



The UPSURGE Project Final Conference

# Guiding Cities to Deliver Regenerative Urban Transformation

## Key Innovative NbS and Highlights in the Engagement Process

Coen de Nijs  
Municipality Breda



10 February 2026  
Katowice, Poland



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 101003818



# Breda – City in a Park



The Municipality of Breda has ambitious goals for greening the city and improving the quality of life for its residents. The ambition is to be one of the most nature-rich cities in Europe by 2030.

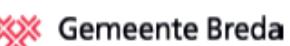
To this end, the city council has established policies, including:

- ⌚ Policy vision: Breda will become a City in a Park
- ⌚ Strategic policy: Implementing the Green Compass
- ⌚ Tools: Public Space Handbook, which sets high standards for green spaces, recreation, and a functional living environment.



Breda is making good progress, and by 2025, the city will have received "National Park City" status, making it the fourth city in the world to achieve this status. Of course, we can't do this alone; to achieve this, we've established partnerships with various stakeholders, including all housing associations active in Breda.

We are pursuing this vision and ambition in all our projects, including the Linie Zuid project, which serves as a demonstration site for the Upsurge project.



**BREDA  
NATIONAL  
PARK CITY\***



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# Breda – Key innovations NBS's

## Co-creation and participation process Linie Zuid:

- Started with a “blanc” design, picked-up ideas, preferences and opportunities to improve the neighborhood
- Design process worked out in several steps, residents and stakeholders were repeatedly asked for feedback
- Close collaboration with housing association Alwel, this resulted in an exchange of properties, which provided opportunities to implement green facades
- This process is very time-consuming and requires strict coordination.
- Final result: a broadly supported design for and by the residents



When you're alone you go faster, when you work together you go further!

# Breda – Key innovations NBS's

## Nature Based Solutions Linie Zuid

23 | Urban Synergy



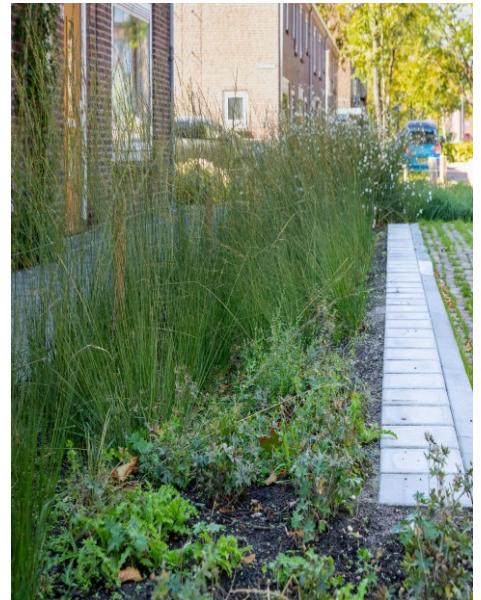
In the project we increased the amount of green with more then 2000 m2.

This doubles the old situation in the Linie Zuid neighborhood.

We implemented the following NBS's:

- Planting new trees: 22 pcs
- Applying shrubs: 700 m2
- Removing paving, laying new lawns: over 1000 m2
- Creating façade gardens: over 150 m2
- Making green walls: 400 m2
- Disconnecting the rainwater drainage from the houses: 64 houses
- Creating rain gardens: 350 m2
- New rainwater sewerage: 530 m1
- Green parkings: over 1500 m2

# Breda – Results of the innovative NBS's



Raingardens



Green parkings



Green walls



Square J.vd Heijdenstraat, old vs. new

# Breda – Highlights engagement process

## Competency group:

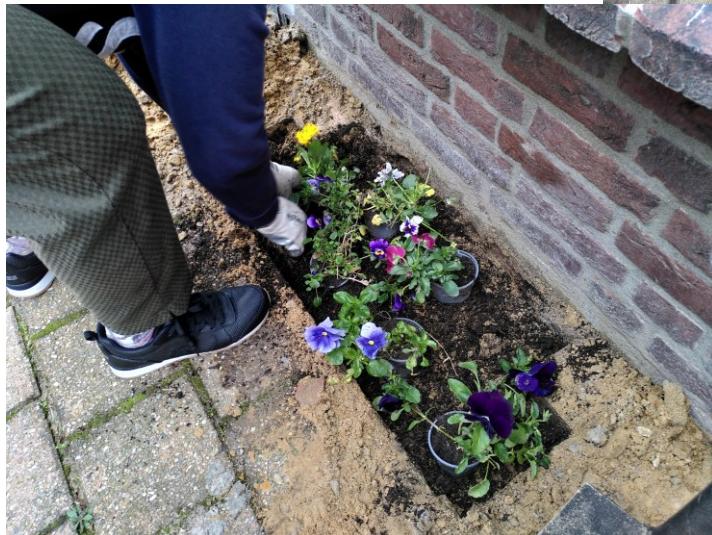
- ⌚ Organized activities, overall, a success
- ⌚ Co-creation with local residents and (small) companies
- ⌚ Great effort from the housing company Alwel

## Communication and feedback:

- ⌚ Participation: easy to approach
- ⌚ Short lines between CG and Municipality Breda
- ⌚ Input and feedback from the “Bouwapp”
- ⌚ Door to door surveys: resulted in a high response



# Breda – Highlights engagement process



Façade gardens, activity we are most proud of !

- ◉ Early involvement of residents
- ◉ Co-creation with the community
- ◉ Hands-on participation
- ◉ Practical support and guidance
- ◉ Visible results
- ◉ Strengthened community spirit
- ◉ Strong example of community-driven urban greening
- ◉ 12 residents, 3 people of the municipality of Breda, 3 volunteers

# Breda – Lessons learned

- ⌚ Social and informal settings are effective
- ⌚ Celebrating milestones strengthens engagement
- ⌚ Informality alone is not always sufficient
- ⌚ Additional social triggers are essential
- ⌚ Sustaining long-term engagement is challenging
- ⌚ Visible results increase support
- ⌚ Combining education, action, and celebration supports long-term sustainability
- ⌚ Qualitative insights support trust-building and adaptation

City-centered approach to catalyze nature-based solutions through  
the EU Regenerative Urban Lighthouse for pollution alleviation and regenerative development



[WWW.UPSURGE-PROJECT.EU](http://WWW.UPSURGE-PROJECT.EU)



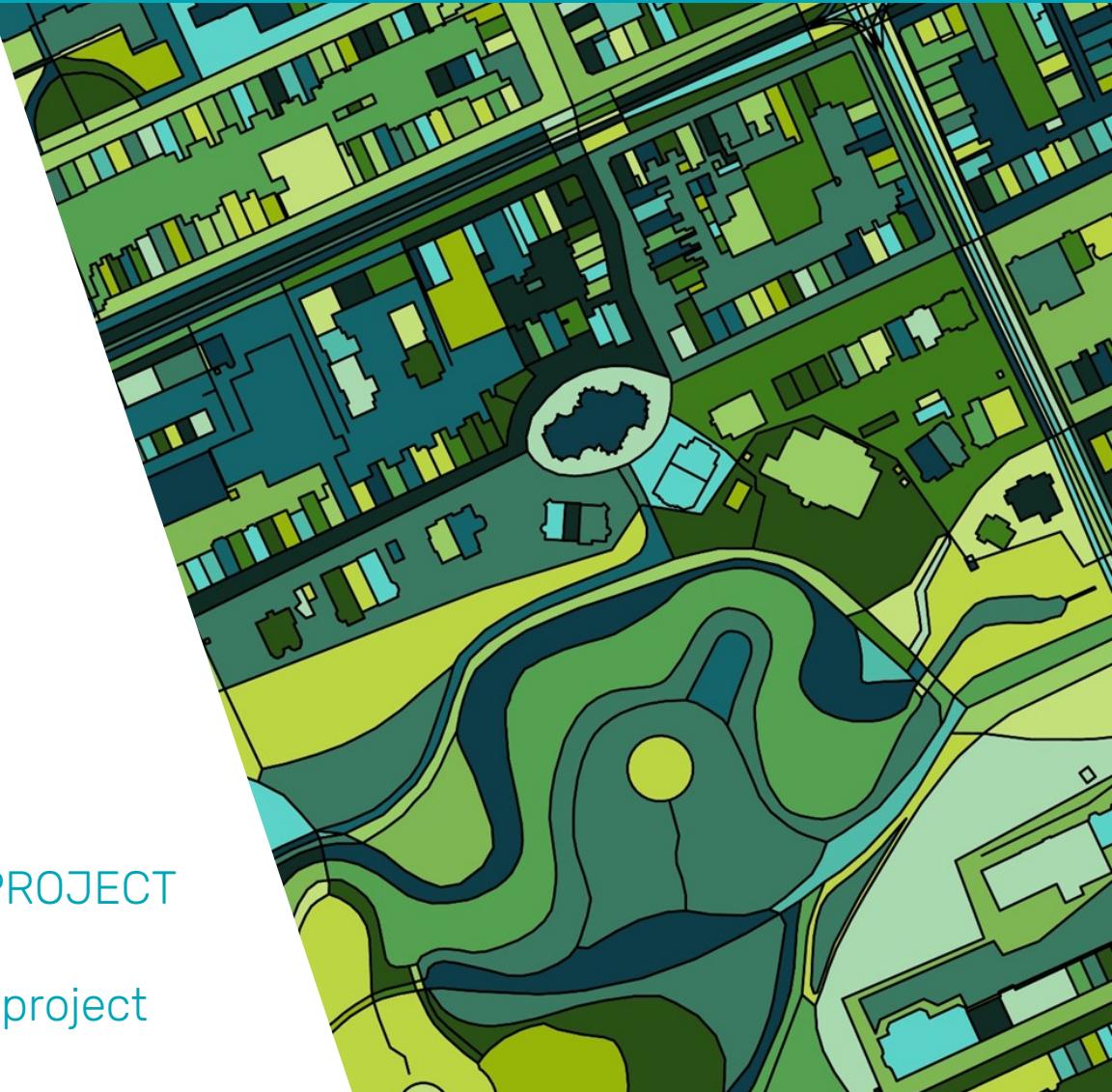
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