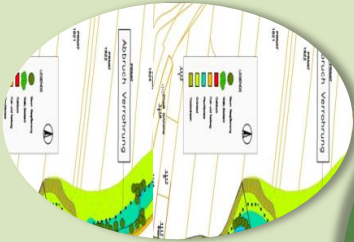


State of the Revitalisation



In short

In order to give you an impression of the tasks and achievements of all project partners this newsletter puts special emphasis on visualizing the planned as well as completed activities.

Pictures on this and the following pages shall document the efforts in almost every stage of the REURIS project. The plans and designs for revitalisation sites, the difficulties to get building permissions, the information and education work as well as obstacles, framework conditions and final success stories will be presented here.

What a difference a year makes!

A lot has been achieved in Katowice as the *before & after* comparison below demonstrates. The pictures in the left column have been taken in autumn 2009. The photographs on the right show the development that could be reached in a years time.



Specific areas in autumn 2009 before revitalisation

Same areas in autumn 2010 after investments



The main informational/ educational table has information about the history of Ślepiotka river, investment under REURIS and visions of the river corridor.

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The picture on the right, taken in March 2011, shows the *green amphitheatre*. In the background there is a newly created orchard with fruit trees of traditional varieties.

Scenario Meetings

Main objectives of scenario meetings in Katowice are:

- to identify the potential scope and manner of local stakeholders' involvement in sustaining the REURIS project and its further development – subject to the principles of sustainable development
- to identify the tasks necessary to implement the vision and to support the project
- to determine the conditions for effective local stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the vision and support of the project
- to identify the risks for the implementation of the vision and the project's support including identification of the likelihood and risk analysis, as well as ways of prevention, and communication with the local community.

The snapshots on the right give an impression of the individual involvement necessary for success. A scenario meeting with representatives of institutions that are involved in river valleys management in Katowice took place in February 2011 in the City Hall of Katowice (right, above). Just a week later a scenario meeting workshop was held with local stakeholders in MDK *Piotrowice* – discussing and working on future scenarios for further development of *Ślepiotka* valley (below).



Three Steps towards the Revitalisation of the Park along the Old Canal in Bydgoszcz

Step one: meeting of local stakeholders

Our experience has proven that the citizens must be informed of the municipal investment plans way before they begin. If we wish to be effective in our holistic approach to revitalisation with the communities' longings and needs respected and acknowledged, the consultations and surveys should be effected even before any revitalisation work has been initiated. Scary as it may sound when you do not have any starting material to be shown and dealt with but this is what we did and we can guarantee it brings results!





Planning and land development concept of the pilot action site in Bydgoszcz

Step two: works and results

It is impossible to carry out what had been initially anticipated, namely we cannot raise the water level within the section of the Old Canal.

Our other challenges have been: specific terrain, dense network of underground infrastructure, different expectations of potential park users, use of more components that would increase costs, inadequate budget, attempts to obtain funds from the city budget, many decision-makers' interests to be reconciled, spatial arrangements of temporary elements, problems with the inclusion of the bike paths within the urban system and finally a lengthy process of project documentation adaptation.

During the formation of concepts and technical design, numerous meetings for the approval of the solutions proposed by the designer have been organized with the representatives of the institutions responsible for pilot action, the Old Bydgoszcz Canal Association, specialists in hydraulic engineering aspects, spatial planners and units issuing decision and opinions.

Nutshell conclusions of the meetings:

- stakeholders do not wish to talk about the general ideas – they desire a given solution for a given area that can be negotiated
- the central interest seems to be placed on how to gain finances for investments
- there is visible little ecological awareness
- residents insist on their contribution to the topic of city urban planning
- the theme of REURIS pilot action and revitalisation of the Park along Old Canal was very interesting for all attendees so councilors have decided to devote a separate session to the subject of the Park and its further development.

Step three: Why strive to make a change?

During its heyday the Park along the Old Canal was a favourite retreat place for residents. After the cover-up of a section of the Old Canal and after the loss of its importance as an inland waterway, the park had gradually degraded. In the park areas located beyond the city centre perimeter, the reign over its character was taken over by nature. The new land development of the park introduces new functions that allow for leisure and recreational park use.

The priority has been to make it possible for the city residents to spend their leisure time by the water, and therefore, terrain stairs, ramps, paths, lighting, benches, bins, bicycle stands, a small playground for younger children, chess tables and footbridges have been placed in the master plan.

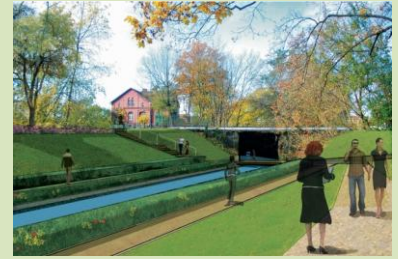
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The section of the park which is the subject of the pilot action was most affected and does not resemble in the slightest the charming city centre beauty spot that it once was. The watercourse has been minimized to a narrow stream at the bottom of the basin and thus has become virtually invisible from the adjacent road perspective. The slopes next to the watercourse are too steep to provide access to the water. The site is located in the centre of the city and could serve for the inhabitants as a recreation place but now, in its totally degraded form, no such activity of any kind can be encouraged.

The Old Canal is a rare figment of creation of former builders and engineers. The course of the water must be straight since such it was in the beginning. With a view to alleviating the straightness of the lines that dominate here and to hiding the hideous concrete embankments, the project introduces perennial flower beds along both sides of the channel in its entire length. This is used to introduce biodiversity because apart from the historic stand of old growth trees that accompany the former park, the area land is devoid of any greater value in terms of nature. Preserving the historical value of the park situated along this Canal and accentuating the elements of its historic spatial composition play a great role in the park's importance restoration process but it is the accessibility that stands out as our mission. The *park spark* will be there again once we finish the works and the residents' excitement about the park will start to work up!

Plans for Old Ponavka in Brno

The development proposal plans to create an extended meander on Old Ponavka with two foot bridges, paths, trees and plants. The aim is to make a place close to the residential area of Brno-Komarov where people can stop, stay and access the water. The whole area is part of a new park equipped with a cycle track that will connect this place with other parts along Old Ponavka River. The documentation for spatial decision is prepared and all land is in city property. The realisation, however, depends on the availability of financial resources.



Visualisation of revitalisation design

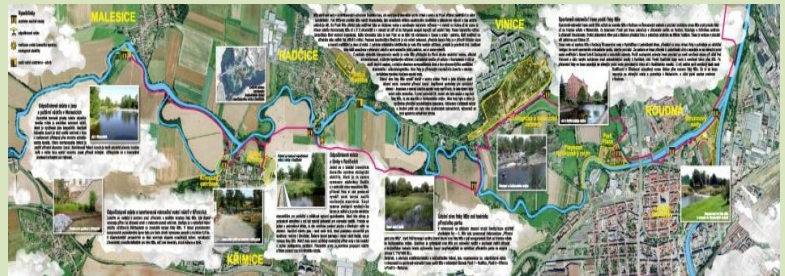


Drawing of one of the selected sections of Old Ponavka

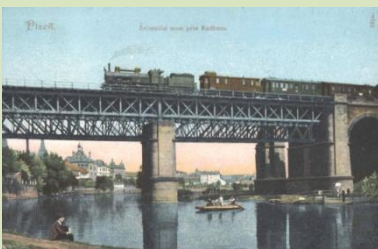
Information, Conservation and Flood Protection in Pilsen

Second Brochure

In addition to the promotional material on the Úslava River a second folded brochure was prepared. This one presents the Mže river within the city of Pilsen and proposes detailed urban landscape concepts for individual neighbourhoods.



The administrator of the Vltava River Basin held its 12th annual open house to commemorate World Water Day. For the third time the Urban Planning and Development Institute took this opportunity and familiarized the general public with the details of the Revitalisation of Pilsen Riverbanks project and presented all of the documentation that has been drawn up so far (left).



One of the outputs of the REURIS project in Pilsen will be the creation of nature trails along all of the five Pilsen's rivers. Information boards will follow the sport and recreational paths (greenways) and warns visitors to the largest natural, historical (like the old postcard to the left) and cultural attractions in the river valleys.



In December 2010, a third in a series of completed comprehensive studies entitled "The Revitalisation of Pilsen's River Valleys – the Úhlava River" was finished. The survey during the study showed that close to the city centre lives the Europe's largest protected rodent beaver (*Castor fiber*).



The January floods on the river Mže (left) with its five-year water incidence (Q5) strongly brought to mind again that the most important functions of alluvial plains are the retention capacity and the slowing of flood flow.

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Pilot action in Stuttgart: Near-natural Brownfield Revitalisation in the Lower Feuerbach Valley

The preliminary draft plan of the pilot investment area (picture on the right) shows the main aims of the revitalisation pilot action in Stuttgart: Meander zones and shallow water areas will enhance the biodiversity by creating habitats with various local conditions. Wherever possible the stream is allowed to develop dynamically and change its low and mid water bed. Endangered banks are secured by bio-engineering measures. The use of construction material will consider the geology of the surrounding (Muschelkalk). The floodplain will mainly be left to succession.

The Stuttgart pilot action comprises the semi-natural revitalisation of the Feuerbach and of an adjacent brownfield. In the 1930s the stream course of the Feuerbach was transferred, channelled and paved with steep concrete banks. The original bed was filled in, a sports field was built in the floodplain. After the sports field was abandoned in 2002 the project now provides the opportunity to revitalise the Feuerbach floodplain, to redesign the topography and to renew the landscape scenery. The focus is on ecological restoration, but social issues are considered as well.

Brownfield revitalisation poses particular challenges and is more difficult than the revitalisation of a “greenfield site”: The functions of the soil have been harmed, the possible existence of contaminated sites in the areas of the former stream bed and the sports field has to be regarded. Some leftover installations of the former sports field still have to be demolished, leftover materials such as stones or the concrete of the paved Feuerbach can be reused, others have to be disposed. Some stock of trees cannot be preserved, the felling has to meet the legal requirements of species protection. When it comes to realisation, these challenges have to be considered in the context of the construction sequence and logistics.

Ecological revitalisation in an urban context does not mean restoring the original or natural state. The stream and its surrounding have experienced major changes which cannot be rolled back: The sealing of the soil surface in the drainage basin by extensive settlement areas leads to rapidly rising run-offs and strong currents in case of heavy rain. This causes “ecological stress”: populations of aquatic animals are washed away again and again. Therefore, it is considered to split the river bed into two branches – one for the low and mid water run-off and one serving as a kind of naturally modelled flood channel.



Area of abandoned sports field



Brownfield with concrete leftovers



Flooded Feuerbach Valley, 1975

Aufbauwerk: Finally we got it!



In February the Aufbauwerk finally received the eagerly awaited information from their experts in Grimma. The application for planning permission for restoration / revitalisation of creek Thostgrund in Grimma was approved by the Landratsamt of the Landkreis

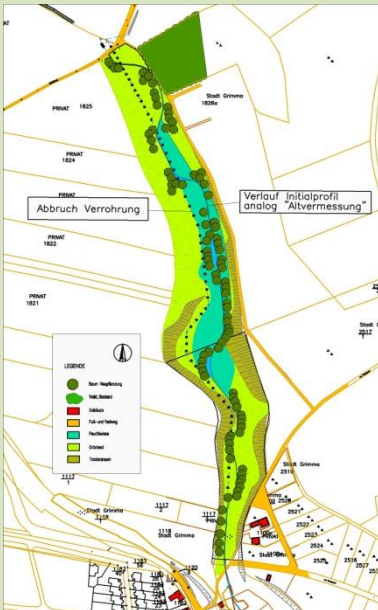
Leipzig (Administrative Office of the District Leipzig). The authorisation was granted to the City of Grimma on the 16th of February. The document was acclaimed by all parties. Further steps to implement the measure have already been initiated. A catalogue of technical specifications will be provided by the office of urban planning and urban development of the City of Grimma. Then the binding procedure will open. The implementation will probably start in the beginning of May.

Success Stories from Leipzig

On March 29, 2011, the Institute of Infrastructure and Resources Management of the University of Leipzig was invited to give a presentation on REURIS at the fifth meeting of the Central German Network of Innovative Environmental Technology in Bitterfeld-Wolfen. The network consists of representatives from academic and non-academic research institutions as well as from companies. Partners come mainly from Central Germany, but also from Eastern Europe. The 20 participants of the meeting were especially interested in the interdisciplinary approach of the REURIS cooperation integrating planning, social and economic aspects of urban river revitalisation.

During the past six months REURIS in Leipzig was able to implement several projects at the Karl Heine Canal that aim at rising awareness for the relevance of urban water spaces in very different ways.

Just a few weeks ago “Water Stories” were told by scholars and actors from the Leipzig Central Theatre. The idea for this initiative results from stakeholder contacts at the canal site and preparatory discussions with a local drama teacher. Little scenes presented by children, seniors, handicapped, professional as well as lay actors were staged as a guided tour through the history of the Karl Heine Canal.



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Leipzig Agenda Award 2010 for Initiative under REURIS

Another attempt of bringing stakeholders in contact with each other will be honoured in the end of April. The concept of a newly founded children study group called “Waterfleas in Action” reached the 2nd place of the Leipzig Agenda Award 2010. In cooperation with teachers from an adjacent school and environmental educationalists the children will explore flora and fauna that can be found at the banks of the canal as well as in the water. The group just started its work, it will meet on a regular bimonthly basis at least over a year’s time. With the help of an exhibition expert the children will present their work in progress and also the results of their studies in an interactive way. Furthermore a weblog will continuously inform about the initiative.

The Leipzig REURIS group now also received the support of the City of Leipzig for its plan to improve the atmosphere and amenity values at the banks of the canal. Developed by architectural students public seatings will be installed simply made from fenders whose original purpose is to keep yachts in secure distance from the landing stage.

At Pentecost this year an art project that we planned together with the artist Frank Bölter and which is supported by the Kulturstiftung des Freistaates Sachsen (Cultural Foundation of Saxony) will be realised at the Karl Heine Canal and the Lindenau Harbour. It addresses the planned water connection between canal and harbour. In cooperation with passers-by the artist will fold a giant paper boat and make a journey on the canal towards the Lindenau Harbour where it shall sink – accompanied by the sounds of the Leipzig Accordion Orchestra.



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