processes, encourage collaboration and foster gaming company establishment.



Green Economy, Education and Entrepreneurship

The Region of Western Greece (GR) – Hangzhou (CN)

Hangzhou and the Region of Western Greece cooperate to enhance green economy.

CGTN

eTrade for all

Thematic Network(s): Innovative, Sustainable & Carbon Neutral Ecosystems

Thematic Cluster(s): Technologies 4.0, Education, Jobs & Skills

Cross-cutting challenge(s): Energy Transition - Climate Change

Topic keywords: E-commerce, Vocational Education and Training

MAIN CHALLENGE AND SOLUTION

The Region of Western Greece made significant efforts to advance the green economy and digital transformation. The region's geographical advantages for renewable energy, historical and natural assets and endeavour for entrepreneurship and economic dynamics suggest opportunities for cooperation with Hangzhou.

Hangzhou endeavoured to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. Hangzhou has been a leading player in cross-border E-commerce, launching the world's first Electronic World Trade Platform (eWTP) public service platform for overseas development. Meanwhile, Hangzhou is facing challenges of discrepancy between renewable energy supply and economic growth needs, despite the rapid growth of renewable energy.

“ *Several initiatives can open the way for fruitful cooperation and collaboration.* ”

— **Kostas Giotopoulos**
the Region of Western Greece

Region of Western Greece and Hangzhou identified cooperation to:

- Cooperate in digital trade, focusing on Vocational Training and SME incubation for internationalisation of business in sectors like agri-food and creative industries.
- Work together in renewable energy, including photovoltaic and wind power, to support regional climate goals and sustainable development.
- Enhance cultural and sports tourism through international events and promote mutual cultural and tourism exchange.
- Foster entrepreneurship and job creation, focusing on mutual visits, pilot projects, entrepreneurship and joint education & training programmes.



Photo Source: European Commission

RESULTS AND IMPACT



Photo Credit: VCG

The cooperation between Hangzhou and the Region of Western Greece will foster talent development and SME incubation and contribute to regional green transition. Cooperation will lead to

- Enhancement of cross-border trade through VET training and education and SME incubation.
- Supporting regional climate goals and sustainable development, with a focus on renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- Joint efforts in culture and sports tourism to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation.
- Fostering talent development, entrepreneurship and job creation.
- Building the foundation for long-term green economic growth.

KEY FIGURES

1
Knowledge platform

3
Joint events

1
China-Europe live streaming E-commerce channel



LESSONS LEARNED

Collaboration on talent development and incubation of SMEs can facilitate regional economic transition.

Joint efforts in renewable energy contribute to achieving regional climate goals and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

International sports events and cultural exchange can enhance mutual understanding and cooperation.



FINAL REFLECTIONS

Final Reflections

Reflecting on the three-year journey of the IURC-China, we are proud of its success as a facilitator of knowledge exchange and network building, despite challenges of COVID-19. Pilot cities and regions have appreciated the programme for collaborative learning of experiences, exchanging local and regional good practices, and fostering common solutions in strategies and pilot projects. The IURC-China has established new initiatives, extended long-term cooperation, and enhanced international visibility and connections for cities, regions, and stakeholders.

With comprehensive results in our knowledge library, the programme demonstrates its broad impact, supporting joint actions aligned with regional and local development plans. The IURC-China is committed to promoting decentralised international cooperation to advance urban diplomacy, sustainable development, and innovation. IURC-China participating cities and regions understand the potential of the programme and how it can be used for a concrete benefit for their city and region. This realisation is attributed to their strong commitment to leadership and international cooperation.

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