

GRaBS News

Issue 2

January 2010

This Issue

Mentoring visits	pages 2-4
Transport adaptation	page 5
Tool update and participation conference	page 6
GRaBS outputs and other news	page 7
Topical projects and contact details	page 8

The Partners

Austria

- Provincial Government of Styria

Greece

- Municipality of Kalamaria

Italy

- Etnambiente SRL
- Province of Genoa
- University of Catania

Lithuania

- Klaipeda University Coastal Research and Planning Institute (CORPI)

Netherlands

- Amsterdam, City District of Geuzenveld-Slotermeer

Slovakia

- Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, Country Office Slovakia

Sweden

- City of Malmö

UK

- London Borough of Sutton
- Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA)
- Southampton City Council
- Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)
- University of Manchester



Mentoring Group at
Southampton City Council

Welcome to the second edition of the GRaBS newsletter, where the latest news is brought to you from the 'green and blue space adaptation in urban areas and eco towns' project.

The aim of the INTERREG IVC Programme is to facilitate the exchange, sharing and transfer of policy experience, knowledge and good practice, to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies to enable our towns and cities adapt to the impacts of climate change and contribute to economic modernisation. Mentoring Visits play a key role in the GRaBS project, and this newsletter reviews some of the partner exchanges to date. Another crucial aspect of the project is the development of Adaptation Action Plans, the first stage of which entails conducting a 'Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats' Analysis in the delivery of adaptation actions at the local or regional level. These, together with the Risk and Vulnerabilities Assessment Tool, have contributed towards the positive progress made in delivering the GRaBS project since September 2008. For more details on the GRaBS partnership and its aims and objectives please visit the website at www.grabs-eu.org.

This timely newsletter has been completed just after world leaders sought to reach a deal at the 15th United Nations Conference on



Climate Change in Copenhagen. Although a binding international treaty has not been reached, a positive outcome is that the Copenhagen Accord recognises the urgent need for enhanced action and international cooperation on climate change adaptation, and calls for the establishment of the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund to help support the immediate implementation of adaptation action in poorer countries, particularly in Africa. An initial, fast-start fund worth \$10 billion annually would operate from 2010 to 2012, including a sum of \$3.6 billion per year pledged by the EU Member States, agreed at a separate Climate Summit of EU leaders in Brussels.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Introducing the Mentoring Programme

The GRaBS Mentoring Programme assists partners to develop and deliver their project outputs through the process of exchanging good practice, expertise and knowledge. Mentoring creates a unique opportunity to share ideas, listen to each others' problems and give support to help partners to find local solutions to their climate change adaptation challenges. In particular, the first phase of the Mentoring Programme was designed to enable partners to help each other in a) the process of developing their SWOT Analyses and the formulation of their Adaptation Action Plans (AAPs) and, b) explore options to progress and advance climate

change adaptation through green and blue space strategies in each partner location.

Partners completed a questionnaire setting out their experience, climate change challenges, political structures and learning needs, allowing a match-making exercise to be implemented which resulted in four mentoring groups each taking part in two visits (see the plan on page 3). Various participants are encouraged to take part to maximise mutual learning, including the main partner representatives and officers with different disciplines, as well as decision and policy makers (such as politicians).

Italian approaches to adaptation

The Province of Genoa, in Italy, hosted a mentoring visit attended by GRaBS representatives from the Northwest Regional Development Agency (UK), the TCPA and the Province of Styria (Austria), as well as a number of politicians and other officers. Following field visits to the Polcevera and Scrivia Valleys (the case study areas for the GRaBS project), an in-depth exchange of views on land planning management, river basin planning management and flooding safety measures, as well as nature preservation, took place.

"The mentoring visit facilitated the exchange of best practice ideas between the partners. Crucially, we identified the need for a well-integrated political infrastructure and partnership working to deliver adaptation and green/blue space projects on the ground." Tim Daley, Environment Agency, September 2009

In September and October, several partners

(SGS Amsterdam, the London Borough of Sutton, REC Slovakia, the Municipality of Kalamaria (Greece) and the TCPA) attended two mentoring visits held in the Catania province of Sicily, hosted by the University of Catania and Etnambiente SRL partners respectively. As well as presenting progress with their SWOT Analyses, and introducing their case study areas for the project, partners learnt how Catania was addressing climate change adaptation through urban planning; specifically, of the University's role in researching the interrelationship between mobility management and climate change adaptation and mitigation. See page 5 for a detailed report.

Partners witnessed both good and bad practices in the municipality of Gravina, and learnt of the benefits of delivering sustainable energy through the Archimede Project (an innovative solar thermodynamic plant). It became apparent that the Municipality of Kalamaria and the Province of Catania shared similar climates and urban planning



problems, and proposed to establish a 'common cooperation strategy' to address upcoming issues. Presentations during the visit helped to raise awareness among the participants, including politicians and other stakeholders, who discussed how motivation was needed to deliver positive change through the practical implementation of adaptation measures.

"The visit created an understanding of different practices in the field of spatial and urban development...the discussions especially helped us to understand the importance of involving a wide range of metropolitan area representatives when preparing development strategies." Zuzana Hudekova, REC Slovakia, October 2009

Community planning of greenspace in Slovakia

The visit to Bratislava was hosted by REC Slovakia, at which Etnambiente, the Municipality of Kalamaria, and the TCPA participated in an intense two-day itinerary. Partners learnt how REC Slovakia has used thermo-vision technology to measure the relationship between air temperature and humidity, and green spaces. Results have confirmed that vegetation cover has a strong micro-climate effect which, in turn, reinforces the evidence that green space can help combat

the urban heat island effect. Partners were also made aware of the benefits of natural flood protection (as opposed to technical flood defences) whilst touring the floodplain forest on the banks of the River Danube, where development is restricted and biodiversity is nurtured. A particularly memorable visit was made to Zvolen City, where Nick Wates (a leading specialist on community planning and design) facilitated a workshop exploring effective, bottom-up community

involvement methods, which would subsequently be implemented locally to get input and a sense of ownership on the renewal of some urban parkland. The representative from Etnambiente went away hoping to hold a similar event in the Province of Catania with local stakeholders, planners and urban designers, on a community engagement strategy for territorial development. *"Participating at the workshop in Zvolen on 'community planning principles, methods*



and scenarios' was very important – we learnt that although approaches adopted to involve communities will be different for every society, there are principles, methods and scenarios which appear to be universally relevant, and can be drawn on for inspiration and guidance." Mariagiovanna Laudani, Etnambiente SRL, October 2009



Talking skills in Southampton

Southampton City Council, in the UK, hosted a visit in October, but wanted to take the discussion a step further, to explore what action was needed to address the risks already identified in the partner SWOT Analyses, and which skills would be required to carry out their AAPs. The complexity of the necessary flow of information and interaction between departments and teams became evident, as well as the potential skill gaps, but on the positive side there were many existing skills and external links to exploit. A best practice field trip followed to the Thornhill Estate, where representatives from Thornhill Plus You (a ten-year government funded programme) explained how the local community had been integral in an estate regeneration scheme which had resulted in measures such as permeable parking and high quality spaces. Although these measures were not implemented specifically with adaptation in mind, it was interesting to see how green space can actually lead to multiple benefits, including building resilience and lowering vulnerability to climate change. The team at Southampton City Council and Thornhill Plus You led a workshop at SGS Amsterdam's Conference on Climate Participation, more details of which are set out on page 6.

"A useful site visit to a housing district renewal scheme, Thornhill Plus You, underlined the importance of community involvement in making environmental work successful, and gave good examples of tools to help make this happen." Annika Kruuse, Institute for Sustainable Urban Development, Malmö, October 2009



Sustainability and Public Examinations in Sutton

In June 2009 GRaBS partners from the University of Catania, SGS Amsterdam, and the TCPA attended an Examination in Public (EiP). At the EiP, GRaBS partner LB Sutton was required to give evidence to an independent government inspector on Sutton's Core Planning Strategy in relation to the re-use of 'brownfield' land for mixed-use development. The inspector had to decide on the soundness of this key development plan document which would provide the framework for the delivery of climate change adaptation measures in the borough for the next 10-15 years. Two workshops were also organised to allow partners to discuss their approaches to the SWOT Analysis (as the first stage in the development of their Adaptation Action Plans), and share ideas about community engagement strategies. Site visits were conducted both to Sutton's case study area, Hackbridge Sustainable Neighbourhood, and to BedZED (Beddington Zero-Energy Development) – the UK's largest mixed use sustainable community. The hosts also gave a detailed account of the Local Climate Impacts Profile process (a way of quantifying climate change impacts in the area), in relation to the National Indicator 188 Planning to Adapt to Climate Change initiative, and how this was delivered as part of the Local Area Agreement.

"I found the discussion on community engagement very useful as everyone was given the chance to describe examples on how participation is being encouraged in their own setting...it was a good opportunity to learn from each other." Atika Bouz, SGS Amsterdam, July 2009

Mentoring partnerships & destinations, 2009

	Visit 1	Visit 2
Group 1: Provincial Government of Styria, Province of Genoa, and the Northwest Regional Development Agency	Genoa, Italy 25-26 June	Northwest Region, UK 1-2 October
Group 2: Southampton City Council, CORPI, and the City of Malmö	Klaipėda, Lithuania 17-18 September	Southampton, UK 12-13 October
Group 3: London Borough of Sutton, the University of Catania and the City District Geuzenveld-Slotermeer (SGS)	Sutton, UK 16-17 June	Catania, Sicily 16-17 September
Group 4: Municipality of Kalamaria, Etnambiente SRL, REC Slovakia	Bratislava/Zvolen, Slovakia 15-16 June	Catania, Sicily 13-14 October

Throughout this first phase of visits, partners developed an understanding of each others' strengths, issues and challenges through activities such as site visits, presentations and discussion sessions.



The value of green and blue space in the Northwest

In September the NWDA, University of Manchester and the Environment Agency welcomed a number of GRaBS partners to the Northwest region of England, with representatives from Provinces of Genoa (Italy) and Styria (Austria), and the TCPA. After the University of Manchester reviewed their adaptation research with participants, and informed them of progress with the development of the Assessment Tool, site visits took place to the Lower Kersal River, Irwell City Park and Salford Quays, where a wide range of issues were discussed, from green infrastructure and open space planning, flood manage-

ment techniques, community engagement and recreation use, and green space-focused regeneration schemes (such as the 'Green Streets' project). A visit was made to a private water company, United Utilities, to hear how they were working with partners to develop a water resources plan, and predict what impacts drier summers and wetter winters would have on wastewater network flooding, for example.

"Through a boat trip along the River Irwell, we learnt of the huge potential and added value of embracing our waterways. Not only do they encourage

leisure and recreation, but as blue spaces they help to lower temperatures in our urban areas and counteract the urban heat island effect."

Ben Gill, Forum for the Future/TCPA, October 2009

The second phase of the mentoring programme will take place throughout 2010, and will focus on the detailed preparation of the Adaptation Action Plans and the piloting of the Risk and Vulnerabilities Assessment Tool. Look out for the outcomes reported in future issues of the GRaBS Newsletter.



A focus on the coast in Klaipeda

In September, officers from the City of Malmö, Southampton City Council (SCC)

and the TCPA visited Klaipeda University Coastal Research and Planning Institute in Lithuania, where they went on site visits to learn about coastal zone management, and how natural processes are balanced with

technical protection to adapt to the threat of sea-level rise. Participants learnt of Southampton's flood risk management strategies at the city level, and how national policy requirements were being relayed into local plans; and of the City of Malmö's approach to green infrastructure through the 'Green Plan', driven at a local rather than regional or national level. Time was also set aside to give each other feedback on their draft SWOT Analyses.

"We learnt how Southampton is focusing on flood risk assessment and management – their experience and support will be very important for other partners of this particular mentoring group, as flood management is a major challenge for coastal cities like Malmö or Klaipeda."

Sergej Suzdalev, CORPI, October 2009

'The Greening of Urban Mobility': University of Catania researches links between transport and climate change

By Giuseppe Inturri and Matteo Ignaccolo,
Department of Civil Engineering and Environmental Engineering, University of Catania

Within the GRaBS project, the University of Catania is focusing on identifying the impacts of transport on climate change, and conversely, how transport is affected by climate change. This report reflects the discussions on this topic among several partners – SGS Amsterdam, the London Borough of Sutton and the TCPA – at the University of Catania-hosted mentoring visit in September 2009.

More than 25% of greenhouse gases (GHGs) are produced by the transport sector, and 75% of this is from road vehicles. There are three ways to curb emissions from cars: improved vehicle efficiency, cleaner fuels and reduction in driving. The last strategy is the best, and planners have a significant role in mitigating GHG emissions through land-use and transport policies that reduce vehicle travel. However, to be effective, mitigation measures require global action, and national and international policies will be required to achieve the stabilisation of GHGs. On the other hand, adaptation policies are more closely tied to the local and regional level, since impacts, strategies and benefits are local.

A consolidated planning approach which recognises that high urban density with mixed land-use close to public transport nodes and walkable communities, is the most effective strategy to obtain less car use for short trips, more transit efficiency, and dramatic GHG reduction. On the other

hand, responding to climate change adaptation requires space within and around buildings: if density is too high this can exacerbate the urban heat island effect and increase the likelihood of urban flooding. This consideration demonstrates the importance of tackling climate change impacts through the integration of mitigation (reduction of further production of GHG) and adaptation (preparing for the inevitable impacts of climate change); in short, we do not have to use adaptation options that increase greenhouse gas emissions and vice versa.

Walking is the most sustainable mode of transport and the best one for mitigation, whilst the provision of green spaces is one of the most effective solutions to urban adaptation. Therefore there is an immediate need for improved knowledge of the relationship between green spaces and non-motorised mobility. People tend to use green spaces for leisure – not for commuting – often because parks are perceived as unsafe, isolated, sometimes unattractive, and not always the most direct route to a destination. The mentoring group in Catania agreed that the right approach might be to focus on medium-density housing, including medium-size green spaces properly connected by a well structured network of green corridors, to provide sustainable accessibility to green spaces and other urban activities. The final aim would be the 'greening of urban mobility' both by favouring the shift towards green (sustainable)



modes of transport for climate change mitigation, and in the sense of supporting the development and use of green spaces for climate change adaptation.

Another issue discussed was the reverse side of the relationship between transport and climate change. The ever-increasing frequency of damage to transport infrastructure caused by extreme meteorological events seems to confirm that climate change impacts have already reached levels of severity largely outside the range for which transport infrastructure was designed. It is therefore urgent to include climate change vulnerability and risk assessment into the planning, design and operation processes for all transport systems and infrastructure.

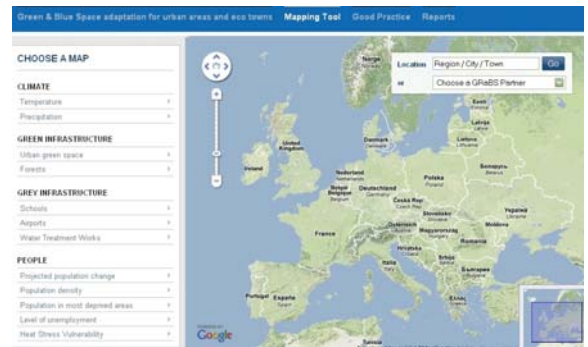


Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Tool: progress update

On 4 November 2009, the Project Steering Committee met in Amsterdam to discuss the delivery and implementation of GRaBS, including progress made with the Assessment Tool. On two consecutive days following this meeting, the GRaBS partner City District Geuzenveld-Slotermeer organised a successful two-day European conference on Participation in Climate Adaptation Planning.

A key output of GRaBS, led by the University of Manchester, is the development of an innovative, cost effective and user friendly assessment tool to identify climate change vulnerabilities and risks in urban areas. The tool will follow the principles of an interactive, on-line Public Participation GIS, allowing for a wide range of users such as policy officers, decision-makers, and community groups. Having recently completed a 'User Needs and Requirements Analysis' questionnaire setting out their expectations for the tool,

climate change impact priorities, and availability of data, the GRaBS partners were introduced to the tool prototype at the PSC meeting in Amsterdam. The next step will be for partners to pilot the tool in their case study areas, and use the outcomes to support the development of their Adaptation Action Plans.



Amsterdam GRaBS Conference raises awareness on the importance of climate participation

By Age Niels Holstein, Chair of the GRaBS Community Involvement Task Team and Programme Manager for European Projects of the City Districts, Amsterdam

During the conference, fourteen GRaBS partners from eight EU member states exchanged knowledge and experience with delegates from the business world, politics, NGOs and the voluntary sector in the Netherlands on the best ways to inform local and regional communities about changes that will occur in their own environment as a result of climate change, and to engage them actively in planning responses and other proposals to adapt to these changes. Around 100 delegates attended the plenary programme, parallel workshops and excursions to project areas that face specific climate challenges with targeted local community engagement strategies.

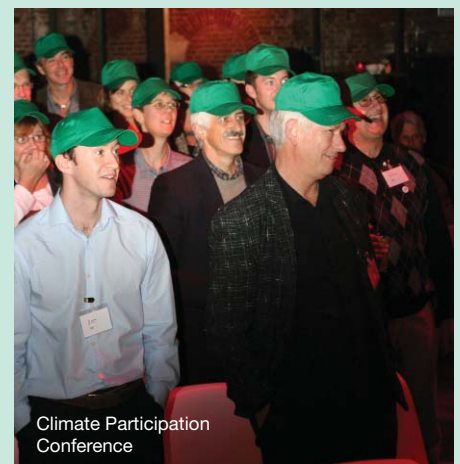
The City District Chairman Robin de Bood opened the conference by stressing the necessity of cooperation between interested parties across sector boundaries. He highlighted the added value of international exchange of knowledge in shaping adequate and shared solutions to adapt to climate change. Keynote addresses were delivered by Age Niels Holstein, Programme Manager for European Projects of the City Districts and Richard Langlais, Senior Fellow of the Swedish Nordregio Institute. Holstein



demonstrated the importance of well designed participation processes connected in a transparent and obvious manner to decision mechanisms on adaptation plans. He argued that to be able to engage local communities in adaptation strategies the planning community must make use of overarching adaptation concepts firmly rooted in shared everyday climate experiences. Langlais presented a series of inspiring practices of local climate change adaptation, making clear that climate change mitigation and adaptation are not separate worlds, but can happily coincide – he introduced the new concept of 'adaptigation' to stress this point.

Several workshops in the afternoon focused on practical ways to involve communities in climate adaptation. Especially the involvement of young people and the new challenges of planning and managing green areas with support of local communities.

The second day was opened by Roelof Kruize, Chief Executive of the Amsterdam Water board and Amsterdam Waste Energy Company. He explained the relevance of adaptation schemes for the management of the complete 'water chain' in the City of Amsterdam and the necessity of a professional risk assessment as an integral part of sustainable water management. An interesting conference was concluded by visits to Dutch water management in 'deep' polders, participation in planning of green infrastructure and the relevance of mitigation targets in the Amsterdam Waste Energy plant. For more information, contact: Age Niels Holstein, T: 020-8898467 E: aholstein@geuzenveld.amsterdam.nl



GRaBS features at Trees and Urban Climate Adaptation Conference in London



Diane Smith, GRaBS Project Manager, highlighted the importance of green and blue space at a recent conference in London focusing on the vital role of trees and urban climate adaptation. The conference, organised by Treework Environmental Practice in partnership with the Forestry Commission, aimed to mobilise policy makers and the wider community to ensure a sustainable urban forest canopy capable of meeting future climate adaptation needs. Alongside other speakers including Professor John Handley from the University of Manchester (who chairs the GRaBS expert panel), and Susannah Gill from Mersey Forest (a GRaBS partner through the NWDA), the importance of green infrastructure in adapting to climate change really hit home to a diverse audience including policy makers, local authority officers and community groups. For more information, see www.treeworks.co.uk.

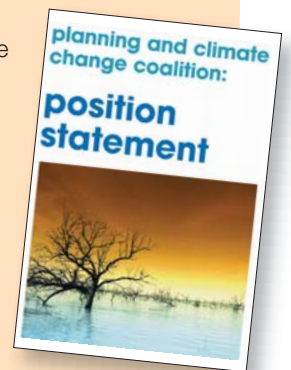
Environmental Audit Committee hears from the TCPA on the benefits of climate change adaptation

The Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) considers to what extent the policies and programmes of England's government departments and non-departmental public bodies contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development. In December 2009, the TCPA presented evidence to the EAC inquiry 'Adapting to Climate Change' about whether Government is on the right path to effectively embedding climate change adaptation, and risks from future climate change impacts, into Government programmes, policies and decision making. The TCPA highlighted that the message about the need to address climate change as an urgent priority simply has not reached the majority of decision-makers, and stressed that many of our communities remain completely untouched by the kinds of positive solutions green open space, energy demand reduction and renewable energy offer that would help to show that climate change is both real and manageable. The Association argued that dealing with the challenges of climate change can only be effectively achieved through a strong plan-led system. The GRaBS project, and its outcomes to date, was a key source upon which the TCPA drew its evidence. The submission can be found in full at

www.tcpa.org.uk/resources.php

Coalition calls for climate change to be put at heart of planning system

In October 2009, a new campaign was launched in the House of Commons in London to persuade the Government to put climate change at the heart of the planning system. A cross-sector coalition of organisations – including leading planners and countryside and environmental organisations – has drawn up draft planning guidance which would transform the system's ability to meet the challenge of tackling climate change. The coalition, brought together by Friends of the Earth and the TCPA, and supported by GRaBS, has made detailed suggestions for improving the planning process by making it fairer and ensuring that it plays its part in slashing carbon emissions and recognising the importance of adaptation. GRaBS partner LB Sutton attended the launch, and Dr Hugh Ellis, Chief Planner for the TCPA, presented the document to all of the partners during the third Project Steering Committee meeting in Amsterdam.



The Rt Hon John Healey MP, Minister for Planning, at the Climate Change Coalition launch at the House of Commons

Topical Projects & Resources

In the spirit of transnational exchanges of information, this section introduces topical projects, initiatives, and interesting resources with a focus on adapting to the impacts of a changing climate.

Climatools

Run by the Swedish Defence Research Agency, this research programme will lead to eight different tools that will assist decision makers in adapting our society to the consequences of climate change. www.foi.se/FOI/Templates/ProjectPage_5846.aspx

UrbSpace

This Central Europe Programme, led by REC Slovakia, focuses on the vital role of urban space and its improvement in terms of design quality, accessibility, and functionality. www.urbanspaces.eu

Green infrastructure to combat climate change

The website www.ginw.co.uk/climatechange has been established as part of the North West Climate Change Action Plan in the UK. A particularly useful resource is the evidence base section, which reviews relevant research, policy and delivery.

BaltCICA

This Baltic Sea Region Programme assesses the most imminent impacts and costs of climate change on the Region, and aims to develop, appraise and implement appropriate adaptation measures. www.baltcica.org

OURCOAST

Commissioned by the Directorate General Environment of the European Commission, to support and ensure the exchange of experiences and best practices in Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM). ec.europa.eu/environment/iczm/ourcoast.htm

FUTUREForest

An INTERREG IVC project which aims to ensure that future European forests continue to deliver multiple benefits and to leave future generations with forests that are well adapted and resilient to the effects of climate change. www.futureforest.eu

REGIOCLIMA

An INTERREG IVC project seeking to assist societies to adapt to the new climate conditions both by minimising the risk of damage and exploiting new opportunities arising from the changing climate. www.regioclimate.eu

C-Change: Changing Climate, Changing Lives

An INTERREG IVB Programme, led by Groundwork London, to engage with citizens, practitioners and policy makers to facilitate changes in behaviour, land use and policy that will help to 'climate proof' our cities now and in the future. www.cchangeproject.org

Eco Cities

A joint initiative in the UK between the University of Manchester and Bruntwood, focusing on the response of urban areas to the impacts of climate change. The project looks particularly at how we can adapt our cities to the challenges and opportunities that a change climate presents. www.ecocitiesproject.org.uk

Upcoming events

April 2010: Fourth PSC meeting in Graz, Austria

28-30 May 2010: ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, together with the City of Bonn, will host "Resilient Cities 2010", the 1st World Congress on Cities and Adaptation to Climate Change – more details at www.iclei.org

June 2010: Study Visit to Freiburg

GRaBS in summary

The GRaBS project is financed by the European Union Regional Development Fund, and made possible by the Interreg IVC Programme. The project has four main objectives:

- 1 To raise awareness and increase the expertise of key bodies responsible for spatial planning and development on how green and blue infrastructure can help new and existing mixed use urban development adapt to projected climate scenarios.
- 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 adaptation action plans to co-ordinate the delivery of urban greening

and adaptation strategies, as well as cooperation amongst:

- Planners
- Policy-makers
- 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 stakeholder and community understanding and involvement in planning, delivering and managing green and blue infrastructure in new and existing urban mixed use development, based on positive community involvement techniques.

Contact details

Get involved in the GRaBS project through:

- International study tours and workshops
- Best practice case studies
- Expert papers
- Newsletters and articles

More information can be found at the project website: www.grabs-eu.org
Or contact the lead GRaBS partner, the TCPA:

Diane Smith, GRaBS Project Manager
e: diane.smith@tcpa.org.uk
t: +44 (0)20 7930 8903
m: +44 (0)7920 280 370
skype: dianesmith152