

**NEXT** Black Sea Basin

Step2CleanPlan

STEP2CLEANPLAN NEWS

NEWSLETTER

Protecting Nature Through Smart Planning



TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

Welcome to the latest edition of the **STEP2CleanPlan Update** – your go-to source for key insights, project milestones, and practical tools on climate adaptation and sustainable urban planning across Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey.

THE MENTORING PROGRAM LAUNCHED ACROSS ALL PARTNER COUNTRIES!

➤➤➤ READ MORE

We are excited to announce that the STEP2CleanPlan Capacity Building & Mentoring Program has officially kicked off in all participating countries—Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey!

Training sessions, climate vulnerability assessments, and stakeholder engagement activities are now underway in all partner regions, with local authorities and experts actively collaborating toward a common goal: effective climate change adaptation and sustainable planning.

Want to know more? Turn to Page 2 for detailed updates on each partner's activities and training highlights.

READ MORE



On May 28–29, 2025, ANATOLIKI S.A. hosted a productive two-day Study Visit in Thessaloniki. The event gathered 26 participants from Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey, including project partners and key stakeholders, to share experiences, explore best practices, and foster innovation in sustainable development planning and climate change adaptation.

Want to learn more? See Page 5 for detailed updates

STUDY VISIT IN THESSALONIKI

TWO-DAY STUDY VISIT IN THESSALONIKI

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Showcasing Good Practices for Climate and Energy

On May 28 and 29, 2025, a successful two-day Study Visit was held in Thessaloniki organized by ANATOLIKI S.A. The Study Visit brought together 26 representatives from project partners and relevant stakeholders from the participating countries – Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey – with the aim of exchanging experiences, studying good practices, and promoting innovative approaches in planning and monitoring sustainable development actions and climate change adaptation.

Welcome and Presentations of Local Initiatives

The day began with a visit to the Kalamaria Municipal Council Hall, where Vaso Papadopoulou, Project Manager of STEP2CleanPlan and Director of European Programs at ANATOLIKI S.A., officially welcomed participants and opened the proceedings.

Tassos Chatzieleftheriou, project team member and climate change expert, gave an overview of the two-day program, highlighting the main points and thematic areas.

Following that, Mr. Nikos Misirlis, Deputy Mayor of Environment, Public Lighting, and Infrastructure Maintenance of the Municipality of Kalamaria, emphasized the key role of local authorities in addressing climate change. He also presented the main interventions and policies implemented by the Municipality for sustainable development and energy transition.



Then, Mr. Apostolos Tsolakis, Deputy Mayor of Technical Services of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, presented relevant actions and initiatives, focusing on technical solutions and active citizen engagement aimed at improving energy efficiency and reducing the carbon footprint.

The first visit concluded with a presentation of the Municipal Emissions Reduction Plan (MERP) for Kalamaria by Yiannis Eleftheriadis, project team member and expert from ANATOLIKI S.A., highlighting a 21.63% emissions reduction since 2019. The plan aligns with the National Climate Law (Law 4936/2022).

These three presentations demonstrated the dynamic role of local governments in the wider Thessaloniki area and reinforced the collaborative spirit of the STEP2CleanPlan project.

Training at the Hellenic Institute of Transport (HIT)



Next stop of the day was a training workshop at HIT, focusing on introducing participants to modern methodologies in designing and implementing sustainable urban mobility.

- **Exercise on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP):** The session began with an interactive SUMP exercise, guided by experts Dr. Kornilia Kotoula, Dr. Maria Morfoulaki, and Maria Chatziathanasiou, introducing the core principles of SUMP and its strategic role in sustainable city transport planning.
- **Logistics in SUMP:** Mr. Orestis Tsolakis presented on the integration of logistics and freight distribution in urban mobility planning, highlighting the importance of balancing people and goods transport in cities.
- **“Mobility Living Lab” – Smart Mobility Workshop:** The session concluded with a presentation by Dr. Jose Salanova on the Thessaloniki Smart Mobility Living Lab, one of the largest in Europe. It offers real-time traffic data and short-term traffic forecasting, supporting Thessaloniki’s ambition to become a smart logistics hub. Dr. Salanova showcased pilot projects and practical applications in real environments, demonstrating how living labs can support data-driven and participatory policymaking.

HIT provided a unique educational setting that combined theory and hands-on practice, positioning Greece as a hub of expertise in sustainable urban mobility.

Visit to Thessaloniki Metro Control Center and Archaeological Stations

Participants visited the Metro depot and Central Control Station, where they were briefed on the technologies and challenges of the Thessaloniki Metro project. The tour ended with a visit to culturally significant stations, such as Venizelou Station, which features notable archaeological findings



TWO-DAY STUDY VISIT IN THESSALONIKI

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Visit to the Region of Central Macedonia (RCM)

On the second day, the group visited the Regional Council Hall in the Region of Central Macedonia, where they attended key presentations on local strategies for sustainable development and climate action. The delegation was warmly welcomed by Mr. Kostas Michailidis, Head of the General Operation and Organization Directorate of RCM, who also shared insights into the historical significance of the building and the ongoing restoration efforts.

- Vassilis Akylas, representative of the Operational Planning and Development Programs Department of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, presented the Municipal Climate Plan and the city's active participation in the EU Mission: 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030. He outlined the city's holistic strategy for carbon footprint reduction, energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, and circular economy, as well as the need to integrate local, national, and EU policies for achieving climate neutrality.
- Evdokia Maggou, from the RCM Directorate of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Support, showed the Sustainable Urban Development Observatory and its capabilities in monitoring and planning regional sustainability policies.



Energy Upgrade of the Government Building – Ministry of Interior (Macedonia-Thrace Department)



The visit concluded at the energy-upgraded facilities of the Ministry of Interior – Macedonia-Thrace Department, where technical solutions and best practices for improving energy efficiency in public buildings were presented, focusing on lighting and heating systems.

The group was hosted by the Department of Co-Financed Programs and Regional Development, represented by Ioannis Kotziampasis, and guided by architects Souzana Karla and Lila Dedemadi.

The Study Visit served as a powerful platform for knowledge and experience exchange, demonstrating the potential of local authorities and research institutions to design and implement effective climate and energy policies.

Participants returned to their countries with valuable insights and successful local examples, encouraging transnational cooperation and the adaptation and implementation of similar actions within their own contexts.



Adapting to Climate Change and Mitigating: Its Impacts in Local Government

By ANATOLIKI S.A.



On Wednesday, June 11, 2025, the three-month training program officially began in Thessaloniki.

The primary aim of the program is to train and mentor 10 local government officials in the design and implementation of actions focused on climate change adaptation and the mitigation of its effects at the municipal level. Participants include staff from seven municipalities in Thessaloniki—Kalamaria, Themi, Pylaia-Chortiatis, Neapoli-Sykies, Delta, Oraikastro—and the Region of Central Macedonia.

The training spans 72 hours, combining in-person and online sessions along with asynchronous learning components. The program is supported by a modern Learning Management System (LMS) that enables two-way communication, access to educational resources, self-assessment tools, and overall flexibility for learners.

Throughout the program, participants will gain practical knowledge and skills on adaptation and mitigation strategies, energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, and greenhouse gas emissions reporting in line with both national and EU standards.

In June the BIONET Mentoring Program started for stakeholders from both partner regions – Varna and Burgas

BY BIONET & DISTRICT GOVERNMENT BURGAS

Participants use their own experience as a basis for learning and exchange. Mentors help them develop their specific policies by sharing good practices. The strategy for sustainable urban mobility for the municipality of Byala, Varna region, was discussed in detail.

The program includes three main modules:

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Sustainable mobility and energy efficiency
- Review and analysis of European and national policies

Representatives of the following stakeholders participate in the initiative:

The Municipalities of Byala (Varna), Sredets and Tzarevo (Burgas).

Public Center for Environment and Sustainable Development, Geya Foundation and Recycling Art Foundation from Varna

Regional Forestry Directorate and Regional Directorate of Agriculture from Burgas, as well as the University "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov"

What remains for the participants? By learning, sharing, and discussing first-hand experience, long-term partnerships are created. Ideas for joint cooperation and development of new projects arise, as well as opportunities for exchange of experience and mutual assistance.

EXPERT ADVICE

These collaborative efforts mark a significant step forward in strengthening local capacities and fostering cross-border cooperation.



➤➤➤ Mentee Trainings Launched in Uzunköprü under Step2CleanPlan

BY UZUNKÖPRÜ MUNICIPALITY

Within the framework of the Step2CleanPlan Project (BSB00004), capacity-building training for local authorities and planning experts has officially started in Uzunköprü on July 3rd. The program is designed to strengthen local capacities in climate change adaptation and mitigation, providing participants with both theoretical knowledge and hands-on skills.

The training modules address sustainable urban mobility with a holistic approach. The key focus areas of the program are as follows:

- **Strategic Planning:** Participants are learning to create Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) aligned with the objectives of the EU Green Deal.
- **People-Centric Solutions:** The focus is on the "15-minute city" concept, walkability, cycling infrastructure, and inclusive transport policies for all.
- **Technology and Innovation:** The program examines the adaptation of smart solutions like Mobility as a Service (MaaS), autonomous systems, and electric vehicles for smaller cities.

Data and Social Equity: Data-driven planning using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is addressed in conjunction with social dimensions such as climate justice and gender equality.



Through workshops, webinars, and study visits, participants are engaging in an interactive learning process that combines local needs with international best practices. This initiative is a key step towards equipping small and medium-sized municipalities in the Black Sea Basin with the expertise required to design and implement effective climate strategies.

LOCAL ACTION FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

➤➤➤ Step2Clean Study visit in Greece and the Guide presented in Varna - constructive dialogue and enthusiasm for change



On 10.06., BIONET held a working meeting on the STEP2Cleanplan project, at which good practices from Greece in the field of green space management, waste management, educational campaigns, and the implementation of smart city technologies were presented.

Vanya Ilcheva and Natalia Nikolova from Eco Cluster Bulgaria presented the example of the Intelligent Mobility Laboratory in Thessaloniki, developed by the Greek Transport Institute (CERTH), transforming the city into a test platform for innovative transport solutions. Its key components include real-time traffic data and congestion forecasts.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the municipalities of Varna and Byala, NGOs, and experts from the environmental and sports sectors. It was discussed that many of the Greek practices could be adapted in Bulgaria, with plans to expand cooperation between local authorities and the non-governmental sector. There was also an interest in the Step2Clean Plan Guide.



Uzunköprü Municipality's SECAP Has Been Approved

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With the support of the Step2CleanPlan Project (BSB00004), the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP), prepared by Uzunköprü Municipality with the support of the Step2CleanPlan Project (BSB00004) and additionally supported by the MLPG4Climate project, has been officially approved.

SECAP is a strategic planning tool that guides municipalities in both reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change. The plan developed by Uzunköprü sets clear targets and actions in key areas such as energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, waste management, and mitigation of urban heat island effects.

The approval of the SECAP demonstrates not only Uzunköprü's strong commitment to climate action but also the joint contribution of the Step2CleanPlan Project and the supporting MLPG4Climate project in strengthening local capacities for climate-resilient planning.

This milestone highlights Uzunköprü's pioneering role in Turkey and sets an inspiring example for other municipalities across the Black Sea Basin.



Burgas and Uzunkopru Launch Joint Climate Adaptation Initiative



District government Burgas and Municipality Uzunkopru continued their partnership with a new joint project for climate change adaptation - TiCCA4DANU in the frames of Horizon Europe. The initiative is part of the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change and aims to support systemic and just climate adaptation across the Danube Macro-Region — one of Europe's most climate-vulnerable areas. 12 European partners from eight European countries, along with six associated and implementing partners from six countries (including Ukraine, Türkiye and Switzerland) will start a three-year collaboration.

Together, they aim to rethink how climate change adaptation is integrated into regional innovation strategies, governance, and everyday life.

In the period 26-27 of June 2025 they participated in the first General Assembly organized by the University of Vienna.



New Project Launch: ANATOLIKI Quest Leads Quadruple Helix Initiative in the Black Sea Basin

ANATOLIKI S.A. announces its participation in a new Interreg VI-B NEXT Black Sea Basin project—ANATOLIKI Quest. This initiative focuses on boosting the capacity of key stakeholders across the Black Sea region to access funding and strengthen collaboration, especially within the blue economy sector.

By applying the quadruple helix model, the project unites universities, businesses, civil society, and public authorities to address regional challenges and promote sustainable, effective cooperation.

Partners include Trabzon Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Karadeniz Technical University, and the Union of Bulgarian Black Sea Local Authorities.



A glimpse into the future" / Timeline and next steps

P L A N N I N G

Interreg



Co-funded by
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NEXT Black Sea Basin

Step2CleanPlan

Development of strategic frameworks and plans:

- Urban Mobility Plans: Municipality of Uzunköprü (Türkiye) & Byala (Bulgaria)
- Energy Efficiency Monitoring Framework: Burgas (Bulgaria)
- Carbon Footprint Reduction Plan: Municipality of Kalamaria (Greece)



Press conferences are to be held in each partner country, showcasing the outcomes achieved through the project activities



Final Conference in Burgas, Bulgaria and Presentation of Results



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Project Partnership



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Областна администрация Бургас

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