The role of Urban Green Areas in the era of **Covid-19**

- Short Description of LIFE GrIn *Promoting urban integration of Green INfrastructure to improve climate governance in cities* (LIFE17GIC_GR_000029)
- Description of the citizen's questionnaire, questions and results

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LIFE Grin project promotes the integration of urban green spaces in urban planning

Open spaces as vital elements of the urban landscape – mean of sustainability and resilience of cities to climate change

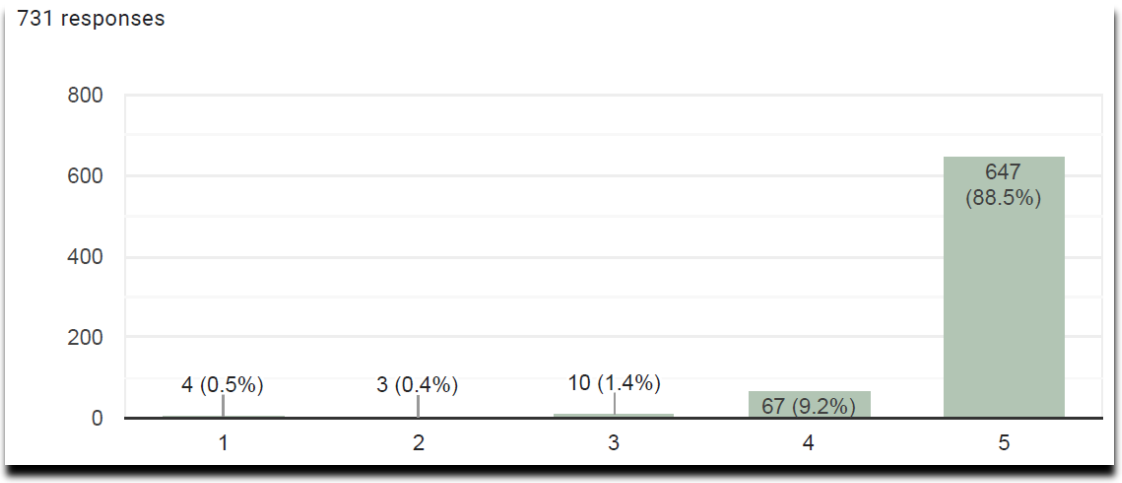
LIFE GrIn project (Promoting urban integration of GReen INfrastructure to improve climate governance in cities (LIFE17GIC_GR_000029)) aims to incorporate climate governance in the management of green infrastructure at the local level through the establishment of an integrated policy framework focusing on Urban Green Areas. The project will support the development and incorporation of coherent climate governance in the management of urban green infrastructure through the Ministry of Environment and Energy, focusing on urban green areas. It will build on the implementation of concrete actions in **two Greek Municipalities (Amarousion & Heraklion)** and the communication of its results through dissemination activities, as well as its replicability and transferability strategy targeting mostly other municipalities and key stakeholders in Greece and other EU countries. Central Union of Hellenic Municipalities, as a supporter of the Covenant of Mayors, will hold a key role in communication activities at the municipal level. This means the reconsideration of **urban green areas**, not as isolated units, but as vital elements of the urban landscape, with their own contribution to the goals of **sustainability, adaptation** and **mitigation** of the effects of **climate change.**

Addressing the emerging challenges of the **Covid-19 pandemic**, the LIFE Grin project team attempted to assess citizens' opinion regarding to the role of **urban green areas** during the Covid-19 pandemic in Greece. The evaluation was based on the implementation of an **electronic questionnaire survey** through the "Google forms" platform, which was conducted nationwide. The questionnaire was distributed by the meteorological web page www.meteo.gr, which is managed by the National Observatory of Athens. The survey was conducted from November 25, 2020 to December 15, 2020 and 731 responses were collected. The research was based on 14 structured

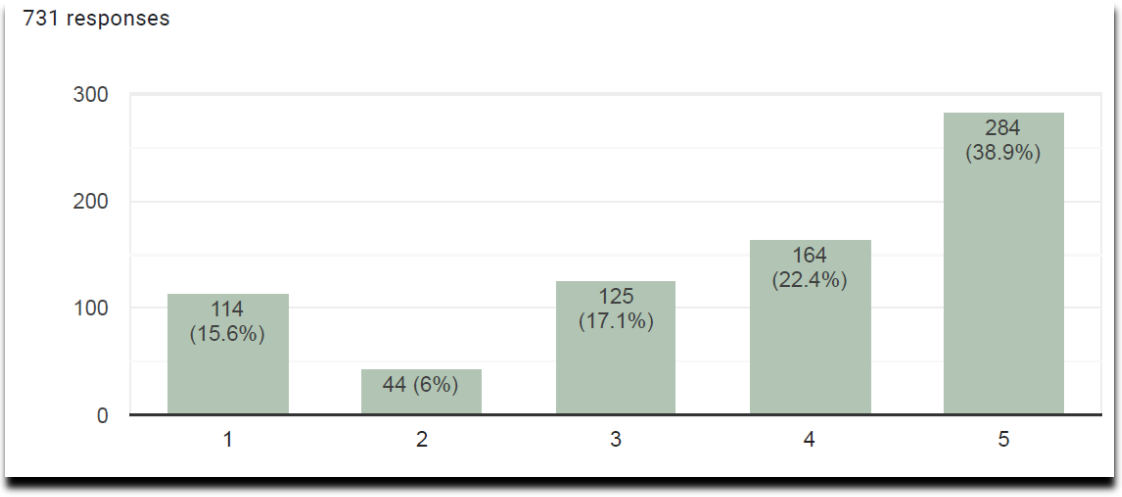
Description of the citizen's questionnaire, questions and results

One of the key findings of the survey is that citizens consider urban green spaces as an important mean of improving public health

Question 1. How important do you consider urban green spaces as a mean of improving human health? (1=less important - 5=very important)

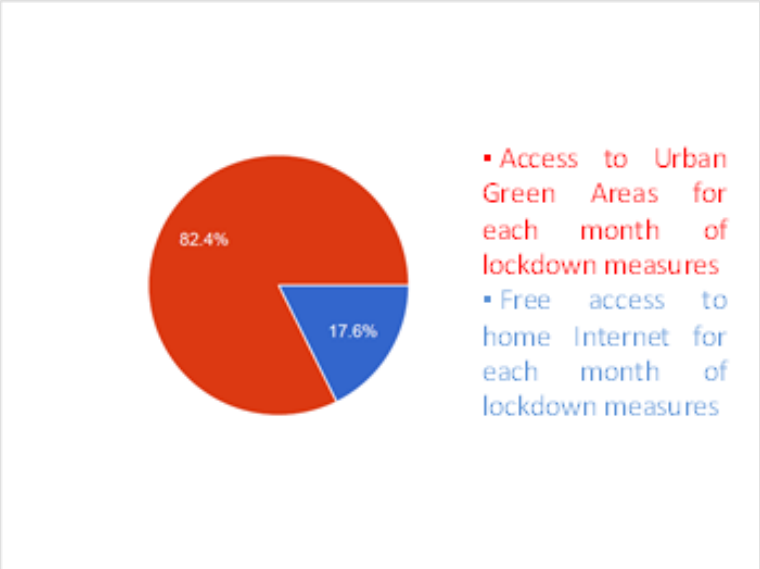


Question 2. In which degree have lockdown measures against the spread of Covid-19 altered your perception in regard to Urban Green Areas as a means of improving public health?
(1=minimum-5=maximum)



Interestingly the majority of citizens responded that Covid-19 has positively altered their perception in regards to **Urban Green Areas** being hotspots for improving **public health.**

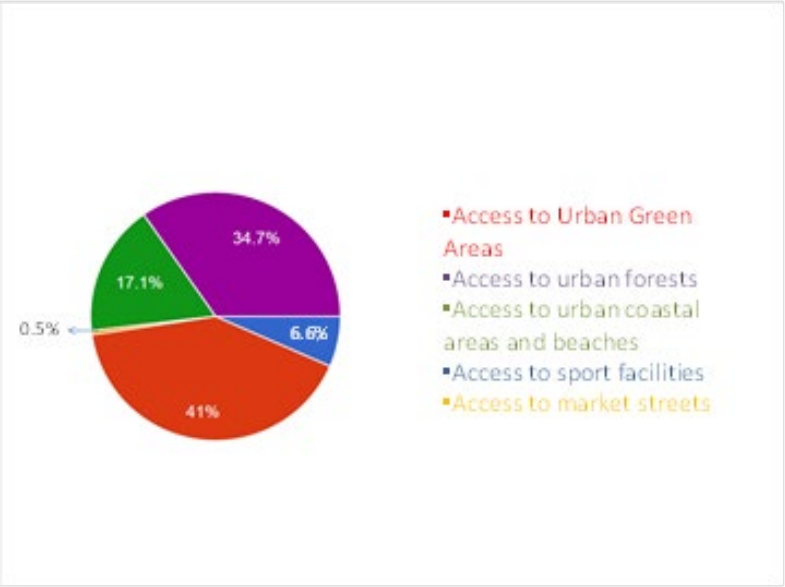
Question 3. Which one of the two options would you select in case of lockdown measures against the spread of Covid-19



In a trade-off question, asking them to select one of the two options in case of a service was offered "gratis" as a public good, the great majority of the participants chose the access to Urban Green Areas instead of having free home internet, for each month of lockdown measures. This finding highlights the "use value" of Urban Green Areas as a public good hinting towards high welfare values derived from the existence of Urban Green Areas.

The majority of citizens choose "the access to urban green spaces" as a renewal way during the imposition of restrictive traffic measures, due to COvid - 19

Question 4. Which of the following services would you prefer to be available to the wider public in case of lockdown measures against the spread of Covid-19

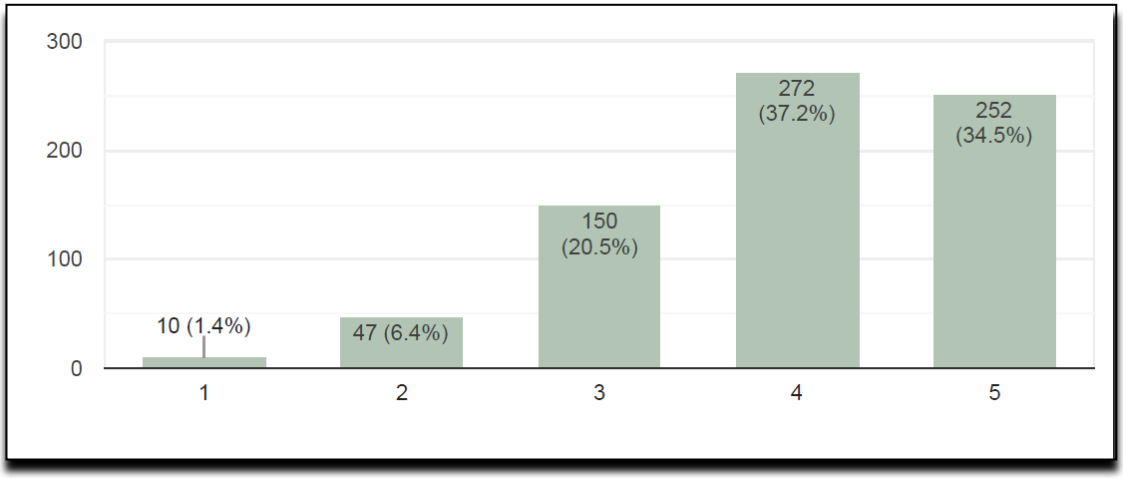


Most wanted Places for urban relaxation

Urban green spaces
Parks
Periubran forests

In another question, asking them to indicate which exact service would they prefer available in the case of lockdown measures, citizens ranked "Access to Urban Green Areas" and "Access to peri-urban forests" as their most favorite options.

Question 5. How safe do you consider your presence in Urban Green Areas in regards to disease transmission (1=least safe – 5=most safe)



Finally, citizens appear to feel quite safe in regards to Covid-19 transmission during their presence in Urban Green Areas.

The study's findings highlight the outmost importance of **Urban Green Areas** for achieving Sustainable Development Goals and specifically **"Goal 3: Good Health and Wellbeing"** and **"Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities".** Results indicate that in a period of both climatic and public health crises healthy and **green urban environments** can play a seminal role for alleviating and mitigating different challenges and impacts, while ensuring **sustainability** of **urban ecosystems**. LIFE GrIn project will continue through its actions to investigate the socioeconomic importance of Urban Green Areas, both from an ecosystemic and public health perspective, considering the emerging challenges of Covid-19. Throughout the whole project, findings and results will be communicated to policy makers and experts, in order to assist the design of healthier and safer cities. An extended analysis of this survey's results and all project's deliverables will be available at the project's website (www.lifegrin.gr).

The importance of urban green spaces as an indicator of cities' sustainability and resilience to climate change