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**IPA** Romania – Serbia

**BLUE SKY**

**CROSS-BORDER SOLUTION TO  
AIR POLLUTION**

## Newsletter No. 2

We invite you to discover the second edition of the “Blue Sky” Project Newsletter, which highlights the latest results and activities carried out within the project partnership. This edition presents the progress achieved so far, the initiatives implemented by the partners, as well as the events contributing to the development of a cleaner and more sustainable cross-border region.

**Project budget in EUR**

**1,423,187.48 €**

**EU co-financing in EUR**

**1,209,709.35 €**

**Project duration**

**5.12.2024. – 4.12.2026.**

Project is co-funded by the European Union through the Interreg IPA Programme Romania - Serbia.

**Learn more about the “Blue Sky” Project and our Partnership!**

### **BLUE SKY – Working Together for Cleaner Air in the Cross-Border Region**

The “Blue Sky” Project brings together four partners from Romania and Serbia, united by a common goal: improving air quality and creating a healthier environment for communities. Through collaboration between local and regional authorities, research institutions and development organizations, the project promotes modern and sustainable solutions to combat air pollution.

The initiative focuses on developing an integrated real-time air monitoring system, alongside promoting sustainable mobility and green urban solutions. These measures are essential for understanding pollution patterns, reducing health impacts and protecting the environment.

**In this context, the “Blue Sky” Project proposes a set of concrete solutions, such as:**

— **Establishing a cross-border air pollution monitoring network**, through the installation of modern equipment – fixed sensors, mobile automatic stations, drone-based monitoring systems and electric mobility infrastructure in the City of Zrenjanin;

— **Developing a digital platform and a mobile application**, enabling the real-time collection and visualization of air quality data, providing accessible information for both authorities and citizens. Through this integrated approach and cross-border cooperation, the “Blue Sky” Project contributes to building a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable future for the entire region.

The project also includes a range of complementary actions aimed at effectively supporting pollution reduction and sustainable regional development:

— **Implementing a joint pilot action** to measure actual air pollution levels in the Central Banat District and Timiș County, focusing on key parameters such as NO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>1</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>;

— **Developing a framework for sustainable mobility planning**, including the preparation of a Transport Model and a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) for the City of Zrenjanin, as well as a Mobility Plan for Timiș County and a Joint Action Plan;

— **Greening and redevelopment of public spaces in Zrenjanin**, including the modernization and landscaping of Zoran Đinđić Square;

— **Raising awareness and strengthening institutional capacity**, through training sessions on smart specialization and air pollution reduction, forums and air quality caravans, as well as targeted communication campaigns.

Investments in air quality monitoring equipment will enable **real-time assessment of environmental conditions**, early identification of exceedances, detection of pollution sources and the implementation of early warning measures for the population.

At the same time, the development of an **open digital platform for cross-border real-time communication on air quality** represents one of the project’s key outcomes, delivering direct benefits to authorities, citizens, institutions and control bodies.

## The “Blue Sky” Project Partnership

*Behind the Blue Sky Project lies more than just an initiative – it is a team of dedicated partners united by a shared vision: a cleaner environment and healthier communities.*

*Through collaboration, expertise and strong commitment, these partners turn ideas into concrete solutions. We invite you to discover who they are and learn more about those contributing to the success of the Blue Sky Project.*

**Project Leader:**  
**City of Zrenjanin**  
(Serbia)



**Project Partner 2:**  
**Timiș County**  
(Romania)



TIMIȘ COUNTY  
COUNCIL

**Project Partner 3:**  
**Regional Agency for**  
**Socio – Economic**  
**Development – Banat**  
**Ltd (Serbia)**



**Project Partner 4:**  
**Politehnica University**  
**Timișoara (Romania)**



## PROGRESS IN ACTION: KEY MILESTONES ACHIEVED

*The activities implemented so far reflect the transition of the Blue Sky Project from the planning phase to concrete implementation and tangible results on the ground. From the development of the technical and strategic framework to the operationalisation of monitoring equipment and the organisation of training activities, the project partners have made significant progress towards building an integrated cross-border air quality monitoring system.*

*At the same time, the progress achieved in the development of mobility plans, as well as in the deployment of the air quality monitoring network and dedicated equipment, confirms a coherent, results-oriented approach. This will enable, in the next stages, the effective use of real-time data and support evidence-based decision-making.*

*Through these achievements, the project strengthens its role as a strategic instrument for improving air quality and enhancing quality of life in the Romania–Serbia cross-border region, paving the way for delivering final results to communities and public authorities.*

## Strengthening Skills for Air Quality Monitoring

### Training for Cleaner Air: Building Expertise within the “Blue Sky” Project

Enhancing professional skills and increasing expertise in the field of air quality monitoring represent a key pillar of the “Blue Sky – Cross-border Solution to Air Pollution” project.

In this context, on 24–25 November 2025, the Timiș County Council, in partnership with the Politehnica University of Timișoara, organised the first series of training sessions dedicated to smart specialisation in air quality monitoring, held in Timișoara.

The event brought together participants from a wide range of sectors – public administration, academia, research and civil society – providing an interactive environment for learning and knowledge exchange. The sessions, delivered by experts and university lecturers, highlighted the latest developments in air pollution, its impact, and modern monitoring and analysis methods.

The training programme combined theoretical concepts with practical examples, covering topics such as atmospheric structure, sources and types of pollutants, as well as technologies used for data collection and interpretation. Participants also explored innovative solutions and international best practices aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.

Through its interdisciplinary and practice-oriented approach, the training emphasised the importance of collaboration between institutions, academia and communities in developing effective solutions for improving air quality.



This initiative marks an important step in the implementation of the “Blue Sky” Project, contributing to the development of a solid base of specialists and paving the way for the next stages: the expansion of the air quality monitoring network and the integration of data into an open digital platform, accessible to both institutions and citizens in the Romania–Serbia cross-border region.



### **Training on “Smart Specialisation and Air Pollution Reduction” held in Zrenjanin**

Within the framework of the “Blue Sky – Cross-border Solution to Air Pollution” project, a two-day training seminar on “Smart Specialisation and Air Pollution Reduction” was held in Zrenjanin (Serbia) on 23–24 February 2026.



The event addressed, in an integrated manner, key aspects of air quality, including the structure and composition of the atmosphere, types of pollutants and their impact on the environment and human health, modern monitoring methods and data interpretation, relevant case studies, as well as current solutions and best practices for reducing air pollution at local and regional level.

The sessions were delivered by distinguished professors from the project partner, the Politehnica University of Timișoara (Romania), offering participants the opportunity to strengthen their knowledge and exchange experience with experts from Romania through interactive and practice-oriented sessions.



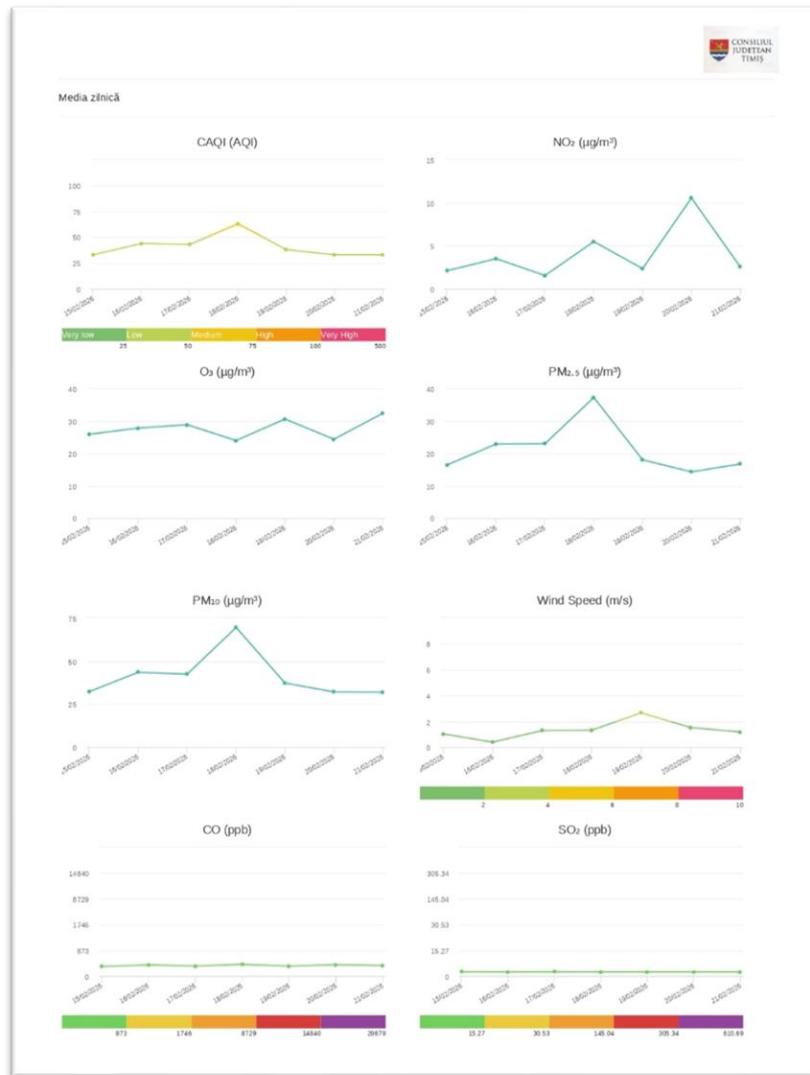
## Smart Air Quality Monitoring Network in Timiș County

Within the framework of the "Blue Sky – Cross-border Solution to Air Pollution" project, Timiș County Council has developed a modern air quality monitoring network consisting of 20 sensors installed across various localities in Timiș County. The system is now fully operational, and the data generated by the sensors is already publicly available on the official website: <https://www.cjtimis.ro/consiliul-judetean-timis/activitate/proiecte/rapoarte-monitorizare-poluarea-aerului-proiect-blue-sky-the-solution-to-air-pollution-acronim-blue-sky-cod-rors00250/>

This network enables continuous air quality monitoring and provides valuable information for both authorities and citizens, contributing to a better understanding of the factors influencing pollution levels in both urban and rural areas.

The sensors installed across the county use advanced technologies to measure key air pollutants, including particulate matter (PM<sub>1</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and carbon monoxide (CO). In addition, the system records relevant meteorological data such as temperature, humidity, atmospheric pressure, as well as wind speed and direction—factors that directly influence the dispersion of pollutants in the atmosphere.

The collected data is analysed using the European Air Quality Index (EAQI), a synthetic indicator that translates technical pollutant values into an easy-to-understand format for the public, using a colour-coded system ranging from good air quality to high pollution levels. The reports generated by the system include detailed information on average, maximum and minimum pollutant values, as well as graphs illustrating their evolution over time.



For example, a recent monitoring report conducted in the city of Lugoj analysed air quality index values and pollutant concentrations such as PM<sub>2.5</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>3</sub>, alongside meteorological parameters including wind speed and temperature, providing a comprehensive overview of atmospheric conditions during the monitored period.

The interpretation of this data allows for the identification of short-term pollution episodes, emerging trends and potential pollution sources, such as road traffic, residential heating or certain industrial activities. At the same time, correlating pollution data with meteorological conditions helps better understand how climatic factors influence pollutant dispersion.

In the medium term, the data generated by the sensor network in Timiș County will be integrated into a common digital air quality monitoring platform developed within the "Blue Sky" Project. This platform will bring together data collected in both Romania and Serbia, including information from sensors installed in the City of Zrenjanin, providing a comprehensive cross-border overview of air quality and environmental factors in the region.

By developing this monitoring network and ensuring transparent access to data, the Blue Sky Project contributes to increasing public awareness, supporting evidence-based decision-making by local authorities and fostering effective measures to reduce air pollution in the Romania–Serbia cross-border region.

## Air Quality Monitoring – A Key Step in Protecting Health and the Environment

Air pollution has a significant impact on health and quality of life, particularly in urban areas, where emissions from traffic and economic activities contribute to increased levels of atmospheric pollutants. In this context, accurate and real-time air quality monitoring becomes essential for identifying issues and implementing effective measures.

Through the “Blue Sky – Cross-border Solution to Air Pollution” project, partners are developing a modern cross-border air monitoring system, based on advanced technologies and continuous data collection.

The investments focus on the acquisition and use of high-performance monitoring equipment, including fixed sensors and mobile automatic stations (mobile laboratories), capable of measuring in real time the concentrations of key air pollutants such as sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO) and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>1</sub>).

A key component of the project is the mobile laboratory of the Politehnica University of Timișoara, now equipped with high-precision technology, including a mass spectrometer (ICP-MS), which allows detailed analysis of the chemical composition of airborne particles and the identification of pollution sources.

Together, these technologies form an integrated air quality monitoring network, with collected data being centralised and presented through a shared digital platform, accessible to both authorities and citizens.

By leveraging advanced technologies and cross-border cooperation, the project contributes to a better understanding of pollution patterns and supports the development of effective solutions for protecting both public health and the environment.



## Building the Digital Backbone of Air Quality Monitoring

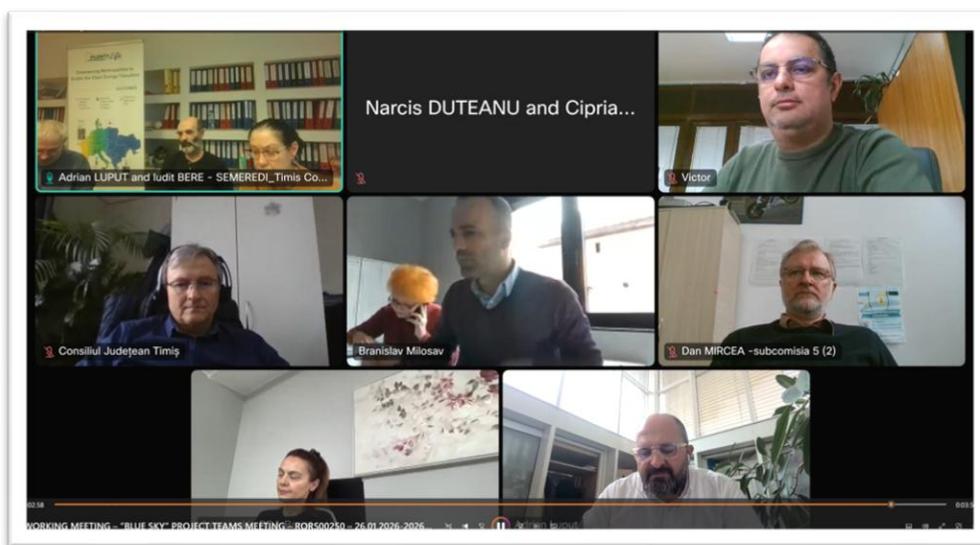
On 26 January 2026, the partners of the Blue Sky – Cross-border Solution to Air Pollution project held an online meeting focused on coordinating the project's technical activities, with particular emphasis on two key components: the development of the Air Quality Monitoring Plan (AQMP) and the creation of the digital air quality monitoring platform.

During the discussions, partners addressed technical aspects related to the type of data generated by monitoring equipment, the frequency of data transmission and the mechanisms for integrating this data into a common platform, which will bring together information collected in both Romania and Serbia. The platform will enable the visualization and analysis of air quality data and will generate periodic reports for both authorities and citizens.

Another important topic was the development of the Air Quality Monitoring Plan, a document that will define how measurements are carried out within the project, including the monitored parameters, the equipment used and the measurement frequency for stationary sensors, mobile equipment and drone-based monitoring systems.

The plan will also include procedures for managing situations in which pollution episodes are detected, as well as cooperation mechanisms between institutions involved in air quality monitoring and management.

Through these activities, the "Blue Sky" Project is taking important steps towards the development of an integrated cross-border air quality monitoring system, contributing to a better understanding of pollution patterns and ensuring transparent information for citizens.



## Smart Traffic Monitoring for Cleaner Air

Five modern traffic monitoring systems have been installed in Timiș County to analyse mobility flows and their impact on air quality.

At the end of February 2026, within the framework of the "Blue Sky – Cross-border Solution to Air Pollution" project, five traffic monitoring systems were installed on key county roads with high traffic intensity in Timiș County. These systems operate continuously and provide real-time data on vehicle circulation, contributing to a better understanding of road mobility and its environmental impact.

The equipment has been strategically placed in the localities of Foeni, Sânnicolau Mare, Uivar, Lovrin and Comloșu Mare, along county roads with significant traffic volumes or relevance for cross-border mobility. The systems use advanced technologies such as automatic number plate recognition and traffic analysis, offering detailed insights into traffic volumes and vehicle types using these routes.

The collected data will enable the analysis of traffic flows, vehicle classification and the identification of mobility patterns across the county—essential information for road infrastructure planning and for developing more sustainable mobility solutions.

At the same time, this data can be correlated with information on traffic-related emissions, supporting the identification of areas under high environmental pressure and the development of targeted measures to reduce pollution impacts on local communities.

The results of the monitoring activities will be further used within the project through awareness-raising and information campaigns addressed to communities in Timiș County, contributing to a better understanding of the relationship between traffic, mobility and air quality.

## **Mobility Plans Under Development for a Sustainable Future**

Within the “Blue Sky” Project, partners are actively working on the development of key instruments aimed at reducing air pollution and improving urban mobility at a cross-border level. A central role is played by the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP), currently under preparation for both the City of Zrenjanin and Timiș County.

These strategic documents provide the foundation for developing efficient, accessible and environmentally friendly transport systems, with the main objective of reducing emissions and improving citizens' quality of life. Their development is based on comprehensive analyses of existing traffic systems, the collection of relevant data and the use of modern transport models capable of simulating and assessing various development scenarios.

In Timiș County, the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan aims to create an integrated transport system that meets the current and future needs of communities, while contributing to the achievement of European objectives related to energy efficiency and environmental protection. At the same time, in the City of Zrenjanin, the development of the transport model and SUMP represents a significant step forward, especially considering that such planning instruments have not been developed for several decades, making this process highly impactful for future urban planning and mobility.

Through these activities, the project contributes to identifying concrete solutions for optimising traffic flows, encouraging the use of public transport and non-polluting modes of transport, and integrating mobility into broader urban and regional development strategies.

At the same time, these mobility plans will strengthen coordination between the two regions, facilitating cross-border cooperation and the implementation of joint measures to reduce air pollution.

The development of these plans marks an important step towards building greener, more efficient and better connected cities, where sustainable mobility becomes a key priority for long-term development.

## **Development of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan in the City of Zrenjanin – An Ongoing Process**

The development of a planning framework for sustainable mobility and the reduction of air pollution represents one of the main priorities of the “Blue Sky – Cross-border Solution to Air Pollution” project. At the end of 2025, RDA Banat and the City of Zrenjanin completed the initial transport model of the city, and starting from 2026, activities for the development of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) have been actively underway.

With a direct impact on the quality of life in urban areas, this strategic document has become an essential tool for cities across the European Union, serving as a foundation for the development of future policies, projects and urban investments. More than just a plan, the SUMP represents a shared vision for the city's future development, built on principles of cooperation, transparency and active involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

In this context, on 4 March 2026, the first stakeholder workshop was held in Zrenjanin, focusing on identifying key challenges and defining priority actions for the development of the city's Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan.



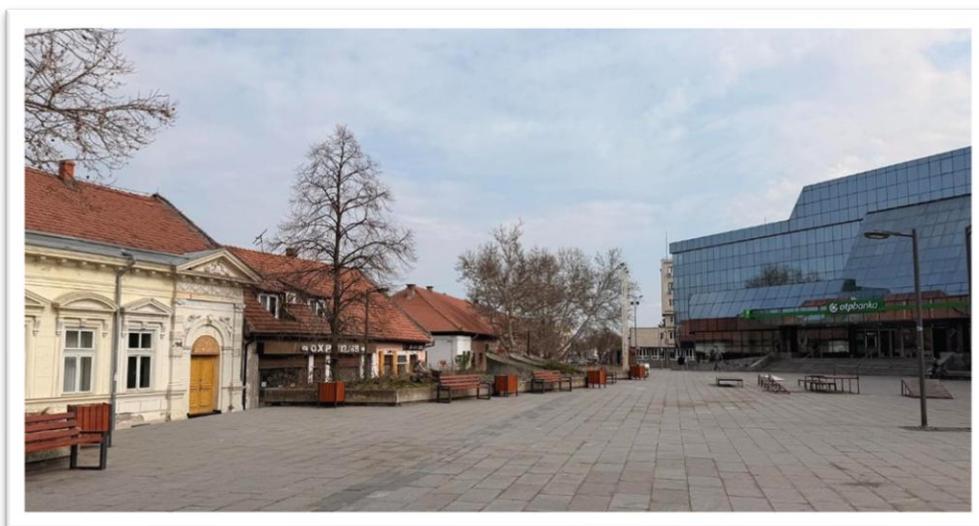
## Revitalised Green Space in Zrenjanin: Redevelopment of Zoran Đinđić Square

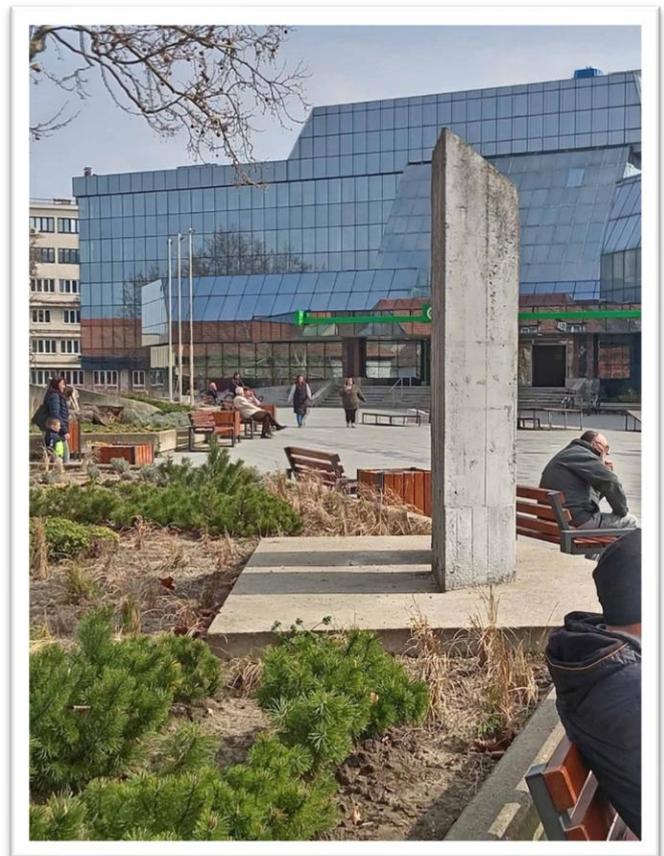
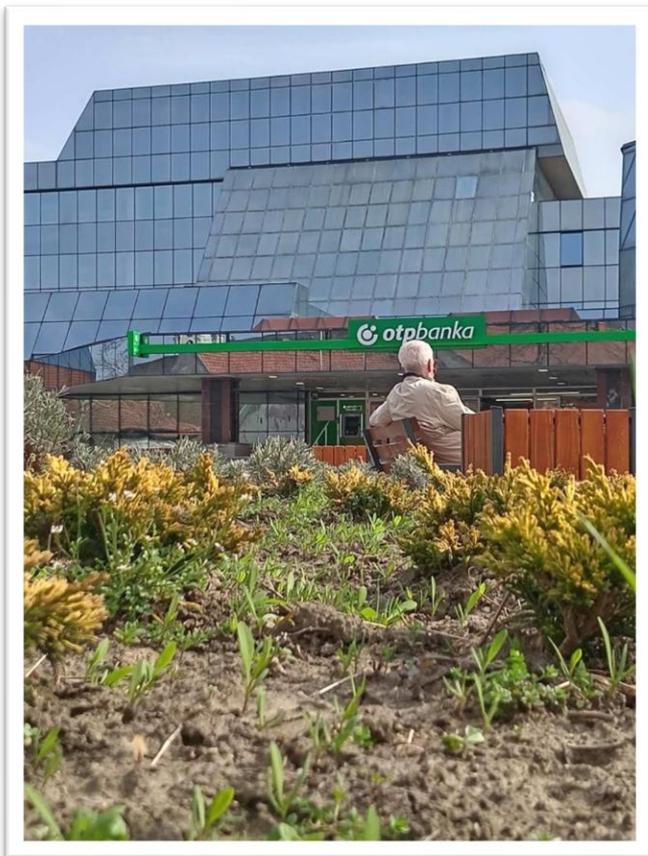
In the context of increasing urbanisation, urban infrastructure is placing growing pressure on the environment, making green spaces essential for maintaining ecological balance and quality of life in cities. These areas represent one of the most important connections between people and nature, contributing to public health and urban biodiversity.

Against this backdrop, the redevelopment and greening of Zoran Đinđić Square in Zrenjanin stands out as one of the key activities of the Blue Sky Project. The importance of this intervention is further highlighted by the fact that the City of Zrenjanin has a relatively low level of forest coverage, of approximately 2.6%.

Located in a central area, the square connects the pedestrian zone of the city centre with the Bega Canal and "Žitni trg", and is situated near one of the busiest roads in the city. It functions both as an important transit area and as a meeting and social space for residents.

The redevelopment concept focused on integrating green elements into the existing urban landscape, through the planting of small deciduous and coniferous trees placed in large containers and planters, complemented by carefully selected urban furniture. The result is a modern, harmonious and welcoming space that contributes to improving the urban microclimate and creating a more pleasant environment for the community.





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