

Pilot Solution Title : Open Call for the Future of Kodra: A Green and Inclusive Vision

Subtitle



Interreg
Euro-MED



Co-funded by
the European Union

BAUHAUS4MED



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Project Overview

Short Description(100–150 words): The Region of Central Macedonia in collaboration with the Municipality of Kalamaria, in the framework of the Bauhaus4MED project co-funded by the Interreg Euro MED programme with 10 partners from 8 Mediterranean countries, invited the public to submit their proposals for the site of the former military camp of Kodra. The Bauhaus4MED project, through participatory design, empowers citizens to shape the areas in which they live. By integrating aesthetic elements and citizen involvement, the project aims to transform urban landscapes into vibrant, environmentally friendly hubs that reflect the values of the New European Bauhaus initiative.



Detailed description

The former Kodra Military Camp is an extensive site of historical and metropolitan importance located in the Municipality of Kalamaria, Thessaloniki. Covering more than 340 acres, it once served as a military base and today is at the center of discussions about urban regeneration and public use. With panoramic views of the Thermaic Gulf and close proximity to the city center, the site holds significant potential for transformation into a space of greenery, culture, and recreation: a metropolitan park aiming to preserve and enhance public open space in the increasingly urbanized area of metropolitan Thessaloniki.

PROCESS RESULTS

The process of submitting proposals to the repository of ideas for the former Kodra Camp was completed on Sunday, October 12, 2025, and the public voting process was completed on Sunday, October 19, 2025. A total of 81 proposals were submitted within the deadline. The platform remains open to the public so that proposals can continue to be collected and the dialogue on the future of the former Kodra military camp can be enriched. It should be noted that each proposal contributes to the public dialogue on the use of the space, as the program aims to strengthen participation and is not a competitive process.

A total of 1,249 votes were cast in the public preference vote.



The Local Green Transformation Node assembled to categorize, analyze, and evaluate the submitted proposals on Thursday, October 16, 2020, Monday, October 20, 2025, and Thursday, October 23, 2025. The Local Green Transformation Hub was established by the Region of Central Macedonia and is composed of expert representatives of the Penta Helix: the local government sector, civil society, academia, the design sector, and the business sector.

The categorization of proposals in the repository by the Node was based on the principles of the New European Bauhaus (aesthetics, sustainability, inclusion), the originality and feasibility of the content, taking into account the Bauhaus4MED project timeline and the current legal framework for the protection of the former Kodra military camp.

The final catalog of proposals is the result of the integration of the public vote and the Node's evaluation, with a coefficient of 40% and 60% respectively, as determined within the timeframe of the process and as provided for in the Bauhaus4MED project regulations. This depository is the main deliverable result of the project on behalf of RCM, which will inform the action plans of the Municipality of Kalamaria and RCM for the future development of Kodra through the direction of the needs of the public. In the Interim, smaller interventions deriving from the depository, will gradually take place, as allowed by the existing legal framework.

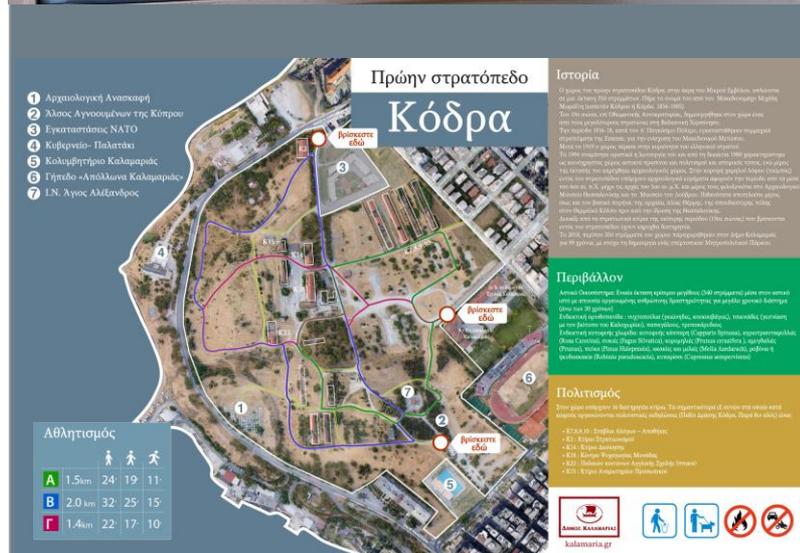
After the procedure – Small-scale pilot implementation

Following the evaluation process, a small-scale pilot intervention have been implemented, combining elements from the highest-rated proposals. The approach focuses on enhancing the **existing paths** created over the years by people walking through the former Kodra Camp.

These paths have now been organized into three thematic routes: history, environment, and culture. The routes have been carefully measured in meters to provide clear distances and orientation for visitors. Informational signs have been placed throughout the park, guiding visitors along each pathway and highlighting key points of interest.

In addition, maps presenting the **three routes** are displayed at central locations across the park, helping visitors easily understand the network and choose their preferred path. This light, low-impact intervention respects the identity and protected character of the site while making it more accessible and meaningful. By building on the traces already formed by citizens, the pilot transforms everyday walking paths into a structured experience that connects memory, nature, and culture within the future metropolitan park.

An upcoming small-scale intervention – **Open-Air Library** as additional small-scale summer intervention, in collaboration with the Municipal Library, will introduce an open-air lending library in the park. Visitors will be able to borrow books and read in a natural setting during summer events and selected days. This light and flexible installation respects the protected character of the site while enriching its cultural dimension. The initiative encourages learning, community interaction, and the active use of the park, further strengthening its role as an open and inclusive public space.



Problem Statement Turbulences

- What turbulences did you map and confront

Kodra Park in Kalamaria, Thessaloniki, is a very important area for both the environment and the local community. However, many complex and connected challenges make it difficult to restore and develop the park in a sustainable way. These challenges include social, environmental, and planning issues that need careful attention to ensure the park's future benefits everyone. As a former military camp designated as a green open space, the site faces significant legal and administrative matters regarding ownership status, land-use regulations, and the range of permitted interventions. This institutional turbulence limits the capacity to implement coherent, nature-based and community-oriented actions. In parallel, a strong sociocultural turbulence has been mapped. Although the park is deeply connected to the local community and widely recognized as a valuable public asset, there is limited trust toward participatory initiatives initiated by public authorities. In the Greek context, crowdsourcing and co-creation processes often encounter skepticism, especially when citizens perceive consultation as symbolic rather than impactful. This weakens active engagement and reduces the effectiveness of inclusive governance models. Furthermore, differing expectations among stakeholders — including citizens, civil society associations, universities, public administration bodies— generate additional coordination challenges in defining a shared vision for the space. These combined institutional and sociocultural turbulences create a complex operational environment for advancing the green transformation between living areas and nature, regenerating urban open spaces, and introducing sustainable design and circular economy approaches. Addressing these challenges requires legal clarity, transparent administrative coordination, and trust-building mechanisms that empower local actors and ensure that participatory processes are meaningful, inclusive, and capable of converting community feedback and group contributions into visible and valuable improvements in the environment and the transition to greener cities.

Bold Vision

A strong vision explains *what it is* and *why it matters*.

To transform the former Kodra Camp into a flagship metropolitan park for Central Macedonia, making Thessaloniki a leading example of sustainable, inclusive, and culturally vibrant urban spaces in Northern Greece. This matters because Thessaloniki is a major cultural, economic, and social hub of the region. Creating a beautiful and green public space strengthens the city's identity, improves residents' quality of life, and demonstrates how urban regeneration can benefit both people and the environment.

Where You are Now

Estimated Duration: project until
September 2026.

Pilot status: ongoing

How did we get here?

How did pilots respond to territorial challenges?

The pilot addressed environmental, spatial, and governance challenges in an integrated way. Environmentally, proposals promoted urban greening, biodiversity enhancement, climate resilience, and circular practices. Spatially, the process respected the legal protection framework of the former military camp while exploring adaptive reuse of buildings and open landscapes. Socially and institutionally, the 40% public vote and 60% expert evaluation balanced democratic participation with feasibility and technical soundness. Clear criteria—sustainability, inclusion, aesthetics, originality, and feasibility—helped manage complex ideas and diverse expectations. Structured meetings of the Local Green Transformation Node ensured coordination and transparency.

How did you build on local identity and history?

The pilot recognized Kodra not as an empty site but as a place with strong collective memory and metropolitan importance. Its military past, panoramic views of the Thermaic Gulf, and symbolic role in Kalamaria's urban and cultural identity shaped the proposals. Many ideas focused on preserving historic structures, integrating cultural and educational uses, and maintaining the openness of the landscape as a metropolitan park. By transforming a once-closed military space into an accessible, inclusive green hub, the project built continuity between past and future—respecting historical layers while redefining the site as a shared civic landmark for Thessaloniki.

What if...

What if...

What if as a: Region of Central Macedonia

I could: Transform the former Kodra Military Camp in Kalamaria into a large metropolitan park that combines nature, culture, and community life.

With: Active participation of citizens, sustainable and climate-friendly design, reuse of existing buildings if feasible, green spaces, cultural activities, and support from the New European Bauhaus initiative.

So that: The people of Thessaloniki can have a safe, inclusive, and beautiful public space that improves quality of life and protects the environment for future generations.



Who will benefit?

Target Groups

-Local residents of Kalamaria and Thessaloniki

Access to green public space
Better quality of life and health
Safe areas for walking, sports, and relaxation

-Children and young people

Outdoor learning and play areas
Environmental education activities
Cultural and creative workshops

-Elderly people

Accessible walking paths and resting areas
Social interaction spaces to reduce isolation

-People with disabilities

Inclusive and barrier-free design
Equal access to cultural and recreational activities

-Artists, cultural organizations, and creative professionals

Spaces for exhibitions, performances, and community art
Opportunities for collaboration under the New European Bauhaus principles

-Universities and research institutions

Living laboratory for sustainability, urban planning, and climate adaptation

Research and innovation opportunities

-Local businesses and social enterprises

New economic opportunities linked to culture, green economy, and tourism

-The wider Region of Central Macedonia

Stronger regional identity
Model project for sustainable urban regeneration

Showing Engagement

Engagement can be demonstrated through:

-Letters of support

From the Municipality, universities, cultural institutions, NGOs, and citizen groups

-Participation records

Lists of participants in workshops, consultations, and co-design activities

-Community meetings

Public events, open discussions, and participatory planning sessions (with minutes and photos as evidence)

-Partnership agreements

Formal collaborations with academic institutions, cultural organizations, environmental groups, and private partners

- More detailed overview of Target Groups
- Show engagement through: letters of support, participation records, community meetings, partnerships

Key Learnings

description of key learnings:

- High public interest**

81 proposals and 1,249 votes show that people care about the future of Kodra Camp.

- Participation increases trust**

An open and transparent process made citizens feel included.

- Citizens + experts = better results**

The 40% public vote and 60% expert evaluation created a fair balance.

- Clear rules are important**

Using New European Bauhaus principles (beauty, sustainability, inclusion) helped guide decisions.

- Dialogue must continue**

Keeping the platform open allows more ideas and strengthens long term cooperation

NEB Values

Beauty – Ambition: [insert]

- How did you accomplish this ambition? Design concepts, cultural programming, artistic vision

Sustainable – Ambition: [insert]

- How did you accomplish this ambition? Sustainability measures, SDG mapping

Together – Ambition: [insert]

- How did you do this? an inclusion strategy, community programming, etc.



NEB Values

Beauty – Ambition:

The park design aims to host activities that will enhance collective experiences and social interactions. With an emphasis on the exhibition of the cultural heritage of the area, experiencing the park empowers the sense of local communal identity and also encourages the cultural understanding with the visiting parties. Providing accessibility to all people, the park gives a chance to all people (local and visiting) to interact among themselves and with the surrounding nature.

- Among the proposals **35** suggested solutions that incorporated the accessibility to people with disabilities, to people with children and to people with pets; and **46** emphasized the connection to the endemic nature.



NEB Values

Sustainable – Ambition:

- The proposal plans to repurpose the existing listed buildings to host indoor programs, while planning to have all structures be adaptable to future uses and conditions, aiming also to use as much as possible materials deriving from circular economy. In addition to maintaining the existing flora, by planting pocket forests and smaller gardens with endemic plants the proposal supports the local biodiversity. All plantations will be as local and as low maintenance as possible.
- Among the proposals **46** suggested using local vegetation to form the park, **7** emphasized the need to provide food from endemic plants, and **4** suggested the creation of Repair Cafes in order to emphasize sustainable consumption.



NEB Values

Together – Ambition:

- The proposal ensures equal access and affordability to all, being a free park to visit that will host under the aegis of the Municipality affordable events for all. The principles of universal design will inform all the decisions in the new constructions. By strengthening community engagement through the experiences of the park in terms of nature and history, and by enhancing communal participation in the events and maintenance of the park, the proposal aims to emphasize the “together” pillar of NEB.



NEB Working Principles

Participatory Process Ambition:

With the assistance of Mamagea, a community for the ex military camp Kodra was formed and reinforced. All members of the society were welcome to participate to the discussions that were conducted with a sociocratic methodology.

Through discussions, polls and a variety of events, the issues and needs of the public pertaining to Kodra arose, and the formation of plausible solutions started to take shape.



NEB Working Principles

Multi-Level Engagement Ambition:

We approached the project conducting a multi-level dialogue among the people of Kalamaria, the deputy Mayor of Environment of Kaamaria as well as the Mayor of Kalamaria, and the Region of Central Macedonia.

The dialogue was ongoing on all the phases of the implementation of the project, providing with transparency and multilevel engagement.

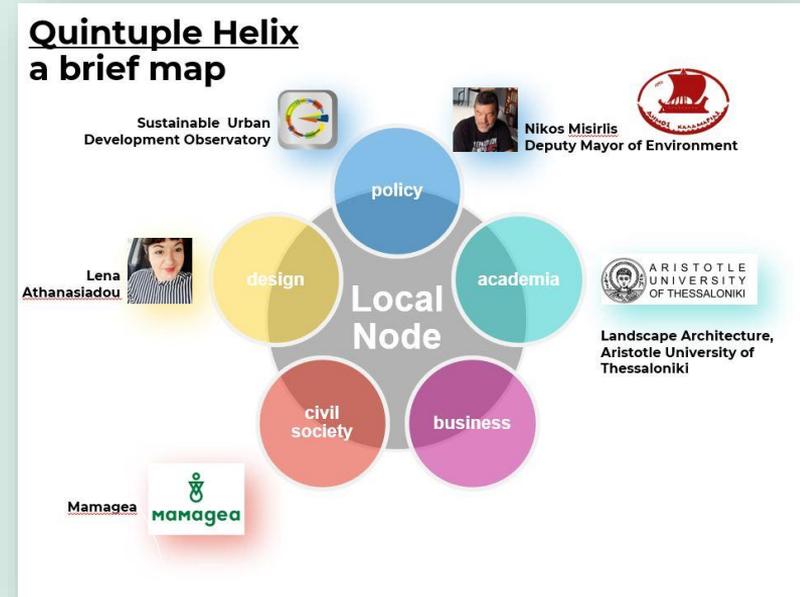


NEB Working Principles

Transdisciplinary Approach Ambition:

The formation of the Local Green Transformation Node had at its core the ambition of the Transdisciplinary Approach.

The Node was formed with Landscape Designers and Professors of Landscape Architecture, with Policy makers, with statisticians observing the socioeconomic factors of Urban Development and with organizations specializing in participatory and grassroots processes.



Common Themes

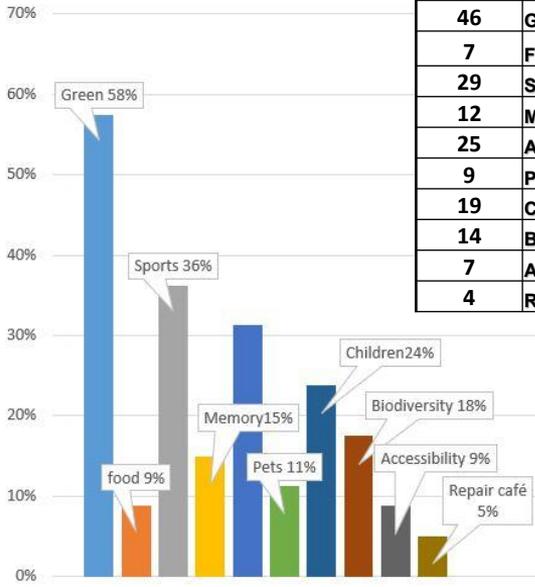
- Need for public space to host activities for extended time (due to good weather conditions) and for all the spectrum of population (accessibility, identity, age)
- Neighborhood based communities have strong opinions (at times conflicting) about public space
- Complex legislative bureaucratic procedures inhibit immediate action
- Hesitation on participatory design and crowdfunding when it comes to public space (alotment of responsibility to government)



Lessons Learned

CONTENT CATEGORIES

Proposals	Content
46	Green-Vegetation
7	Food-Agrotourism
29	Sports-Action
12	Memory-Identity
25	Art-Culture
9	Pets
19	Children
14	Biodiversity
7	Accessibility
4	Repair Café



- **What surprised you?**
 - The volume of submitted proposals (82 by deadline) and the care that went into conducting them in detail and in clarity of the issues addressed.
 - The entirety of the proposals was within the NEB Principles (as evaluated by the members of the Local Green Transformation Node), which showed that the public has adequate understanding of NEB and that their needs are in alignment with the NEB Principles
 - Many proposals hit the majority of the overall thematic axes, while others concentrated in depth to one or two. The most “popular” thematic axis was on “Green and Vegetation”, while the most surprising axis was on Repair Cafes, which four submissions proposed, and shows the need of the public for more sustainable consumption and community.

Lessons Learned



- **How did you resolve or overcome obstacles?**

- Objections on the final use of the park were resolved in an open dialogue between the public and representatives of the Region, of the Municipality and of the Local Green Transformation Node
- Bureaucratic limitations were explained in detail in order for the public to gain additional understanding of the existing conditions, and for the policy makers to delineate the decisions that need to be taken to facilitate following interventions. The explanation took place at the Local Bauhaus Festival in the format of an open dialogue

Lessons Learned



- **What will you do differently?**
 - We would offer longer time for the people to prepare and submit their proposals on the Platform, which would allow for communication between the submitters who will read and explore each other's proposals and have the opportunity to refine and collaborate.
 - We would offer a second phase of evaluation of proposals by the NODE where the Public can re-inform and resubmit their advanced proposal after consultation with the representatives of the Quintuple Helix
 - We would provide an intermediate informational open dialogue between the two phases between the public and the representatives of the Quintuple Helix (NODE)
 - We would aim to provide incentives for submitting proposals (phase 1) and also for collaborative proposals (phase 2)

● Lessons Learned

What surprised you? How did you resolve or overcome obstacles? What will you do differently?



What surprised us?

- The **high number of proposals and votes** showed stronger interest than expected.
- The **variety of ideas** — from environmental actions to cultural uses — showed that citizens see Kodra Camp as more than just a park.
- Many people were willing to participate when they understood that the process was open and not competitive.

How did we overcome obstacles?

- **Different expectations** were managed through clear communication about legal limits and the project timeline.
- **Complex ideas** were reviewed using clear criteria (sustainability, inclusion, aesthetics, feasibility).
- **Coordination challenges** were addressed through structured meetings of the Local Green Transformation Node and transparent evaluation steps.

What will we do differently next time?

- Provide **clearer information earlier** about legal and technical constraints.
- Organize **more face-to-face community meetings** to reach people who are less active online.
- Offer **short guidance material** to help citizens prepare more feasible proposals.
- Strengthen feedback to participants so they better understand how their ideas were evaluated.

Sharing for the Future

B4M Toolbox

What knowledge can contribute to the toolbox