

Application Form

CATEGORIES IN WHICH YOU WANT TO APPLY THE EXPERIENCE

1: TYPE OF EXPERIENCE: *choose the most important element (choose only one element which you consider the most outstanding of your practice).*

A) Deliberation Citizen assembly / deliberation workshop / lottery / legislative theater / participatory planning	X
B) Decision Participatory budget / referendum / consultation / participatory process with vote	
C) Citizenship Citizenship / community action / permanent council / civic education / associationism / other initiatives to reinforce local democracy	

2: TYPE OF GOVERNMENT: *choose one only.*

A) Up to 50,000 inhabitants (towns, small cities, rural areas).	
B) Cities between 50,000 and 250,000 inhabitants.	
C) Cities between 250,000 and 1,000,000 inhabitants.	
D) Large cities or urban areas of more than 1,500,000 inhabitants.	X
E) Supralocal, regional, provincial governments....	

Experience data: *complete the information below in a clear and concise manner.*

Title of the experience: Interactive Urban Space Project
Name of the city or region: Evliya Çelebi Neighborhood of Tuzla District, Istanbul
Inhabitants of the city or territory: Participants of the project, residents of Evliya Çelebi Neighborhood with 13707 of population
Country: Turkey

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Institution presenting the candidacy: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) – Department of Parks, Gardens & Green Areas		
Website of the experience or institution: https://yesil.istanbul https://yesil.istanbul/haber_tuzla-yasam-vadisi-etkilesimli-alan-uygulamasi		
Profiles in social networks of the experience or the institution: Twitter: @ibbyesilist Instagram: @ibbyesilistanbul Facebook: @ibbyesilist		
Start date of the experience: 17th October, 2022		
End date of the experience: 11 th December, 2022		
Budget of the experience: Budget of the department		
Type of candidacy <i>(mark with an X in the right column)</i>	New experience	X
	Innovation on an existing experience	
	Continuity of an experience	
Type of experience <i>(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)</i>	Participatory budgeting	
	Participatory planning	X
	Standing council	
	Workshop / meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	X
	Public hearing / forum	
	Poll / referendum	
	Assemblies / Citizen juries / Deliberation spaces	
	E-government / Open government / Digital platforms	X

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	Citizen initiative		
	Other (specify): Participatory urban design / place making		X
Objective of the experience <i>(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)</i>	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation		X
	Including diversity as a criterion for inclusion		X
	Community empowerment		X
	To empower non-organised citizens		X
	To increase citizen's rights in terms of political participation		X
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy "ecosystem"		X
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		X
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy		X
	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
Territorial area <i>(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)</i>	All the territory	Local	X
		Regional	
	District		
	Neighbourhood		X
	Governance		
	Education		



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Thematic area <i>(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)</i>	Transport	X
	Urban management	
	Health	X
	Security	X
	Environment / Climate change and/or urban agriculture	X
	Civic associations, grassroots and new social movements	
	Culture	
	Housing	
	Job creation	
	Decentralization	
	Local development	
	Training / learning	
	Economy and/or finances	
	Legal regulations	
	Social inclusion	X
All		
Other (write the topic)		
Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) associated with the practice <i>(mark with an X in the right column,</i>	SDG 1 - No poverty	
	SDG 2 - Zero hunger	
	SDG 3 - Good health and well-being	X



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<i>more than one option can be chosen, you can also add the specific target)</i>	SDG 4 - Quality education	
	SDG 5 - Gender equality	
	SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation	
	SDG 7 - Affordable and clean energy	
	SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	
	SDG 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure	
	SDG 10 - Reduced inequality	X
	SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities	X
	SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production	
	SDG 13 - Climate action	
	SDG 14 - Life below water	
	SDG 15 - Life on land	
	SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions	
SDG 17 - Partnership for the goals	X	

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PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Fill in the following fields clearly and concisely. You can add links, images or graphics if you consider it appropriate.

Context:

*In a **maximum of 300 words**, present the cultural, geographical, historical, institutional and socioeconomic context of the city, region or territory in which the experience takes place.*

As part of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's Green Istanbul projects, the aim was to create an urban park area around Tuzla Valley of Life, one of the Life Valleys projects, and Umur (Doğandere) Stream, one of the tributaries of Tuzla Stream, where natural life thrives and recreational areas are developed while preserving the balance between conservation and use.

The aim was to reclaim the unused areas along the stream for users. The transformation of the project area, where lane discipline is not maintained and road widths are variable, required gathering public opinions and experiencing possible outcomes in advance. Therefore, a tactical urbanism approach was chosen due to its low-cost and rapid implementation potential. Considering the significantly low per capita green space in Istanbul and its districts, such implementations provide an opportunity to enhance the quality of life.

As part of the proposed project, a trial of street pedestrianisation was conducted to increase green areas and make pedestrian and vehicular transportation more comfortable. This allowed users of all age groups to experience the area with various activities and the participation of different stakeholders on different days, aiming to measure the effects of the planned project and assess the needs and potentials of the public.

Precedents:

*Explain the precedents and origins of the experience: if it is the innovation of an existing experience, what are its origins; if it is a new experience, what are the antecedents in participation in your city, region or territory. You can also indicate if you have been inspired by experiences in other cities/countries. (In a **maximum of 300 words**).*

Tuzla Valley of Life Interactive Urban Space Project is an example of tactical urbanism carried out with the leadership of IMM. Through this approach, facilitative results are achieved for local governments by improving decision-making through the participation of local groups and ensuring the ownership of change by the local community. These applications provide many benefits to urban design and planning processes, including the creation of alternative organisational support and financing sources.

Interactive Urban Space Project serves the purpose of creating well-designed streets and environments, in addition to the tactical urbanism approach. The project has been developed within the scope of designing streets for children, along with the closure of designated streets to traffic. Giving priority to children on the streets means creating safer and more comfortable spaces for everyone (NACTO, 2020). When public spaces are

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designed from the perspective of children, areas that offer safe, accessible, and enjoyable experiences emerge. The effects of such spaces on people are long-lasting. In this context, it becomes important to create improved and independent mobility public spaces that provide long-term positive effects.

Furthermore, as a similar previous project, pedestrianisation efforts and the creation of the vision for the Ordu Street and its surroundings in the Historical Peninsula have led to the preparation of the Istanbul Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan. Within this plan, research and awareness activities have been organised in various urban areas to nurture the evolving sustainable mobility, including urban participation and inclusiveness in decision-making. In this context, workshops and activities have been conducted in Laleli and its surroundings, and the implementation has been carried out on Ordu Street. The Department of Parks, Gardens & Recreational Areas and the directorate have also contributed as internal stakeholders of IMM in this implementation.

Objectives of the experience:

*What is the objective listed in Part 1 that you think is the most important, and indicate other outstanding objectives of the experience. (In a **maximum of 100 words**).*

Main goal of the project is to experience the area together and answer the questions that may occur when a street open to vehicular traffic is transformed into a green area with children's playgrounds. For this reason, by rehearsing to close the vehicle traffic, experiments were carried out to note public reaction and to include their ideas in the project. So that, "to improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy" was the most reasonable objective that was listed. Other than the objectives listed, "participatory design making" notion was also the pioneer perspective of the project.

Methodology:

*Describe the methodology of the experience: phases of the process, participation channels. (In a **maximum of 300 words**).*

Interactive Urban Space Project, implemented in line with the principle of participation in the planning and design of public spaces, has been approached through the stages of planning, implementation, and data collection to measure and evaluate its impact on the area. The implementation process includes the stages of installation, workshop activities, user feedback, and interactive plays. The workshops have facilitated the contribution of community members and the expression of their needs towards the project. User feedback has been collected to gather ideas and suggestions regarding the design of the space. Interactive plays have allowed users to have insights on how to experience the space.

The methodology of the study, which presents the results of the application, includes public opinion research within the scope of the "Here Together Movement" (Burada Birlikte), face-to-face and online public opinion surveys conducted by the Green Istanbul team during

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and after the application, in-depth interviews conducted during the application process, and vehicle and pedestrian counts conducted before and after the application. These data collection methods have been used to objectively evaluate the project results and understand the experiences of the participants.

The participation channels include social media, banners in the working area and its surroundings, distribution of informative brochures, sharing of information by the headman within the neighbourhood, and events where various stakeholders participate.

Innovation:

*Explain what you consider as the most innovative aspect(s) in the practice. (In a **maximum of 150 words**).*

The most innovative aspect of the presented Tuzla Valley of Life project is the provision of a trial period to the local community and people using the area for transit before making transportation decisions and implementing them. This trial was conducted not only by closing the designated streets to vehicle traffic, but also by keeping the area lively through various activities and allowing it to adapt flexibly based on participants' feedback. This practice, which is quite innovative for Tuzla, where the project took place, allowed the neighbourhood residents and all participants to see and experience the space they frequently use in their daily lives, from different perspectives. The name "Interactive" of the project also derives from this aspect, where the main users of the space can make design decisions for the area they use.

Inclusion:

*Point out the importance of including as many groups and diverse populations as possible, and how you have achieved it. (In a **maximum of 150 words**).*

The priority was to create areas where children can spend time safely, while also ensuring safe and more liveable spaces for all age groups. Starting with a focus on children is an important step towards inclusive spatial design. Other than safe play areas for children, urban furniture used in the area were used especially by the elderly and people returning from the bazaar with their loads.

Immediately after closing the street to vehicle traffic, seeing children using it for play and recreation purposes was an indication that the project was on the right track. After the completion of installations, it was observed that children, along with their parents and other age groups, used the area for relaxation and leisure. The attractiveness of the ground paintings, along with the plays and activities, played a significant role in getting feedback from everyone, also the inclusive planning perspective of the project's development.

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Communication:

*What has been the strategy and communication channels of the experience for engaging the population? (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

Information about the temporary pedestrianisation process and the activities during this period were announced in the social media accounts such as Instagram, Twitter etc. The programme of the event day was shared before the events. The headman's office was very helpful in distributing brochures to the residents.

General public interest and opinions of the population about the pedestrianisation if it happens were noted by the small talk interviews with the visitors and residents during the events. All the observations and chats with the residents and visitors were recorded and it was measured whether the pedestrianisation rehearsal in the interactive urban space project is suitable for the citizens of the city. Besides that, activities of "Here Together Movement", in which the public ideas about the space design in the area can be obtained directly, was also organised and the residents were able to touch the space.

Articulation with other actors:

*Explain how the experience was articulated with different actors and simultaneous or pre-existing processes. What roles did these participants assume? Explain the degree of success of this articulation. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

Since the project is actually a rehearsal of a pedestrianisation application and will come to life when the positive feedback or participation of the public is provided, many different departments of IMM, district municipalities, IMM affiliates and headman of the neighbourhood provided significant support in the project. In order to organise attractive events to ensure the participation of all residents in the Interactive Urban Space Project, associations and volunteer-based communities also took part in the project as stakeholders.

The success of the project was thanks to all actors being together and working with harmony. The activities organised by the responsible stakeholders were the most attractive element of the project for the residents. It has ensured the active use of the area during the application and the spread of the project among the people in a positive sense.

Evaluation:

*What evaluation mechanisms have been implemented? Develop whether the citizenry has participated in the evaluation of the practice. (In a **maximum of 300 words**).*

The most important evaluation mechanism of the project has been to provide two different alternatives of the project as a rehearsal to the residents, the main users of the area, and to enable them to experience these two spatial alternatives and provide feedback.

The two different spatial alternatives were carried out for one month each, lasting a total of two months. After each activity during this process, feedback was obtained from participants and residents, and additions, removals, or adjustments were made to the

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activity program. Acquiring active and continuous user feedback during the project process is the key factor in keeping the project attractive and dynamic. Through these comments and feedback, the formation of a space based on the needs and desires of the neighbourhood residents has been achieved.

In addition to the activities, apart from this temporary project, many feedbacks have been received regarding how the future Tuzla Valley of Life, which will be implemented and permanently exist in the area, should be organised. This project, which will be permanent based on these feedbacks -which collected by "Here Together Movement", face-to-face and online public opinion surveys during and after the application and in-depth interviews- will enable the residents to develop their own space with their own ideas.

Impacts and results

*Describe the impacts and results of the process. How many people have participated, and what are their profiles? What have been the impacts on public policies, the functioning of the administration, and the citizenry? (In a **maximum of 300 words**).*

Interactive Urban Space Project lasted for two months with the aim of allowing the residents and other users to experience two different alternatives. During the implementation of these alternatives, various activities were organised to attract both the residents and individuals from outside the neighbourhood to the area and provide them with the opportunity to experience the space through different actions. On days with and without activities, approximately 3000 people, including the residents and participants from outside the neighbourhood, were involved in the project and experienced the spatial arrangement within the project.

On days with activities, there was a total participation of around 300 people. The spatial organisation was specifically designed for children's play areas, so approximately 60% of the participants who experienced the space were children on these days. However, adults other than the parents of the children also participated in the plays and activities.

Feedbacks from 71 residents who experienced the project were recorded, and approximately 50 individuals engaged in small talk during the project to incorporate their opinions into the temporary project and the Tuzla Valley of Life project.

The project served as inspiration for both the residents and Tuzla Municipality, demonstrating how creating differences in the space and providing opportunities for pedestrians and children can contribute to the creation of safer and more livable areas. Additionally, providing different experiences in the regularly used space has been beneficial for the residents to feel a sense of belonging in the area. Through the activities, the opinions of the residents were obtained, and they also had a say in the development and change of the area.

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PART 3: EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

*A summary of the experience: origins, objectives, operation, results, monitoring, and evaluation. (Do not hesitate to repeat aspects that have already been written before. This summary will be shared on the digital platform for open evaluation and in the publication of the award). (In a **maximum of 500 words**).*

Tuzla Valley of Life Interactive Urban Space Project is a part of Valleys of Life which were carried out by the IMM Department of Parks, Gardens and Green Areas, is a project that aims to serve the whole of Istanbul by bringing together the forests and seas, which are the important ecosystems of Istanbul, with green corridors, and strengthening the ecosystem both on a local and urban scale.

It is aimed to bring the unused areas along Umur (Doğandere) Stream, one of the tributaries of Tuzla Stream, to the Istanbulites by creating an urban park area where natural life is revived and recreational areas are developed by considering the protection-use balance, around Tuzla Valley of Life, which is one of the Valleys of Life projects. Along the 3.9 km long Umur Stream, transportation circulation was reconsidered in order to provide uninterrupted green space along with uninterrupted bicycle and walking paths. Then, "Interactive Urban Space Project" was applied for the decided streets with the decision of the temporary transportation and traffic commission.

Interactive Urban Space Project aims to serve as a catalyst for more comprehensive and lasting transformations through temporary and small-scale interventions. The study, which ensures active citizen participation and conducts vehicle and pedestrian counts, allows for measuring the effects and changes while prioritising user demands and opinions in project and implementation decisions. This approach leads to more informed, participatory and sustainable decision-making processes while fostering a culture of collaboration.

Within the scope of Tuzla Valley of Life Interactive Urban Space Project, the experiences of the users were observed by using many different methods mentioned in the report in order to gather feedback from citizens and to measure the possible effects of the temporary closure of the streets, which are planned to be pedestrianised and transform to green areas and parks. It is aimed to determine the most optimal design with qualitative and quantitative analysis methods based on user feedback, vehicle and pedestrian counts, and survey results.

It can be understood that the impact of the project on the local residents has been positive based on the responses obtained from the questionnaires filled out by citizens during and after the implementation, as well as the active use of the area by children and other residents from the first day of the project. Even though participatory planning and place making processes are popular in the Turkish planning system, participatory events are mostly done after the completed constructions or planning decisions. However, this type of participation process is not efficient for the decisions already taken without public opinion. Tuzla Valley of Life Interactive Urban Space Project is the pioneer for implementing the participatory approach before making planning decisions.



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Following the positive feedback received from the public as a result of the implementation, IMM continues the process of making necessary transportation decisions to permanently close the designated streets to vehicle traffic. A report compiling and evaluating the process and outcomes has been prepared to be forwarded to the relevant departments.

[Annexes to better illustrate the project](#)