PLANNED Summer School 25/26

INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL

RIVERS AND ROUTES:

RETHINKING AND ENHANCING BELGRADE'S BLUE-GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

30 AUGUST – 6 SEPTEMBER 2026

BELGRADE, SERBIA

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

Collaborate with students and teachers from partner universities.

3 ECTS CREDITS

Participants receive a certificate signed by the University of Belgrade and the University of Ljubljana.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Students of bachelor's and master's study programmes related to spatial and urban planning, geography, civil engineering, transport planning, landscape architecture, environmental studies, regional planning, architecture and related disciplines.

6 days of lectures, fieldwork, group work and presentations.

Explore the dynamic confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers.

ORGANIZED BY

UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA | FGG Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering

University of Belgrade FACULTY OF GEOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to blue-green infrastructure as an essential component of sustainable, climate-resilient and liveable cities. Rivers, green corridors, public open spaces, water-sensitive urban areas and active mobility routes are no longer understood only as separate spatial elements, but as interconnected and multifunctional systems that support urban resilience, climate adaptation, stormwater management, water retention, biodiversity, environmental quality, public health, everyday mobility and social interaction.

Belgrade, located at the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers, offers a particularly relevant context for exploring these issues. Its riverfront areas have strong ecological, recreational, mobility-related and development potential. At the same time, they are spaces where fragmented accessibility, uneven public space quality, urban development pressures, environmental challenges and competing land-use interests become highly visible.

The PLANNED Summer School 25/26: Rivers and Routes: Rethinking and Enhancing Belgrade's Blue-Green Infrastructure is organised by the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering, and the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Geography. Through a combination of lectures, fieldwork, discussions and group work, students will explore how Belgrade's riverfronts, green systems and active mobility corridors can be analysed and improved as part of a more sustainable, inclusive, climate-resilient and liveable urban environment.

The programme will approach blue-green infrastructure not only as a spatial connection between rivers, green areas and mobility routes, but also as a planning concept that integrates nature-based solutions, water-sensitive urban design, public space quality, ecological continuity and climate adaptation.

FOR WHOM IS THE SUMMER SCHOOL INTENDED?

The summer school is intended for students of study programmes related to spatial and urban planning, geography, civil engineering, transport planning, landscape architecture, environmental studies, regional planning, architecture and other related disciplines.

Students of bachelor's and master's study programmes are welcome. The programme may be especially relevant for students whose interests are connected with urban infrastructure, sustainable mobility, blue-green infrastructure, public space, urban resilience, environmental planning, nature-based solutions or spatial development.

The programme is designed for students interested in understanding how urban spaces can be analysed and improved through an integrated approach that connects rivers, green areas, walking and cycling routes, public spaces, environmental challenges and planning instruments. It will provide students with an opportunity to explore how blue-green infrastructure can contribute simultaneously to better accessibility, improved public space quality, climate resilience, water management and more inclusive urban environments.

The summer school will be held in English.

Students who successfully complete all planned summer school activities will be awarded 3 ECTS credits and will receive an official certificate of attendance, signed by the Rector of the University of Belgrade and the Dean of the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Geography.

AIM AND GOAL OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL

The main aim of the summer school is to critically assess and rethink the role of blue-green infrastructure and active mobility corridors in the sustainable development of Belgrade, with a particular focus on selected areas along the Sava and Danube riverfronts.

The goal is to provide students with knowledge and practical experience in analysing the relationship between riverfront areas, green infrastructure, pedestrian and cycling routes, public spaces, environmental conditions and surrounding urban functions. Students will learn how to recognise spatial problems and potentials, assess accessibility and public space quality, identify environmental and climate-related challenges, and develop proposals for improving selected sites.

Special attention will be given to the connection between blue-green infrastructure and active mobility. The programme will examine how walking and cycling routes can contribute to better access to riverfronts, stronger links between urban neighbourhoods and open spaces, and more inclusive, climate-resilient and attractive public areas.

At the same time, the programme will address the multifunctional role of blue-green infrastructure in supporting climate adaptation, stormwater management, water retention, biodiversity, ecological connectivity, public health and urban liveability. In this way, active mobility will be considered not as an isolated transport issue, but as part of a wider spatial and environmental system.

WHAT WILL STUDENTS DO?

During the summer school, students will take part in lectures, discussions, guided and independent fieldwork, studio-based group work, mentoring sessions and final presentations.

In the field, students will observe and document selected riverfront areas along the Sava and Danube rivers. They will collect information through mapping, photography, site observation and basic assessment of accessibility, spatial quality, conflicts and potentials.

In addition to mobility and public space aspects, students will also consider selected environmental and climate-related characteristics of the study areas. These may include shading, heat exposure, permeability of surfaces, vegetation coverage, ecological continuity, stormwater-related issues, opportunities for water retention and the potential application of nature-based solutions.

In international and interdisciplinary groups, students will analyse the collected material and develop practical proposals for improving selected areas. Their work will focus on solutions that respond to the specific spatial, environmental, mobility-related and social context of the selected area.

At the end of the summer school, each group will present its results to teachers, mentors and invited stakeholders. The final outputs will include a short spatial diagnosis, mapped problems and potentials, photo documentation, and proposed improvements for blue-green infrastructure, active mobility, environmental quality and public space.

WHY JOIN?

Understand blue-green infrastructure and active mobility in practice

Work on real sites along Belgrade's riverfronts

Develop solutions for climate resilience, better public spaces and liveable cities

Learn in an international and interdisciplinary environment

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME AGENDA[1]

Belgrade, 30 August – 6 September 2026

Virtual Component: Online Preparatory Session

Proposed date	Thursday, 9 July 2026
Time	10:00–14:00 CEST
Format	Online
Duration	4 hours
Main purpose	Introduction of participants, presentation of the programme structure, theoretical introduction to the summer school topics, introduction to Belgrade's urban and riverfront context, and formation of working groups.

Time	Activity	Lecturer / Moderator
10:00–10:15	Opening of the virtual component and welcome words	University of Ljubljana / University of Belgrade
10:15–10:40	Introduction of students, teachers and mentors	All participants
10:40–11:00	Presentation of the Summer School: objectives, structure, learning outcomes, expected outputs and working methods	Branko Protić, Bojana Pjanović
11:00–11:15	Short Break	
11:15–11:55	Introductory lecture	University of Ljubljana team
11:55–12:35	Introductory lecture	University of Belgrade team
12:35–12:50	Q&A and moderated discussion	All participants
12:50–13:20	Introduction to case-study areas, fieldwork logic and possible research questions	University of Belgrade team / Partner mentors
13:20–13:45	Formation of working groups	Coordinators and mentors
13:45–14:00	Final remarks, preparatory reading and next steps before the physical component in Belgrade	Bojana Pjanović, Branko Protić, Jana Tovšak

Suggested preparatory materials for students: short readings on blue-green infrastructure, urban resilience, climate adaptation, active mobility, Belgrade's riverfront development, and basic fieldwork/mapping methods.

[1] the organising team reserves the right to change the programme if needed.

Physical Component: Belgrade, 30 August – 6 September 2026

Venue: University of Belgrade – Faculty of Geography / selected field locations in Belgrade

Main working format: lectures, guest lectures, guided field visit, independent student fieldwork, studio-based group work, mentoring sessions and final presentations.

Day 0 Sunday, 30 August 2026: Arrival and informal welcome

Time	Activity	Venue
16:00 - 18:00	Arrival of participants and informal registration	TBD
18:00 - 20:00	Informal welcome and ice-break gathering: introduction of students, teachers/mentors; practical information about Belgrade and the Summer School	Informal venue
20:00 onwards	Optional informal dinner or walk through the city centre	Belgrade city centre
Purpose of the day: The arrival day is intended for informal networking, initial orientation and creating a positive working atmosphere before the official start of the programme.		

Day 1 Monday, 31 August 2026: Setting the framework

Time	Activity	Venue
09:00–09:30	Official opening and welcome addresses	Opening session
09:30–10:00	Introduction to the Summer School: objectives, structure, outputs, assessment and expected final products	Introductory session
10:00–10:45	Lecture 1	Lecture/ Partner teacher
10:45–11:00	Coffee break	
11:00–12:00	Lecture 2	Lecture / Partner teacher / UB-GEF
12:00–13:30	Lunch break	
13:30–15:00	Methodological workshop: how to observe, map and evaluate. Presentation of case-study areas, available data, maps and fieldwork materials	Workshop
15:00–16:00	Group work: defining research questions, group roles and initial fieldwork plan	Group work
16:00–16:30	Daily wrap-up and instructions for Day 2	Discussion
Expected output of Day 1: Each working group should define its preliminary research focus, understand the assigned case-study area, and prepare an initial plan for field observation and data collection.		

Day 2 Tuesday, 1 September 2026: Belgrade context and field visit

Time	Activity	Type
09:00–10:00	Guest lecture: Belgrade riverfronts, green areas and implementation challenges	Guest lecture
10:00–10:30	Coffee break	
10:45–11:30	Comparative examples from partner countries: planning and managing blue-green infrastructure related projects	Short presentations / Partner teachers
11:30–12:00	Preparation for the guided field visit: routes, observation sheets, safety instructions and group tasks	Fieldwork preparation / UB-GEF team
12:00–13:30	Lunch break	
13:30–16:30	Guided field visit through the wider problem area: Sava/Danube riverfront, green-public spaces and conflict points	Guided fieldwork /UB-GEF team and mentors
16:30–17:30	Informal field debrief over drinks: first impressions, key problems and possible focus areas	Discussion / informal venue

Expected output of Day 2: Students should gain a common spatial understanding of the wider problem area and identify preliminary problems, potentials and research priorities for their group work.

Day 3 Wednesday, 2 September 2026: From observation to evidence

Time	Activity	Type
09:00–09:45	Workshop: Fieldwork methods for assessing problem areas	Workshop / All teachers-mentors
09:45–10:15	Group work: final preparation of observation sheets, mapping tasks and field routes	Group work
10:15–10:45	Coffee break	
10:45–13:30	Independent fieldwork by student groups: mapping, observation, photo documentation and short interviews/surveys where feasible	Fieldwork
13:30–14:30	Lunch break on location	
14:30–16:30	Continued independent fieldwork / return to classroom and upload of collected materials	Fieldwork / studio work
16:30–17:15	Mentors' check-in: review of collected material, identification of gaps and planning of next analytical steps	Mentoring session

Expected output of Day 3: Each group should collect sufficient field material: notes, photographs, mapped issues, accessibility observations, conflict points and first ideas for possible improvements.

Day 4 Thursday, 3 September 2026: Analysis, mapping and development of alternative solutions

Time	Activity	Type
09:00–09:30	Morning briefing: from field notes to spatial diagnosis	Briefing
09:30–11:00	Group work: problem mapping, identification of potentials and priority sections	Studio work
11:00–11:15	Coffee break	
11:15–12:30	Mentoring round 1: feedback from teachers and partner experts	Mentoring
12:30–13:45	Lunch break	
14:00–15:00	Stakeholder session: input from local experts, city administration, public companies, NGOs and professional associations	Stakeholder session
15:00–16:00	Group work: developing intervention concepts and alternative solutions	Studio work
16:00–17:00	Interim presentations: short group presentations and feedback	Pin-up / critique

Expected output of Day 4: Each group should prepare a clear spatial diagnosis and draft proposal, including mapped problems, potentials, priority interventions and the basic structure of the final presentation/poster.

Day 5 Friday, 4 September 2026: Finalisation, presentations and closure

Time	Activity	Type
09:00–10:30	Group work: finalising maps, posters and presentations	Studio work
10:30–10:45	Coffee break	
10:45–12:00	Final mentoring and technical preparation	Mentoring
12:00–13:00	Lunch break	
13:00–15:00	Final presentations of student groups	Presentations
15:00–15:45	Discussion with teachers, mentors and invited stakeholders	Discussion
15:45–16:15	Evaluation of the Summer School	Evaluation
16:15–16:45	Closing remarks and certificates	Closing session
17:00 onwards	Optional informal closing gathering	Social activity

Expected output of Day 5: Each group presents its final results, including a diagnosis of the selected area, key mapped problems and potentials, and proposed improvements for blue-green infrastructure and public space quality that respond to the specific spatial, environmental, mobility-related and social context of the selected area.

Day 6 Saturday, 5 September 2026: Optional study visit and informal closing

Time	Activity	Type
11:00–13:00	Optional thematic walk: Belgrade riverfronts, historic core and urban transformation	Study visit
13:00–14:00	Informal lunch / farewell	Informal activity
Afternoon	Free time / departures	

Purpose of the day: This day may be organised as an optional spatial and cultural orientation activity for participants staying in Belgrade during the weekend. It is not intended as a core working day.

Suggested final student outputs

1. Short spatial diagnosis of the selected riverfront section or active mobility corridor.
2. Map of key problems and potentials.
3. Photo documentation from the fieldwork.
4. Proposal of context-sensitive interventions for improving blue-green infrastructure, walking, cycling and public space quality.
5. Final poster or presentation.
6. Short group reflection on the methodology, challenges and lessons learned.