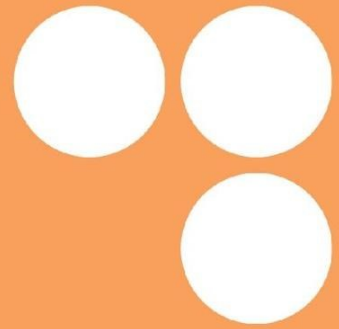


TWIN2EXPAND



FOCUS GROUP RESULTS REPORT

'DISCUSSION AND PRIORITIZATION OF KEY ISSUES FOR THE
STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE PEDIEOS RIVER | JULY 2024

Document Description: This report presents the results of a structured focus group conducted to inform the strategic planning of the Pedieos River corridor. It documents the participatory methodology applied, including ideation, clustering of proposals, and a two-stage prioritization process involving both group-level and plenary evaluation. A total of forty-three ideas were generated across three thematic areas: Traffic and Connectivity,

twinning towards
research excellence
in evidence-based planning
and urban design



Environment, and Public Space and Activities. The analysis identifies convergences, shifts in priorities, and cross-cutting strategic issues that emerged through stakeholder engagement. The findings provide an evidence-based foundation to guide the sustainable, inclusive, and integrated development of the Pedieos River area.

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Executive Summary

The focus group held on July 3, 2024, examined and prioritized key issues related to the strategic planning of the Pedieos River corridor. Through a structured and participatory process, representatives and stakeholders engaged in ideation, clustering, and cross-group evaluation. In total, forty-three (43) ideas were generated across three thematic groups demonstrating a high level of engagement and constructive dialogue.

- Traffic and Connectivity,
- Environment (Conservation, Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure), and
- Public Space and Activities

The results highlighted shared strategic priorities across themes. Accessibility and safe connectivity emerged as fundamental conditions for the corridor's functionality. Environmental responsibility, including minimizing ecological footprint and promoting awareness, was strongly emphasized. At the same time, the development of social and cultural activities along the river was recognized as essential to strengthening its role as an active public space.

The two-stage prioritization process, within groups and subsequently at plenary level, allowed confirmation and refinement of the most pressing challenges and opportunities. The findings provide a structured basis for advancing the strategic plan, supporting sustainable, resilient, and inclusive development of the Pedieos River corridor.

Focus Group Results Report:

‘Discussion and Prioritization of Key Issues for the Strategic Planning of the Pedieos River’

1. Introduction

1.1. Context and Objective

On July 3, 2024, as part of the work of the SURF lab group in the TWIN2EXPAND project, a focus group focused on the Strategic Planning of the Pedieos River was organized. Participants of the focus group were representatives from various agencies and stakeholders involved or related to the area of the Pedieos River.

The aim of the meeting was for the individuals to discuss and arrive at a set of priorities regarding the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Pedieos River, with a view to ensuring the enhancement of accessibility, the protection and improvement of the environment, and the creation of active public spaces along the river.

The report presents the process of planning and implementing the focus group, and summarizes the key findings collected from the participants and then recorded by the facilitators of the groups.

Chapter 2 follows to present the approach taken, the structure designed and how the individual two parts of the focus group were conducted.

2. Focus Group Approach, Structure and Conduct

This chapter presents the approach followed, the stages of preparation and the way the focus group was conducted.

2.1. Approach

The focus group was based on a participatory and interactive approach promoting an environment conducive to democratic and open dialogue, creative thinking and consensus building among participants.

The following paragraphs present the two main parts of the focus group, as well as Structured Democratic Dialogue (SDD)¹ techniques that were utilized and adapted for the needs of this particular meeting.

¹ The Structured Democratic Dialogue method is a structured and interactive process of developing and recording opinions on a complex issue or problem or question, leading to participatory decision-making

Part A - Group Discussion: Ideation and Prioritization

The first part was based on the Nominal Group Technique, a structured method for small-group discussion. It consisted of the following stages, adapted to meet the needs of the focus group:

1. Presentation of the topic to each group in the form of a guiding question that the group was asked to address.
2. Individual ideation, during which each participant recorded three ideas on separate post-it notes in response to the question.
3. Presentation of all individual ideas, followed by group discussion to clarify concepts and reasoning.
4. Collection and placement of all ideas on a shared large sheet at the center of the group.
5. Voting process (up to five votes per participant) to identify the five most important ideas.
6. Presentation and clarification of each group's five dominant ideas in plenary.

Part B - Prioritization and Confirmation

The top five ideas from each group that gathered the highest number of votes in the previous phase are used in the second part, consisting of the following stages, as followed for the needs of the focus group:

1. Transfer of the (five) dominant ideas of each group to a new piece of large paper and post it on the board. The three large papers are placed next to each other.
2. Conduct of a plenary vote (with up to three votes per topic, six votes in total) where the members of each group choose the (three) most important ideas of the other two groups.
3. Targeted discussion of comments on variations or confirmations, comparing votes cast by each group with the new votes received from the other two groups.

The importance of part b' is the confirmation of the prioritization by the plenary and the reduction of prejudices for the key issues in each of the three themes.

2.2. Preparation

The SURF Lab study team and the project supervisor working on the TWIN2EXPAND project identified three thematic areas to be explored through the focus group process, in relation to the Pedieos River Strategic Planning initiative. The three topics were:

- a) Traffic and Connectivity

- b) Environment (Conservation, Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure)
- c) Public Space and Activities

Participants were selected through a purposive invitation process to ensure diverse representation in terms of institutional affiliation, professional role, perceptions, opinions, and experiences related to both the topic and the study area.

In particular, personal invitations were sent via email and, in most cases, followed by phone communication, during which consent was obtained and participation was confirmed.

The composition of the focus groups was deliberately structured during the preparation phase, primarily based on institutional and professional diversity, in order to facilitate the collection of a broad range of perspectives and experiences.

A total of fourteen (14) participants took part in the process. They were divided into three (3) focus groups, each corresponding to one of the three thematic areas, ensuring that the sessions could be effectively conducted within the allocated two-hour time frame.

The participants in each thematic focus group are presented below. For confidentiality purposes, all names have been coded to prevent identification in the data presented.

Table 1. Focus Group – Topic 1: Traffic and Connectivity

Code	Profession / Organization
P1	Architect, Local Resident
P2	Cyprus Confederation of Disabled People's Organizations (CYSOA)
P3	Intermunicipal Development Projects of Nicosia (DAEL 1)
P4	Area Businessman
P5	Architect

Table 3. Focus Group – Topic 2: Environment (Conservation, Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure)

Code	Profession / Organization
P6	Member of the District Primary School Board of Directors
P7	Area Activist
P8	Intermunicipal Development Projects of Nicosia (DAEL 2)
P9	Architect, Local Resident

Table 2. Focus Group – Topic 3: Public Space and Activities

Code	Profession / Organization
P10	Area User
P11	Cyprus Institute

P12	Municipality of Strovolos
P13	Intermunicipal Development Projects of Nicosia (DAEL 3)
P14	Intermunicipal Development Projects of Nicosia (DAEL 4)

2.3. Focus Group Structure and Conduct

On the day of the focus group, and prior to the commencement of the session, the SURF Lab team of the TWIN2EXPAND project presented a concise overview of the Strategic Planning framework for the Pedieos River. The presentation also clarified the objectives of the process and the rationale for involving stakeholder representatives in the discussion.

The meeting was held in a specially designed and equipped room at the premises of the University of Cyprus. Three separate tables were arranged to facilitate group work, and all necessary materials had been prepared and placed at the center of each table in advance.

The structure of the focus group was designed in accordance with the methodological approach outlined earlier (see Section 2.1, Approach).

Introduction: Process Explanation and Instructions to the Groups

As the groups had been pre-assigned by the organizing team, participants were guided upon arrival to locate and sit at the table corresponding to their designated group, in order to ensure efficient time management. At the same time, the organizing team obtained written consent from all participants regarding the recording of photographic and audio material.

At the beginning of the session, the coordinator introduced the structure of the focus group, presented the three thematic areas and their respective guiding questions, and clarified the roles of the participants, the focus group coordinator, and the group facilitators.

Each individual facilitator was responsible for coordinating and guiding their group to follow the steps of the structured process within the time frames set.

Discussion in Groups: Ideation and Prioritization

The process in each group started with introductions. The facilitators soon moved on to guide people to think about the question posed to their group.

The three questions posed to each group were as follows:

Group / Unit 1 – Traffic and Connectivity	
Thematic Area	Guiding Question
Traffic Connectivity	– What are the key issues that should be prioritized in the Strategic Planning of the Pedieos River regarding Traffic and Connectivity?

Group / Unit 2 – Environment (Conservation, Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure)	
Thematic Area	Guiding Question
Environment (Conservation, Biodiversity, Infrastructure)	– What are the key issues that should be prioritized in the Strategic Planning of the Pedieos River regarding Environment (Conservation, Biodiversity, and Green Infrastructure)?

Group / Unit 3 – Public Space and Activities	
Thematic Area	Guiding Question
Public Space Activities	– What are the key issues that should be prioritized in the Strategic Planning of the Pedieos River regarding Public Space and Activities?

First, participants in each group were given time for individual reflection and asked to write down up to three ideas, one on each post-it note. They were then invited to present and explain their ideas, while the

facilitator ensured that all members were given the opportunity to speak in turn. Each idea was placed on a large white sheet of paper at the center of the table, making it visible to all participants (Fig. 1–2).

After all ideas had been collected, participants were given five votes and asked to select five different ideas within their group that they considered most important. Voting was carried out using adhesive dots placed directly on the large sheet (Fig. 3).

The first part concluded with each group placing its large sheet on a board so that it was visible to the plenary. Each group then presented its five highest-ranked ideas, followed by responses to clarifying questions concerning the content of the ideas or the rationale behind their prioritization (Fig. 4).

In total, forty-three (43) ideas were generated across the three group tables. However, as noted in the facilitators' observations presented in the following section, participants had already begun informally clustering related ideas prior to the voting process.





Fig. 1-2. During the first part, people brainstorm and present to their group three ideas, based on the question they were asked.





Fig. 3-4. During the first part, after brainstorming and presenting the ideas to the groups, individuals vote and rank the group's ideas as a whole, in order to highlight the top five.

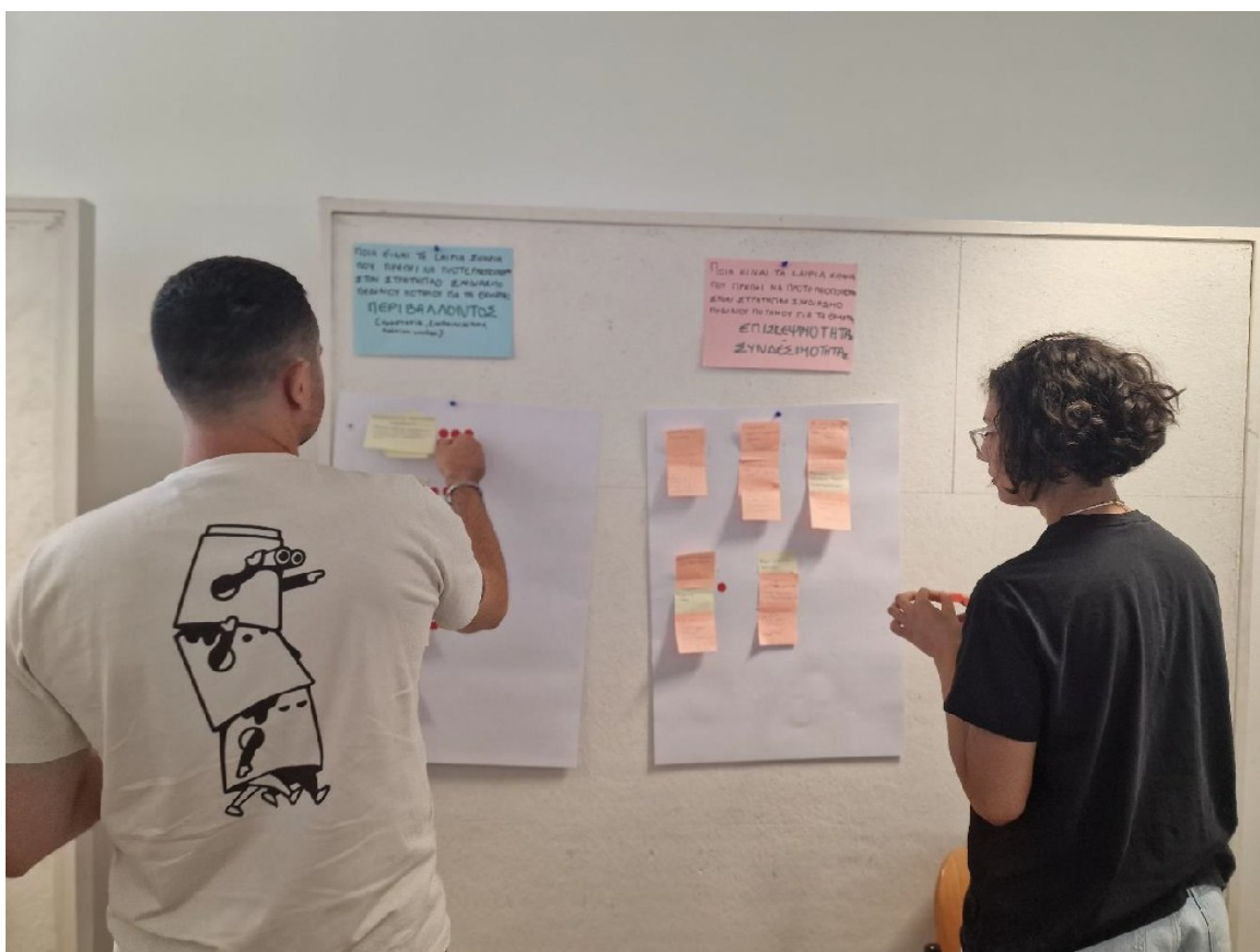
Prioritization and Confirmation

In the second part, the facilitators transferred the five dominant ideas from their respective groups onto new sheets of paper, which were then displayed on a board. Each group's set of ideas was presented separately and positioned side by side for comparison.

Once the voting display was prepared and given that participants were already familiar with the ideas generated by all groups from the first phase, each participant was allocated three votes for each of the other two groups (six votes in total). They were asked to select six different ideas they considered most important, placing adhesive dots next to the corresponding ideas. This process led to the final cross-group prioritization of key issues for each thematic question (Fig. 5).

Each facilitator was responsible for counting the votes and recording, next to each idea, both the number of votes received from their own group in the first phase and the additional votes received from the other two groups in the plenary vote (Fig. 6).

The second part concluded with the facilitators presenting the updated results and reporting observations on convergences, divergences, and confirmations that emerged through the cross-group evaluation process.



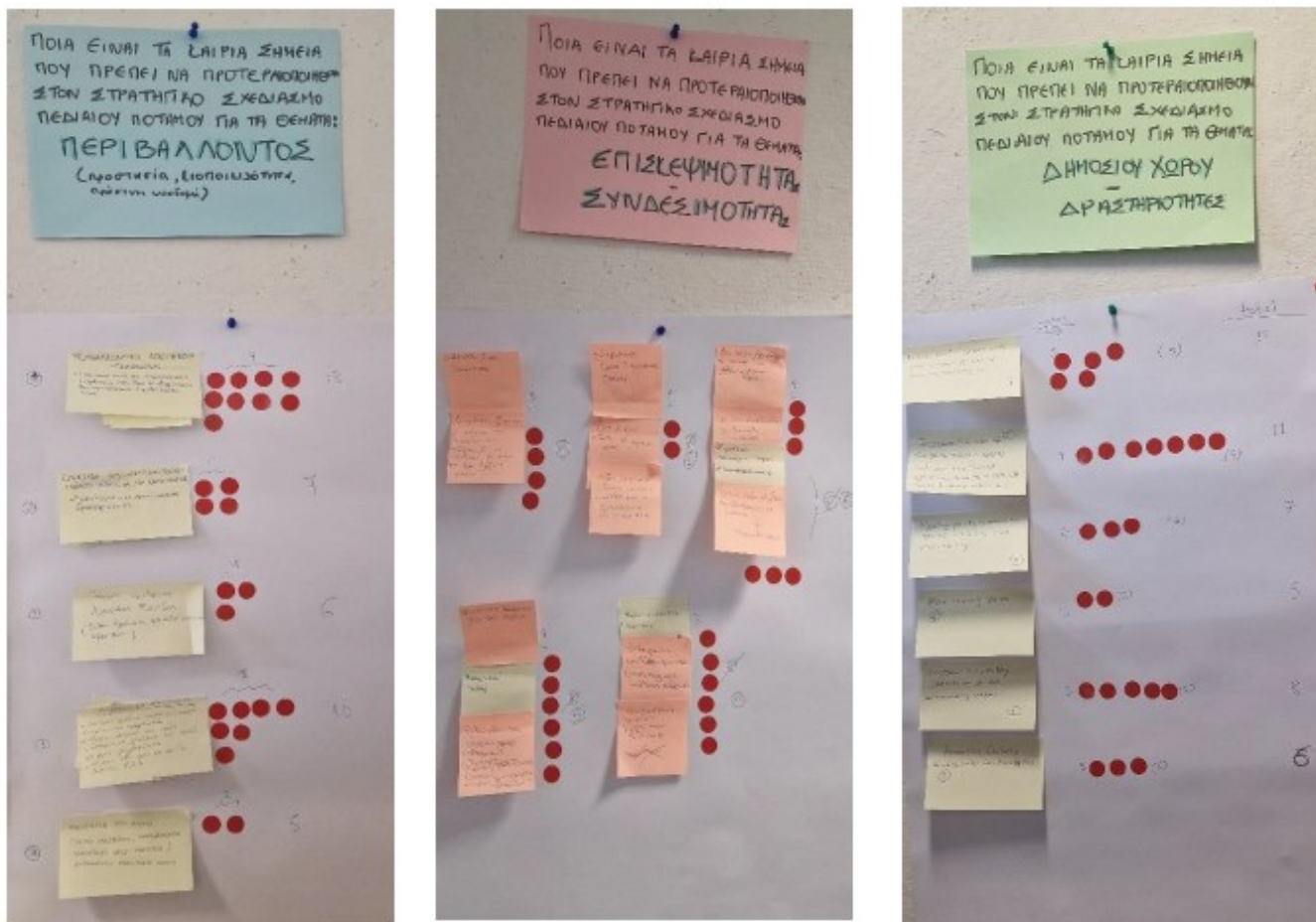


Fig. 5-8. During the second part of the focus group, each group votes the ideas they find more important from those presented by the other two groups, in order to achieve the final prioritization, with confirmations or even variations in the ranking.

2.4. Limitations

It should be noted that the purposive sampling method used to select participants may limit the generalizability of the findings to the wider population. Consequently, the views expressed during the focus group may not fully represent all individuals associated with, working in, or residing near the Pedieos River area.

Additionally, participants may have provided responses they perceived as socially desirable or aligned with the expectations of the institutions or groups they represented. Although such bias cannot be entirely excluded, efforts were made to create a comfortable and open environment in order to encourage honest and balanced contributions.

The limited duration of the meeting did not allow sufficient time for introductory interaction or ice-breaking activities among participants, which may have influenced group dynamics.

Moreover, there were moments during the process that shifted toward a participatory workshop format rather than a strictly structured democratic dialogue. Some participants expressed the need to move beyond the concise presentation of ideas and engage in deeper discussion and exchange of views. While this was accommodated to some extent, time constraints limited the depth of deliberation. At the same time, the process, while designed as a structured democratic dialogue, revealed the importance of methodological flexibility, allowing groups to refine, cluster, and critically compare their ideas, identifying overlaps and differences.

Finally, the choice of a more hands-on approach in recording ideas and presenting results proved relatively time-consuming. However, this approach contributed positively to participants' sense of engagement, ownership, and creativity within the process.

Chapter 3 follows, presenting the findings from both the first and second parts of the focus group process.

3. Results

This chapter presents the ideas generated by the participants and documented by the group facilitators. It also reports observations regarding differences and confirmations that emerged between the outcomes of the first and second parts of the focus group process.

3.1. Ideation and Prioritization Results – Part A

Following the introductory phase, participants engaged in group work to generate ideas and select their five most important priorities. This was followed by the presentation of each group's top five ideas to the plenary.

The following sections present the results of the ideation process and the selection of the five dominant ideas for each thematic area.

Topic 1: Traffic – Connectivity

The table below presents the dominant ideas discussed within the group. During the discussion phase, participants identified a significant number of overlapping or closely related proposals. As a result, they clustered similar ideas and reached consensus on five broader thematic categories that incorporated

these convergences. The table also indicates the ranking of these ideas based on the internal voting results of Group 1.

Topic 1 – Traffic and Connectivity Ideation Clusters and Internal Voting Results (Group 1)		
Rank	Description of Idea / Group of Ideas	Votes (Group 1)
1st Place	<p>1. Flat Traffic Areas – The areas around Pedieos should be as flat as possible, despite the natural environment. Where necessary, ramps should be installed for ascent and descent.</p> <p>2. Widening, Levelling and Surface Regeneration – Improvement of the pedestrian and cycling surface to ensure smooth movement. The Pedieos linear park is one of the main running and cycling arteries in Nicosia, yet the current surface condition does not adequately support these activities. The deck has deteriorated over time, and accessibility normalization for persons with disabilities, strollers, and elderly users is essential.</p>	5
2nd Place	<p>3. Direct Transversal Access to Residences – Improvement of cross-connections between neighbourhoods (e.g., Agioi Omologites and parts of Old Strovolos) where lack of sidewalks limits accessibility. Shared walkways could enhance convenience.</p> <p>4. Neighbourhood Access Points – Development of an unofficial but recognizable network of entrances corresponding to neighbourhood paths.</p> <p>5. Continuous Access Route – Creation of a continuous route connecting neighbourhood, city, and park levels. Current issues include uneven ground, insufficient lighting, and rainwater runoff affecting park trails.</p> <p>6. Entrances – Exits and Surface Smoothing – Entrances and exits are not clearly identifiable and are not accessible for all users (PwD, strollers). Lack of signage and uneven surfaces create barriers.</p>	4

<p>3rd Place</p>	<p>7. Pedestrian Safety Standards – Need for application of urban safety standards (railings, warnings, regulated crossings). Sidewalks should prioritize pedestrian use rather than aesthetic obstruction.</p> <p>8. General Safety Concerns – Safety was referenced without detailed elaboration, as it overlapped with other issues.</p> <p>9. Safe and Sufficient Parking – Insufficient, poorly lit, and poorly maintained parking areas. Concerns include thefts, accidents, lack of surveillance, inadequate bus provisions, and traffic congestion within parking areas.</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>4th Place</p>	<p>10. Separation of Different User Flows – Clear separation between pedestrian and cycling areas, including differentiated surfaces. Surfaces should accommodate wheelchairs, strollers, and elderly users.</p> <p>11. User-Friendly Parking for Hyperlocal Users – Convenient parking for frequent users such as running groups and families.</p> <p>12. Pedieos as a High-Accessibility Axis – Development of a formal network of entrances enabling entry from one neighbourhood and exit to another. Strong signage is required, especially for non-local users.</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5th Place</p>	<p>13. Activities Infrastructure – Activities exist but are sporadic and lack supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>14. Services and Amenities – Need for water points, benches, toilets, playgrounds, group gathering areas, and maintenance infrastructure.</p> <p>15. Experiential Movement Through Pedieos – Encouraging pedestrian movement through the river landscape rather than exclusively via bridges, enhancing experiential engagement with the river corridor.</p>	<p>3</p>

Topic 2: Environment (Conservation, Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure)

The table below presents the dominant ideas that emerged following discussion and collaborative refinement within the group. During the exchange, additional proposals were introduced under shared thematic directions. Several ideas were expressed by two or three participants in complementary or partially overlapping ways. Where convergence was identified, these ideas were consolidated, reformulated collectively, and rewritten clearly on new post-it notes. The table also indicates the ranking of the ideas based on the internal voting results of Group 2.

Topic 2 – Environment (Conservation, Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure) Ideation Clusters and Internal Voting Results (Group 2)		
Rank	Description of Idea / Group of Ideas	Votes (Group 2)
1st Place	1. Environmental Footprint – Protection of the natural environment during visitation and intervention. Proposed actions should not burden the existing ecosystem and must respect the character and biodiversity of each area. Emphasis was placed on sustainability in both interventions and construction processes, promoting softer and more nature-based approaches.	4
2nd Place	2. Extension and Reinforcement of the Green Network – Vertical and longitudinal expansion (widening) of the existing park. Enhancement of the park as a “green lung,” introduction of new activities at entrance points, and spatial diffusion of green areas and activities into the wider urban fabric.	3
3rd Place	3. Analysis of the Current Situation – Comprehensive assessment of the existing ecosystem (flora and fauna), documentation of pollution levels and other environmental pressures, as a prerequisite for proposing targeted and evidence-based solutions.	3

4th Place	4. Environmental Awareness and Education – Strengthening environmental consciousness through the active involvement of schools and children in educational programs (e.g., tree planting, park cleaning, environmental games). Development of coordinated awareness actions with shared objectives across different areas.	3
5th Place	5. Protection and Security Measures – Addressing pollution, waste management, and coping strategies for environmental degradation. Tackling issues related to stray animals and insufficient lighting during night and early morning hours. Emphasis on systematic involvement of competent authorities to ensure long-term protection and safety.	3

Topic 3: Public Space – Activities

The table below presents the dominant ideas that emerged following discussion and collaborative refinement within the group. During the exchange, additional proposals were introduced under shared thematic directions. Several ideas were expressed by two or three participants in complementary or overlapping ways. Where convergence was identified, these ideas were consolidated, reformulated collectively, and rewritten clearly on new post-it notes. The table also indicates the ranking of the ideas based on the internal voting results of Group 3.

Topic 3 – Public Space and Activities Ideation Clusters and Internal Voting Results (Group 3)		
Rank	Description of Idea / Group of Ideas	Votes (Group 3)
1st Place	1. Safety, Emergency Access and Lighting – Improvement of overall safety conditions within the park, ensuring adequate access for emergency vehicles and upgrading existing lighting infrastructure.	5
2nd Place	2. Programmed Actions and Events – Development of a structured program of activities for adults and children. Proposed actions include	4

	cultural events (e.g., art exhibitions), community gatherings (e.g., dog shows), and informal social uses such as birthday celebrations.	
3rd Place	3. Creation of “Destination Points” – Establishment of identifiable spaces within the park that encourage users, including new visitors, to stop, gather, and spend time. These nodes would function as spatial attractors within the linear park.	4
4th Place (tie)	4. Diversification of Seating Types – Provision of varied seating options to accommodate different user groups and activities.	3
4th Place (tie)	5. Improved Accessibility from Neighbouring Areas – Enhancement of pedestrian and cycling access from surrounding neighbourhoods.	3
4th Place (tie)	6. Infrastructure for Basic Amenities – Improvement of essential infrastructure, including access to drinking water, public toilets, and organized picnic areas.	3

Analytical Synthesis of Part A Results

The results of the first phase reveal a clear convergence around three interrelated priorities: accessibility, safety, and environmental responsibility. Although each group worked within a distinct thematic framework, overlapping concerns emerged across topics, indicating shared perceptions regarding the current condition and future role of the Pedieos River corridor.

Accessibility appeared as a cross-cutting issue. In Topic 1 (Traffic–Connectivity), accessibility was primarily framed in terms of surface quality, continuity of routes, transversal neighbourhood connections, and inclusive design for persons with disabilities, elderly users, and families with strollers. In Topic 3 (Public Space–Activities), accessibility re-emerged through the need for improved connections from neighbouring areas and better internal infrastructure. Even in Topic 2 (Environment), the notion of extension and reinforcement of the green network suggested improved spatial integration within the

wider urban fabric. This indicates that participants perceive Pedieos not only as a recreational corridor but as an infrastructural spine of metropolitan relevance.

Safety constituted a second recurring priority. Group 1 emphasized pedestrian safety standards and secure parking, while Group 3 ranked safety, emergency access, and lighting as the highest priority. In Topic 2, protection and security were framed in environmental terms, including pollution control and systematic involvement of competent authorities. The recurrence of safety across themes suggests that users experience the park as spatially valuable but operationally vulnerable.

Environmental responsibility was most explicitly articulated in Topic 2, where minimizing environmental footprint and conducting ecosystem analysis ranked highly. However, environmental considerations were implicitly present in other groups' concerns regarding surface materials, green expansion, and experiential movement through the river landscape. This reflects an underlying consensus that interventions should enhance, rather than compromise, the ecological character of the corridor.

A further observation concerns the balance between structure and flexibility. While participants were asked to generate concise ideas, many groups naturally moved toward clustering and synthesizing broader categories before voting. This indicates a tendency toward systemic thinking rather than isolated problem identification.

Participants did not simply propose discrete improvements; they framed Pedieos as a multi-scalar system connecting neighbourhood, city, ecology, and social life.

Overall, the Part A results suggest that stakeholders view the Pedieos River corridor as a strategic urban infrastructure that must simultaneously function as a safe mobility axis, an ecologically sensitive landscape, and an active public space. The subsequent cross-group confirmation process (Part B) provides further insight into the degree of consensus among themes and the relative weight attributed to these shared priorities.

3.2. Prioritization and Confirmation Results – Part B

Following the structure of the focus group, the second phase consisted of the presentation of each group's top five ideas and a plenary vote to confirm and re-evaluate the priorities across themes. The following paragraphs present the results as shaped by the plenary vote, indicating the final ranking of the three most dominant ideas for each topic.

Topic 1: Traffic – Connectivity

The plenary voting process resulted in a reordering of priorities compared to the initial internal ranking of Group 1.

Specifically, the category initially ranked first, that related to infrastructure improvements, particularly widening, levelling, and regeneration of surfaces, was repositioned to second place in the plenary vote, receiving a total of nine (9) votes.

The highest priority, with ten (10) votes, was assigned to the cluster of ideas concerning safety and access. These were thus highlighted as the most critical issues for the strategic planning of the Pedieos River corridor.

Also receiving nine (9) votes and ranking second in the final plenary evaluation was the cluster of ideas related to the need for additional activities and services within the park. Notably, this category had initially been ranked fifth within Group 1, indicating a significant shift in perceived importance following cross-group evaluation.

Finally, the cluster concerning the separation of spaces for different uses was ranked third, receiving six (6) votes. This category had initially been placed fourth by Group 1.

Overall, the plenary process led to a partial reconfiguration of priorities, emphasizing safety and activation (services and activities) more strongly than the initial internal ranking. The detailed reordering of Topic 1 priorities after the second vote is presented in the table below.

Topic 1 – Traffic and Connectivity Reordering of Priorities after Plenary Voting (Part B)				
Final Rank (Initial Rank in Group 1)	Description of Idea / Group of Ideas	Votes Group 1	Votes Groups 2 & 3	Total Votes
1st Place (2nd Place)	Direct Access and Continuous Connectivity 1. Direct transversal access to residences via sidewalks and public arteries.	4	6	10

	<p>2. Neighbourhood access points (informal but recognizable network of entrances).</p> <p>3. Continuous access route linking neighbourhood–city–park levels, addressing uneven surfaces, drainage issues, and lighting deficiencies.</p> <p>4. Clear entrances–exits and improved accessibility (PwD, strollers, signage).</p>			
1st Place (3rd Place)	<p>Safety and Secure Parking</p> <p>5. Pedestrian safety standards within the urban fabric (railings, warnings, regulated crossings).</p> <p>6. General safety concerns.</p> <p>7. Safe and sufficient parking (lighting, maintenance, surveillance, accident prevention, bus provision).</p>	4	6	10
2nd Place (1st Place)	<p>Surface Improvement and Levelling</p> <p>8. Flat traffic areas with ramps where necessary.</p> <p>9. Widening, levelling, and regeneration of pedestrian and cycling surfaces to ensure smooth, inclusive movement.</p>	5	4	9
2nd Place (5th Place)	<p>Activities and Services within the Park</p> <p>10. Strengthening activities beyond sporadic use.</p> <p>11. Provision of services (water, benches, toilets, playgrounds, group gathering areas, maintenance infrastructure).</p>	3	6	9

	12. Experiential movement through Pedieos to enhance engagement with the river landscape.			
3rd Place (4th Place)	<p>Separation of Different User Flows and Accessibility Axis</p> <p>13. Separation of pedestrian and cycling spaces with differentiated surfaces.</p> <p>14. Friendly parking for hyperlocal users.</p> <p>15. Pedieos as an axis of high accessibility between neighbourhoods, supported by strong signage.</p>	4	2	6

Topic 2: Environment (Conservation, Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure)

The plenary voting process resulted in both confirmations and shifts in relation to the initial internal ranking of Group 2.

The idea concerning the environmental footprint remained in first place, receiving a total of thirteen (13) votes. This confirms strong cross-group agreement on the need to ensure that future interventions respect biodiversity, minimize ecological disturbance, and adopt sustainable construction and management practices.

In second place, with ten (10) votes, was the idea of environmental awareness and education. Notably, this category had initially been ranked fourth by Group 2, indicating a significant rise in importance following the cross-group evaluation. The result suggests that the broader plenary recognized environmental consciousness and educational engagement as strategic components of long-term sustainability.

In third place, with seven (7) votes, was the proposal to expand and reinforce the existing park structure. Although this idea had originally been ranked second within Group 2, it received comparatively fewer votes in the plenary process.

By contrast, the proposal to conduct a systematic analysis of the current ecosystem and the category concerning protection and security did not rank among the three dominant ideas in the final vote. This is

noteworthy, particularly given that safety and protection issues were emphasized more strongly in the other thematic groups.

Overall, the plenary vote consolidated ecological responsibility and awareness as the primary environmental priorities, while placing comparatively less emphasis on diagnostic analysis and operational protection measures. The detailed reordering of priorities for Topic 2 after the second vote is presented in the table below.

Topic 2 – Environment (Conservation, Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure) Reordering of Priorities after Plenary Voting (Part B)				
Final Rank (Initial Rank in Group 2)	Description of Idea / Group of Ideas	Votes Group 2	Votes Groups 1 & 3	Total Votes
1st Place (2nd Place)	<p>Environmental Footprint</p> <p>Protection of the natural environment during visitation and intervention. Proposed actions should not burden the existing ecosystem and must respect biodiversity and local character. Emphasis on sustainability in both intervention design and construction processes, promoting softer and nature-based approaches.</p>	4	9	13
2nd Place (3rd Place)	<p>Environmental Awareness and Education</p> <p>Empowerment through the involvement of schools and children in educational initiatives (e.g., tree planting, park cleaning, environmental games).</p>	3	7	10

	Development of coordinated awareness strategies with shared objectives across different areas.			
3rd Place (1st Place)	Extension and Reinforcement of the Park Vertical and longitudinal expansion (widening) of the park, enhancement of its role as a green lung, and diffusion of green activities into the wider urban fabric.	3	4	7
4th Place (5th Place)	Analysis of the Current Situation Systematic assessment of the ecosystem (flora, fauna), documentation of pollution levels and environmental pressures, to support targeted and evidence-based interventions.	3	3	6
5th Place (4th Place)	Protection and Security Measures Addressing pollution, waste management, stray animals, insufficient lighting, and the need for systematic involvement of competent authorities.	3	2	5

Topic 3: Public Space – Activities

The plenary voting process resulted in a reordering of priorities compared to the initial internal ranking of Group 3.

The category initially ranked first, concerning safety, emergency access, and lighting, was repositioned to second place, receiving a total of ten (10) votes.

In contrast, the proposal to develop a structured program of activities and events for all age groups rose to first place, collecting eleven (11) votes. This idea had originally been ranked second within Group 3, indicating increased cross-group recognition of activation and programming as strategic priorities for the Pedieos River corridor.

The issue of accessibility to the linear park moved from fourth place in the initial ranking to third place in the plenary vote, receiving eight (8) votes. This shift highlights the importance attributed by the wider group to improving connections from surrounding neighborhoods.

By comparison, proposals concerning the creation of destination points, infrastructure upgrades (e.g., drinking water, toilets, picnic areas), and diversification of seating did not rank among the final top three priorities following the plenary vote.

Overall, the plenary confirmation phase emphasized activation (events and activities), safety, and accessibility as the core public space priorities. The detailed reordering of Topic 3 priorities after the second vote is presented in the table below.

Topic 3 – Public Space and Activities Reordering of Priorities after Plenary Voting (Part B)				
Final Rank (Initial Rank in Group 3)	Description of Idea / Group of Ideas	Votes Group 3	Votes Groups 1 & 2	Total Votes
1st Place (2nd Place)	Programmed Actions and Events Development of a structured series of activities for adults and children. Proposed initiatives include cultural events (e.g., art exhibitions), community gatherings (e.g., dog shows), and informal social uses such as birthday celebrations.	4	7	11
2nd Place (1st Place)	Safety, Emergency Access and Lighting Improvement of overall safety conditions within the park, ensuring access for emergency vehicles and upgrading lighting infrastructure.	5	5	10
3rd Place (4th Place)	Accessibility from Neighbouring Areas	3	5	8

		Enhancement of pedestrian and cycling access from surrounding neighbourhoods to the linear park.			
4th Place	(3rd Place)	Creation of Destination Points Establishment of identifiable spatial nodes that encourage users to stop and spend time within the park.	4	3	7
5th Place	(4th Place)	Infrastructure for Basic Amenities Improvement of access to drinking water, public toilets, and organized picnic areas.	3	3	6
6th Place	(4th Place)	Diversification of Seating Types Provision of varied seating options to accommodate different users and activities.	3	2	5

Cross-Thematic Analytical Synthesis – Part B

The confirmation phase demonstrated that, despite shifts between the internal group rankings and the plenary vote, clear patterns of convergence emerged across the three thematic areas. Differences in emphasis remained, yet several issues consistently surfaced as shared strategic priorities.

First, **accessibility and safety** emerged as common denominators, particularly between Topics 1 (Traffic–Connectivity) and 3 (Public Space–Activities). Both groups prioritized safe and inclusive movement, improved lighting, smoother terrain, and clearer access points. These concerns extend beyond mobility in a narrow technical sense; they reflect a broader demand for infrastructural reliability that supports everyday usability of the linear park. Accessibility was therefore framed not only as physical connection but as a condition for equitable and safe participation in public space.

Second, the need for **adequate supporting infrastructure** was repeatedly highlighted. Whether expressed through surface regeneration, emergency access, signage, or lighting, participants emphasized that the

strategic value of the Pedieos River corridor depends on its operational functionality. Infrastructure was not treated as an isolated engineering matter but as a foundational layer enabling environmental protection and social activation.

Third, and notably across all three topics, there was strong consensus regarding the importance of **developing social and cultural activities along the river corridor**. Even when framed differently, through programmed events (Topic 3), extension and reinforcement of green areas (Topic 2), or improved accessibility to encourage use (Topic 1), all groups recognized the need for activation. Importantly, these activities were not proposed in opposition to environmental concerns; rather, they were conceived as mechanisms that simultaneously utilize, enhance, and promote the green character of the area.

Taken together, the plenary results indicate that stakeholders perceive the Pedieos River not merely as an environmental asset or mobility corridor, but as an integrated socio-ecological infrastructure. Safety, accessibility, environmental responsibility, and social activation are not independent categories; they form an interconnected framework for strategic planning.

Overall, the confirmation process highlights the emergence of shared strategic priorities across thematic boundaries. Safety, accessibility, ecological responsibility, and social activation form an integrated framework that shapes the collective vision for the Pedieos River corridor. The following chapter builds on these findings by examining their implications for strategic planning directions.

Conclusion

The focus group process demonstrated that the Pedieos River is perceived not merely as a natural landscape or recreational asset, but as a critical socio-ecological and urban infrastructure within Nicosia. Across thematic boundaries, consistent priorities emerged: improving accessibility and connectivity, ensuring safety and operational reliability, safeguarding and enhancing the natural environment, and activating the corridor through structured social and cultural activities.

The structured methodology enabled both differentiation and convergence. While initial group rankings reflected thematic emphases, the plenary confirmation process revealed strong cross-sectoral agreement on key strategic directions. The integration of mobility, environmental stewardship, and public space activation emerged as a unified framework rather than separate planning domains.

Ultimately, the focus group underscored the value of pluralistic consultation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and active stakeholder involvement in shaping sustainable urban strategies. The collective

insights generated through this process establish a substantive foundation for the continued development and implementation of the Pedieos River Strategic Plan, supporting a resilient and socially inclusive future for the area.