## 4.2.2 Preserving and enhancing the natural environment

### 4.2.2.1 Natural preservation; Dublin; Maribor; Athens; Palma; València; Venice

**UNESCO Dublin Bay Biosphere, Where People and Nature Connect; Dublin:** Dublin city is home to the Dublin Bay Biosphere which has a unique UNESCO designation, as it is the only Biosphere Reserve worldwide which includes within its area a national capital city. It recognises the biodiversity of the area, as well as the economic, cultural and tourism importance of this biodiversity, and the need for an ecologically sustainable economic model for the Biosphere. The Biosphere was expanded in 2015, now covering the whole of Dublin Bay, extending to over 300km2. Over 300,000 people live within this newly enlarged Biosphere. The buffer zone comprises 82km2 of public and private green spaces such as parks, greenbelts, and golf courses, which surround and adjoin the core zones. The transition zone comprises 173km2 and forms the outer part of the Biosphere. It includes tourism hot spots, residential areas, harbours, ports, and industrial and commercial areas. The Biosphere has three main goals: conservation, which focuses on promoting the conservation of landscapes, habitats, wildlife, and cultural values; learning, which emphasizes supporting education and research for a better understanding of nature and global issues, and development, which aims to fostering a sustainable economy and society for people living and working in the area. It operates important programmes to help foster economic and environmental sustainability. To build on this success, the partnership has developed a five-year Conservation Programme, a five-year Research Strategy, a three-year Business Development Plan and an Education and Awareness Programme. Within the Dublin Bay Biosphere, which includes three Blue Flag beaches, are exceptional recreation areas for both Dubliners and tourists alike. Visitors who use wheelchairs can now access these amenities due to the introduction of special 'beach wheelchairs' which are available free of charge at North Bull Island and Dollymount Strand. For visitors, another popular way to explore the biosphere is on the award-winning Biosphere Discovery Tour which is run by Dublin Bay Cruises. Furthermore, 1600 Dublin bikes and explore the Biosphere on Dublin's newest Coastal Mobility Route, which comprises over 3.6km of cycling and walking path along Dublin's coastline which was opened in 2020. Since opening, the Coastal Mobility Route has become an important sustainable transport corridor for Dublin which helps to spread our visitors more sustainably throughout the city. The route is also fitted with smart sensors to measure its usage. Its success has transformed how people get around Dublin, with over 20,000 cycle trips being recorded every week, a 100% increase since 2019.

© Frank Hanswijk (Rotterdamse Daken Dagen), city of Rotterdam

Find out more at: https://www.dublinbaybiosphere.ie

**Green labels for the city – Old Vine House; Maribor:** The Maribor Tourist Board in cooperation with local partners decided to apply Maribor as the green destination of Slovenia and has come up with a detailed action plan with laid-out environmental goals. One of the institutions implementing the action plan and serving as a green label example is the Old Vine House that in 2020 was awarded the Green Key ecolabel by the National office in Slovenia. For obtaining the certificate, the provider must meet 13 criteria of evaluation, ranging from environmental management, guest information, waste and water management, energy efficiency to staff engagement and other criteria. In 2021, the Old Vine House was also awarded the Slovenia Green Attraction logo.

Find out more at: https://kongres-magazine.eu/2020/10/old-vine-house-maribor-awarded-the-green-key-eco-label-certificate/ and https://www.visitmaribor.si/en/what-to-do/wine-and-culinary/old-vine-house/

**Adopt a tree, help Athens stay green, Athens:** Every year, Athens plants approximately 600 trees that need watering 3-4 times per week so that they survive, but 10%-40% of these trees die because of high temperatures. The city has begun to invest in proper maintenance of trees to protect them from weather events and to increase their environmental benefits. Athens created a map with the participation of residents that shows the coordinates of all the city's trees and their characteristics to help design the most efficient and effective ways of maintaining the trees. Additionally, the Adopt-a-Tree program helps residents keep a schedule of when trees are watered to help them survive. Through the Novoville app, people can find a tree and commit to keeping it healthy by watering it.

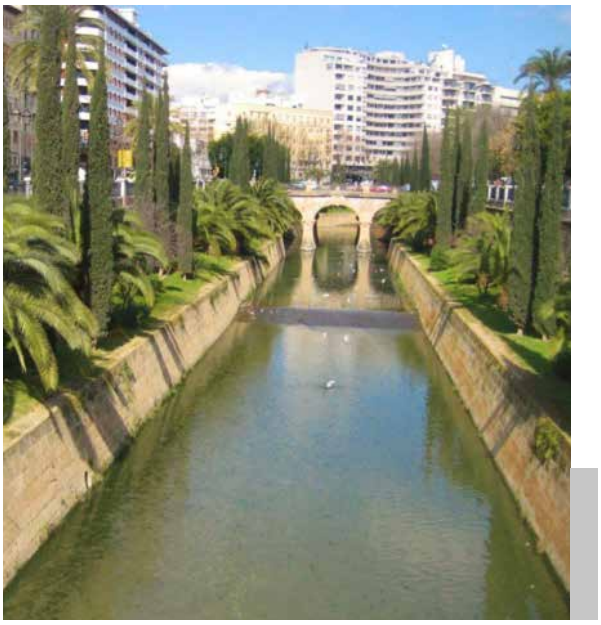
Learn more about 'Adopt a Tree' initiative here https://novoville.com/adopt-a-tree/

© City of Athens

**Green Corridor Reforestation; Palma:** To mitigate and adapt to climate change by reducing CO2 emissions and their effects, Palma has instigated a campaign to reforest their urban landscape and has installed prominent signage containing live, real time updated information with how many trees have been planted to date. Together with the Green Corridor project, the city aims to help the recovery of green areas in the urban city centre as well as help combat the effects of climate change namely rising temperatures by offering a natural cooling of the city through the regeneration of the trees in Palma.

Find out more at: https://www.majorcadailybulletin.com/news/local/2016/12/27/46432/green-corridor-for-temperature-reduction-planned-for-palma.html

**Coastline sustainability at the center of responsible maritime tourism; Valencia:** València participates in the MITOMED project, a project that aims to improve the development of sustainable and responsible coastal and maritime tourism in the Mediterranean and is based on the following actions: Developing a system of tourism data indicators to measure the sustainability of tourism activities and their social and economic results and impacts; Promoting social dialogue between stakeholders; Creating the Green Beach model, a tool for local authorities and beach operators that helps them make decisions about the sustainable management of beaches; Developing an integrated management model of coastal and maritime tourism.



© Visit Palma

Find out more at: https://fundacion.visitvalencia.com/en/sustainability/projects/mitomed

**How to prevent flooding in a sustainable manner; Venice:** The MOSE system that has been implemented may at first glance appear to be a smart solution to a particularly Venetian problem, but it can have application across Europe and the world. To protect the city of Venice the unique architectural and environmental heritage the Experimental Electromechanical Module (MOSE System) operates to protect the city from high water and from the tides. The system can protect Venice and the

© Renato Greco Comune di Venezia

lagoon from tides up to 3 meters high and from a sea-level rise up to 60cm expected in the next century. The MOSE flood gate was raised in 2020 and since then, Venice has no longer suffered flooding from tides exceeding 110cm.

Find out more at: https://www.mosevenezia.eu/project/?lang=en

#### 4.2.2.2 Sustainable education; Dublin; Alba Iulia; Copenhagen; Matosinhos; San Sebastian

**Encouraging ecological values among the little ones; Dublin:** During the Covid 19 lockdown, the Dublin Bay Biosphere used remote technology to run a HomeSchool Biodiversity Series, and community programmes that encourage children from across the city to become Biosphere ambassadors. In June 2021, Dublin Bay Biosphere in partnership with Scouting Ireland launched the Dublin Bay Biosphere Award. This allows children to earn a badge which can be sown onto uniforms or clothing in recognition of their efforts to protect local wildlife.

Find out more at: https://www.dublinbaybiosphere.ie/events/home-school-webinar-series/ and https://www.dublinbaybiosphere.ie/biosphere-award/about-the-biosphere-award/


© Fiona McDonald