BeSecure-FeelSecure (BSFS):

Lessons Learned and Attention Points

Funded by the Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) Initiative of the European Regional Development Fund, the BeSecure-FeelSecure (BSFS) project aimed to reinforce urban security and promote a positive perception of urban safety among residents of Piraeus by facilitating the collaboration of urban security stakeholders, both in the physical and cyber spaces.

The holistic approach of the BSFS project was based on four mutually reinforcing pillars:
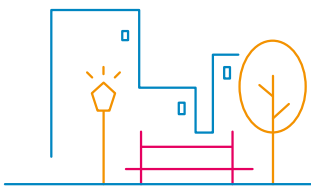
GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Governance innovation through the creation and operationalisation of a Local Council for Crime Prevention (LCCP), which helps to better coordinate crime prevention amongst different stakeholders;

INNOVATIVE ICT TOOLS

ICT innovation with the development of an application called CURiM (Collaborative Urban Risk Management), which collects data helping to assess physical and digital threats;

SOCIAL AND SPATIAL INTERVENTIONS

Social (awareness-raising) and spatial interventions aiming to improve citizens' feelings of security, for example through anti-bullying awareness sessions for students and the beautification of public spaces around the city of Piraeus;

VICTIM SUPPORT

Victim support through the creation of a Victim Information Unit, which is a one-stop-shop for victims of crime.

Underlying BSFS' holistic approach is the local security audit or baseline assessment (as per the terminology used by the University of Panteion, which conducted the study for the municipality of Piraeus). Such an audit is an indispensable first step prior to designing and implementing measures to strengthen urban security.

The purpose of this document is to present the lessons learned, attention points and recommendations drawn from the main measures implemented by the BSFS project in order to facilitate their transferability and adaptation to other cities and urban contexts.

Each of these interventions has already been discussed in detail through dedicated webinars and factsheets, which review the implementation process of the chosen measure and provide other interested local and regional authorities with inspiration and guidance.

This document provides interested local and regional authorities with a repository of general tips and advice they can apply to their own context.
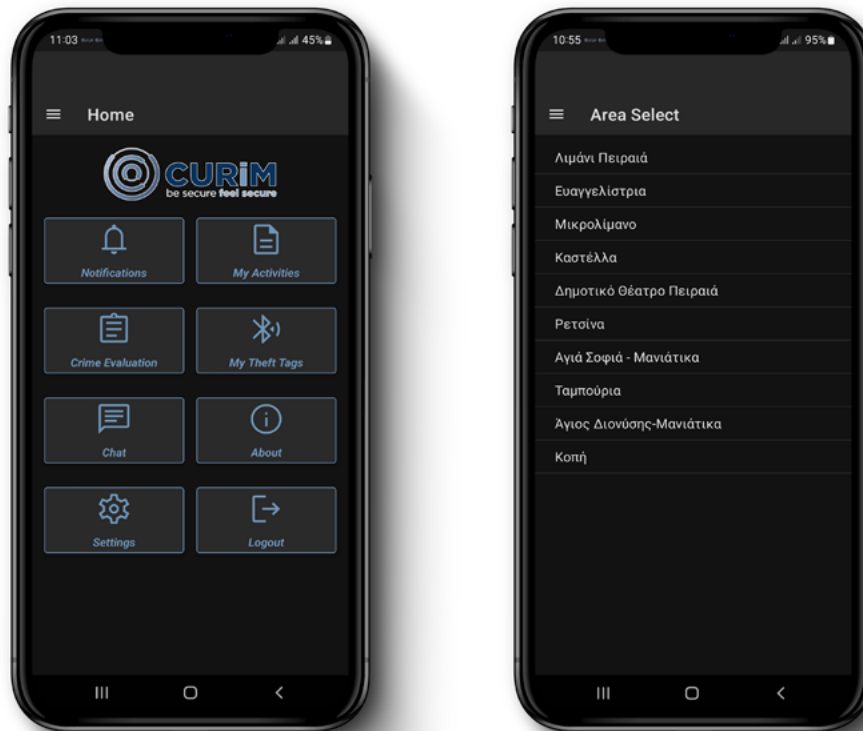
● **Key attention points and recommendations regarding:**

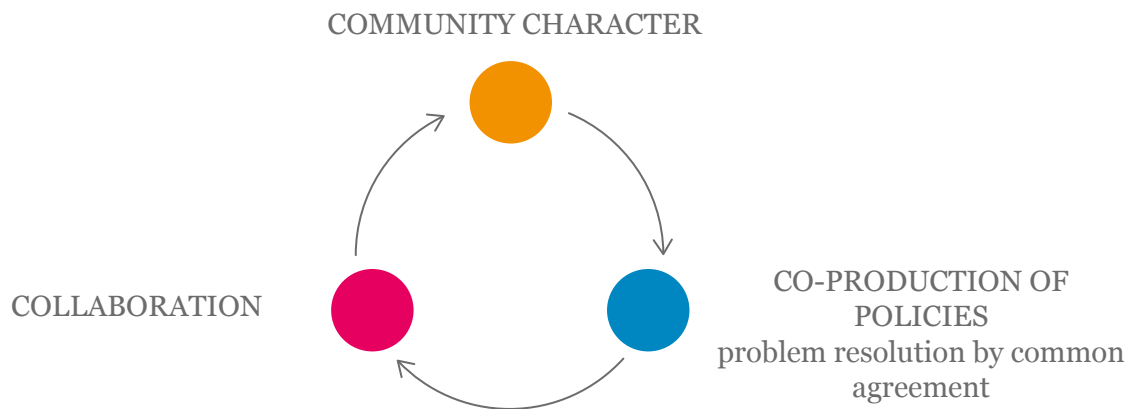● **Baseline assessment/local security audit**

- The relevant indicators should be co-defined with security stakeholders.

  The assessment shall be based on a representative sample of the population in order to produce valid data. Therefore, its design and execution should be led or supported by an experienced research partner.

- Respondents should be informed about the aim of the exercise and their role in the assessment process.

- The safety perceptions of vulnerable groups of population should be included into the baseline assessment (to compensate the fact that their perceptions are often ignored in official crime statistics).

- A back-up plan should be prepared in case the assessment cannot be conducted as planned. In the case of BSFS, the assessment was hampered by the Covid-19 lockdowns, which made it impossible to meet respondents in person.

● **Evidence-based Collaborative Urban Risk Management (CURiM) platform**

● Ensure that you have a communication strategy for making citizens aware of the application and encourage them to use it. Indeed, such tools can play an important role in strengthening social cohesion and creating a sense of belonging in the local community.

● Give citizens information to help them use the application with ease.

● Clearly inform citizens about the ways in which the data collected could/will be used, for example by the Local Council for Crime Prevention for evidence-based policy-making.

● Make sure you comply with data privacy regulations and ethical guidelines.

● Incentivise citizens to report crime, whilst being mindful that it can also lead to vigilantism. A balance should be struck.

● **Local Council for Crime Prevention (LCCP)**

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

COLLABORATION

CO-PRODUCTION OF
POLICIES
problem resolution by common
agreement

- Identify what local stakeholders you will need to involve in the LCCP, making sure they represent a range of perspectives and fields of expertise (e.g. theoretical and practical, gender perspective, etc.). Define how they will contribute to the LCCP, how they will work together, and how often they will meet.

- Ensure that local elected officials promote and present the Council in a cross-cutting way without restricting participation in the LCCP to a service or a sector of the municipality.

- Make sure LCCP's participants and especially the technical team are well trained, and provide regular follow-up training sessions.

- Ensure that the LCCP has sufficient human and financial resources to operate, as well as the necessary political and technical support.

- Work on internal (with LCCP members) and external communication (with citizens) to ensure that the LCCP's work is transparent and perceived as legitimate.

- Design a plan/strategy to enhance citizen engagement in the LCCP's daily work (e.g. the creation of specific working groups for citizens, invitation to the plenary sessions, etc.).

- Have a crisis management strategy for the LCCP to operate smoothly in times of political change and crisis.

• Victim Support Unit

Ensure that the Victim Support Unit includes a range of stakeholders, both institutional and social.

Make sure you respect the confidentiality of victims' experiences and GDPR regulations.

Limit excessive visits to the service to avoid putting the victim in danger.

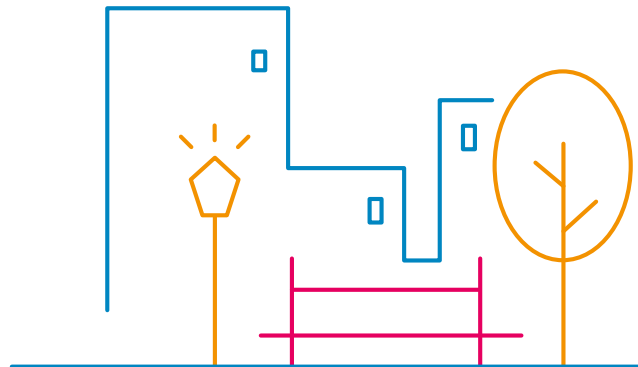Consider which hours and means of contact are the safest for the victim.

Make sure that every specialist at the Victim Support Unit complies with an ethical code.

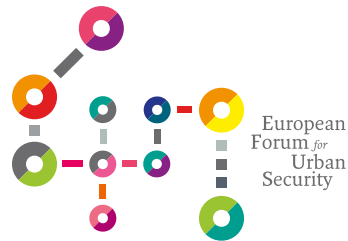● **Social interventions and awareness-raising**

- Conduct an *ex-ante* process and impact evaluation to critically examine why your chosen action was effective or not.

- Draft a message that is relevant, to the point, and specific for awareness-raising campaigns/actions. Use images that are recognisable and relatable to the chosen audience in the area. Focus on calling for action, instead of merely providing information.

- Use the medium that best allows you to reach your target audience, whether leaflets or videos, for example. Research which channels are best adapted to reach the target audience.

- Consider the complexity of security challenges in the target area and act accordingly.

- Be aware of the location of the actions. The more localised your actions are, the more they will be recognised and their impact felt by citizens. This in turn will bring citizens on board, which in turn will make the actions and overall intervention project more sustainable in the long run.

● Spatial interventions

- Make sure that the local community has a say when decisions about spatial interventions are made.

- Be mindful that some measures may result in crime displacement. The "benign" displacement of a crime is where CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, see link to the practice sheet above) initiatives result in crimes that have less impact or cause less damage to persons and properties. "Malign" displacement means displacement and replacement of a crime by one that has a greater impact and more adverse effects.

- Ensure you have a plan for the maintenance of public spaces once they have been beautified.

- Always seek to include security by design in the initial design and facility planning phase.

Project Partners