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**PRESS RELEASE – MONDAY 15<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2008**

## **CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PROJECT ‘GRABS’ THE STAGE AT TCPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

The new **Green and Blue Space Adaptation for Urban Areas and Eco Towns (GRaBS)**<sup>[1]</sup> project was presented to planners, local authority officers and members, developers, architects, infrastructure providers, consultants, academics, and representative from NGOs and voluntary organizations at the TCPA’s<sup>[2]</sup> annual conference in London last week.

Speaking at the acclaimed TCPA conference GRaBS Project Manager Diane Smith said:

“In a highly competitive bidding process we are delighted that the GRaBS project has won funding from the European Union European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) INTERREG IVC Programme<sup>[3]</sup>.”

“From Sweden to Slovakia, Greece to Manchester, Lithuania to Austria, and Sicily to Sutton the 14 project partners, drawn from eight member states, represent a broad spectrum of authorities and climate change challenges, all with varying degrees of strategic policy and experience. By sharing best practice and advancing the knowledge and expertise of partner staff through the project, regional and local municipalities, decisions makers, politicians and communities, will be able to make a more informed and strategic response to climate change adaptation.”

The GRaBS Project has 4 main objectives:

1. To raise awareness and increase the expertise of how green and blue infrastructure can help new and existing mixed use urban development adapt to projected climate scenarios of key bodies responsible for spatial planning and development
2. To assess the delivery mechanisms that exist for new urban mixed use development and urban regeneration in each partner country and to develop good practice action plans to co-ordinate the delivery of:-
  - a. urban greening
  - b. adaptation strategies
  - c. cooperation amongst planners, stakeholders and local communities.
3. To develop an innovative, cost effective and user friendly risk and vulnerability assessment tool, to aid the strategic planning of climate change adaptation responses.
4. To improve stakeholders' and communities' understanding and involvement in planning, delivering and managing green infrastructure in new and existing urban mixed use development, based on positive community involvement techniques

The project has been co-financed by the European Union European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and made possible by the INTERREG IVC Programme.

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**Contacts:**

Kate Henderson, TCPA (Lead-Partner)

Tel: 020 7930 8903/ 07915 057769

Email: [kate.henderson@tcpa.org.uk](mailto:kate.henderson@tcpa.org.uk)

**Notes to Editors**

1. **History of the GRaBS project proposal** - Working with the two initial partners in the early part of 2007, the TCPA developed an outline GRaBS project proposal,

which was presented to UK local and regional government in order to gauge interest in and relevance of both the project idea and the proposed European wide exchange of experience and knowledge. The TCPA decided to offer to take on the Lead Partner role for the new project and together with the **University of Manchester**, the **City District Geuzenveld Sloterveer** (Amsterdam), the **London Borough of Sutton** and **Southampton City Council** began the process of extended European partner search. The aim was to find partners with a range of interests, cultures, experiences and needs, located in a range of climate zones. Towards the end of 2007 the **Province of Genova, Etnambiente**, the **University of Catania** (Italy), the **City of Malmö** (Sweden), the **Municipality of Kalamaria** (Greece), the **Regional Environment Centre for Eastern Europe** (Slovakia), the **South East England Development Agency** (SEEDA), the **Region of Styria** (Austria) and **CORPI** (Lithuania) joined the project as partners.

2. **INTERREG IVC Programme** – The INTERREG IVC Programme is financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), part of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective of the Structural Fund policies for the period 2007-2013. It aims, by means of interregional cooperation, to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies and contribute to economic modernisation and increased competitiveness of Europe. In its first call for proposals the INTERREG IVC Programme received 492 applications by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2008 submission deadline.
  
3. The **Town and Country Planning Association** (TCPA) is an independent campaigning charity calling for more integrated planning based on the principles of accessibility, sustainability, diversity, and community cohesion. The TCPA puts social justice and the environment at the heart of the debate about planning policy, housing and energy supply. We inspire government, industry and campaigners to take a fresh perspective on major issues including climate change and regeneration. [www.tcpa.org.uk](http://www.tcpa.org.uk). The TCPA annual conference *'The Children - Where Will They Live? Planning for future generations'* took place on Thursday 11 December 2008 at the IET, Savoy Place, London. Details of the conference and full programme can be found at: <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/events.asp>