

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

 Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

PROJECT	
Participant:	GEMEINDE HEININGEN
PIC number:	931880456
Project name and acronym:	[Rural Communities pushing BEYOND COVID-19] — [BEYOND]

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	3
Event name:	Event 3 in the Municipality of Heiningen, Germany
Type:	The event was organized as a 3-day event with various activities: Day 1 (Wednesday September 27th) consisted of the organization of the opening conference (T3.1.), an online survey (Mentimeter) regarding the thoughts and feelings of participants/citizens; comparing the before and after situation in their towns due to the pandemic as means to create discussion, and a tour of the facilities of the Heiningen fire brigade (volunteer-based) as a means to show how civil protection is implemented in Heiningen. A diner for participants was held at the end of the day as means to allow participants to get to know each other and build cooperation. Day 2 (Thursday September 28th) consisted of presentations & group activities relating to environmental protection, work distribution between district administration and municipal administration to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, integration of persons in migration, and intergenerational solidarity; site visit to the waste treatment centre in Heiningen: Activities were organized in line with T3.2. and T3.3. in the event description. The presentations provided participants with insight on how volunteers are able to assist migrants integrate in the community, how volunteers assist elderly persons get from place to place in the Goppingen area (includes Heiningen) via the free transport service. The presentations also focused on environmental protection. Details on the European Green Deal were presented as were details and approaches to creating a Renewable energy cooperative in Heiningen. A site visit to the waste treatment/incineration facilities in Heiningen was organized as a way to show how the town is making progress in achieving zero-emissions from waste. Day 3 (Friday September 29th) consisted of a project consortium meeting and nature tour in Heiningen: these activities were organized as a means to monitor project results (meeting), inform the media about the project (by inviting reporters to the meeting) and showing participants how Heiningen is protecting natural areas in the town (via the nature walk/town tour).
In situ/online:	In-situ
Location:	Heiningen, Germany
Date(s):	September 27 th – 29 th , 2023
Website(s) (if any):	
Participants	
Female:	37
Male:	50
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Croatia]:	9
From country 2 [Slovenia]:	14
From country 3 [Italy]:	8
From country 4 [Hungary]:	1
From country 5 (Germany)	55
Total number of participants:	87
From total number of countries:	5
Description	
Provide a short description of the event and its activities.	

The event took place over three days (from Wednesday, September 27th – Friday, September 29th, 2023) in Heiningen, Germany. All activities of the event were held in-situ. The activities were organized in a manner ensuring that the following objectives were achieved:

- To enhance awareness on how citizen-based actions concerning environmental protection have been implemented during the pandemic
- To raise awareness on how diversity in the community contributes to sustainable development

Day 1:

The event was organized as a 3-day event with various activities:

Day 1 - Organization of the opening conference (T3.1.): The Municipality of Heiningen started the event with an introduction to the Municipality of Heiningen by the Mayor Norbert Aufrecht. Apart from just describing the municipality, Aufrecht also mentioned which powers and responsibilities the municipality has been granted under the German Federal system. He also described that tackling climate change, enhancing nature protection and the social integration of migrants are key priorities for the municipality. Aufrecht also gave a clear “before and after” picture to the participants showing how Heiningen changed drastically had to change its approach on these issues during the pandemic. As a means to engage the audience, representatives of Heiningen engaged participants through an online survey (Mentimeter) regarding their thoughts and feelings, comparing the before and after situation in their towns due to the pandemic. This created an open discussion where participants were able to share how they adapted measures for environmental protection and social integration during the pandemic. In the second part of the conference, the local fire brigade of Heiningen (volunteer-based) presented its history and current activities, with emphasis on how it operated in times of COVID-19. At the end of the presentation, participants were given a tour of the facilities at the firehouse as a means to show how civil protection is implemented in Heiningen. A diner for participants was held at the end of the day as a means to allow participants to get to know each other and build cooperation.

Day 2 – Presentations & group activities relating to environmental protection, integration of persons in migration, and intergenerational solidarity; site visit to the waste treatment centre in Heiningen:

Activities were organized in line with T3.2. and T3.3. in the event description. The format was adapted to the participants' needs based on inputs received in questionnaires from previous events, and via project meetings. The first presentation held by municipal representatives described how the municipal government in cooperation with local associations were able to organize neighbourhood help in the town during the pandemic. In addition, the division of work between the district administration and the municipal administration to manage the COVID-19 pandemic was explained. The second presentation showed participants how registered asylum seekers and refugees are integrated in the local community. Representatives of Heiningen described the challenges that they have faced (regarding housing, education, employment, etc.) and how they have addressed them via volunteering and sound urban planning. The representatives of Heiningen also described the free transport service that the town is implementing targeting elderly persons in the community. It was clearly described how volunteers are the foundation of the service, as they make the service sustainable. After that, a presentation on the European Green Deal was held by Patrick Galeski. He mentioned how the EU intends to be free of fossil fuel emissions by 2050 and described the measures and priorities concerning the Deal. As a means to engage the audience, an online survey was held to stimulate discussion on environmental priorities. The discussion also focused on how towns were impacted environmentally during the pandemic (In terms to biohazardous waste, plastics, emissions, etc.) While showing the survey results, participants mentioned what the environmental priorities of their towns are and discussed how EU funding opportunities could be used to make their projects a reality. To end the session, the renewable energy cooperative of Heiningen (citizen energy cooperative - Voralb-Schurwald eG) was presented by Dieter Nemec. He described its operations and overall results. The presentation focused on how the cooperative serves the town, such that others consider it as a green action in their communities.

In the second half of the day, the participants were given a tour of the waste treatment/incineration facility of Heiningen (waste-to-energy plant). This facility was included in the agenda as many participants described waste management as a major issue in their towns. Operators of the facility emphasized that the incineration systems and separators allow for near zero-emissions in the environment. The operators described how the centre started and demonstrated the safety measures in place that protect nearby households.

Day 3 – Project Consortium Meeting and nature tour in Heiningen

The final day consisted of a project meeting, where participants evaluated the event and planned for future activities. The Municipality of Heiningen invited media to attend the meeting. At the meeting, participants provided reporters information about the project and described its intended positive impacts. This ensured that there was media coverage and that the wider public was aware of Heiningen's best practices and efforts to build European cooperation with rural communities. In parallel with this, representatives of Heiningen organized a short nature walk for participants so they could see and understand how the town is protecting natural wetlands (and see the benefits of such an approach).

Via this approach to organizing and implementing the event, participants learned:

- How citizens managed to continue to make progress towards EU environmental goals during the times of the pandemic
- how to engage and connect elderly and younger generations (especially in times of crisis such as COVID-19);

- became aware of the best methods and practices in terms of protecting promoting diversity, social integration and inclusion of persons from vulnerable groups (elderly persons, third-country nationals, etc.)

The participants were also able to interact and generate new project ideas (connected to environmental protection, mobility solutions for elderly persons and the integration of migrant populations in the local community).

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	12.06.2023	Initial version (new MFF).