

COOLING HAVENS

EUROPEAN URBAN INITIATIVE

SOFIA MUNICIPALITY

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Recovery and Resilience Plan

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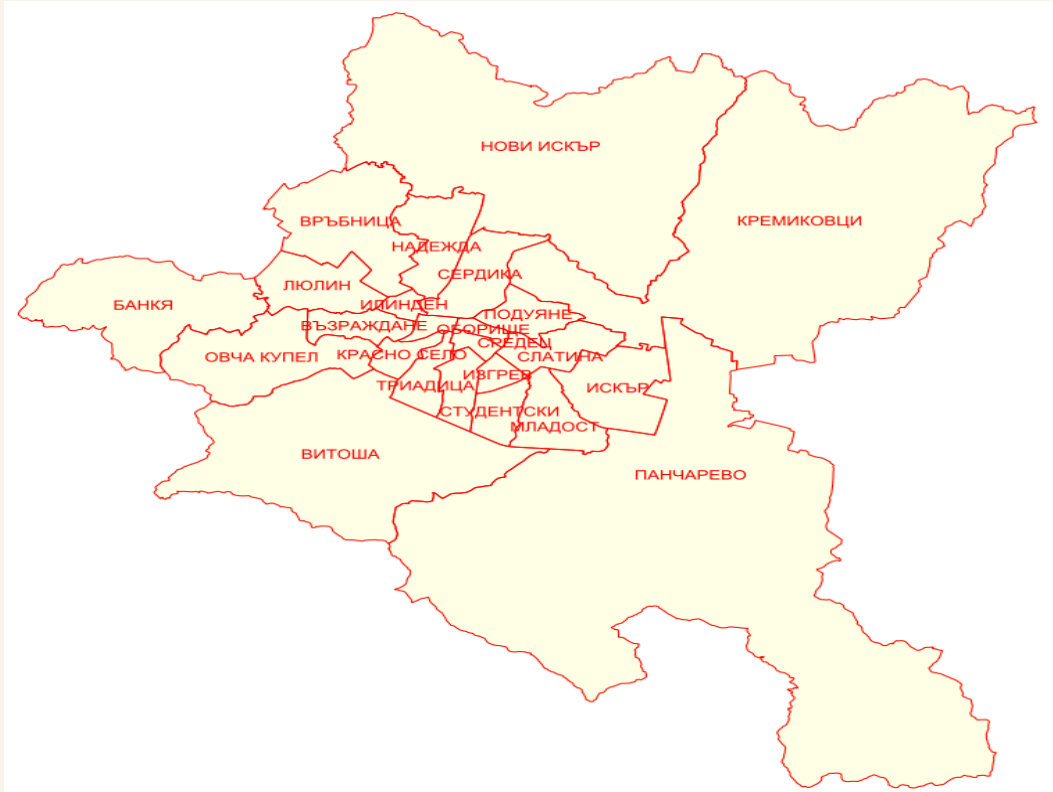
Sofia is a city with a centuries-old history and ancient cultural heritage, numerous parks and gardens, beautiful natural landmarks and rich biodiversity.

Our capital blends the old and the new - historical and cultural artifacts alongside modern buildings and large residential complexes.

According to the latest census, conducted in 2021, Sofia's population is 1,274,290.



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In 2023, the existing unmaintained amphitheater in Vazrazhdane Park, located in the highly urbanized central part of the city, was transformed into a “cooled” space.

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A shaded green area has been created, designated as a cool zone. Irrigation systems have been installed. A rock garden has been designed with suitable climate-resistant vegetation. The existing pavement has been replaced with a light-coloured one made of natural materials with low thermal capacity. A movable screen and multimedia equipment have been supplied.



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The shared “cooled” space is actively used both for recreation and reducing heat stress during the summer months in the highly urbanized part of the city and for conducting training and environmental education events.

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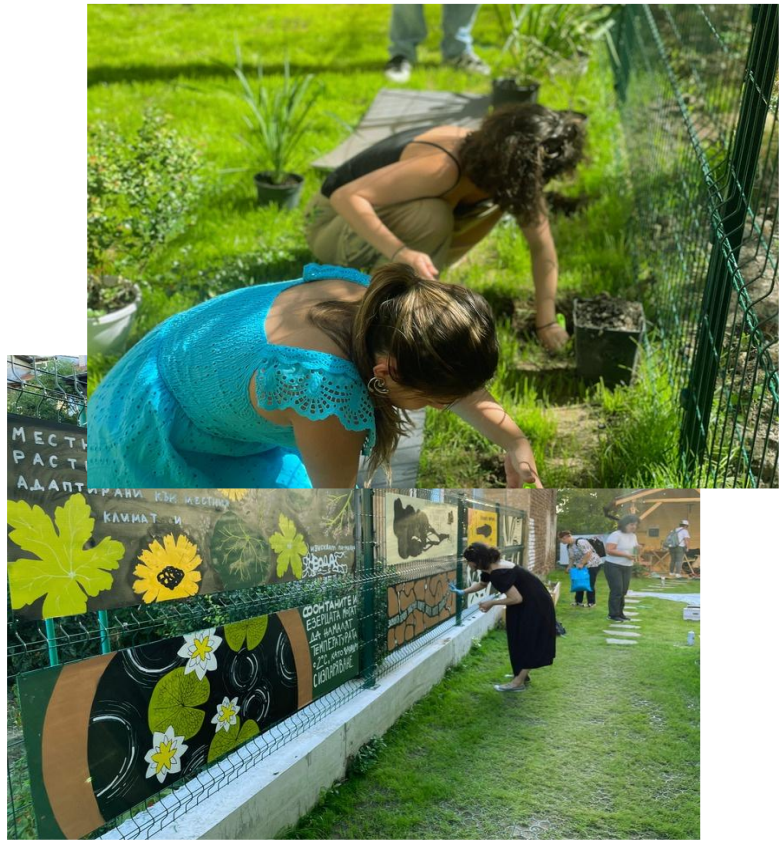
A demonstration “climate shelter” is already operating in the center of Sofia. The choice of location was dictated by the fact that there is a busy bus stop, an open-air market and two kindergartens in the immediate vicinity. Over 130 citizens, including young artists, have been involved in the improvement of the neglected municipal site.



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The space already features greenery, permeable soils, a fountain, a mist cooling system, a rainwater harvesting facility, a birdhouse, and a composting facility. The “climate shelter” is currently used by citizens for meetings, relaxation, board games, neighborhood events, and shared care of the place.



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What would we change if we were starting the project now?

We would plant bigger trees for an immediate effect! The young trees we planted do not provide enough shade, and this could disappoint some of the users of the “climate shelter”.

From our experience:

A successful “climate shelter” has five key qualities:

•It provides seating, shade, water, internet and charging;

•It is accessible and open to citizens at all times;

•It allows people to engage in nature-friendly and diverse activities;

•The space provides amenities and has an attractive appearance;

•It is a place where people meet and socialise.

Our recommendation:

Before starting the implementation of the project, it should be clear who will maintain the “climate shelter” and take care of the vegetation in it.

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Thank you for your attention!

We wish the city of Budapest every success!

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