

NEW INTEGRATED APPROACHES ON CLIMATE CHANGE, THE CASE OF SATURN PAN EUROPEAN PROJECT

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Abstract

The landscape has been described as a blind spot in regional economic strategies. It is not surprising therefore that the immense potential of the peri-urban and rural hinterlands to contribute to the climate emergency is so frequently overlooked. Recognition of the value of landscape in dealing with issues such as carbon sequestration, food and biomass production, risk mitigation, culture, health and identity is further complicated by fragmented ownership, numerous types and scales of often conflicting kinds of designations and a complex infrastructure of governance structures, policy requirements and regulatory frameworks. This underpins the development of inadequate city climate strategies analysed independently of their territory, surroundings and agricultural land.

With partners from across Europe, the pan European Orchestrated Ecosystem research project funded by EIT Climate-KIC, System and sustainable Approach to virtuous interaction of Urban and Rural Landscapes (SATURN) is developing new integrated approaches to deal with the urban, peri-urban and rural landscape in response to an evident need for new ideas in the context of the deepening climate emergency and the need to address air quality, food and water security. By increasing awareness of the capacity of landscape SATURN will also help nation states to meet the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG's) and respond to the 2020 State and Outlook of the European Environment (EEA 2019).

This paper reports SATURN's initial findings.

Building on expertise developed by partners from Birmingham (UK), Trento (Italy) and Gothenburg (Sweden) it focuses on the relationship between cities, food growing and the rural landscape, and outlines progress made to generate holistic strategic frameworks to landscape management, development and transformation and engage urban populations in urban and peri urban landscape and local farming.

Concentrating primarily on the re-use of abandoned territories, SATURN, by supporting, extending and evaluating a range of local and national food growing initiatives is reintroducing and invigorating the production of organic agricultural products and is building skills and competencies in traditional and new agricultural practices through the provision of collective growing spaces (or vegetable gardens).

The project builds on the work undertaken by a number of existing initiatives including the sustainable approach of farming developed in Gothenburg, the policy work developed in Trento, the UK's social farms and garden network and the International Traditional Knowledge Institute. It is building up a comprehensive and flexible framework to help cities implement food growing and water cleansing policies and projects at a range of scales in their surrounding landscape, taking into account land use assets and cultural identity.

Responding to the increasing interest from consumers, citizens, and private/public institutions, it is raising awareness of the capacity of the land and local production to mitigate climate change. Setting out the next phase of the project, the paper concludes with key lessons learned, the identification of processes that can be applied in regions across Europe and an evaluation of the significance of exchanging knowledge between different countries.

SATURN Partners:

