

The LIFE DICCA project – A good climate for the Danube Island

Like everywhere else, the Danube Island is feeling the impact of climate change. The EU LIFE DICCA project is developing appropriate adaptation strategies.

Vienna is a major city with a number of valuable green spaces, including the Danube Island, the Lobau wetlands, the Prater park and the Vienna Woods. All of the above serve as local recreation areas for the Viennese people and as green corridors that help cool the city down. Nonetheless, without a strategy for adapting to the already tangible effects of climate change, these ecosystems will come under increasing pressure.

The EU LIFE DICCA project

The EU project LIFE DICCA will run for six years and aims to implement targeted measures to counteract the negative impacts of climate change. The acronym "DICCA" stands for "Danube Island Climate Change Adaptation". The project was developed by Municipal Department MA 45 – Water Management in partnership with external experts. LIFE DICCA receives funding from the EU funding instrument LIFE under the auspices of its sub-programme for climate action.

The measures to be implemented by 2024 are designed to help protect the Danube Island, firstly as an ecosystem and secondly as a local recreation area. The amount of upkeep and maintenance required is to be reduced at the same time, along with the associated carbon emissions. The project also has a strong focus on public information and engagement activities for the people who use the Danube Island.

Measures implemented on the Danube Island:

- Since 2019, a flock of sheep has been placed on the northernmost section of the Danube Island from May to October each year to act as environment-friendly "lawnmowers".
- 50 colonies of bees belonging to a local organic beekeeper were installed in spring 2020.
- New pond habitats have been created and three existing ones revitalised. A new 100m² pond biotope in the middle section of the Danube Island was completed and planted in spring 2021. A further small pond biotope for Triops crustaceans has been created next to the Inselinfo service centre.
- New meadow orchards, near-natural grassland areas and green spaces. A new meadow of 25 wild fruit trees was planted near Kaisermühlen Bridge in 2020.
- Climate-friendly wind-powered irrigation systems for two ponds: the little Endelteich in the northern part of the island and the Tritonwasser (winter 2022/2023).
- Five wooden pergolas with seating and cooling graduation walls were erected in the middle section of the Danube Island in 2020.
- Five weather stations on the Danube Island have been supplying the project team with meteorological data since autumn 2019.
- Three new phenological gardens were laid out in spring 2021.



70 sheep serve as "lawnmowers"



More near-natural grassland areas





New and revitalised pond habitats



Green wooden pergolas



50 organic bee colonies



Planting of meadow orchards



Weather stations for meteorological data



Phenological gardens

The Danube Island: an ecosystem under pressure

The average annual temperature in Austria has risen by about 1.9°C since the mid-19th century, while global temperatures have risen by an average of 0.9°C. Prolonged heatwaves, periods of drought and frequent torrential rainfall are already making themselves felt. Large cities are particularly severely affected by climate change.

The Danube Island was artificially constructed as part of Vienna's flood defences, but quickly became popular with the Viennese population as a local recreation area. Oxbow lakes formed by the Danube, such as Toter Grund and Zinkerbachl, as well as artificially created ponds on the island provide habitats for amphibians, dragonflies and a number of different bird species. However, both native species and biodiversity in general are threatened by climate change. Long heatwaves and extended periods of drought are drying out meadows, woodland and ponds on the Danube Island. This increases the costs and resources required for irrigation, upkeep and maintenance.



Key project data

Full project title: Climate Change Adaptation of the Ecosystem Danube Island

Short project title: LIFE DICCA

Duration: Sept. 2018 bis Sept. 2024

Budget: approx. €2m, 50% co-funded by the EU

Implementing body: City of Vienna, Municipal Department MA 45 – Water Management

Information:

www.life-donauinsel.wien.at

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