



GOVERNANCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

INTEGRATED PARTICIPATORY CLIMATE GOVERNANCE MODEL FOR LOCAL CLIMATE-RESILIENT PLANNING.

INNOVATIVENESS

The innovativeness of the solution lies in its systemic and governance-oriented approach to climate resilience. Rather than focusing on single adaptation measures, the method integrates participatory processes into formal decision-making and planning cycles, linking community engagement with binding instruments such as masterplans, management plans, and regulatory frameworks.

The solution also introduces a modular combination of tools – co-design procedures, green infrastructure management guidelines, capacity-building actions, and public engagement spaces – that can be scaled and adapted to different local contexts.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the solution is to provide local and regional authorities with a structured and transferable framework to strengthen climate governance through coordinated, cross-sectoral and participatory processes. The solution supports municipalities in translating climate risks into shared planning priorities, co-designed spatial and management strategies, and long-term civic engagement mechanisms, thereby increasing institutional capacity, public ownership, and resilience to climate impacts.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE:

APPLICABLE AT LOCAL AND URBAN LEVEL ACROSS CENTRAL EUROPE AND OTHER EUROPEAN REGIONS, PARTICULARLY IN MUNICIPALITIES FACING CLIMATE RISKS RELATED TO FLOODING, HEAT STRESS, WILDFIRES AND ECOSYSTEMS DEGRADATION.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE SOLUTION

IN MUNICIPALITY OF LIGNANO

SABBIADORO

The climate resilience solution consists of an integrated governance model that enables public authorities to design, adopt, and implement climate resilience strategies through inclusive and coordinated processes.

The method is structured around three interconnected pillars:

- Participatory spatial and strategic planning, enabling the co-design of climate-resilient interventions in vulnerable areas;
- Institutionalisation of climate resilience tools, through the development and adoption of management plans, regulatory frameworks, and operational guidelines;
- Continuous civic engagement and capacity building, ensuring awareness, skills development, and long-term community ownership of climate action.

The method has been tested and validated through pilot actions, demonstrating its effectiveness in aligning technical expertise, political leadership, and stakeholder knowledge within a coherent climate governance framework.

Below are examples of individual results achieved through the application of the participatory model described above (Please note that all of these materials are currently available only in Italian):

- [Green management plan documents](#)
- [Web page of the Lignano 180° Festival](#)



Green Management plan activities - fostering civic engagement



Lignano 180° Festival

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- 1) CONTEXT ANALYSIS AND STAKEHOLDER MAPPING
- 2) DESIGN OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE PROCESS
- 3) CO-DESIGN AND VALIDATION OF CLIMATE RESILIENCE STRATEGIES
- 4) INSTITUTIONALISATION THROUGH PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT INSTRUMENTS
- 5) CAPACITY BUILDING AND CONTINUOUS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
- 6) COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION, AND REPLICATION

STEP 1 – CONTEXT ANALYSIS AND STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

Assessment of local climate risks, existing policy frameworks, and governance structures, with specific reference to the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) or equivalent local climate strategies and plans. The step ensures alignment of the participatory process with municipal mitigation and adaptation objectives already adopted or under development.

In parallel, a systematic stakeholder mapping is carried out to identify and engage relevant public authorities, technical departments, private actors, civil society organisations, and citizen groups with a role or interest in climate resilience and land-use management.

Example from the pilot: in Lignano Sabbiadoro, the process was grounded in existing climate planning frameworks (SECAP) and supported by a detailed stakeholder mapping of users and actors connected to a flood-prone coastal area.

Inputs/tools: climate risk assessments; SECAP (or equivalent climate action plans); stakeholder mapping templates.

STEP 2 – DESIGN OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE PROCESS

Design of a structured participatory governance process, including the clear definition of its scope, objectives, roles, and boundaries. This step establishes transparent premises for participation, clarifying from the outset which elements are open to co-design, which constraints are non-negotiable (e.g. legal, technical, financial), and how stakeholder inputs will inform decision-making.

The process design also defines participation principles, representation criteria, timelines, and decision-making responsibilities, ensuring a balanced, inclusive, and manageable engagement framework. Professional facilitation is identified to support dialogue, manage conflicting interests, and maintain trust among participants.

Example from the pilot: in Lignano, the engagement process was explicitly designed upfront, with clear rules, facilitation support, and shared understanding of the decision-making scope among all participants.

Inputs/tools: participatory governance guidelines; facilitation protocols; terms of reference defining scope, roles, and decision-making boundaries.

STEP 3 – CO-DESIGN AND VALIDATION OF CLIMATE RESILIENCE PROJECTS

Implementation of structured co-design activities (e.g. workshops, consultations, public hearings) to jointly develop climate resilience strategies, spatial concepts, and priority actions, integrating technical evidence with local knowledge and stakeholder perspectives.

The co-creation process is explicitly grounded in the principle of safeguarding people, assets, and ecosystems, ensuring that climate resilience strategies are primarily oriented towards risk reduction and safety of places. While the process seeks to balance and integrate the needs and expectations of different users and stakeholder groups, it also acknowledges that certain limitations or trade-offs may be necessary in order to protect the common good.

The validation phase ensures that co-created outcomes are technically sound, socially acceptable, and aligned with climate risk assessments and public interest objectives.

A core condition of this step is the active involvement of the technical professionals responsible for drafting plans and related instruments throughout the participatory process. Planners, consultants, and technical experts are required to participate in engagement activities, be familiar with participatory methodologies, and be willing to integrate public inputs into technical solutions, within the defined legal and safety constraints.

Example from the pilot: in Lignano, stakeholders contributed to the co-design of a regeneration project for a vulnerable area explaining their users-needs, while accepting certain limitations linked to flood risk mitigation and public safety. The external consultants already had experiences in participatory processes and actively participated during each plenary consultations.

Inputs/tools: participatory design tools; climate risk and safety analyses; draft masterplans or strategic climate resilience documents.



Porto Casoni co-design meeting



Porto Casoni Lignano rendering

STEP 4 – INSTITUTIONALISATION THROUGH PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT INSTRUMENTS

Design of a structured participatory governance process, including the clear definition of its scope, objectives, roles, and boundaries. This step establishes transparent premises for participation, clarifying from the outset which elements are open to co-design, which constraints are non-negotiable (e.g. legal, technical, financial), and how stakeholder inputs will inform decision-making.

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Example from the pilot: in Lignano, the engagement process was explicitly designed upfront, with clear rules, facilitation support, and shared understanding of the decision-making scope among all participants.

Inputs/tools: participatory governance guidelines; facilitation protocols; terms of reference defining scope, roles, and decision-making boundaries.

STEP 5 – CAPACITY BUILDING AND CONTINUOUS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Design and implementation of a systematic capacity-building framework that is automatically activated whenever new plans, regulations, or strategies affecting citizens and local stakeholders are introduced. This step ensures that capacity-building and information activities are not treated as ad-hoc actions, but as an integral and recurring component of climate governance processes.

The approach aims to equip citizens, stakeholders, and local actors with the knowledge needed to clearly understand municipal strategies, management choices, and related responsibilities, thereby enabling informed participation and compliance over time. Capacity-building actions are designed to accompany the full lifecycle of planning and regulatory instruments, supporting transparency, trust, and long-term public ownership of climate resilience policies.

Example from the pilot: in Lignano, capacity-building and awareness-raising activities were implemented in parallel with the introduction of the Green management Plan and regulatory framework, supporting citizens' understanding of municipal climate resilience strategies.

Inputs/tools: training and educational programmes; structured communication and learning modules linked to planning instruments; guidelines for institutionalised civic capacity building.



Green management plan Capacity building activities

STEP 6 – COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION, AND REPLICATION

Development of communication and dissemination activities to ensure transparency, public accountability, and knowledge-sharing regarding local climate strategies and plans. This step supports the visibility of results, the documentation of lessons learned, and the sharing of methodologies, tools, and planning instruments with peer authorities, stakeholders and general public.

The dissemination approach combines technical outputs (e.g. guidelines, plans, methodological documents) with accessible communication formats and public events, enabling knowledge exchange and peer learning. The step explicitly supports replication by providing adaptable tools and clear guidance for application in different territorial and governance contexts.

Example from the pilot: in Lignano Sabbiadoro, the communication and dissemination of pilot results and other climate-related initiatives implemented by the Municipality were centred around the Lignano 180° Sustainability Festival, conceived as a public platform for dialogue, awareness-raising, and knowledge exchange on climate resilience and urban transformation.

Inputs/tools: communication and dissemination strategies; methodological guidelines; knowledge-sharing platforms and public engagement formats.

Lignan^o180°



Lignano 180° Festival

PILOT SUMMARY

The Lignano Sabbiadoro pilot contributes to addressing climate challenges in community climate governance by demonstrating a cross-sectoral, coordinated, and participatory model that translates strategy into broadly accepted action. It mobilised the municipality and a wide range of stakeholder groups to co-design interventions and resulted in a City Council-approved masterplan for a flood-vulnerable area, thereby building social licence for implementation.

The pilot also advanced city-wide governance by introducing a Green Management Plan and accompanying capacity-building activities linked to its regulatory framework, ensuring that objectives, responsibilities, and standards are clearly communicated to citizens and that everyday practices are aligned with climate resilience goals.

To mainstream awareness and coordination across initiatives and disciplines, the Lignano 180° Sustainability Festival connected technical planning, nature-based approaches, mobility, and public-space quality with civic dialogue, positioning climate governance as both a technical and a cultural endeavour.