

NEWSLETTER #2

DIPS moves from research to implementation



Needs Analysis Completed

One of the first major activities of the project has been the completion of the DIPS Needs Analysis phase.

The analysis examined the situation in Ecuador, Paraguay and Argentina, combining desk research with input from academic communities, public authorities and labour market stakeholders.

The findings confirmed several common challenges across the three countries. Existing university programmes provide strong theoretical foundations in areas such as architecture, urban planning and social analysis, but important gaps remain in the practical application of this knowledge.

The analysis also highlighted the need for stronger integration of inclusive design principles, universal accessibility, gender-sensitive planning, participatory approaches and advanced digital tools into academic education.

These findings now provide an evidence base for the development of the DIPS Master's programme.

Training on Curriculum Development

On **12 and 13 May 2026**, DIPS implemented a **two-day online training** activity, aimed at strengthening the capacities of academic staff from the Latin American partner universities.

Topics included spatial justice, human-centred urbanism, gender and environmental sustainability, co-creation of nature-based solutions, urban comfort, community-led planning and the economic sustainability of public space projects.

The programme brought together European academics, Latin American experts and applied researchers, creating opportunities for exchange between different academic and professional perspectives while supporting academic staff in the development of the new DIPS Master's courses.

Strengthening Digital Capacities

A second and separate training activity took place on **26 and 28 May 2026** that consisted of two online workshops designed to strengthen the digital skills required for the future delivery of the DIPS Master's programme.

The first workshop focused on Moodle, including its navigation, course structure and core functionalities for managing learning materials, assignments, quizzes, communication and assessment. The second workshop introduced a range of interactive and multimedia tools – Miro, Interacty, Notebook, Lumen5 and Flourish – and explored how these can be incorporated into digital course design to support more engaging, visual and collaborative learning experiences. The workshops were closely linked to the digital needs previously identified among the Latin American partner institutions.

All seven Latin American partner institutions were represented. A total of **38 participants** took part in the workshops, while women represented 65% of the trained participants. Average self-assessed digital confidence increased from 3.89 to 4.55 out of 5.



Local Networking Event at UPSE

On **22 May 2026**, the Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE) organised the **first DIPS Local Networking Events in Ecuador**.

The event introduced the DIPS project and the future Master's programme and brought together representatives from academia, local authorities, professional associations and the construction sector.



A panel discussion entitled "Designing and Building for Diversity" explored the role of universities, municipalities and the private sector in promoting more inclusive public spaces.

The programme also included an interactive redesign workshop, during which participants worked in groups to analyse selected public spaces and propose improvements based on inclusion and accessibility principles.

In this way, the event combined dissemination, stakeholder engagement and hands-on co-creation, while strengthening the connection between the DIPS project and local actors involved in the planning and development of public space.



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Local Networking Event at UDA

On **30 June 2026**, the Universidad del Azuay (UDA) organised the **second Local Networking Event in Cuenca, Ecuador**, combining project dissemination with participatory discussion and co-creation activities.

The event introduced the DIPS project and the future Master's programme to the academic community and local stakeholders and created a space for discussion around the accessibility and inclusiveness of public spaces in Cuenca.

Participants represented academia, public authorities, civil society organisations, foundations and the productive sector. Through participatory activities, they identified barriers and opportunities affecting local public spaces and worked together to develop redesign proposals based on principles of universal design and inclusion. The event also encouraged participants to experience accessibility challenges from different user perspectives, helping to translate the discussion on inclusion into practical and context-based design thinking.

2nd Transnational Project Meeting in Rosario

From **14 to 18 September 2026**, the DIPS consortium met at the Universidad Nacional de Rosario, Argentina, for the project's **2nd Transnational Project Meeting**.

The meeting brought together representatives from the partner institutions to review the progress achieved during the first year of implementation and coordinate the next phase of the project.

The agenda covered project and financial management, quality assurance, infrastructure development, communication and dissemination, the development of the Virtual Learning Environment, curriculum development, accreditation and the preparation of forthcoming project activities. Particular attention was given to the development of the Master's curriculum and accreditation dossier, as well as to the different national accreditation pathways in Argentina, Ecuador and Paraguay.



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Curriculum Development Advances Through Peer Review

A central focus of the Rosario meeting was the academic development of the DIPS Master's programme. Partners reviewed the proposed course list and general curriculum dossier and carried out the Peers' Review.

allowed the participating institutions to examine the overall structure, academic content, learning outcomes and implementation logic of the programme, exchange feedback and identify areas requiring further refinement before the next stages of development. The discussion also underlined the need to maintain a common academic framework across the consortium while allowing sufficient flexibility for adaptation to national requirements. The consortium also discussed the different accreditation pathways that will need to be followed in Argentina, Ecuador and Paraguay, taking into account the specific national and institutional requirements of each country.



AESOP Provides Quality Input to the Master's Curriculum

The academic development of the programme was further supported through the AESOP Quality Input. During the Rosario meeting, the consortium reviewed recommendations aimed at strengthening the academic quality and relevance of the future Master's programme.

Particular attention was given to the need to strengthen Latin American perspectives and authors, integrate participatory research methodologies, and clarify the pedagogical approaches to be followed within individual modules.

This contribution supports the consortium in developing a programme that combines international academic standards with the specific experiences, needs and realities of the participating Latin American countries.



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What's Next

Following the progress achieved during this period, the consortium will continue to focus on the further development and implementation of the key project components. In particular, the next phase of work will concentrate on:

- finalising and refining the Master's curriculum;
- preparing the accreditation processes in Argentina, Ecuador and Paraguay;
- further developing the Virtual Learning Environment;
- establishing the Infrastructure Centres; and
- continuing local networking, communication and awareness-raising activities.



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