



Cyprus
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Photo: Urban architecture in the historic centre of Nicosia. © Cyprus Energy Agency



NICOSIA

an inclusive, accessible,
green and regenerated
walled city

- ACTION PLAN -



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1. Introduction

1.1 Sustainable Historic City Districts Project [2018-2020]

The 'Sustainable Historic City Districts' project departs from a holistic approach to address common challenges already identified in historic districts of five cities from four EU Mediterranean countries [Lisboa (PT), Savona (IT), Ptuj (SI), Sassari (IT) and **Nicosia (CY)**], and to work, within a shared framework, to change their historic districts towards more sustainable, climate resilient and inclusive ones, through innovative integrated solutions and social change.

The project, adopts a common framework to identify innovation opportunities to accelerate the learning process to transform the historic districts into sustainable and lively ones. Its key concept is to put sustainable development at the heart of the districts, by taking integrated approaches instead of responding to isolated challenges in a fragmented way.

The Sustainable Historic City Districts project aims to demonstrate how a collaborative approach to take integrated action, can deliver innovation towards sustainability and climate change mitigation and resilience. This process is tackled and developed through a participatory process with the districts' stakeholders and local population to assure its effectiveness in the long term.

Taking the five historic districts, the project delivers tested innovative solutions across the areas of:

- mobility & accessibility
- local economic development & tourism
- housing & buildings
- circular systems & nature-based solutions

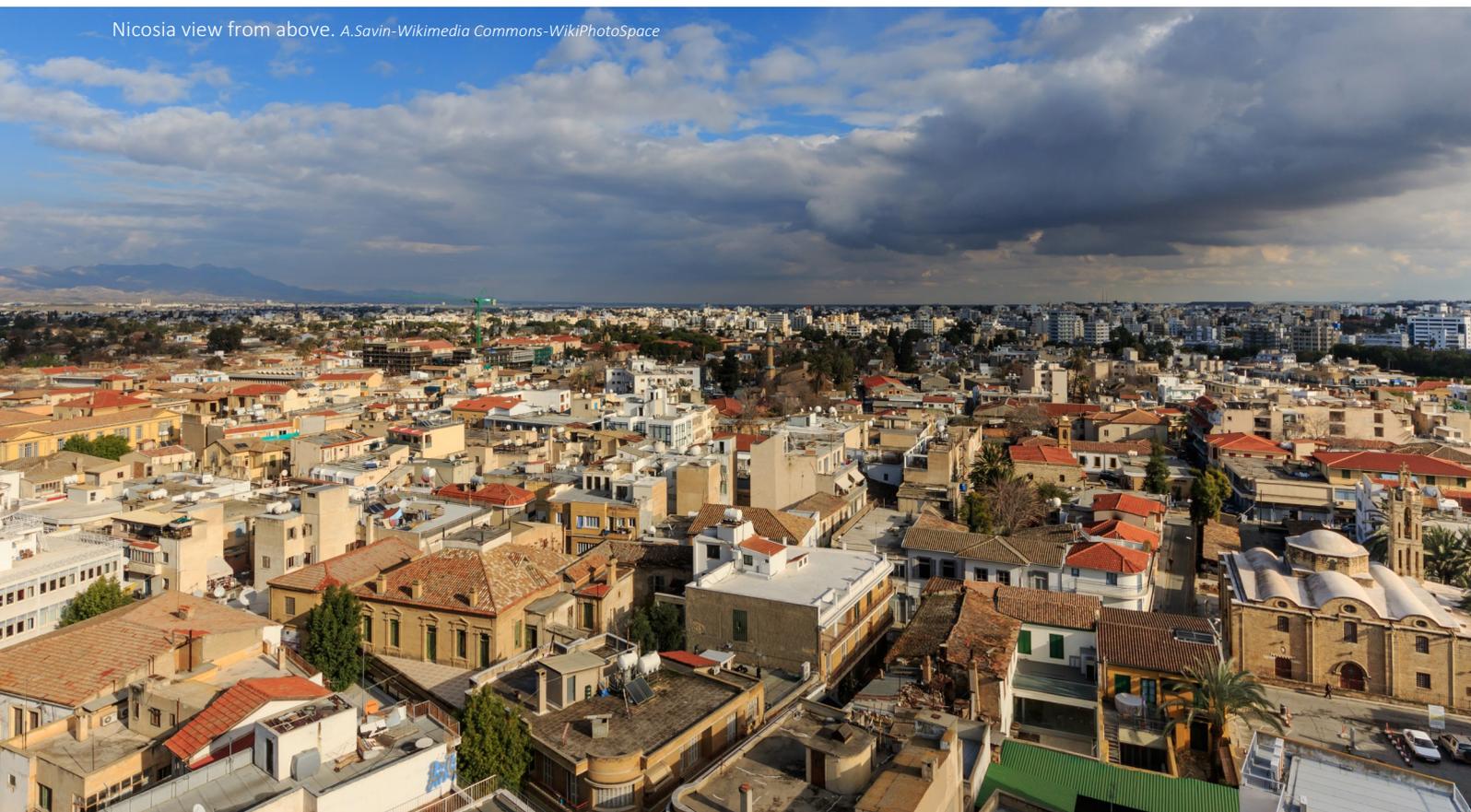
Through coordinated actions across key-enablers of change:

- citizen & community participation
- stakeholder engagement
- governance & partnerships
- business models & finance platforms
- urban planning approaches
- communication & progress monitoring

The project enables the participating city-district communities to take bolder steps to deliver local transformation through potentially replicable models, in a joint learning process. During the project's duration the partners evolved from a Vision, to an Agenda, to a Plan, to change their historic districts, by increasing the robustness of planning and delivery of transformative projects and supporting social systems.

This document **constitutes the local Action Plan for the historic centre of Nicosia**, and it is based on the work implemented within the framework of the project from 2018 to 2020.

Nicosia view from above. A.Savin-Wikimedia Commons-WikiPhotoSpace



1.2 The Historic Center of Nicosia

NICOSIA is the largest city and capital of Cyprus, located approximately at the geographic centre of the island. Since 1974, it remains divided, with its historical centre to be affected by this division. The Nicosia district covers an area of about 111km², and its historical centre - within the venetian walls - extends to about 2km². Due to the surrounded fortifications, the historic centre cannot expand in terms of land area to accommodate new facilities.

Nicosia district has a population of around 220,000 whereas the Nicosia Municipality has 55,014 citizens (based on the 2011 Census data), and is expected to increase considerably by 2025. The population of the historic centre is around 9,000 inhabitants.

Overall, Nicosia experiences long, hot and dry summers with almost zero precipitation, whereas heat-waves are becoming more frequent each year. Additionally, the risk for urban flooding during sudden storms is constantly increasing.

Nicosia Municipality is one of the active *Covenant of Mayors* signatories in Cyprus, with an ambitious ongoing and well performing Sustainable Energy Action Plan [SEAP] for 2020 and beyond, which also includes actions for the historic city. Based on the SEAP, the largest consumer of energy in the municipality is the transport sector followed by the building sector.

The fact that the city is divided, is a great challenge as it can limit the actions taken and the diffusion of the results throughout the territory of the historic centre. Nowadays, the historic centre is characterised by insufficient public and private transportation systems and obsolete infrastructures which lead to the excessive use of cars, even in the narrow streets of the historical centre, downgrading the quality of life of the residents and the visitors. There are also limitations to the implementation of energy efficiency measures at the historical centre and the utilisation of RES, as its biggest part is under preservation constraint, restricting many possible interventions.

Moreover, the historical centre is characterized by the lack of climate resilient public spaces and sustainable, inclusive buildings, whereas the heat-island effect and its consequences, are becoming more obvious every year, making it imperative to take drastic measures.

Historic districts at Mediterranean cities have peculiar characteristics that make them unique for those who live there, but also for their visitors. They have many common features as, for example, historic urban fabric, composed by narrow streets with limited green public spaces, and degraded heritage buildings, often vacant. Moreover, historic centres are usually populated by elderly inhabitants and characterised by massive tourism fluxes. The lack of integration and interaction between the different groups are often at the origin of problems hampering the well-being and development of such districts.

Since they have many common features, they are also characterised by many common challenges such as: general lack of climate resilient public spaces, due to low presence of green areas in a densely inhabited areas; severe limitations to implement energy efficiency measures and utilize RES in the historical buildings due to their cultural value; very congested streets with excessive use of private cars amplifying impacts on air pollution, noise and GHG emissions; and lastly, loss of the sense of community spirit, hampering their authenticity.

Due to their location, they also share common climate features, such as the very hot and dry summers and the relatively mild winters and increased heat waves, flash floods and water scarcity threats, which tend to be exacerbated under future climate changes.

All the abovementioned, are also evident in the historic centre of Nicosia, the 'city within the walls', which is the focus area for Cyprus.

Over the last few years, the zones of mixed activities and commercial activities in the historic centre are shrunk, whereas big percentage of derelict and empty buildings as well as underused plots, are reducing the attractiveness of the area for investing. Moreover, the existing Local Plan for the wider urban area of Nicosia city, offers a wider perspective for the development of the city, and does not focus on the complex and unique aspects that are particular and necessary for the revitalisation of the centre. Therefore, a new plan specifically for the revitalisation of the historic centre, is created based on citizens' needs.

This 'Action Plan' contributes to the revitalisation of the intra muros city of Nicosia, emphasising on the intersection between small scale interventions with the aim to enhance the built environment and the involvement of local community in the process for sustainable development and climate adaptation & mitigation.

"The 21st century will determine the way we will tackle climate change and social inequality in cities. The actions to be taken to reduce the impact of climate change and the vulnerability of cities, contribute to reducing social inequality, by creating opportunities for partnerships and local investment, among other."



For this Action Plan, the community participation and the structured environment are put in the foreground, and five high-level objectives are set as follows:

High-Level Objectives:

Environmental resilience and sustainability: Nicosia to become a city that facilitates non-motorised movement and has quality green public spaces with citizens who are aware of climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions (circular systems, nature-based solutions).

Governance and Participation: Nicosia to become a city where the local community participates effectively in the commons and has access to information on subjects that shape their everyday environment.

Accessibility and social inclusion: Nicosia to become a human-centered city where all community groups, and especially vulnerable groups, are considered in the establishment of physical and social infrastructures.

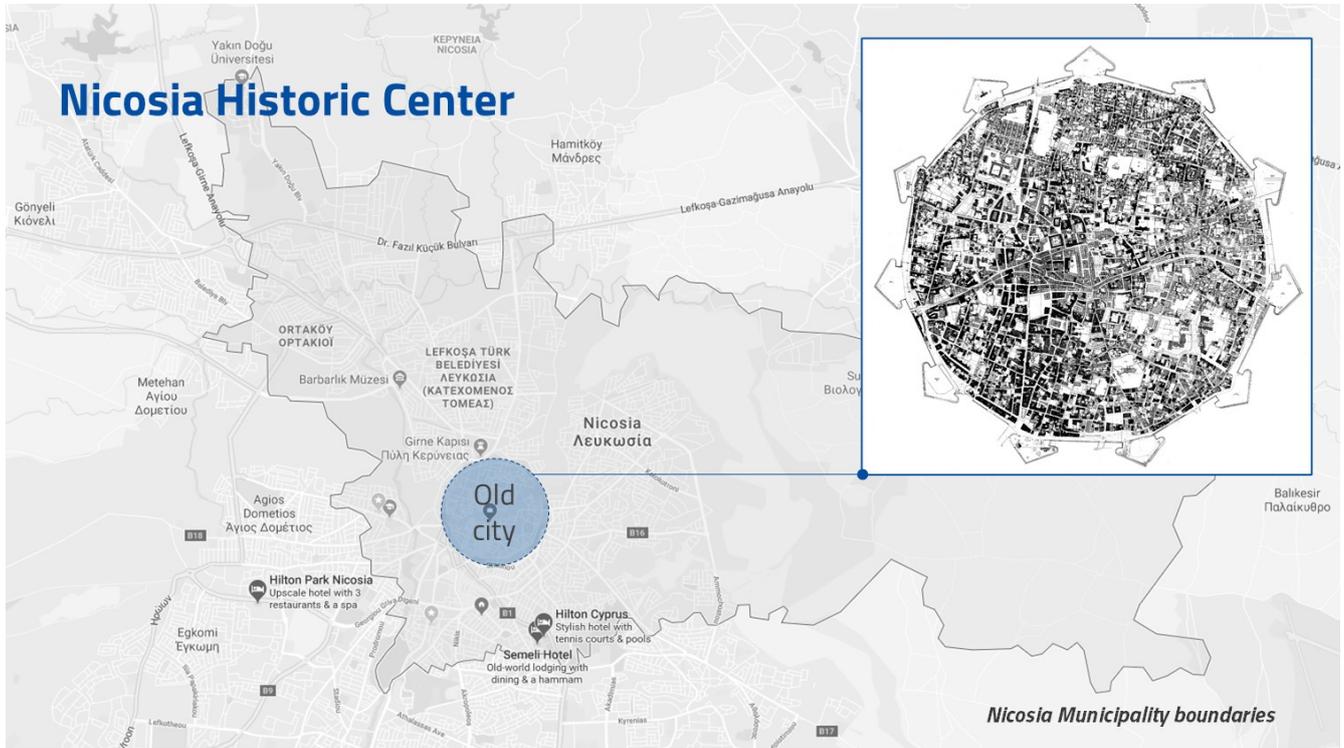
Quality of life : Nicosia to become an attractive, liveable and lovable city that offers opportunities to everybody to live up to their full potential.

Economic efficiency: Nicosia to become a capital with a vibrant urban economy that promotes public-private partnerships, encourages the creation of innovative business models for its local economic development and attracts cultural tourism activities.

Those are the core foundations to meet the vision for “An inclusive, accessible, green, regenerated city within the walls”.



*A vision for a
Sustainable Historic Centre*



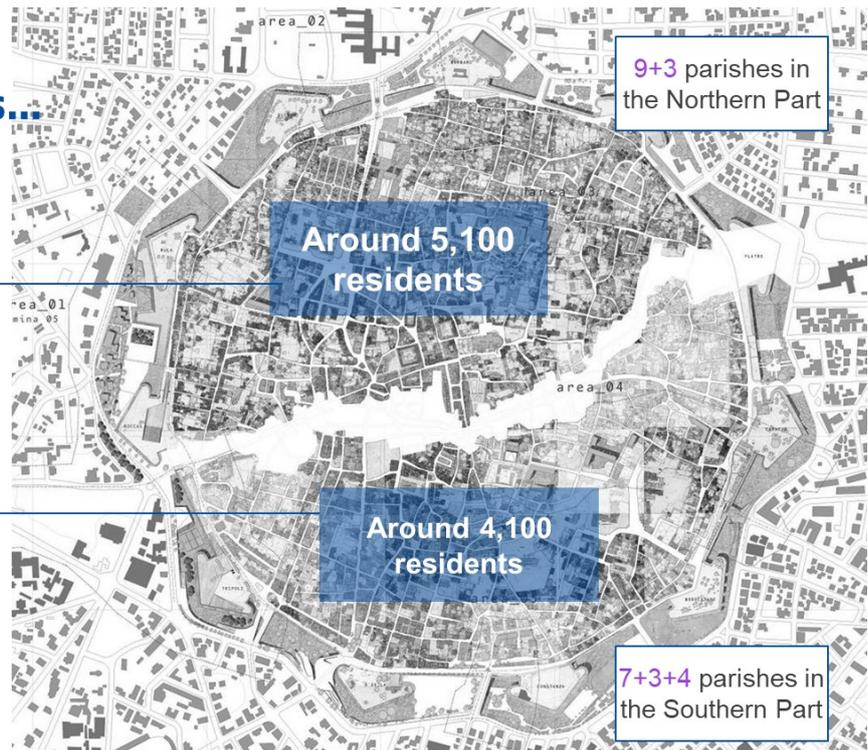
Municipal Boundaries of Nicosia and Location of the Historic Centre. Map: Google Maps

Nicosia – In numbers...

Majority: Cypriots [TU]

No specific data for the EU Citizens & other citizens

Mostly populated by immigrants & elderly inhabitants [& low percentage of young families]



Population Data within the historic centre, based on 2011 Census. Map: <https://bit.ly/2LL9pO4>

Ambition for change through the Historic Districts Initiative

Summary of the key assets, opportunities and challenges identified for Nicosia

Key Assets	
1.	Buildings & landmarks of cultural heritage
2.	Mediterranean climate
3.	Rich History - the historic centre through the time
4.	Frequent cultural events, exhibitions & festivals
5.	Low levels of criminality
6.	Night Life – Some parts of the historic centre are active from morning to night
7.	Variety of users and residents (different ages, status, cultures)
8.	Serves alternative forms of tourism [ie. food tourism, architectural tourism, 'dark' tourism]
9.	Flat land [active mobility]
Opportunities	
1.	Sustainable Historic City Districts Project (establishment of an Action Plan for the historic centre)
2.	Nicosia strategies (SECAP, Masterplan, Smart City, SUMP, Central Nicosia Area Scheme Action Plan)
3.	Many Active CSOs and NGOs within the historic centre
4.	Supporting Schemes by the Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism, the Town Planning and Housing Department, the Antiquities Department and the United Nations Development Programme
5.	CYENS (former RISE) – Research centre on Interactive media, Smart systems and Emerging technologies
6.	State supporting schemes by the relevant Authorities
7.	Right to participate in the commons - Use of open consultations
Challenges	
1.	Nicosia, and consequently the old city, is divided therefore any actions taken may be restricted and limit the diffusion of the results throughout the territory of the historic centre
2.	Citizens are not fully informed and engaged with the commons
3.	The implementation of energy efficiency measures at the historical centre and the utilisation of RES are limited, as its biggest part is under conservation constraint
4.	A lot of buildings remain unused and abandoned - need to be preserved and rehabilitated
5.	Inadequate economic incentives which leads to lack of a holistic approach
6.	City is vulnerable to climate change - Heat Island Effect – Social Environment
7.	Limited -climate resilient- public and green spaces and insufficient infrastructure
8.	Implementation of a holistic Mobility Plan is difficult due to insufficient public and non-public transport systems
9.	Insufficient spatial policy [surrounding area of the historical centre]

"To revitalize the intra muros city of Nicosia through working on the intersection between small scale interventions, with the aim to enhance the built environment, and the involvement of local community in the process for sustainable development and climate adaptation and mitigation."

2. Quality of Life

2.1 Assessing Citizen's Perceptions

The sustainable transformation of the Historic Centre of Nicosia requires an appropriate process that builds upon national urban priorities, strategies and programmes, as well as city visions and strategies. It also needs to take into advantage the latest scientific findings and technological developments and to support the development of a visionary programme of research, technological development and innovation.

Creating a shared vision and strategy means that opinions, concerns, ideas and recommendations of all stakeholders are taken into account through a co-creative process. This increases the acceptance and ownership of the strategic plan and the proposed concrete actions and gives to the procedure a sense of bottom-up incorporation. The creation of a shared vision requires a variety of resources, tools and methodologies such as surveys, meetings, focus groups, open dialogue with stakeholders, and development of online platforms to share thoughts and ideas.

The Cyprus Energy Agency, in the framework of the 'Sustainable Historic City Districts' project, conducted a study on the 'Quality of Life in the Historic Centre of Nicosia'. The need to prepare this assessment of Quality of Life in the Historic Centre of Nicosia derives from the simple fact that there is limited understanding on how the local community perceives the current state of the walled city. A more holistic approach to the needs and expectations of the citizens is required in order to move forward and plan sustainable actions for the development of the city.

The project promotes a holistic approach to addressing common challenges in historic districts, by setting sustainable development as a priority and avoiding focussing on individual challenges. The aim is to transit the historic urban centre, to a sustainable and all-inclusive growth, and to reduce its vulnerability to climate change. This will be developed through the engagement of the stakeholders, such as the public authorities, professionals, organised groups, and citizens.

The study has been used both as a medium to start the conversation with the public about the sustainability of the centre and as a methodology to gather valuable input on the perceptions of the citizens about the area, from both sides of the buffer

zone. The aim of the study was to analyse the views of residents/workers/visitors within Nicosia on various aspects, that are either directly or indirectly related to the quality of life, and the natural, structured and social environment. The objective was to use the results of the study in order to identify the greatest needs and the priorities for the execution of projects and activities for SUSHI in the historical centre.

The questionnaire was available online in the three official languages of Cyprus (English, Greek, Turkish) and included 29 short questions. The first 15 concern the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and they were used to evaluate the results. The final 14 questions are based on the '**Place Standard Tool**' and are designed to evaluate the current conditions in the area of the Historic Centre of Nicosia.

The 14 questions concern the following 14 topics:

1. *Moving around*
2. *Public transport*
3. *Traffic and Parking*
4. *Streets and Spaces*
5. *Natural Space*
6. *Play and Recreation*
7. *Facilities and Amenities*
8. *Work and Local Economy*
9. *Housing and Community*
10. *Social Contact*
11. *Identity and Belonging*
12. *Feeling Safe*
13. *Care and Maintenance*
14. *Influence and Sense of Control*



Photo from tour of Nicosia Photo Walks. © Nicosia Photo Walks Photo Archive

The Place Standard tool was developed by the Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland and Architecture & Design Scotland. It contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0 (@Crown Copyright 2017). The '**Place Standard Tool**' evaluates the quality, capabilities, and current conditions in the neighbourhood or the selected area through a simplified process, and has been used in similar studies abroad, in action planning. The tool can help identify areas where targeted actions can be taken on a priority. The evaluation of the historic centre by its users is probably the most reliable source for the identification of the needed actions.

Note: The Cyprus Energy Agency complies with the guidelines of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All personal data received were used exclusively for the purposes of this research and were deleted upon completion of the project's activities.

2.2 Findings and Observations

The study sample was equally represented gender-wise (approx. 50% men- 50% women) and age-wise (50% young citizens under 35 - 50% elder citizens of 35 years old and older). Furthermore, the vast majority of the respondents of the questionnaire (90%) are Cypriots (including Cypriots who do not permanently live on the island).

More than half of the responses of the survey was from visitors of the center of Nicosia, and despite the small sample, a first assumption is that the Old Town of Nicosia attracts many people from other areas of the city, or other parts of the island. Probably because of its small size, the buffer zone and particularities of its physical infrastructure, the Historic Centre accommodates a small community of residents and workers. However, many people who do not live or work there, but feel somehow connected to the area, have dedicated their time to respond to the online questionnaire about the Quality of life in the Historic Centre of Nicosia, and to provide valuable information.

The results of our study showed that most of the respondents have been living, working, or spending their time in the historic center of Nicosia for more

than a decade. Even though this fact seems to be obvious for most urban centers, in the case of Nicosia it has a particular significance since the division of the island has left the historic center neglected, underused and unvisited until the beginning of the 2000s. Although initially the local community had “turned their back” to the historic center to avoid the painful memories of the division, the younger generations have started investing again in the revitalization of the walled city.

Faneromeni area appears to be both geographically and culturally the “heart” of the public life of the city, as nearly half of the responses refer to this specific parish. Despite the very small sample of respondents referring to the North side of Nicosia, Arab Ahmet and the Ayia Sofia [Selimiye] quarter seem to be the most vibrant areas of the Turkish-speaking Nicosia.

An important finding of the study is that there are different viewpoints regarding the status quo of the Historic Center, depending on how the respondents relate to this area and specifically whether they simply hang out, or live and/or work in the intra-muros city.



Contradictions in the Historic Centre of Nicosia. © Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive



The public square in front of the old Municipal Market Building where CYENS will be hosted. © Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive

The quantitative and qualitative information reveal a discrepancy between respondents who live in the historic center and those who either work or hang out in the area.

- The average rating of people who live in the area is higher than the ratings of the two other groups.
- Residents of the old town are particularly more satisfied with the accessibility of the area by public transport and the opportunities to move around, while they are more dissatisfied with the availability of parking spaces near their houses.
- People who only work or hang out in the area, not surprisingly, have rated the quality of housing opportunities in the old town quite low, compared to people who actually live in the area.
- Residents of the old town seem to value the social contact and the feeling of identity and feeling of belonging they get by living in the historic center of Nicosia. On the contrary, people who are not part of the resident community do not seem to understand that there is social cohesion between the various group currently living in the center.

Another observation is that there is a discrepancy between the perceptions of the younger and older generation about the area. This is probably due to the fact that older people have seen the area being divided, dilapidated over the years and have witnessed its transformation through many decades.

- Nostalgia, lack of acceptance of the political situation, fear of contemporary changes led

people who are older than 35 years old to evaluate the quality of the center as generally low.

- People who are over 35 years old have given low ratings to both infrastructural and social aspects of the city center.
- The younger generation have a better perception of the area particularly regarding its social capital (safety level, sense of identity and belonging, social contact and relations).

In general, most of the 14 aspects of the Place standard questionnaire have an aggregated rating **lower than the average**. The quality of natural spaces was rated the lowest of all aspects, bringing to our attention the **necessity of enriching the green public spaces in the city**. The physical aspects of the city e.g., the street infrastructure, the buildings, and public spaces and their maintenance seem to be less satisfying for the respondents.

Interestingly, the aspects related to the **social capital** of the historic center such as “social contact”, “identity and belonging”, and “feeling safe” are rated close to average and have **the highest average**. However, the respondents perceive that they have limited power and level of influence about the development of the city and a low sense of control over the decisions regarding the future of the historic center.

2.3 What people say about Nicosia:

Needs & recommendations

Summaries of the respondents' comments on the 'Quality of Life in the Historic Centre of Nicosia' assessment.



Moving around | Illegal and reckless parking behaviour make walking and cycling in the old town unpleasant. Even the pedestrianized streets are somehow occupied by the restaurants and cafes' chairs and tables. Sidewalks are narrow and are often obstructed by signs and bins, making it impossible to be used by people with disability and by parents with baby strollers. The roads are narrow and dominated by cars, but the fact that most streets are one-way means that cyclists can use them safely. The respondents suggest the whole city centre to be a shared space zone with low speed limit or even a car-free zone; only delivery cars should enter during early morning hours. People wish for more sidewalks shaded by trees and improved street lighting during the night.

Public transport | Citizens think the bus routes are not regular enough and there is a lack of information on signs about the routes and the timetable of bus departures and arrivals. Furthermore, the respondents express the need for shelters on bus stops to provide protection from weather conditions. Nicosia's historic centre is accessible via many bus routes but there is a need to improve the efficiency of public transport to better connect with other areas and make it a viable option for visitors.



Traffic and Parking | People are unsatisfied with the lack of parking policy enforcement inside the city walls. The residents find it hard to park their cars near their homes and they often have to pay to park. Some of the respondents believe that the interests of shop owners are prioritised compared to the residents regarding parking availability. Citizens suggest that only the cars of residents and delivery trucks should be allowed inside the walled city of Nicosia and municipal parking lots should be outside the walls.

Streets and Spaces | Historic Public buildings and churches with architectural value are beautiful and in good condition but there are lots of abandoned private buildings. The commercial areas within the historic center have altered the character. Respondents see the potential in making the old town of Nicosia very attractive if the maintenance and security levels are improved. There is a need for a greener, cleaner and safer city center with improved community and public spaces.



Natural Space | The green spaces along the city walls (moat of fortification) are not well connected with the rest of the city and inside the walls there is a lack of trees and landscaped spaces. The citizens need more green spaces and ask for upgrading of the existing ones to counteract the noise and air pollution from cars.

Play and Recreation | The city, as it is now, is not child-friendly. Inside the walled city there are very few accessible and safe playgrounds, that are often vandalized. The citizens ask for more open places for diverse and healthy entertainment for kids and families as well as for the elderly and disabled.



Facilities and Amenities | Proximity to some services is good, but the functional mix and diversity of uses in the historic centre should be improved so there is no need for residents to move to other areas for basic services. There are no pharmacies or medical centres inside the old town. There are no public toilets either.

Icons downloaded from The Noun Project - thenounproject.com



Work and Local Economy | Respondents believe that the local economy is not well-developed. They suggest that the municipality provides incentives to boost the business sector and attract investment in the historic centre. The jobs are mainly related to cafes, restaurants and shops. The small local businesses struggle to survive, especially compared to international brands. More traditional craft and cultural related jobs need to be promoted.

Housing and Community | Lots of old and abandoned buildings are in bad condition and need immediate renovation for safety and aesthetic reasons. Landlords of deteriorated buildings offer low rents and immigrants choose to live there despite the danger for their safety and health. On the other hand, renovated houses and apartments in good condition have high rents, and they do not necessarily attract new local population. There is a gentrification trend that needs to be avoided by the municipality.



Social Contact | There are no vibrant community centers where regular events can take place. The old municipal market (Agora) used to bring people together regardless of their cultural or other differences, but it is now reconverted into a Research Centre and citizens are not involved in this process. Respondents express their need for diverse opportunities for socialization. People currently socialize at cafes and restaurants.

Identity and Belonging | Some respondents who live in the area do not feel part of the community, mainly because they do not know or interact with their neighbors. On the other hand, people who have been living in their neighborhood for many years and know their neighbors and have good memories, feel like they belong in the community. There seems to be a diversity of opinions about the multiculturalism of the local community including Cypriots, foreigners and immigrants. Recent efforts, like organized walks and festivals help to promote the old city and provide information to visitors about the history of the area.



Feeling Safe | Some people feel safe in their neighborhood (mostly those who live in the area) while others do not (mostly those who visit the area). People who do not feel safe is mainly because of the abandoned buildings and the dark streets. Respondents suggest to improve street lighting and improve the conditions in all areas of the centre.

Care and Maintenance | People are unhappy with the amount of rubbish and the bad smells coming from the bins of restaurants etc. There is a lack of waste and recycling bins in the whole centre and they need to be collected and cleaned more often. Respondents are especially disappointed with the bad maintenance of roads and sewers that causes flooding whenever it rains. Individuals do not respect the public spaces and throw away trash and old furniture. Ruined and old buildings are a danger to the people, while tagging and ugly graffiti on buildings degrade the neighborhoods.



Influence and Sense of Control | People feel that their opinions, ideas and problems are not heard by the municipality. People want to participate in the decision making and be informed for all the decisions that concern their city. The municipality needs to find ways to engage the public to participate and to actively contribute to the sustainable development of their neighborhoods.

3. Transformative Actions

The 14 topics of the 'Place Standard Tool' were grouped in 4 thematic axes for the transformative actions which will lead to the realization of the vision. Thus, all 14 topics that were evaluated via the Quality of Life in the Historic Centre of Nicosia study can be addressed through actions following the four overarching themes of [1] **Sustainable Mobility**, [2] **Environment & Public Spaces**, [3] **Uses & Activities**, [4] **Community & Social Capital**.

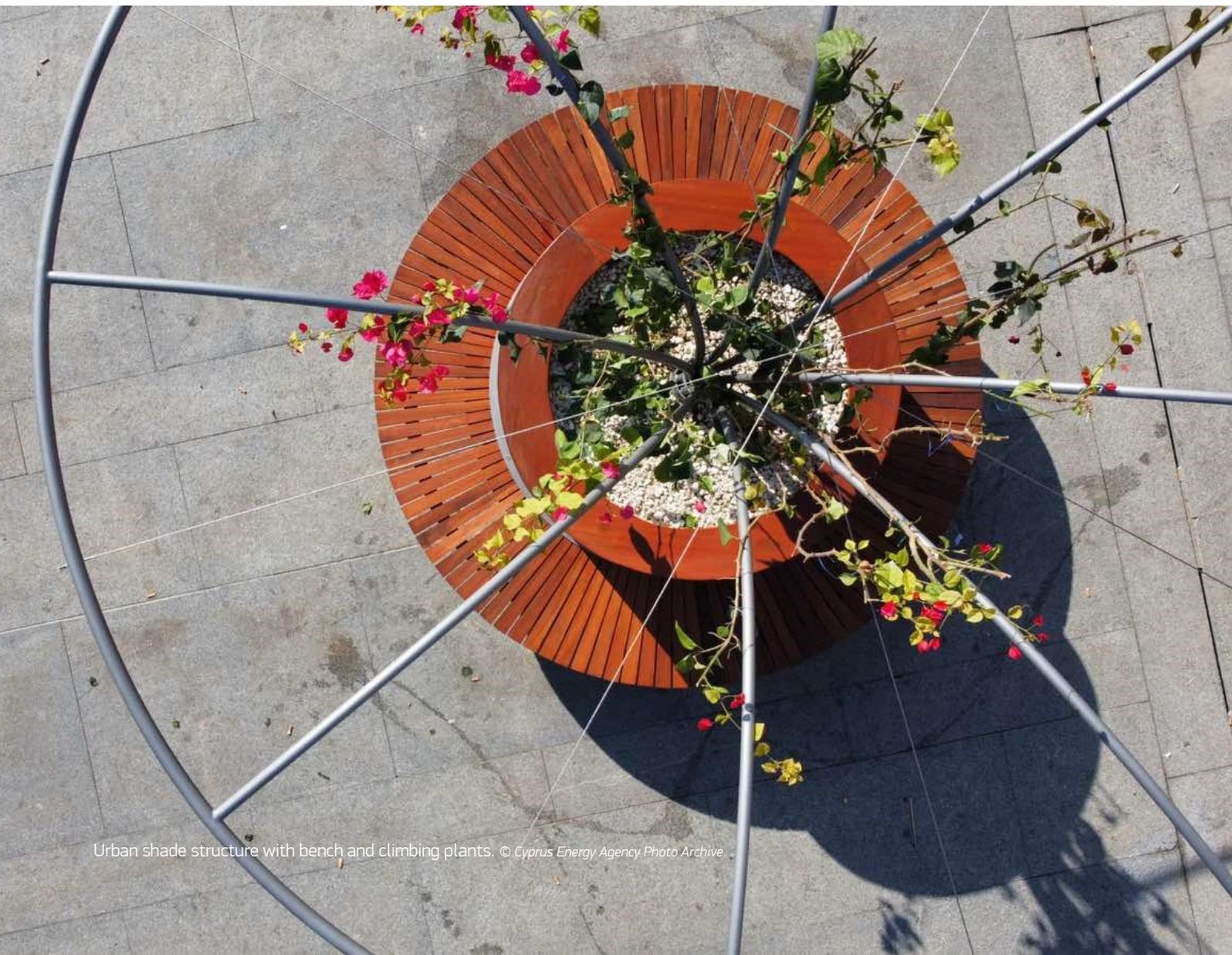
The 4 thematic axes are further explained with a non-exhaustive list of possible actions to be taken by the Local Authority (Nicosia Municipality) in collaboration with Government Departments, by the Private sector and the Civil Society. The enabling elements in terms of process, business model (possible ways to benefit and make profit from the transformative actions) and potential synergies are also mentioned.

Sustainable Mobility: Moving around | Public transport | Traffic & Parking

Environment & Public Spaces: Streets & Spaces | Natural Space | Play & Recreation | Care & Maintenance

Uses & Activities: Facilities & Amenities | Work & Local Economy | Housing & Community

Community & Social Capital: Social Contact | Identity & Belonging | Feeling Safe | Influence & Sense of Control





Cycling tour in the North of Nicosia. © Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive

3.1 Sustainable Mobility

Like all medieval fortified cities, the intra-muros city of Nicosia is designed for walking and for accessing all basic needs within the distance of less than 1.5km. The uncontrolled urban development of the capital and its division in 1974, have resulted in a socio-spatially segregated city centre characterised with discontinuity and seclusion.

This thematic axe welcomes all actions that intend to provide opportunities and options for citizens who live, and/or work in the city centre or visit the area to move sustainably, while satisfying their needs to access places and services safely.

In December 2020, the open procedure for tenders for the study of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan of Nicosia started. The development of a Sustainable **Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP)** for the City of Nicosia including the City Centre and the greater urban area of Nicosia will give an emphasis on integration, participation and evaluation principles.

The vision of the SUMP is the creation of a sustainable city by 2030. In this context, the aim of the SUMP is to satisfy the mobility needs of people and businesses in the study area for a better quality of life guided by the high-level objectives which reflect the objectives of the EU White Paper on transport, and the supporting SUMP Guidance.

Transformative Actions

- 1A : Promote Soft Mobility
- 1B: Reduce Use of Private Motorised Vehicles
- 1C: Increase Use of Public Transport
- 1D: Sustainable Transport for Logistics

TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION 1a: Promote Soft Mobility

Human-powered transportation should be prioritised for the movements within the centre and in proximity of the central area, to encourage a healthy and environmentally friendly urban lifestyle. Accessibility and quality of pedestrian areas should be improved with the intention to meet the needs of all citizens and make the city centre a human-centred area that welcomes people from different backgrounds and with different abilities.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS



Local (Municipality) /
National Authorities

- Improve pedestrian infrastructure (widen sidewalks, pedestrianised zones, create shared space streets, improve street furniture and lighting)
- Improve infrastructure conditions for cycling and other micro-mobility vehicles (create cycling paths when possible and connect to the bicycle network outside the city walls, install safe bicycle parking infrastructure, create shared space streets)
- Provide incentives for the use of Nicosia's bicycle-sharing system



Private Sector

- Provide incentives to visitors and workers to walk / cycle to the centre



Civil Society

- Facilitate and advocate for safe access to vulnerable groups
- Promote walking and cycling to schools of the centre
- Enhance connectivity between the North and the South of Nicosia through community events



ENABLING ELEMENTS

PROCESS

- Living Labs & Workshops to identify the needs of commuters
- Living Street events and Car-Free days as temporary tools for user behaviour change
- Enhance access to information through integrated Smart City Projects

BUSINESS MODEL

- Several studies have shown that people who walk and cycle shop more often in their area and spend more money in a month compared to people who drive.
- Improving accessibility, connectivity and proximity to services will (a) boost the local economy and attract more businesses to re-locate in the centre, (b) attract new investments and building renovations and (c) attract more residents to live in the centre.

SYNERGIES

- Visitor's Guide and Map of thematic routes and sightseeing itineraries connecting key locations in city - Nicosia Tourism Board
- 'Bike to Work' scheme in combination with Nicosia's bicycle-sharing system Next Bike
- Collaborate with citizen initiatives : Bicycle Mayor of Nicosia, Battle of the Pedestrians, Streets4all Cyprus, Oxygono

TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION 1b: Reduce Use of Private Motorised Vehicles

The use of private motorised vehicles should be discouraged in order to re-claim valuable public space from streets, to improve road safety and to reduce air and noise pollution. A car-free historic centre should be the ultimate goal.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS



Local (Municipality) / National Authorities

- Implement car access restrictions based on time or create car-free zones within the centre (especially in high density and commercial areas)
- Enforce strict parking policy respecting the safety of all road users and protecting public/private properties.
- Increase parking fees within the walled city and convert existing municipal parking areas inside the walls to accommodate other uses (public spaces, parks, multifunctional facilities etc.)
- Reduce parking requirements for commercial buildings within the city centre and incentivize parking outside the walls.
- Reward / Penalty scheme to cars based on vehicle emissions



Private Sector

- Boost car sharing and car pooling systems



Civil Society

- Organise awareness raising events



ENABLING ELEMENTS

PROCESS

- Living Labs & Workshops to identify the needs of business owners, workers and residents
- Living Street events and Car-Free days as temporary tools for user behaviour change
- Use integrated Smart City Projects to monitor reckless driver behaviour

BUSINESS MODEL

- Use money from parking fees and savings from road infrastructure improvements to invest in pedestrian or cycling infrastructure or to subsidize local businesses

SYNERGIES

- Create public space installations in former car parking spaces to improve the quality of the experience of the city (architects, urban planners, designers, creative community)

TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION 1c: Increase Use of Public Transport

Access to the city centre should shift to alternative means of transportation and access by bus should become a viable and comfortable option for those who come from longer distances.

*“An advanced city is not one where even the poor use cars, but rather one where even the rich use public transport”
Enrique Peñalosa*

POSSIBLE ACTIONS



Local (Municipality) /
National Authorities

- Improve bus stop infrastructure with shelters and benches
- Provide real-time information on routes and timetables with digital screens
- Facilitate intermodal solutions (bicycles can get onboard of buses) for both tourists and local commuters.



Private Sector

- Provide incentives to workers to commute by bus and inform about nearby bus stops



Civil Society

- Organise awareness raising events
- Promote Mini-Buses for access to schools of the centre
- Facilitate and advocate for safe access to vulnerable groups



ENABLING ELEMENTS

PROCESS

- Living Labs & Workshops to identify the needs of business owners, workers and residents
- Living Street events and Car-Free days as temporary tools for user behaviour change
- Use integrated Smart City Projects to monitor reckless driver behaviour

BUSINESS MODEL

- Use money from parking fees and savings from road infrastructure improvements to invest in improving real-time information on bus journeys

SYNERGIES

- Cooperation with Cyprus Public Transport for multimodal interchange points and combination with cycling itineraries.

TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION 1d: Sustainable Transport for Logistics

Logistics (transportation, loading and unloading of products) should be done by light electric vehicles or cargo-bikes in the city centre. In this way the entrance of heavy-duty vehicles in the narrow streets of the historic centre is limited or even prohibited, but also the centre is decongested especially in the early hours where the majority of the cargo operations are taking place.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS



Local (Municipality) /
National Authorities

- Create a central station located in the surroundings of the venetian walls for big trucks to park and unload packages that will be then transferred to the historic centre with smaller environmental friendly vehicles.
- Provide incentives to the private sector for the use of cargo bikes or smaller non-polluting vehicles for deliveries



Private Sector

- Improve efficiency of the transportation of products within the centre with better planning and using digital platforms for monitoring
- Invest in digital platforms for monitoring of logistics and in light electric vehicles



Civil Society

- Advocate for reduction of air and noise pollution caused by delivery trucks



ENABLING ELEMENTS

PROCESS

- Living Labs & Workshops to identify the needs of companies and businesses
- Determine location for station for unloading packages outside the historic centre

BUSINESS MODEL

- Maximising the efficiency of the transportation of products will save time and energy for the private sector
- Reducing air and noise pollution will improve the environmental and aesthetic quality of the commercial area of the historic centre

New business and job opportunities will arise

SYNERGIES

- Collaborate with Association of Shop Owners of Nicosia's Pedestrian Areas and the Association of Shop Owners of Ledras and Onasagorou Streets to create a shared vision for a vibrant commercial centre.

3.2 Environment and Public Spaces

The architectural heritage of Nicosia consists of buildings that reflect its complex and rich history. The narrow streets and the low height of buildings give a unique picturesque character to the city. However, the built environment sets particular challenges in accommodating the needs of contemporary lifestyle. Moreover, Nicosia's walled city centre is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to the hot and dry climate, the increasing number of extreme weather events, the high percentage of impermeable surfaces and the low percentage of green areas.

This thematic axe enumerates actions that can make Nicosia a greener, cleaner and safer city with resilient and future-proof infrastructure.

Transformative Actions

2A : Upgrade of Built Environment

2B: Resilient Public and Green Spaces



View from the Bastion towards the Moat. © Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive

TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION 2a: Upgrade of Built Environment

The restoration of cultural heritage buildings is very important for the identity of the historic centre. Some efforts are already initiated and implemented from the municipality and Central Public Authorities, but further actions are needed for the integrated structural and aesthetic upgrade of buildings. The maintenance and restoration of the facades of the buildings in streets of high density is a priority for aesthetic purposes, but of course it is not a panacea. The buildings' as a whole need to be restored and/or renovated in order to be in position for (reha)bilitation. The energy upgrade of existing buildings is also important for the historic centre, as a lot of the buildings remain unused due to poor internal conditions and high energy consumptions.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS



Local (Municipality) /
National Authorities

- A thorough study of the structured environment should be undertaken, building on the results of the already implemented studies, such as for vacant buildings, buildings that need restoration, buildings with gardens, and others. An integrated approach at a larger scale (not individual building) is preferable for the historic centre to ensure a uniformity and joint solutions. The current policy plans and preservation decrees should be taken into consideration.
- Restoration of important historic / traditional buildings in key locations within the historic centre of Nicosia through funded programs and/or schemes or by providing incentive to the private sector.
- Promotion of use of environmentally designed solutions for the upgrade of buildings (green walls, permeable outdoor materials, rain gardens, green or brown roofs).
- Policy adjustments to allow RES installation in the historic centre, even at a small scale. Community PV systems, or virtual net-metering solutions can be created to serve the historic centre and avoid conflicts with existing legislative arrangements.



Private Sector

- Restoration of private buildings within the historic centre
- Energy upgrade of private buildings within the historic centre
- Implementation of sustainable and environmental solutions on private buildings within the historic centre (thermal insulation, permeable outdoor materials, rain gardens, green or brown roofs).



Civil Society

- Reactivation of cultural heritage buildings to be used as shared spaces or community buildings



ENABLING ELEMENTS

PROCESS

- Living Labs & Workshops to raise awareness on the cultural value of the built heritage and the importance of preserving it and upgrading it for a sustainable city centre

BUSINESS MODEL

- Public-Private Partnerships | State & Structural funds (Listed Buildings, Ancient Monuments) | United Nations Development Programme
- Renovated Public buildings can be used for community activities or as means for income for the municipality.
- Upfront investments into urban nature-based solutions can lower future costs from extreme weather events such as droughts, storms and floods (Risk reduction model)*
- A 'no net loss' approach can incentivize or require offset investments into urban nature-based solutions that are lost because of real estate and infrastructure development within the city. (Urban Conservation Offsetting model)*
- Subsidies / Incentives for RES use

SYNERGIES

- SECAP and other strategies of the municipality can be used as the basis for the transition.
- Collaborate with CYENS Centre of Excellence (former RISE) for the use of interactive media, smart systems and emerging technologies



Plants of Tower 25 overlooking the walled city of

TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION 2b: Resilient Public and Green Spaces

Nicosia is characterised by the lack of climate resilient public spaces and green areas. In order to achieve the regeneration of the city and the transition to a more sustainable city, resilient spaces and public spaces are essential.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS



Local (Municipality) /
National Authorities

- Implement an integrated approach on [nature-based solutions](#) in public spaces to countereffect the heat island phenomenon, prevent the impacts of floods, and enhance biodiversity in the centre.
- Create a green strategy for the moat of the fortification with upgraded parks and thematic routes connecting points of interest in the historic centre.
- Create a child-friendly policy about public spaces and parks and implement strategic actions to prevent vandalization of public furniture and play structures
- Improve care & maintenance of streets, public spaces and urban furniture
- Improve the regularity of garbage collection and facilitate recycling of waste
- Invite artistic interventions in public spaces for cultural urban regeneration
- Promote outdoor activities and provide sports facilities in public areas



Private Sector

- Implement circular economy strategies based on the philosophy “a man’s trash is another man’s treasure”
- Implement composting solutions for restaurants and hotels, and invest in private green spaces



Civil Society

- Facilitate and advocate for safe access to vulnerable groups (children, elderly, minority groups)
- Initiate sustainable solutions for open spaces such as community gardens, circular organic systems, tree-planting events, public space reclaim with site specific installations
- Creative use of public spaces with artistic interventions (murals and installations), festival organisation
- Organisation of clean-up events



* The Business models in parentheses for the Environment and Public Spaces Thematic Axe refer to the Connecting Nature, Financing and Business Models document.

It is available at <https://connectingnature.eu/financing-and-business-models>
[Accessed December 2020]

Nicosia. Yiorgis Yerolymbos.—published on www.yatzer.com.



ENABLING ELEMENTS

PROCESS

- Living Labs & Workshops with stakeholders and specifically with the local community
- Provide information on Nature Based Solutions and raise awareness on climate change impacts
- Enhance access to information about weather conditions and quality of air through integrated Smart City Projects

BUSINESS MODEL

- Nature-based solution plots and trees can be “adopted” by citizens and businesses who are willing to protect and support nature in their neighborhood based on the direct value and sense of identity and meaning that they derive from it. (Local Stewardship model)*
- The municipality can provide space for local initiatives and (social) entrepreneurship in (sometimes temporarily) unused urban public space. (Vacant Space model)*
- Nature-based solutions can be set up and managed to support environmental education for the schools within the historic centre and allow young citizens to engage with food and nature. (Education model)*
- Greening the moat of the fortification can build on cultural values and a sense of identity to sustain and develop urban nature-based solutions. The green spaces that support / are cultural heritage can lead to different types of value creation, ranging from tourism and education to cultural healing. (Green Heritage model)*

SYNERGIES

- Gardens of the future Initiative
- 300 000 trees in Nicosia Initiative
- ZFWC - Zero Food Waste Cyprus initiative
- SECAP and other strategies of the municipality can be used as the basis for the transition.
- Collaborate with CYENS Centre of Excellence (former RISE) for the use of interactive media, smart systems and emerging technologies

3.3 Uses and Activities

A city centre is by definition the most diversified and vibrant area of an urban settlement that concentrates different population groups and activities. Nicosia’s division and the expansion of urban housing in the outskirts of the city have altered this image of the historic centre.

This thematic axe provides ideas on how the historic centre can become again the heart of the city and develop towards a sustainable and attractive place to live, work and recreate. The implementation of

these transformative actions to diversify the uses and activities of the fortified city can be then replicated by other municipalities for their urban cores.

Transformative Actions

3A : Mixed-Use Historic Centre

3B: Vibrant Local Economy

3C: Upgrade the Residential Qualities

TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION 3a: Mixed-Use Historic Centre

Increasing the functional mixity and diversity of activities taking place within the city centre will concentrate commercial activities and human interaction, minimising the need of residents and workers to commute to other areas to meet their basic needs. It will also make the city centre an attractive area where visitors will enjoy spending time in and a unique local identity and lifestyle will be revived.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS



Local (Municipality) / National Authorities

- Ensure that the basic services are within the city centre or can be easily reached by the local population. These services concern health-related facilities (e.g. pharmacies), educational facilities, sport and well being facilities, cultural and recreational facilities, as well as security-related services (police, ambulance, etc.)



Private Sector

- Invest in business that provide value to the historic centre and satisfy the needs of the local community



ENABLING ELEMENTS

PROCESS

- Living Labs & Workshops to understand the needs of the local community (residents, civil society and private sector)
- Collaboration between the municipalities of the South and the North for complementary strategies

BUSINESS MODEL

- Minimizing the number of movements in the historic area due to better interconnection of activities will have a positive impact on the quality of life and the quality of the built environment in the historic centre.
- Creating a vibrant city centre will attract external visitors and cultural tourism

SYNERGIES

- Buildings Owners & Associations
- T/C Property Management Service

TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION 3b: Vibrant Local Economy

Boosting the local economy and diversifying the provision of job opportunities in the area will make the historic centre a financially resilient area.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS



Local (Municipality) /
National Authorities

- Provide incentives to boost the business sector (ie. low rents) and attract investment in businesses other than the hospitality industry for more diversity
- Subsidize small entrepreneurs to start businesses in the sector, attract start-ups with appealing investment conditions
- Protect and showcase traditional professions and craftsmanship



Private Sector

- Invest in business that provide value to the historic centre and satisfy the needs of the local community
- Create collaborations between businesses of the historic centre through local associations



ENABLING ELEMENTS

PROCESS

- Living Labs & Workshops to understand the needs of the private sector

BUSINESS MODEL

- A strong local economy that is founded in local skills and expertise can withstand financial recessions
- Creating a vibrant city centre will attract external visitors and cultural tourism

SYNERGIES

- Buildings Owners & Associations
- T/C Property Management Service
- Complement the activities for the Regeneration of Nicosia's commercial triangle and the Creative Industry Quarter



Pythonos Street. Clairi Moustafellou—published on www.kathimerini.com.cy

TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION 3c: Upgrade the Residential Qualities

A vibrant and sustainable historic centre is a place where the local resident community can thrive. Housing opportunities in Nicosia need to respond to the current needs of the community and to correspond to the contemporary lifestyle.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS



Local (Municipality) /
National Authorities

- Provide opportunities for young families to settle in the historic centre
- Implement a socially inclusive strategy to housing to prevent gentrification by creating regulations on rent prices and by ensuring access to housing for different social groups and ensuring a diversity of housing typologies



Private Sector

- Diversify housing typologies



Civil Society

- Facilitate and advocate for access to housing for vulnerable minority communities (migrants, refugees etc.)



ENABLING ELEMENTS

PROCESS

- Living Labs & Workshops to understand the needs and issues of residents

BUSINESS MODEL

- A permanent resident community and socially inclusive long term housing opportunities are foundations for socially cohesive city centre. People who thrive in their place of living tend to care more about their city and to be actively involved in its development.

SYNERGIES

- Caritas Migrant Center



Traditional Urban Residential Buildings in Old Nicosia. ©Dimitris Vetsikas - Pixabay



Ledras Street, the main commercial axe. ©Daria Saulskaia - CyprusTravelers.com

3.4 Community and Social Capital

The development of the city can only be sustainable if it is co-created and co-led by the local community. Social capital is the effective functioning of social groups through interpersonal relationships, a shared sense of identity, a shared understanding, shared norms, shared values, trust, cooperation, and reciprocity.

This thematic axe focuses on the intangible social aspects of the historic centre of Nicosia, the soul of the city.

Transformative Actions

4A : Increase Social Cohesion

4B: Stakeholders Engagement and Effective Participation

TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION 4a: Increase Social Cohesion

Building a sense of community, identity and belonging is essential for the social sustainability of the community who lives, works and recreates in the historic centre of Nicosia. Community Prosperity is defined by strong neighborhoods, where all individuals and families can access opportunities, build wealth, and enjoy a high quality of life.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS



Local (Municipality) /
National Authorities

- Create vibrant community centres that host regular events providing opportunities for residents and visitors to interact. Opportunities for socialisation and entertainment should be diverse and welcome all age groups and social groups
- Accelerate efforts for social inclusion of minority groups living and working in the centre through municipal projects and by providing opportunities to the private sector and civil society to contribute and share responsibilities
- Encourage community initiatives with overlapping objectives with the municipality's strategy
- Use CYENS Centre of Excellence (former RISE) as a platform for community interaction
- Introduce the role of community policing to increase the sense of safety



Civil Society

- Community members acting as 'Watch-dogs' that keep an eye on their neighbourhood
- Organise neighbourhood and cultural events, street and food festivals to create connections between people and places



ENABLING ELEMENTS

PROCESS

- Living Labs @ Workshops to understand the needs of the local community (residents, civil society and private sector)
- Collaboration between the municipalities of the South and the North for complementary strategies
- Full appreciation of the interplay of the complex dynamics between the economic, social and cultural processes of exclusion.

BUSINESS MODEL

- Counteracting sociospatial segregation in Nicosia's centre will allow it to develop in a coherent manner using its neighborhoods as key spatial scale for sustainable policy intervention.

SYNERGIES

- Home for Cooperation for bi-communal activities
- Combine activities with Nicosia's Municipal Multipurpose Centre
- Collaborate with CYENS Centre of Excellence (former RISE)

TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION 4b: Stakeholders Engagement and Effective Participation

The active and effective participation of different community stakeholders in decision making on urban topics that affect the place where they live, work and recreate in order to ensure that a holistic approach is taken based on actual needs. A community which is active and well-informed will have more probabilities to be an alliance in the efforts for urban transformation. Contemporary forms of participatory democracy are needed in the Cypriot capital, to showcase effective processes and governance structures that deeply engage key people and organisations.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS



Local (Municipality) /
National Authorities

- Bring innovation in public consultation methods in order to provide new ideas and more transparency about the suggestions concerning the commons.
- Use CYENS Centre of Excellence (former RISE) as a platform for citizens participation , to host innovation and ideas contests (e.g. Climathon)
- Improve communication tools with citizens and ensure access to information for all citizens through e-Governance platforms about new actions, new projects, updates on on-going projects, and to raise awareness
- Activate community centres as platforms of interaction where people of all ages and all backgrounds can share their opinions
- Systematic exploitation of the information gathered from the online complaints form to allow progress monitoring



Private Sector

- Facilitate the creation of joint ventures for community activities
- Provide universal access to information through new technologies



Civil Society

- Facilitate participation of vulnerable groups in community events and ensure their opinion is heard



ENABLING ELEMENTS

PROCESS

- Stakeholder's analysis to recognise new opportunities and address the existing challenges of the historic centre.
- Living Labs @ Workshops to understand the needs of the local community (residents, civil society and private sector) and to promote the co-creation approach
- Collaboration between the municipalities of the South and the North for complementary strategies
- Smart City Strategy : provision will be made for intelligent management features

BUSINESS MODEL

- Increasing citizen's participation and including different stakeholders in the process from the beginning will save time, money and energy as all voices and reactions will be heard before the project advances.

SYNERGIES

- Combine activities with other Institutions in the historic centre
- Collaborate with CYENS Centre of Excellence (former RISE)



Restoration of buildings in Topali Street. © Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive

4. Lessons from other cities

The partner cities of the Sustainable Historic City District consortium have promoted and implemented innovative practices in their context to promote a sustainable development of their city centres. European projects aspire to upscale the results of their activities by creating collaborations between the cities and ensuring the replicability of the solutions in other contexts.

Urban Living Lab - Savona (IT)

An Urban Living Lab (ULL) was conceived in Savona (Italy) during the SUSHI project activities, in order to engage people with a co-development process based on the concept of “open innovation”. The Savona ULL, whose setting up is envisaged for the year 2021, will be a local place for innovative solutions aiming to solve urban challenges and contribute to long-term sustainability by actively and openly co-constructing solutions with citizens and other stakeholders (public, private, research centres). A key component of Savona ULL is the web portal for citizen participation, which has been developed as one of the final activities of the project in Savona to facilitate and encourage the citizens’ participation on issues related to urban regeneration and sustainability of the city.

Green Spaces Mapping & tactical urbanism - Sassari (IT)

A GIS-based tool on green infrastructure of the historic centre of Sassari (including public and private green spaces) was developed during the project. This is the basis for the development of current and planning Urban Green Map of the district. This subject was selected as the key component to achieve the historic district vision. Therefore, significant efforts were allocated to increase the public awareness on green infrastructure and its relationship with climate change, through a series of local events and supported by a devoted website.

A toolkit for the design of public spaces between mitigation and adaptation to climate change were developed within the framework of SUSHI, based on tactical urbanism approach.

Link to Sassari Resiliente:
<https://www.sassari-resiliente.it/>

The Green Menu- Ptuj (SI) and Lisbon (PT)

Experts were commissioned to provide insights into the current situation of the urban building stock of the centres of Ptuj (Slovenia) and Lisbon (Portugal) and chart meaningful revitalization options with a specific focus on degraded historic building fabric.

An expert organisation, Bankers without Boundaries provided support for the business model and financial structuring options for a district-wide revitalization, which is a big challenge for small historic centres.

The model was presented at the national workshop event titled Mission: Climate Neutrality in December 2020.

Link to the Slovenian version:
<https://www.zelenimeni.si/sl/po-vsej-drzavi/hise>

Link to the Portuguese version:
<https://www.menurenovacaoverde.pt/pt/em-todo-o-pais/casas>

Alfama Toolkit - Lisbon (PT)

ALFAMA TOOLKIT is a webGIS tool conceived to support the future activities of ALFAMA LIVING LAB - the Urban Living Lab for the historic urban area of Lisbon - dedicated to catalyse innovation and climate adaptation while preserving and readapting the natural and social heritage and assets of the neighborhood.

The Alfama Toolkit is composed by three main instruments:

1. Mapping: Aims to contribute to the knowledge and diagnosis of Alfama's historical area and surroundings by mapping stories and numbers. An infographic page was created providing information on sociodemographic, buildings & heritage, mobility, public spaces and local economy.
2. Experimenting: Aims to test some of the activities to be developed in the laboratory. In this context will be described the tactical urbanism activity SÃO VICENTE CÁ FORA.
3. Local community story-telling: Aims to tell successful and failure stories of the Alfama community.

Link to the Alfama Toolkit:
<https://alfamatoolkit-lisboaenova.hub.arcgis.com/>

Link to the infographic:
<https://bit.ly/3iGUz75>

5. Moving Forward

The transformative actions outlined in this document require careful planning and coordination between different stakeholders. In order to make Nicosia, a sustainable place to live, work and enjoy, actions must be taken by the local authority, the private sector, the civil society and the citizens themselves to ensure a future that is well grounded in the local culture and community.

The Cyprus Energy Agency promotes the actions in the thematic axes of Sustainable Mobility, Environment & Public Spaces, Uses & Activities, Community & Social Capital through its involvement in local and European projects. Our organisation encourages the authorities, the private sector and the civil society to implement these actions by using the suggested processes, by exploring innovative business models and by creating the relevant synergies in order to sustainably transform the historic centre of Nicosia.

HUB-IN project



The **Sustainable Historic City Districts** project has now reached its closure and passes on the torch to another project with the ambition to transform the historic centre of Nicosia.

The HUB-IN project (Hubs of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for the Transformation of Historic Urban Areas) aims to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the Historic Urban Areas (HUA), while preserving the unique identity of the historic sites regarding their natural, cultural and social values.

HUB-IN adopts the innovation and entrepreneurship as the main drivers of urban regeneration in HUAs and it is fully aligned with the International agendas for Cultural Sustainable Development (UNESCO) and Cultural Heritage Strategy (Council Europe).

The Hubs of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (Hubs) will test, demonstrate and pilot activities of co-creation and co-design in three meaningful clusters with potential for sustainable transformation of HUA: i) Cultural and creative industries, ii) New lifestyles and iii) Endogenous Natural & Social Resources.

HUB-IN defines 12 specific goals, that will be achieved by the following methodology:

- i) Building an ecosystem of interconnected Hubs to accelerate urban regeneration in eight HUAs,
- ii) Creating value in pilot Hubs, piloting social innovation and accelerating sustainable entrepreneurship in HUAs,
- iii) Packaging, upscaling and exploiting the results and create collaborative global network of Hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship in HUA,
- iv) Creating a HUB-IN digital space.

HUB-IN is expected to help reverse the trend of abandonment and neglect of the historic heritage in a systematic way, which may lead to the creation of new sustainable opportunities for local traditional businesses and the development of new creative skills and jobs.

HUB - IN is funded by the European program "Horizon 2020" and consists of 18 partners from 8 different European cities. The Cyprus Energy Agency and the Municipality of Nicosia represent Cyprus and the Nicosia HUA.

More information: <https://bit.ly/362a84l>

Taking the first steps

The Cyprus Energy Agency invites individuals as well as representatives of institutions and specific groups to embrace the "Nicosia, an inclusive, accessible, green and regenerated walled city– Action Plan" and to draw inspiration from its approach for their own initiatives.

The document is disseminated to the stakeholders identified through the process of implementation of the SUSHI project and will be shared across different communication platforms to reach all interested parties.

6. Annexes

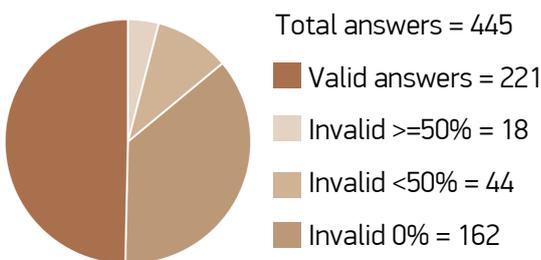
6.1 Survey Results

Validity and Research limitations

During a period of 16 months 445 answers were collected in total. The crucial part of the questionnaire was the 14 questions of the Place Standard Tool. Therefore we decided to base our criteria for the validity of the responses (Graph 01) on whether the respondents have completed, or partially completed the 14 questions. The number of invalid answers (0%), meaning those who have not completed any of the 14 questions was 162. The number of invalid answers (<50%), meaning those who answered less than 7 out of the 14 questions was 44. The number of invalid answers (>=50%), meaning those who answered 7 or more than 7 out of the 14 questions was 18. The number of Valid answers meaning those who answered all 14 questions of the Place Standard Tool was 221, almost half of the sample.

In order to respect the reliability and consistency of the study, the results we present take into consideration only the answers of the 221 persons who have completed all the 14 questions of the Place Standard Tool.

Graph 01: Validity of Answers



Research Limitations: We identified the following research limitations, aspects and conditions that we could not control in the limited time we had to carry out the research and have influenced our results and conclusions.

1. *Limitations due to the survey methods:* The online questionnaire is more accessible for specific social groups and can be considered exclusive. However, a small amount of surveys were answered in person when CEA's staff approached citizens in public spaces, assisting them to answer the questionnaire using a tablet. This was unfortunately not possible to continue after March 2020 due to restrictions for physical

contact related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, Cyprus shut its crossings of the border between the North and the South, in a precautionary move against coronavirus as the two sides applied different sets of rules. Thus, the movement between the two parts of the divided capital remained restricted which did not allow the physical contact with the residents of North Nicosia and has limited the project's impact, since there were difficulties in implementing any activities between, or on, the North side of the city.

2. *Issues with sample and data gathering:* As mentioned previously, the socio-political situation of Nicosia did not allow the data gathering throughout the territory of the historic center. There are some *sample bias* linked to the fact that the electronic questionnaire was shared in platforms and networks of people that may have similar characteristics. Even though the questionnaire was published in different mediums, there was a high level of "randomness" in the sample selection, something that could have been resolved with focus groups but time constraints did not allow to pursue this method. Additionally, the sample size is insufficient and cannot be used for accurate statistical measurements.
3. *Issues with the topic:* There is a lack of previous research studies on the Quality of Life in the Historic Center of Nicosia or any similar studies gathering the perceptions of citizens on different aspects of the capital. Some conflicts and particularities arise from cultural bias and other personal issues among the respondents, linked to the socio-political situation of Nicosia.

Living, working or hanging out in Nicosia

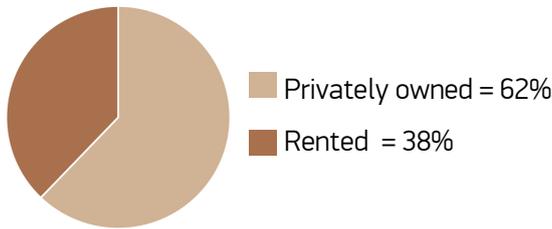
The Graph 02 illustrates that the majority of the people who responded to all 14 questions of the questionnaire hang out to the Historic Area of Nicosia (61%), while close to one fifth of the respondents work there (22%) or live there (17%).

Graph 02: Live, Work, Hang out



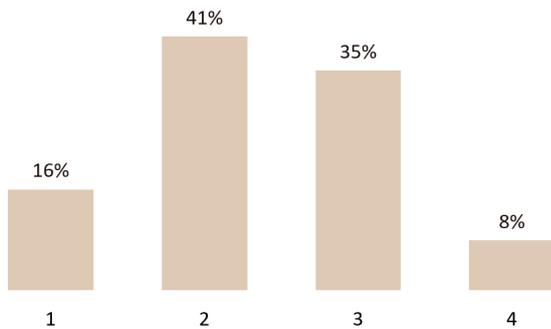
As shown in Graph 03, out of the small sample of respondents who live in the area of the Historic centre of Nicosia, most of them reside in privately owned properties and close to 40% live in rented properties.

Graph 03: Residential properties



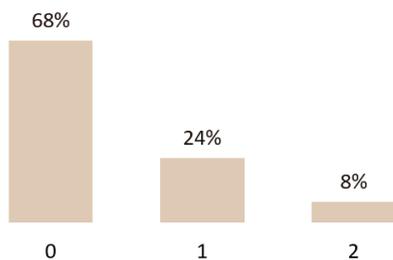
The Graph 04 depicts the number of people living in the household of the respondents who live in the area. Only a minority of the respondents share their home with 3 other people, while most of them live with 1 or 2 other persons.

Graph 04: Number of people / Household



The Graph 05 shows the number of children (under 18 years old) live in the households. A big majority of the respondents do not have children or do not live with children.

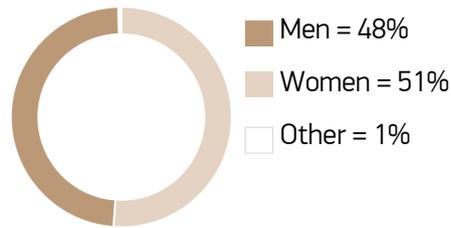
Graph 05: Children / Household



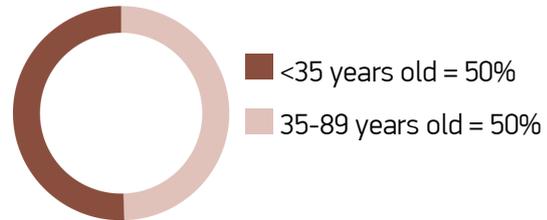
Sociodemographic

According to the Graph 06 there is an equal representation of men and women in the sample of respondents. There is also an equal representation of citizens that are younger than 35 years old and older based on the Graph 07.

Graph 06: Respondents Gender

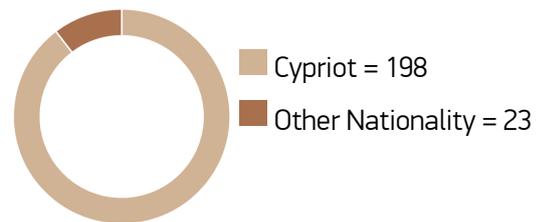


Graph 07: Respondents Age



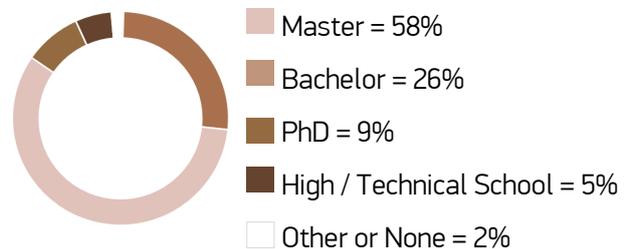
The Graph 08 shows that the majority of the respondents of the questionnaire, almost 200 people, are Cypriots (Greek Cypriots & Turkish Cypriots). It is important to note that this number may include Cypriots who currently do not live in the country.

Graph 08: Respondents Nationality



According to the Graph 09, the majority of the respondents have a university degree (most of them a Master degree), and according to the Graph 10, the majority of the respondents have a full time job.

Graph 09: Respondents Education

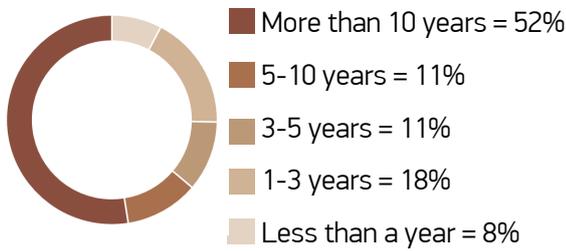


Graph 10: Respondents Employment status



The Graph 11 illustrates that more than 50% percent of the respondents have been living, working or spending their time in the historic centre of Nicosia for more than 10 years.

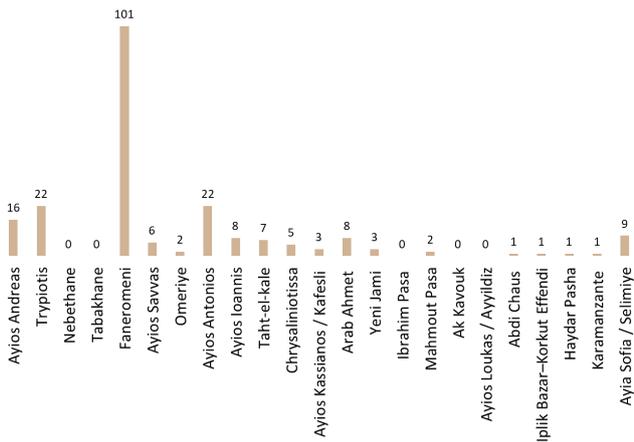
Graph 11: Respondents relationship with the centre



Neighborhood Profile

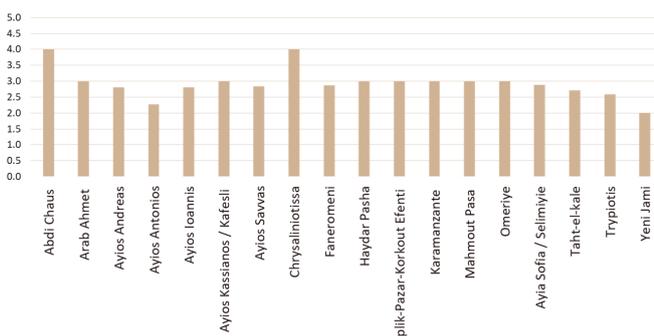
The Graph 12 shows that there is an uneven distribution of the amount of valid responses per parish of the historic center.

Graph 12: Valid Responses / Parish



Nearly half of the respondents that completed the 14 questions of the questionnaire (valid responses) refer to the parish of Phaneromeni. It is important to note that, there were more responses for other parishes but as explained in the Validity section, only valid responses were considered for the results.

Graph 13: Rating of Parish in relation to others



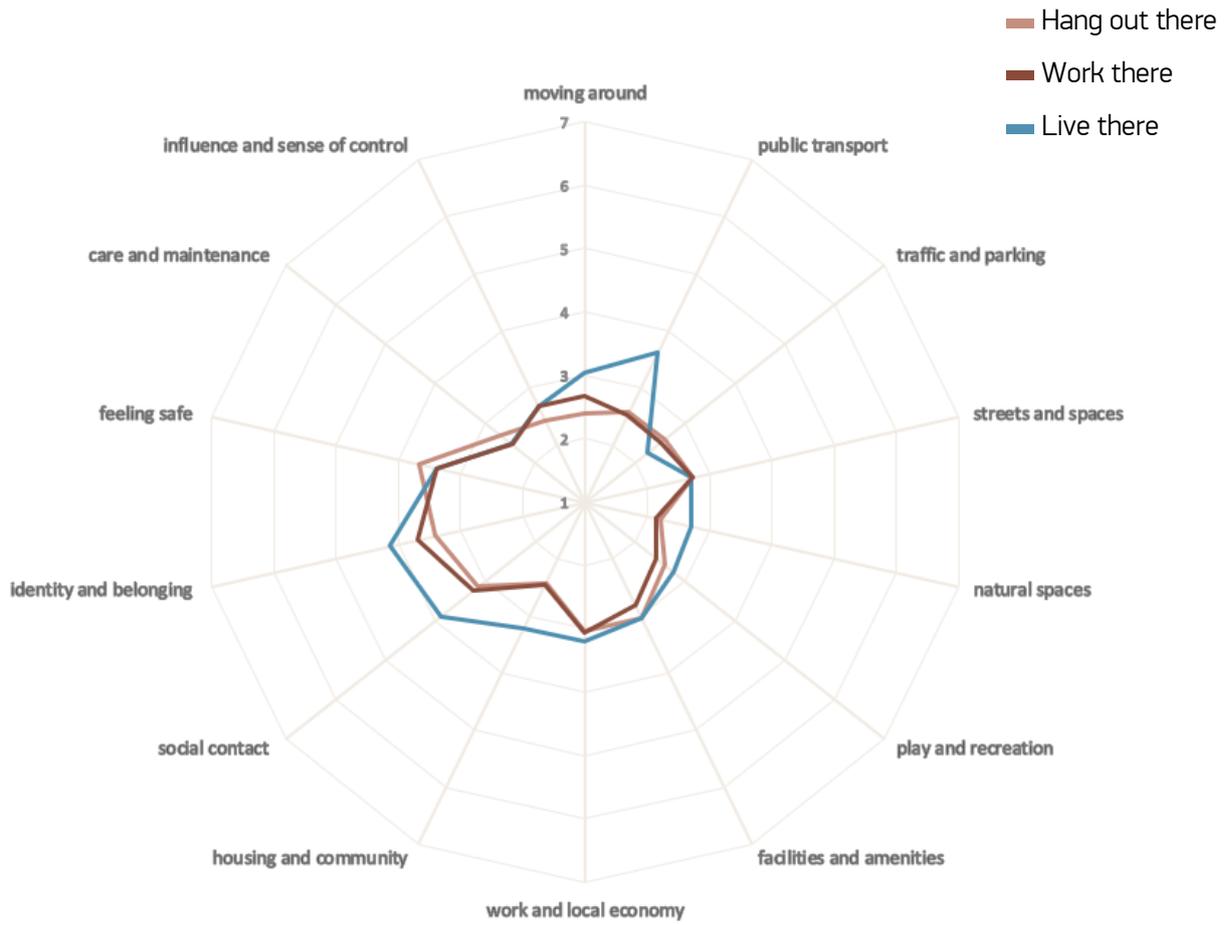
The Graph 13 shows the rating from 1-5 of every parish in relation to other neighborhoods, according to the respondents. As mentioned in the previous graph, there is an uneven representation between respondents of each parish so the average rating for every parish is not really comparable with other because the sample who rated every parish is different.

Based on the neighbourhood where respondents live/work/hang out within Nicosia, they have answered the 14 questions of the Place Standard Tool as explained in Chapter 2. The rating was on a scale from 1 to 7, according to the room of improvement the evaluated aspect has: 1 corresponds to a "Great room of improvement" (the neighbourhood situation is *not satisfactory*) and 7 corresponds to a "Little room of improvement" (the neighbourhood situation is *particularly satisfying*).

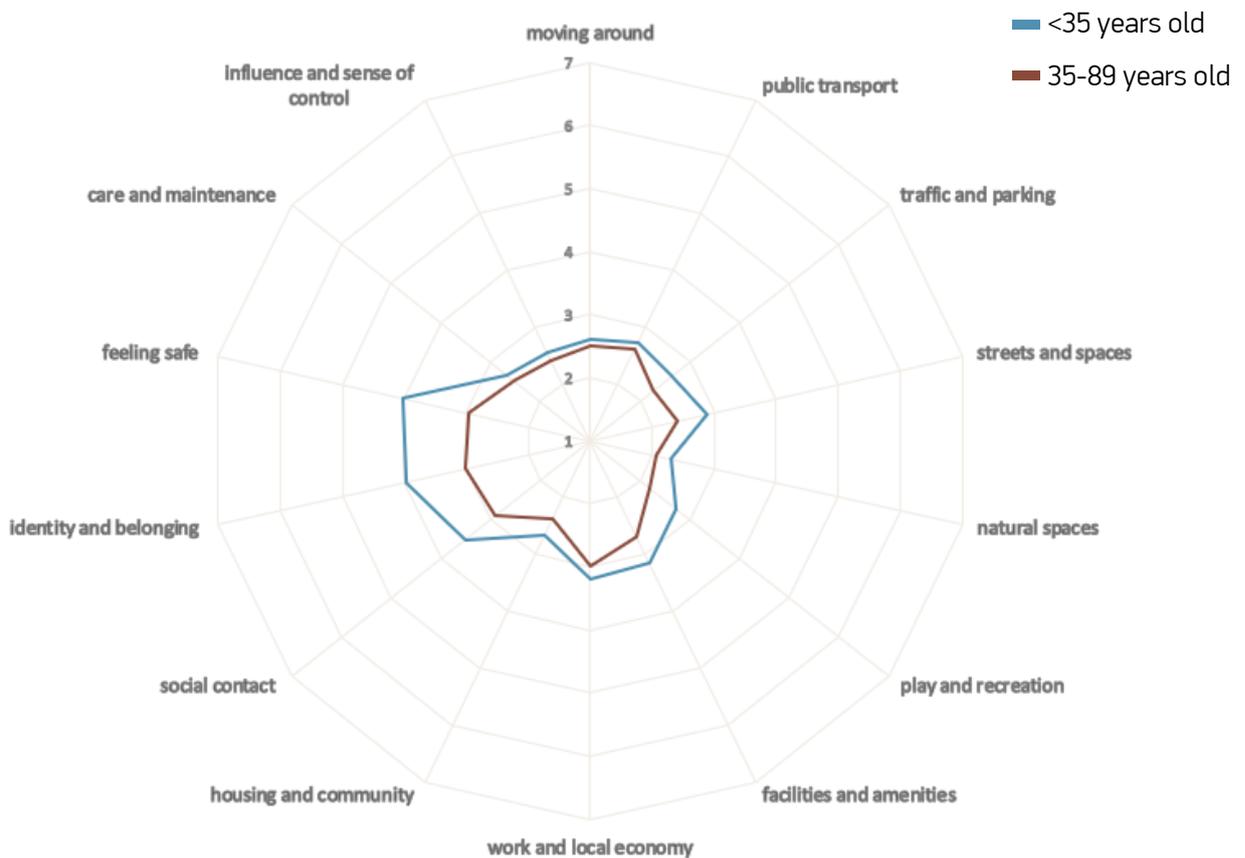
The spider diagram in Graph 14 illustrates the average rating for all parishes according to three types of groups: respondents who hang out, who live and who work in the historic centre. The diagram shows that respondents who live in the historic centre have rated the different aspects of their neighbourhood higher than respondents who work or hang out in the area.

The spider diagram in Graph 15 illustrates the average rating for those who are under 35 years old and those who are 35 years old and above. This diagram shows that younger people have a better perception of the area compared to the older ones. This may relate to the fact that older people have seen the transformation of the centre through many decades and they tend to compare with the past.

Graph 14: Average rating per respondent type group



Graph 15: Average rating per respondent age group

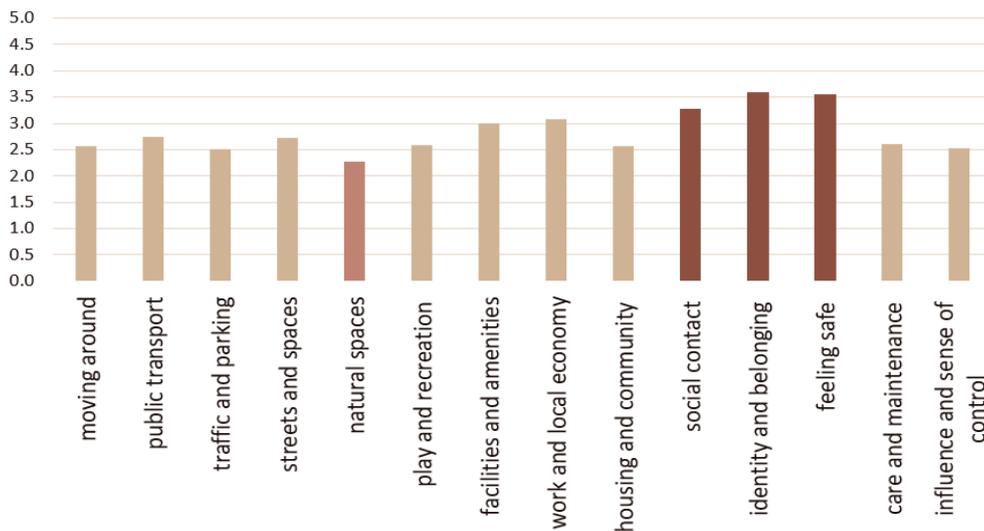


Nicosia's Historic Centre Profile

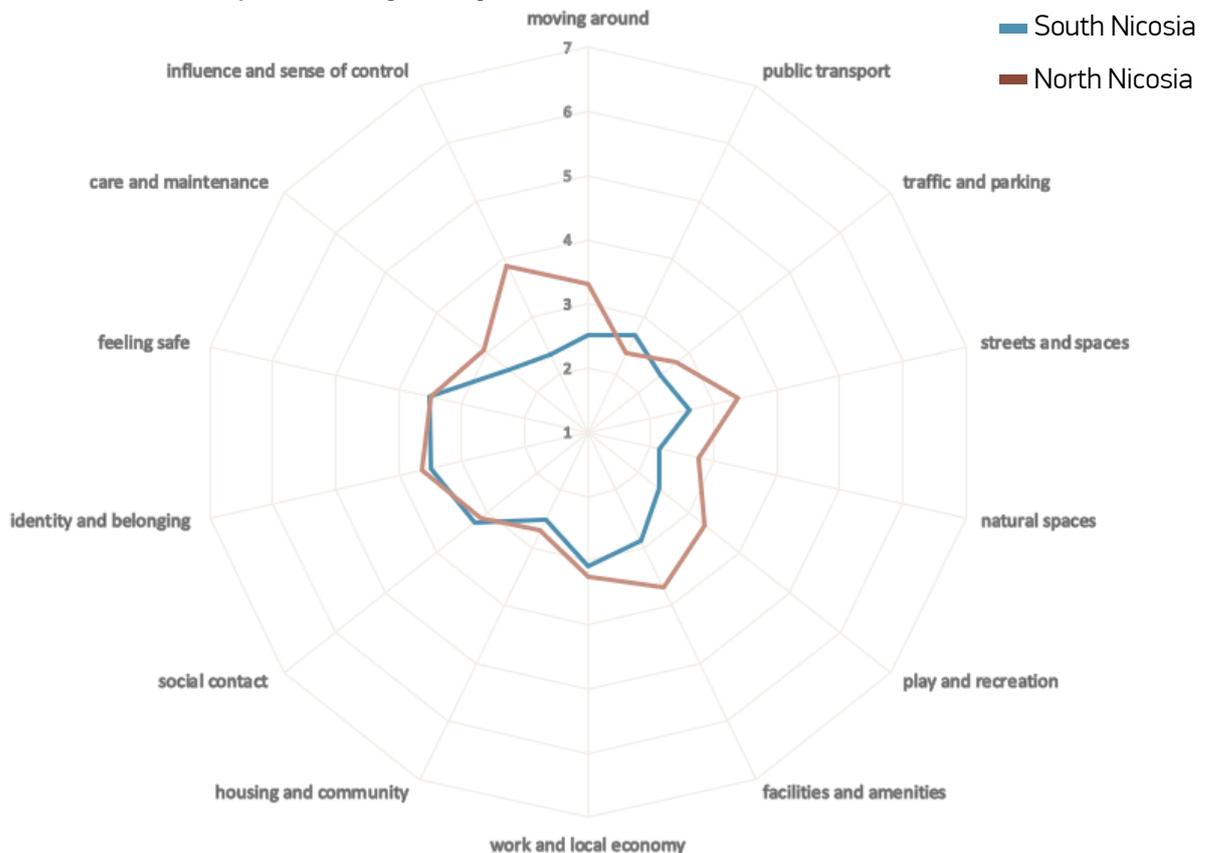
The Graph 16 depicts the average rating from all the valid responses for the whole of Nicosia's center. Most of the aspects have a score below the average, and natural spaces is rated the worst (2.28/7). It is interesting to note that most aspects that are related to the social capital (facilities and amenities, work and local economy, social contact, identity and belonging, feeling safe) are rated above 3/7. However, the aspects that are related to mobility, streets and public infrastructure seem to be less satisfying for the respondents.

The spider diagram Graph 17 shows the average rating for the 14 aspects of the Place Standard tool for the neighborhoods of the North and the South of Nicosia. As already mentioned, the sample of responses gathered from the two areas are not equal in numbers, therefore the average rating of this graph is not representative, but it could be used to make quick assumptions for further research.

Graph 16: Average rating for each aspect for the whole of the Historic Centre of Nicosia



Graph 17: Average rating of the North and the South of Nicosia



6.2 Stakeholders Mapping

Stakeholders within the local community who are interested, or affected by, the development of the historic city centre and its sustainability.

1	Nicosia Municipality	1	Shopkeepers Associations: <i>Cyprus Confederation of Professional Craftsmen and Shopkeepers</i> & <i>Nicosia Sidewalks Shopkeepers Association</i>	1	<u>Cyprus Energy Agency</u>
2	Nicosia City Councils	2	Shopkeepers [other]	2	<i>Cyclists Across Barriers</i>
3	North Nicosia Municipality (Lefkoşa Türk Belediyesi)	3	OSEL (Nicosia District Buses)	3	Gardens of the Future
4	Department of Town Planning and Housing	4	Nicosia Chamber of Commerce and Industry	4	Nicosia Tourism Board
5	Department of Antiquities	5	Cyprus Hotel Association	5	Urban Gorillas
6	Department of Road Transport	6	Association of Cyprus Travel Agents	6	Youth Council of the Municipality of Nicosia
7	Water Development Department	7	Research Centre of Excellence in Cyprus	7	Filoi tis Lefkosias [Friends of Nicosia]
8	Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber	8	Private transport providers (Cyprus Taxi)	8	ICOMOS Cyprus
9	Chamber of Cyprus Turkish Engineers and Architects	9	Nicosia Mini Buses	9	Federation of environmental organisations
10	Energy Service	10	Next Bike sharing system	10	<i>Nicosia Today and Tomorrow Group</i>
11	Cyprus' University [Architecture Department]	11	Restaurants & Café & Leisure Centre Owners	11	Art Collectives & Relevant Groups
12	Other municipalities with historical districts	12	Private companies & artisanships	12	Organisations related to community engagement: <i>Home for Cooperation, Oxygono, 300,000 Trees in Nicosia</i>
13	Schools located within the historic centre (<i>Pancyprian Gymnasium, Faneromeni Primary School, Faneromeni Elementary School</i>)	13	Churches and ecclesiastical committees	13	Relevant individual initiatives: <i>Mobility (Bicycle Mayor of Nicosia, Streets 4 all Cyprus, Battle of the Pedestrians)</i> <i>Food waste (Zero Food Waste Cyprus)</i>
		14	Property Owners (including parking plots) / Property Developers (<i>Cyprus Land and Building Developers Association</i>)		
Policy /Public		Business/Associations		CSOs/NGOs	

6.3 Pilot Projects

The Cyprus Energy Agency [CEA] in collaboration with the Municipality of Nicosia have implemented four pilot projects in public spaces of the historic centre, within the framework of the project. The CEA has explored different possible solutions and after a process of research, design and evaluation has proposed four ideas to introduce the thematic of sustainable practices to the citizens that contribute to the resilience of the fortified city.

Three of the pilots focused on showcasing nature-based solutions in the context of the historic centre, while the fourth one took the form of a Living street event promoting various sustainable practices.

1. Urban shade structures with bench and climbing plants

Platia Dimarchias is a public square in the heart of Nicosia, close to the Townhall, the premises of CYENS and other significant buildings. A nature-based solution was proposed as an addition to the urban furniture of the square, in order to introduce the importance of shade in Nicosia's public spaces to counteract the impact of climate change and specifically the extreme heatwaves and the urban heat island effect.

The goal is to tap into the qualities of this central



Transportation of the base of the structure.
© Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive



Preparations for planting the climbing plants
© Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive



The climbing plants: bougainvillea and star jasmine
© Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive

square in order to raise awareness of the environmental challenges faced by our city and to enhance its value as a place for sociability and interaction.

The installation of the four identical structures aspire to make the square more comfortable and friendly over the course of the day and throughout all the seasons of the year. This composite structure contributes to the enhancement of biodiversity in the area, as the selected climbing plants attract pollinators but they also absorb carbon dioxide from the air.

The structure is a circular bench surrounding a planter containing a steel structure that aims to support climbing plants to provide natural shade. An important requirement for the design of the structure was that it had to be movable and not be fixed on the ground of the square below of which there are many municipal infrastructural services.



The urban shade structure with bench and climbing plants
© Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive

The structures are expected to be used by residents and workers of the area for their short breaks during the day and by visitors during their walk in the city.

2. “Pollinator Park” in Ayios Kassianos parish

The neighbourhood park of Ayios Kassianos is a green space connecting neighbouring private properties, the yard of Ayios Kassianos church, and the kindergarten. The location was selected because of the residential character of the area and its potential in raising awareness among the residents of Chrysaliniotissa neighbourhood.

The proposed solution was to introduce the theme of



Pollinator Park in Ayios Kassianos parish
© Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive

Pollination and promote and enhance urban biodiversity by planting selected local plants and creating spaces for birds and insects.

Two different zones of the park were planted with native indigenous plants of Cyprus that can attract pollinators. The zones were landscaped in order to invite visitors to walk through them, and benches, signs, bird feeders and insect hotels were added to the existing outdoor furniture. A big information sign describing the objectives of the Pollinator Park and the importance of pollination in the face of climate change.

The maintenance of the park could be a shared responsibility between the department of green spaces of the Municipality of Nicosia, the residents and other stakeholders of the area.

The intervention aims to have an educational character as well, exploiting its vicinity with the kindergarten, encouraging the learning of topics such as biodiversity, pollination and climate change to the young citizens of Nicosia.



Pollinator Park in Ayios Kassianos parish
© Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive

3. Enhancement of biodiversity of the green space of SPEL and opposite Famagusta Gate

The third location that was selected for an NBS intervention is the green space that is in front of the SPEL (State Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Cypriot Art) and opposite the Famagusta Gate.

This green space is adjacent to the main road surrounding the city walls and is located near public and cultural institutions. The main purpose of this

4. Living Street event in Peonos street

In cooperation with the Municipality of Nicosia, the Cyprus Energy Agency implemented the social event «Meet us in Peonos street» in November 2020. The event took the form of the «Living Street» concept, as the street “opened” for its residents and visitors, inviting them to participate in activities related to best practices for the Sustainable Development of the historic center of Nicosia.

Those who attended the event had the opportunity to participate in multiple workshops, such as the creation of rain-gardens and bird-feeders, the repair and maintenance of bicycles, and the creative re-use of different materials.



SPEL Gallery's green space
© Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive

intervention is to raise awareness about climate change and the loss of biodiversity to a wider audience because of its high visibility and accessibility.

This NBS implementation also has the potential to be combined with the art-related activities organised by the administration of the SPEL Gallery. The theme of pollination could be used for artistic activities for children and integrate environmental awareness in learning activities.

Indigenous plants were planted to enhance the existing landscaping, and information signs were added in order to raise awareness about the importance of pollination in the urban environment. Bird feeders and insect hotels were also installed to welcome the pollinators.



Bicycle Repair Workshop—Living Street in Peonos
© Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive



SPEL Gallery's green space
© Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive



DIY Planter Raingarden Workshop—Living Street in Peonos
© Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive



Participants also had the opportunity to interact with others through the Human Library concept and “street games”. The activities attracted both the residents of Peonos Street, as well as visitors of the historic center.

The ‘Living Street’ event was implemented within the historic centre to address societal aspects and bring closer the citizens and habitats of the historic centre to rethink public space and to reclaim back space for public use.

The event was of a small scale and considered as a forerunner of greater actions that will boost the transformation from temporary to permanent solutions. A specific learning from the implementation of this initiative, is that many key actors should be engaged in the process, and the activities should be chosen based on the demographics of the area and also on the site’s characteristics, to ensure success.



Hopscotch & Street Games - Living Street in Peonos
© Cyprus Energy Agency Photo Archive

6.4 Synergies

Gardens of the Future

Within the project framework local synergies, notably with the 'Gardens of the Future' have been established to ensure a long-term cooperation among projects and initiatives which have the same purpose: the sustainability of Nicosia's historic centre.

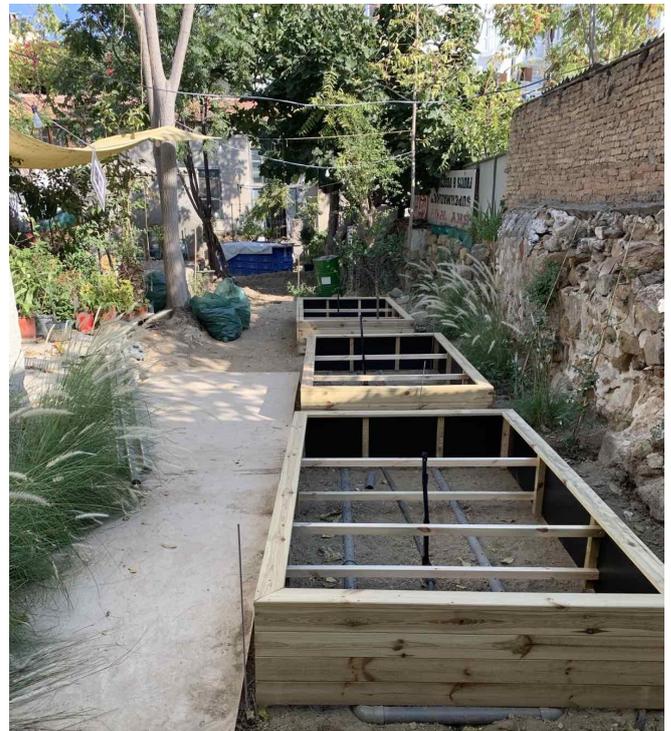
The 'Gardens of the Future' aims to enable locals to become agro-entrepreneurs in the heart of Nicosia, so that the city can become a catalyst for sustainable action and position in Nicosia as a role-model city.



Planting with the local community
© Gardens of the future Photo Archive

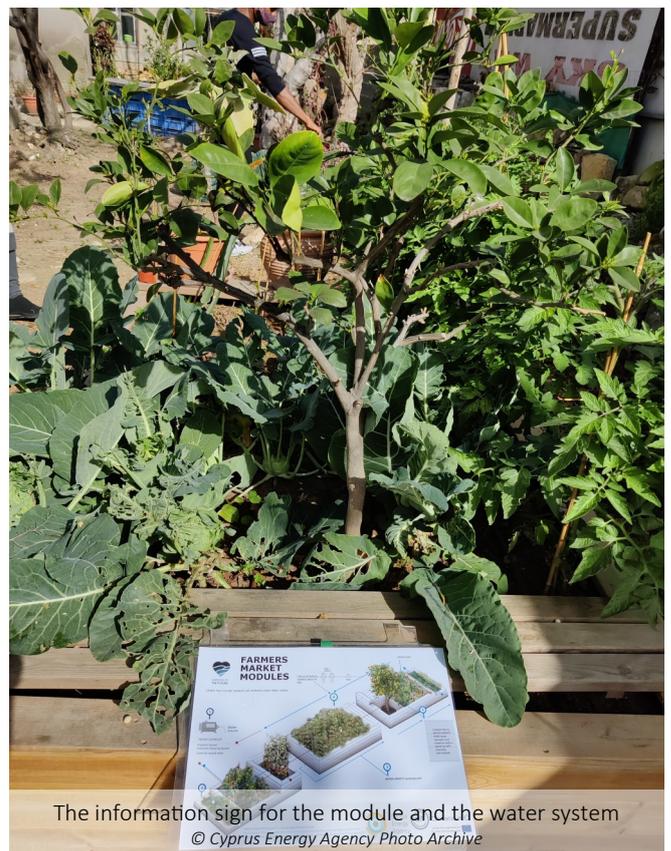
The 'Gardens of the Future' Initiative is based on three main aspirations, also shared by the SUSHI project. These involve:

- a. *Building Communities:* Sharing experiences through a communal garden to facilitate the circulation of ideas and practices of care and hospitality.
- b. *Environment:* Embracing a circular economy approach, promoting the philosophy of building from 'waste' and practice the loop of recycle – reuse – reduce. The design of the garden becomes an ambassador of innovative techniques around responsible farming and creates a dynamic urban food sharing ecosystem.
- c. *Agro-entrepreneurship:* The garden's aim is to be a social hub in the city and create new work opportunities for the neighborhood and beyond. Celebrating a 'sharing economy' and support locals in how-to create their own gardens, grow their own food and open paths for economic freedom around agriculture activities.



The farmers module with the water system installation
© Gardens of the future Photo Archive

Based on the shared aspirations, the Cyprus Energy Agency worked closely with the 'Gardens of the Future' for the implementation of a pilot (community gardens), based on NBS, in the heart of the historic centre. The Cyprus Energy has supported the installation of a water recycling and reuse system for a farmers market module.



The information sign for the module and the water system
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