

## Nature Based Solutions in the field: a journey to the Velika Gorica ULL

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The City of Velika Gorica is the smallest of six cities in the REGREEN project, but the sixth largest in Croatia. It has a strong history and culture that nourishes and respects the nature and heritage of green urban planning from the previous political systems. But with passing time and closeness to the main city of Zagreb, Velika Gorica is exposed to fast urbanization caused by rapid population and traffic growth, economic and business development, leaving little to no space for nature in the city center and suburban areas. To address occurring challenges the city joined the colorful REGREEN consortium to find and redefine the city development path that offers high-quality life for its dwellers in balance with nature.



*City tour snapshot; visit to central park Franjo Tuđman (credit: Regreen partners)*

On sunny days of May 2022, the REGREEN partners were introduced to the NSB in the city center to discuss how the city manages, plans and develops nature-based solutions. Having **walk and talk tour** by city department for nature conservation the partners encountered both grey, green and blue areas of the city to evoke conversations and exchange experiences in other cities, but also to inspire specialist point of view.

The main observation of REGREEN partners was:

**“The city of Velika Gorica is already very green and let’s find a way to keep it that way! “**



*Aerial photo of urban part of Velika Gorica (credit: <https://travelcroatia.live/listing/velika-gorica>)*

As the day progressed, other areas of the city were explored with emphasis on blue infrastructure that shows potential for biodiversity and recreation for citizens to decompress from stress and reconnect to nature.

The partners visited:

- Lake Čiče (gravel exploitation lake 10 min from city center that offers an escape from the summer heat)
- Creek Želin (stream ready for natural revitalization with a high potential for biodiversity)
- Landscape regeneration, rehabilitation of village Gradići (transformation of wild dump to walkway and green area)



*Lake Čiče, great potential for summer cool off and recreation (credit: <http://www.kronikevg.com/foto-jezero-cice-more-nase-mladosti/>)*



Velika Gorica historically means “Great forest” and as such marks the relation to the natural resources that were important in the past. Even nowadays the city is well connected to the surrounding rural areas and villages. The citizens in rural areas close to the city cherish nature more than urban dwellers and nurture history, culture, knowledge, and education on the topic of NBS.



*Culture center Novo Čiče (credit: Regreen partners)*

The Regreeners got the opportunity to visit most active organizations:

[Cultural center Novo Čiče](#) (natural building and natural material experts preserving old customs)

[Fishing association](#) (association in charge of maintaining fishing lakes)

[Plemenita općina turopoljska](#) (association that cherish natural history of the region and it organised Turopolje oak forest visit and Lukavec castle)

[ZMAG](#) (Permaculture, wood, and NBS experts with showcase eco-village that nationally provides know-how and workshops for interested individuals)



*Culture center Novo Čiče (credit: Regreen partners)*



*ZMAG eco village (credit: Regreen partners)*