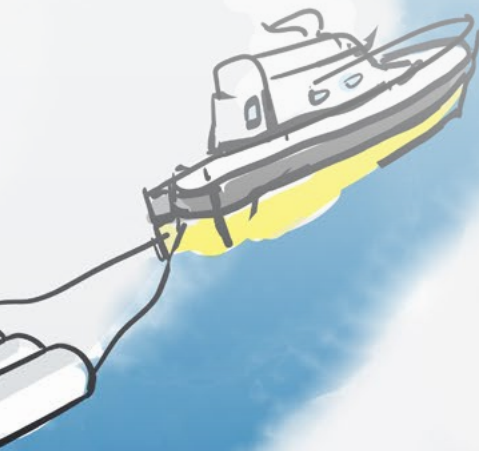


Active Citizenship Participation on climate change & health

in the Euregio Meuse Rhine



**Crossing borders
in health**

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1 INTRODUCTION

EMR-region

euPrevent conforms closely with the policy and objectives of the EGTC Euregio Meuse Rhine (EMR), which facilitates cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. The participants of this five border EMR are the subregions:

In Belgium:

- the Flemish province Limburg
- the Walloon province Liege
- the German-speaking community

In Germany:

- the western part of the Regierungsbezirk Köln (North Rhine-Westphalia)

In The Netherlands:

- the southern part of the province Limburg

euPrevent Foundation

[euPrevent](#) is a non-profit organisation and a Euroregional network that wants to promote the quality of life of citizens in the border regions of the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium.

Policy in the field of care and well-being is mainly organised at national level. This has a major impact on citizens in the border region who regularly cross the border for work or family reasons. We therefore focus on the establishment of sustainable, cross-border network connections between health organisations in the border region. We work within three proven frameworks.

- euPrevent is a Euroregional network for sustainable cooperation, which enhances the quality of life of the inhabitants of the border region and is a laboratory for health innovation.
- euPrevent wants to stimulate cross-border cooperation in the field of health promotion in the border region.
- euPrevent does this through a thematic focus and concrete, sustainable results and products
- euPrevent knows: together we will get further.

Funding

The ACP project is funded by the Robert-Bosch Foundation within the Common Ground Program. The [Robert Bosch Stiftung](#) is one of the largest corporate foundations in Germany. The foundation focuses its work on science, health, international understanding, education, society and culture. ¹

Common Ground Programme

In a three-year pilot phase, the [Common Ground](#) programme supports the implementation of participation processes at the local level in up to eight German border regions - transsectoral and cross-border (see figure 1). The focus is on regions that want to increase with (cross-border) citizen participation. Within the framework of the programme, formats for low-threshold participation are to be developed or disseminated in a demand-oriented manner, which also reach people who have so far hardly felt addressed by politics. Following this pilot phase, selected border regions will receive further support in stabilising their participation structures. For this purpose, all projects funded in the pilot phase will be accompanied scientifically. The EMR-region is one of the eight border regions within the Common Ground Project.

Active Citizen Participation project

Within the Common Ground programme, the EMR region implement the Active Citizen Participation (ACP) project which focus on the topic climate change and health. Many people feel they are not sufficiently taken into account in many political processes. Of course, this also applies to such complex processes as climate protection and climate adaptation. This project therefore, offers the opportunity to design a structure to bring “citizen opinion” and “expert opinion” together and into exchange with politics across borders.



Figure 1: eight German border regions within the Common Ground programme.

Active Citizenship Participation



Stakeholder groups



Citizen summits
Input key topics EMR

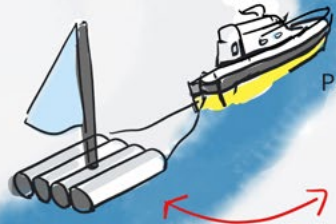


Stakeholder groups

- Agenda setting
- Contact citizens
- Use tools

Project group

- Designs meetings
- Proposes health topics
- Assembles stakeholder groups
- Organizes meetings/ yearplan



Stakeholder groups

Project group



Citizen summits

2 PROJECT GOAL

The goal of the project euPrevent [Active Citizenship Participation](#) (ACP) is to establish a structural citizen participation framework that is to be embedded in the cross-border decision making process in the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion, starting with the theme 'Climate change and health'. After implementation, also other health-related issues that equally bear transboundary features will be integrated in the participation framework.

The project euPrevent ACP is part of the euPrevent module "Crossing Programmes". Apart from the specific subject related programmes, some collaborations and projects within euPrevent are related to more programmes or subjects.

3 TARGET GROUP

The target group is multi-level, cross-sector, multi-cultural and multi-lingual: EMR – Citizens as well as health professionals and policy-makers at local, national and regional level will be engaged. The wide participation from all levels and countries is the guarantee for the implementation of a sustainable participation structure in the border region. In addition, the group of participating citizens should present a wide diversity in terms of gender, age, level of education, occupation.

4 PROJECT PARTNERS

Formal Partners in this project are:



GGD Zuid Limburg (Lead partner)



EPECS



euPrevent Foundation



Euregio Meuse-Rhine



Gesundheitsamt Kreis Düren



Kreis Heinsberg

Landeszentrum Gesundheit
Nordrhein-Westfalen



Landeszentrum Gesundheits
Nordrhein-Westfalen (NRW.LZG)

Associated Partners in this project are:



Bundeszentrale gesundheitliche (BZgA)



Logo Limburg

5 PROJECT STRUCTURE

The objectives formulated can be expressed in two so-called project levels:

- 1. Institutionalisation:** the first project level, institutionalisation, is about the establishment of a sustainable structure. This will make citizen participation in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine possible in the long term.
- 2. Gathering citizens opinion:** the second project level is about the concrete process of citizen participation. In this project we focus on gathering citizens opinions on the topic of climate change and the consequences on health.

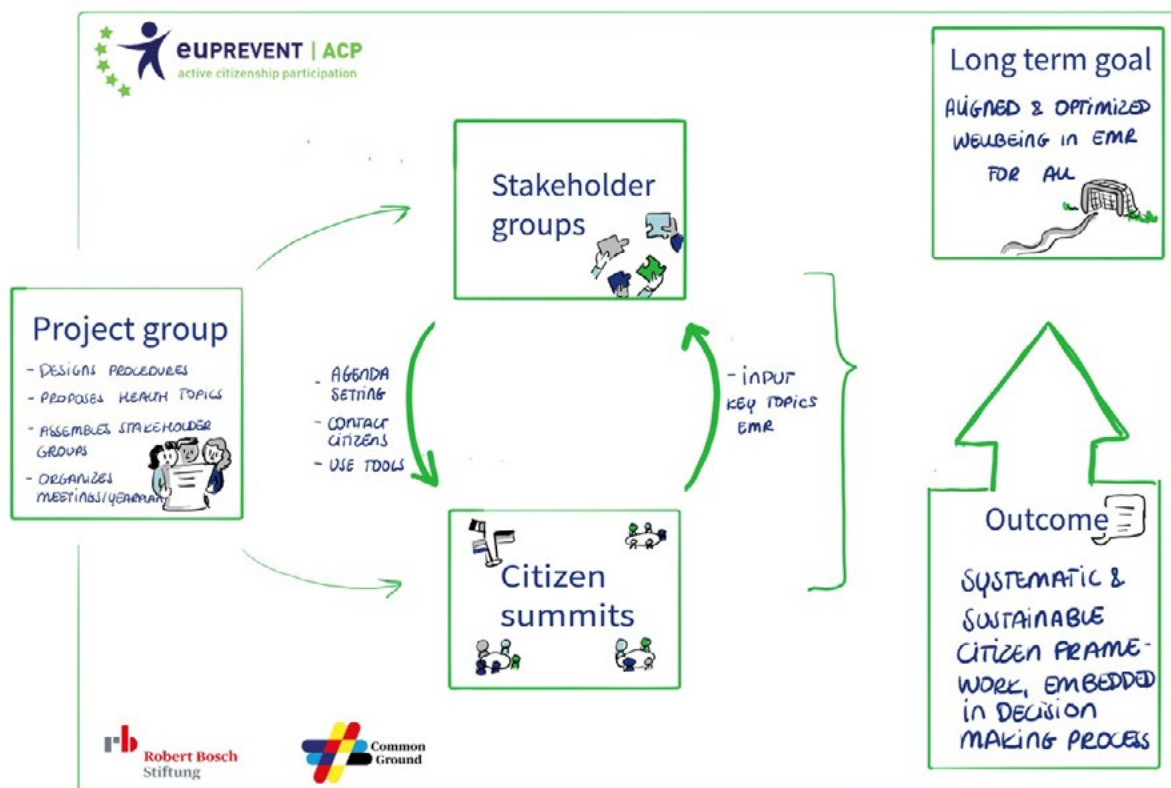


Figure 2: the outline of the ACP project structure.

5.1 First Level Participation: Institutionalisation

The establishment of a sustainable euregional structure for citizen participation requires the consideration of three sub-aspects: the project group, the stakeholder group and the work results.

Project Group

The project group is of central importance. During the course of the project, it designs the procedures, implements them and evaluates them. It assembles the members of the stakeholder group and builds up the associated network. The project group proposes health-related topics that are prioritised by the stakeholder group. On this basis, the project group prepares an annual programme for the stakeholders. It also organises and coordinates the stakeholder meetings and prepares the minutes of the individual events. It is currently still being discussed who will take over this function after the end of the project period. It would be conceivable for the Euregio Meuse-Rhine or the euPrevent Foundation to take over.

Stakeholder Group(s)

The stakeholder group is the central body within this structure. Here, representatives of the most diverse

professional and political groups in society meet the representatives of the various citizenships. In addition to the citizens involved, this also includes policy makers, scientists, welfare organisations, health care institutions, patient representatives, representatives of local communities, health insurance companies as well as crisis managers, depending on the chosen topic. In addition to their technical expertise, the stakeholders also provide the opportunity to contact citizens in the respective communities. In the stakeholder meetings, the issues at hand are examined from all positions and strategies are developed on how to capture citizens' opinions in order to incorporate them into the outcome.

Outcomes

The results of the respective stakeholder group participation process can be documented in different ways: as a statement, as euregional recommendations for action, as a euregional political strategy or, related to the project theme, as a Euregional Heat Plan. The project group is responsible for the preparation of these documents during the project period. The documents are then forwarded to the next higher political level in order to be able to take a political decision based on them. In addition, these work results serve as feedback to the citizens involved.

5.2 Second Level Participation: Citizen Participation

At this second level, the sustainable structures of the First Level Participation are used to work on the specific project topic of “climate change and health”.

Health consequences of climate change

Climate change and its consequences represent one of the greatest challenges facing humanity worldwide. The serious health consequences of climate change require the interconnectedness of health promotion, climate adaptation and urban/ neighbourhood development. The health impacts can be direct (e.g. through heat stress or extreme weather events) or indirect (e.g. through air pollutants, pollen and allergens, infectious diseases), see figure 3. For more information have a look at the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/default.htm>

One of the other objectives of the euPrevent-ACP project is to develop measures to mitigate the negative health impacts of climate change, with particular attention to citizen opinion. In particular, the Place StandardTool will be the method to implement to collect citizens' views and suggestions.

Place Standard Tool

The overall objective of the PlaceStandardTool or the [StadtRaumMonitor](#) is to design a liveable and health-promoting living environment in which all people feel permanently at ease (figure 4). The PlaceStandardTool is a participatory tool for evaluating communities/ districts/ neighbourhoods, captures the perception of the people who live there and visualises which areas are rated well and where there is a need for improvement. It provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place and allows to think about the physical elements of a place as well as the social aspects. The tool provides prompts for discussions, allowing you to consider all the elements of a place in a methodical way. The tool provides discussions on five aspects of our living environment: 1) mobility, 2) public room, 3) care/work/living, 4) social aspects of live, 5) climate change and health.

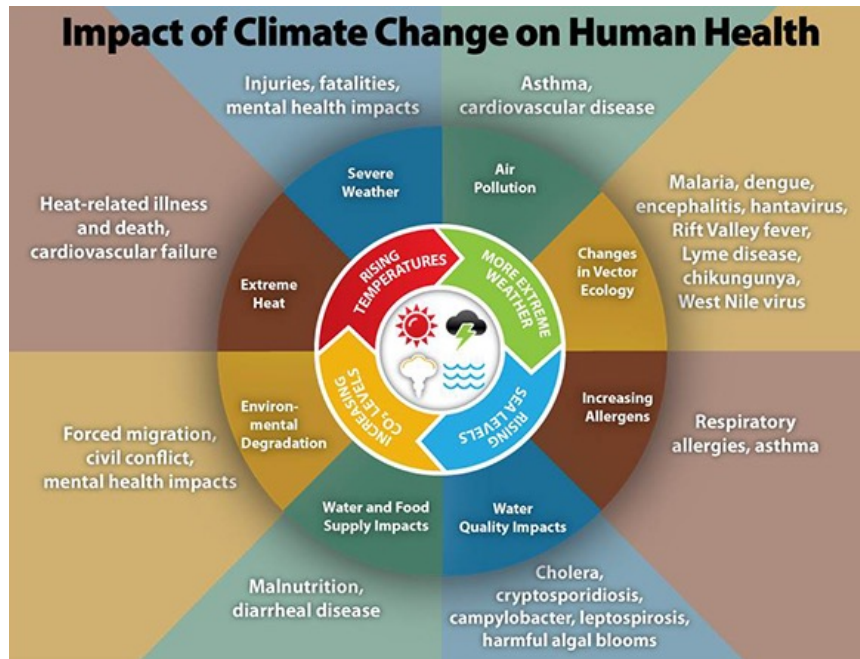


Figure 3: the impact of climate change on human health.



Figure 4: the PlaceStandardTool or StadtRaumMonitor.

6 PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINE

This project last for three years from September 2022 until August 2025. The first year focus on the process design and the main activities are the monthly meetings of the project group, who prepares the annual programme for the stakeholders meetings and citizens summits. The stakeholder group is formed and consolidated. Also the Tool StadtRaumMonitor/Place Standard Tool is adjusted, translated and pre-tested. The second year will focus on the implementation of the citizen participation process and the stakeholder meetings. The main concern in the third year is to make the approach workable and sustainable in political structures in the Euregion Meuse-Rhine region. The project group will provide a final report with recommendations or guidelines to gain a structural citizen participation framework across borders in the EMR region.

Year 1: Process Design

- What is important for administrations and organizations when it comes to involving citizens in political decision-making processes?
- How do we reach and engage a diverse and large group of citizens in the participation process?
- Constitution and consolidation of stakeholders who represent a large group of citizens, professionals and politicians.

Year 2: Implementation

- Preparation and implementation of the citizen summits and a public kick-off for stakeholders.
- Consulting stakeholders during several half a day meetings.

Year 3: Consolidation of citizen participation

- Organizing trainings, meetings and workshops for stakeholders and/or local authorities in order to implement and sustain the cross-border participation concept.
- Creation of a sustainable framework for citizen participation across borders in the EMR.
- Presentation and report of project results in political and administrative structures.

What do stakeholders do?

As stated before, the stakeholders are the representatives of a different groups of professionals, politicians and citizens within the EMR. The stakeholders are the key-persons to get in touch with citizens, especially special interest groups. They are asked to discuss and evaluate the results of citizen summits and share best practices. They are the representatives/key-persons on implementing a systematic and sustainable framework for citizen participation within the EMR. See also figure 5 below on the role of the stakeholders. The idea is that the stakeholders will be consulted during six separate meetings that will last more or less 2 hours. The first stakeholder meeting (the kick off) is an international meeting, there will be translators available. The other stakeholder meetings will probably take place in smaller regional settings in the native languages (DE, FR, NL) or English if wished for by stakeholders.. In order to further increase sustainability of the participation process, the focus will be not on bigger international summits but more on local focus group discussions.

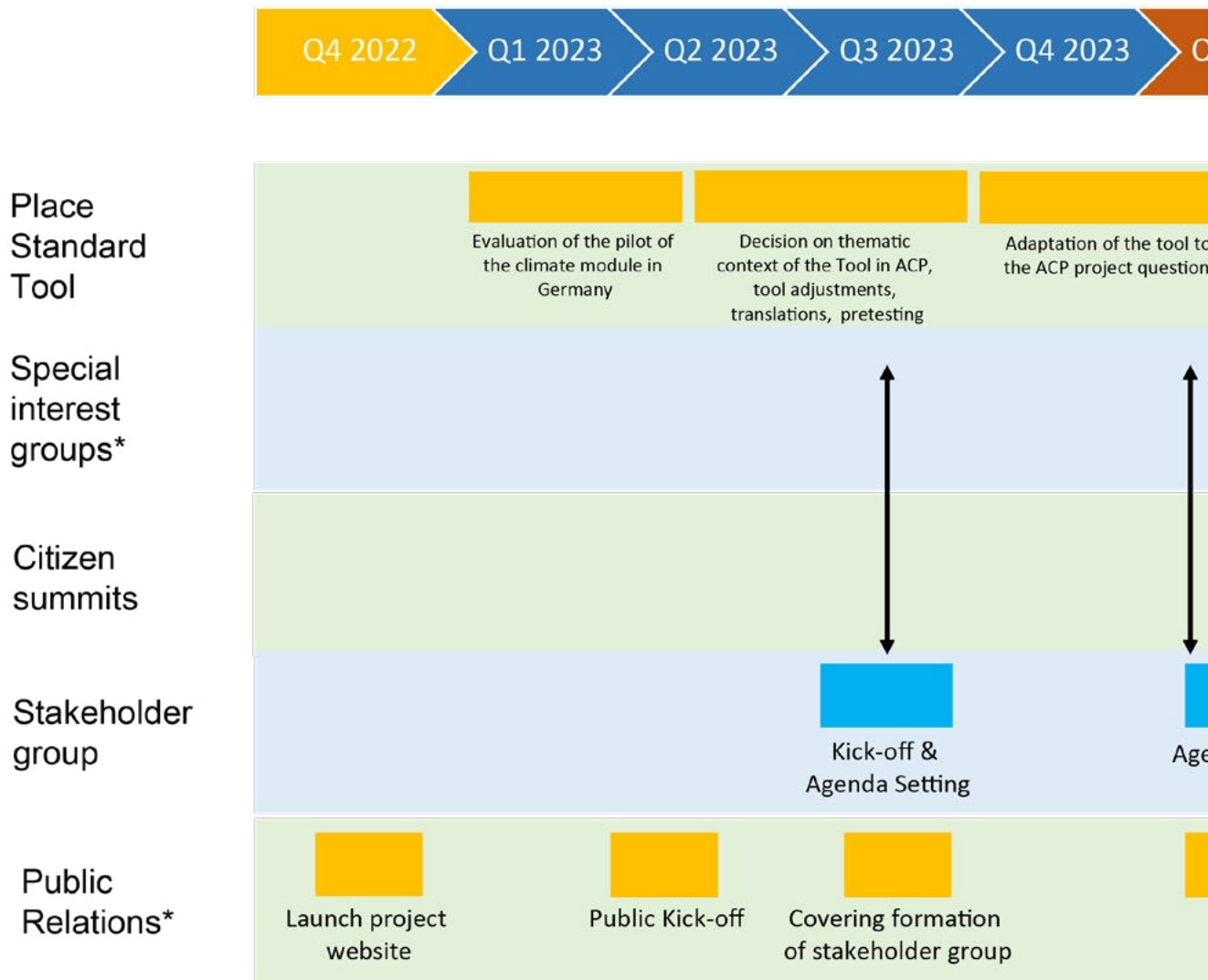
- **2023-Q4:** International kick-off meeting and use the PlaceStandardTool
- **2024-Q1:** Agenda setting for citizen summits: which climate change & health topics are currently relevant?
- **2024-Q3:** Interim evaluation of the citizen summits and special interest groups
- **2025-Q1:** Final evaluation citizen summits and special interest groups
- **2025-Q3:** Discussion of results and share best practices
- **2025-Q4:** Aimed at increasing sustainability of the participation process

The project group will provide both an interim and final report based on the evaluations and discussions of the stakeholder meetings. The final report will focus on recommendations or guideline to gain a structural citizen participation framework across borders in the EMR region.

See figure 6 for the outline on the expected timeframe of the project during those three years.

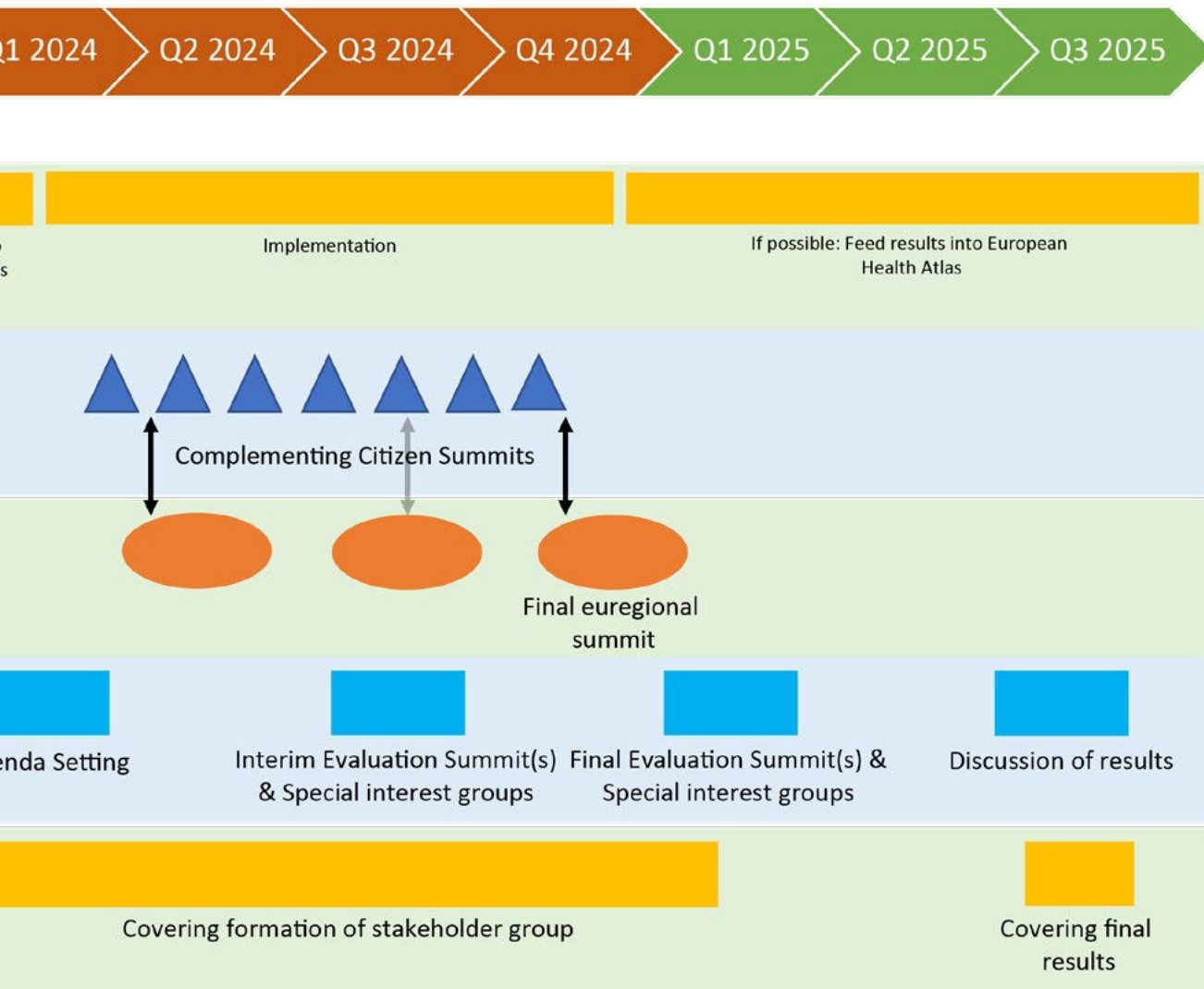


Figure 5: the role of the stakeholder groups within the ACP.

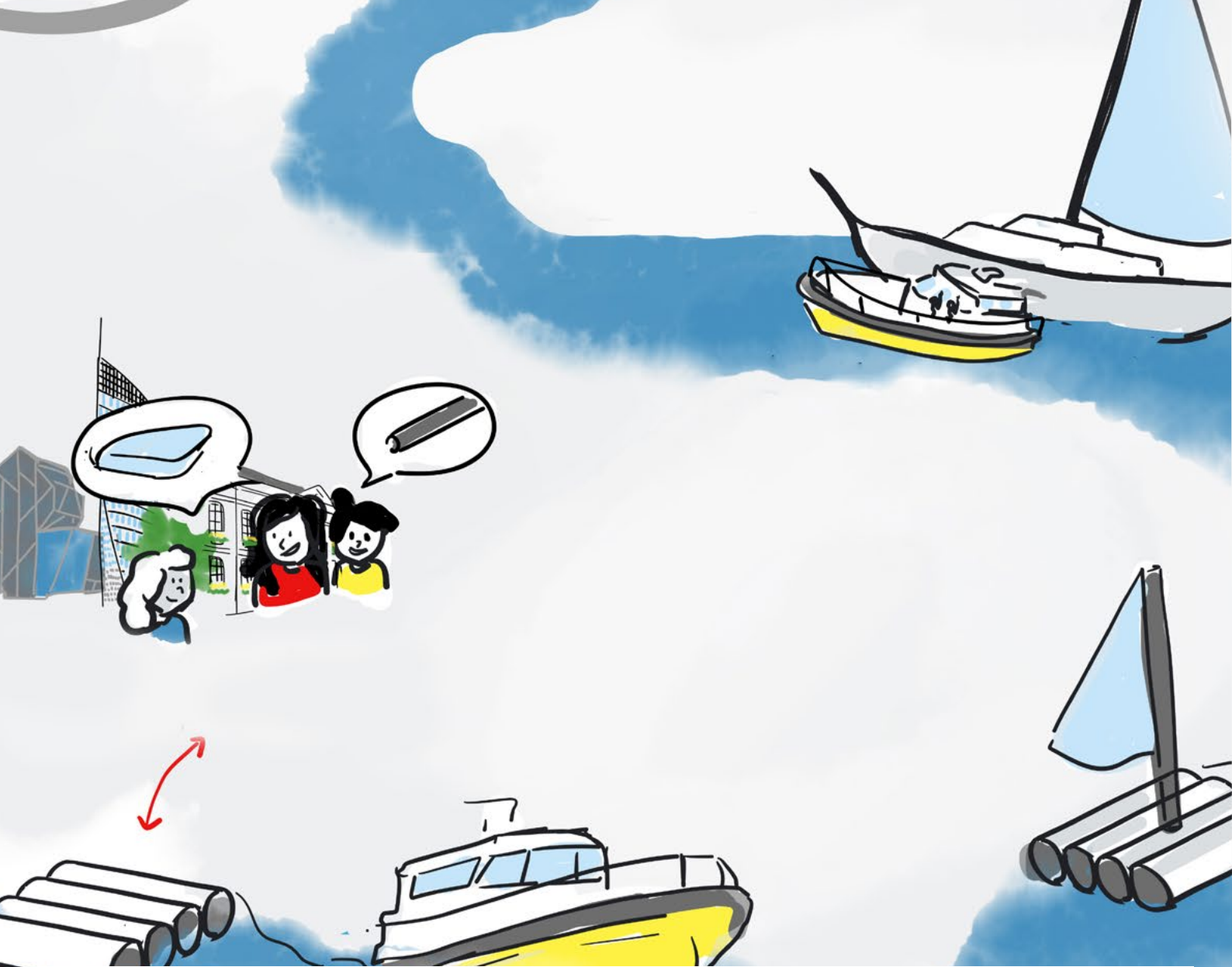


* Number of shapes is not necessarily equal to number of activities

Figure 6: timeline of the project.







Landeszentrum Gesundheit
Nordrhein-Westfalen



Gefinancierd in het kader van Common Ground, een project van Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH
Gefördert im Rahmen von Common Ground, einem Projekt der Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH
Soutenu dans le cadre de Common Ground, un projet de la Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH

