SmartWB NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial

Welcome to the 3rd and 4th Newsletter issue of the SmartWB Project:

Curricula innovation in climate-smart urban development based on green and energy efficiency with the non-academic sector

We were all very excited about bringing this issue out, so that you could start knowing more about us, and getting updated about what we have been doing for the SmartWB project development.
The Newsletters will periodically publish information about the project partners' roles; the project progress; news and activities; as well as about the synergies we make withother research and educational initiatives and activities.

The Newsletter of the SmartWB Project is edited by its dissemination partner Polytechnic University Of Tirana (UPT) including contributions from project partners and active stakeholders.

Enjoy your reading!

Comments and announcements for the next issues of the SmartWB Newsletter should be sent to the email address below with the subject: "Newsletter". Your feedback is very welcome. *Thank you!*

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THE SMARTWB ERASMUS+ PROJECT IN FOCUS

In this unprecedented era of increasing urbanization and the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and other global development agreements and frameworks, cities should be well-planned and well-managed.

The broader objective of the SmartWB project is to improve the quality of higher education in the climate-smart urban development (CSUD) field, strengthen its relevance for the labour market and society, enhance relations between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Western Balkans (WB) partner countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro) and the economic and social environment by establishing a technological platform for cooperation, exchange of knowledge, experience and good practices, modernizing universities' courses in line with EU trends and improving the level of competencies and skills of teaching staff. This broader objective fully complies with the priorities of the Capacity Building projects within the Erasmus+ program, i.e., Green Deal.

To achieve planned wider and specific objectives, the Project Consortium consists of six HEIs from EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme: Austria, Croatia, Germany, Norway, Spain and Serbia and seven HEIs from targeted countries of Region 1: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, supported by 5 non-academic partners from the West Balkans region.

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SmartWB Project Hosts 4th Progress and Coordination Meeting in Zagreb

Zagreb, Croatia — On December 10-11, 2024, the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Geodesy, welcomed participants from across the region for the 4th Progress and Coordination Meeting of the "SmartWB" project. This pivotal event gathered project partners to review achievements, share progress, and coordinate future activities.
The meeting opened with a welcome address by representatives from the University of Zagreb, followed by an update on the project's overall status, presented by Project Coordinator Marija Jevrić from University of Montenegro.

Key sessions included detailed discussions on the implementation of new and modernized courses, led by Amir Hajdar (UNSA), and updates on student internships presented by Marko Ćećez (UNMO).

Participants also engaged in conversations on the posting of best-practice examples and self-evaluation of implemented courses, led by Hasimin Kećić (European University of Tirana) and Milan Gocić (Universiry of Nis), respectively.

The dissemination and quality assurance segment featured status reports on the project website, roundtables with the non-academic sector, and promotional activities emphasizing emission reduction and low-carbon technologies. Presentations were delivered by Ivana Ćipranić (Univerity of Montenegro), Aladin Crnkić (UNBI), and Elona Karafili (U_POLIS).

Committee meetings concluded the event, including sessions for the Quality Assurance Committee, Steering Committee, and Project Management, facilitating the planning of future initiatives.
A cultural highlight of the meeting was the social event on the first evening, featuring a visit to the Salaj family's renowned Christmas fairytale light display and a traditional dinner at Kezele family restaurant.
This successful gathering reaffirmed the consortium's commitment to advancing climate-smart urban development and fostering collaboration between academic and non-academic sectors.

SMARTWB PROJECT ACTIVITIES

A round table was held at the Faculty of Civil Engineering UoM

A round table entitled "Ecological transition in urban development: The role of education, legislation and practice" was held at the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the University of Montenegro. The event was organized by the Faculty of Civil Engineering, in cooperation with Ecoportal.me, as part of the activities on realizing the Erasmus+ project SmartWB.

Numerous attendees took part in the presentation and discussion, including representatives of the Ministry of Spatial Planning, Urbanism and State Property, the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Development of the North and the Ministry of Energy, as well as representatives of the NGO Expeditio, NGO Ozon and NGO Green home. Colleagues from the Faculty of Architecture and Mechanical Engineering at the University of Montenegro, the Center for Climate Change of the University of Donja Gorica, the Electric Power Company of Montenegro, the Capital City, UNDP and the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro also attended the round table.
The meeting moderator was Milica Mitrić, Eng—Arch. and lecturer at the Faculty of Polytechnics, University of Donja Gorica, editor-in-chief of Ecoportal.

A round table was held at the University of Bihać

On Thursday, December 5, 2024, a round table was held at the Technical Faculty of the University of Bihać within the Erasmus+ project SmartWB, attended by representatives of the economy, local authorities, ministries, public institutions and the academic community.
This event aimed to exchange experiences and discuss improving higher education in climate-smart urban development.

One of the key topics was the promotion of environmentally conscious approaches to urban development, with a special focus on green technologies in construction. During the discussion, proposals and guidelines for overcoming the challenges of urbanization in the Una-Sana Canton and Bosnia and Herzegovina were presented.
Also, the modernization of curricula at the Technical Faculty of the University of Bihać was discussed by the standards of similar programs from the EU.

The SmartWB project represents a significant step towards promoting environmentally conscious development and improving education in the Una-Sana Canton and throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

SMARTWB PROJECT ACTIVITIES

A round table was held at the at the University of Sarajevo

As part of the SmartWB initiative, the University of Sarajevo hosted a high-level roundtable titled "Disaster Risk Reduction: The Role of Education, Legislation and Practice." The event gathered over 30 participants and 11 expert panelists from government, academia, NGOs, and the private sector, with the goal of discussing urban resilience strategies in the face of climate change and environmental risks.

Participants emphasized the need to strengthen early warning systems and improve community awareness of disaster risks. A coordinated, interdisciplinary approach was seen as essential to adapt spatial planning and infrastructure to new climate realities. The Faculty of Civil Engineering was praised for its leadership in merging academic research with real-world application.

This event reinforced the role of academic institutions as innovation hubs, helping to shape future urban planners and engineers who are equipped to lead ecological transitions in the Western Balkans.

A round table was held at European University of Tirana

The SmartWB roundtable hosted by the European University of Tirana brought together a vibrant mix of industry leaders, urban planners, and academics to explore solutions for sustainable urban development. With a strong focus on construction and logistics, the event opened new channels of cooperation between universities and industry actors across Albania.

The roundtable showcased real-world case studies, including Albania's energy-efficient buildings using solar power and sustainable insulation. Urban greening efforts and initiatives like bike-sharing and walkable cities were explored as effective means of reducing carbon emissions and improving quality of life. Local success stories highlighted the role of civic engagement in designing inclusive public spaces.

This roundtable emphasized the value of embedding academic knowledge into industry-led projects and vice versa. As part of SmartWB's mission, UET demonstrated how universities can become engines for sustainability by training professionals and informing public policy.

Through stronger academia-industry dialogue, Albania takes a step forward in shaping urban environments that are greener, more inclusive, and better equipped to withstand climate challenges.

A round table was held at Polis University

Polis University hosted a thought-provoking roundtable titled “Bridging Knowledge and Practice: Strengthening Collaboration Between Academic and Non-Academic Institutions for Sustainable Development.” The event addressed ecological catastrophes, non-urban development impacts, and how academia and governance can jointly respond to these pressing challenges.

Notable presentations by Keti Hoxha and Rea Muka explored the impact of ecological degradation on urban systems, especially using the Kune-Vainit Laguna case. Participants stressed the urgency of aligning policy and science to mitigate risks and improve resilience in Albanian cities.

The roundtable laid the foundation for more institutionalized partnerships, reinforcing Polis University’s role as a bridge between research and governance for sustainable urban futures.

By directly involving policymakers and community leaders in academic dialogue, this event empowered more inclusive and informed decision-making in Albania’s ecological and urban agenda.

A round table was held at Dzemal Bijedic University of Mostar

Under the theme “Promotion of Environmentally Conscious Urban Development,” this SmartWB roundtable at UNMO focused on how ecological catastrophes reshape cities and what measures are needed for more resilient, inclusive recovery. Participants from local government, academia, and the private sector reflected on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s recent climate-related events and their urban consequences.

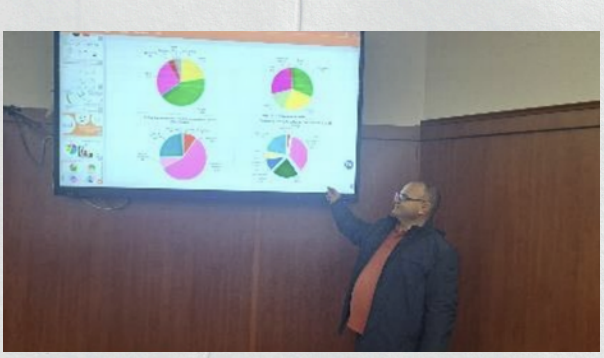
The discussions revealed that unregulated development, especially in hazard-prone zones, exacerbates the effects of natural disasters. Infrastructure damage, displaced populations, and economic disruptions call for a paradigm shift in how cities are planned, built, and rehabilitated.

The roundtable emphasized the need for proactive urban strategies grounded in environmental awareness and community resilience. Recovery, participants agreed, must go beyond bricks and mortar—addressing the social and psychological dimensions of disasters is just as vital.
This event positioned UNMO as a key actor in promoting disaster-informed urban planning and contributed to a wider regional dialogue on building back better.

A round table was held at Polytechnic University of Tirana

Under the SmartWB framework, the Polytechnic University of Tirana convened a wide-ranging roundtable titled “Climate-Smart Urban Development Based on Green and Energy Efficiency.” The event welcomed over 50 participants, including graduate students, municipal officers, and geospatial experts from Albania’s leading institutions.

The roundtable bridged the gap between policy, education, and emerging market demands. UPT reaffirmed its leadership in producing technical expertise aligned with Albania’s environmental and climate priorities.
By bringing geospatial science, urban ecology, and education together, this roundtable contributed to a holistic vision of resilient, inclusive, and green urban futures in the Western Balkans.



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DISSEMINATION NEWS

The SmartWB team hosted the cluster meeting "Green transition in the Montenegrin higher education system"

At the Faculty of Civil Engineering, University of Montenegro, the SmartWB team hosted the cluster meeting "Green transition in the Montenegrin higher education system", organised by the National Erasmus+ Office in Montenegro. The event brought together the coordinators / local coordinators of the Erasmus+ CBHE projects oriented towards the green economy, which are currently running at universities in Montenegro. Non-academic partners participating in these projects also attended the meeting.

Given that the green economy is one of the key priorities of the new cycle of the Erasmus+ program, this cluster meeting aimed to discuss institutional approaches to "green" initiatives at Montenegrin HEIs, focusing on Erasmus+ projects' achieved and expected results and the impact of these projects on the system of higher education in Montenegro.

SmartWB Project Advances Educational Innovation through Active Dissemination

The SmartWB Project, funded by the European Union under ERASMUS-EDU-2022-CBHE, is making substantial strides in advancing educational practices within higher education institutions across the Western Balkans through targeted dissemination and communication activities.
Recent dissemination reports from partner institutions detail extensive knowledge-sharing events following international training workshops aimed at integrating innovative teaching practices into curricula, specifically within the domain of climate-smart urban development and energy efficiency.

These activities emphasize the SmartWB Project's commitment to not only elevating educational standards but also facilitating continuous professional development among academic staff, ultimately supporting the broader aim of sustainable and climate-smart urban growth in the Western Balkans region.

Shaping the Future of Construction: Vuk Milošević Inspires Students with Talk on Climate Change

Vuk Milošević, from the partner university in Niš, recently delivered a lecture at the Faculty of Civil Engineering in Montenegro to first-year students of the Introduction to Civil Engineering course. The lecture focused on how climate change is shaping the future of construction. It emphasized the need for the industry to adapt to build more resilient and sustainable structures.

The event attracted great interest among students, who actively participated throughout the session. A short and engaging quiz challenged their understanding at the end of the lecture, adding a fun and interactive element to the learning process.

Polytechnic University of Tirana Enhances Practical Learning with State-of-the-Art Geodetic Equipment

The SmartWB project, funded by the European Union under the ERASMUS-EDU-2022-CBHE initiative, has successfully upgraded the Polytechnic University of Tirana with advanced geodetic equipment. This significant enhancement provides students with the opportunity to engage directly in innovative laboratory practices in the fields of geodesy and urban planning.

The new, modern geodetic instruments allow students to perform precise measurements, conduct comprehensive spatial analyses, and develop practical solutions for real-world urban planning challenges. The hands-on experience gained through these laboratories equips students with valuable skills, preparing them to contribute effectively to climate-smart urban development projects.

The incorporation of this sophisticated equipment into educational curricula not only boosts student capabilities but also positions the Polytechnic University of Tirana as a leading institution for geospatial education and research in Albania. This investment underscores the university's commitment to providing high-quality, practical education and reinforcing the link between academic learning and industry requirements.

DISSEMINATION NEWS

EUT students integrate SmartWB lab equipment into hands-on Construction and Architecture courses

Students at the European University of Tirana have actively integrated the laboratory equipment purchased through the SmartWB project into hands-on coursework in both Construction Sciences and Architecture Technology. In Construction Sciences, thermohygrometers and multi-sensor temperature probes are used to accurately measure and analyze U-values for various building materials, enabling detailed evaluations of thermal insulation efficiency and energy performance. Humidity and temperature probes further aid in assessing material durability and indoor environmental conditions, while anemometers help students gauge airflow rates and HVAC performance to maintain balanced ventilation and optimize energy usage. Non-contact tachometers allow for reliable diagnostics and maintenance of construction machinery, ensuring mechanical systems function at their best. Blower door kits, such as the Smoke Pencil Pro Field Kit, empower students to measure building airtightness firsthand, highlighting the importance of minimizing air leakage to improve energy efficiency and occupant comfort.

Polis University Pioneers Drone-Powered Urban Planning Education under SMARTWB Project

In the framework of the SMARTWB project, Polis University has successfully introduced a new and innovative learning methodology that merges technology with territorial analysis.

As part of the modernised course Urban Planning Studio, students had the opportunity to use drones to scan buildings and urban areas in Tirana. This approach enabled a deeper understanding of the urban landscape, marking a significant leap forward in climate-smart urban development education.

The drone technology served as a crucial tool for data collection, providing high-resolution aerial imagery and accurate spatial data. The collected datasets were then processed using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), enabling students to analyze urban patterns, identify spatial issues, and propose sustainable planning solutions based on real-time and real-scale observations.

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

SmartWB news is an e-newsletter of "Curricula innovation in climate-smart urban development based on green and energy efficiency with the non-academic sector" - SmartWB project.

If you wish to contribute with reviews or announcements for the next issues of the SmartWB Newsletter, please send an email with your contribution to the address below with the subject: “SmartWB Newsletter”.

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