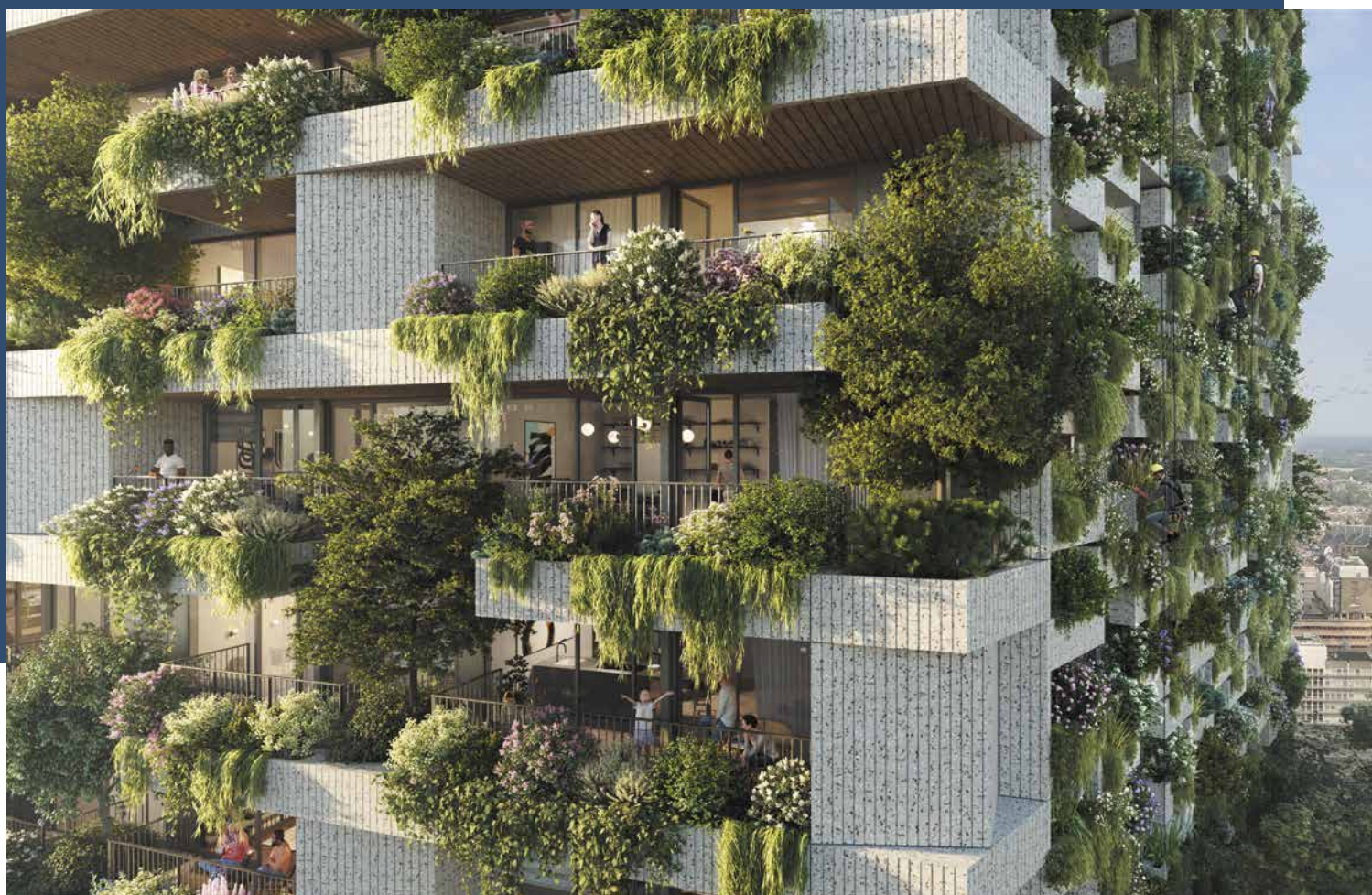


# European Platform for Urban Greening

Case Study *Czech Republic*



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# Contents

## FOREWORD

03 The Answer is Green

## INTRODUCTION

04 What is Urban Greening?

06 European Platform for Urban Greening

## CASE STUDY

08 Czech Republic

## SUMMARY

12 Summary of Activity

## FOREWORD

# The Answer is Green

Today over 55 percent of the world's population live in cities and by 2050 it is expected that nearly 70 percent of global citizens will live in urban areas. The question is, what will those urban areas and cities look like and what will our experience be like living in them?

The reality of a changing climate is here. Around the world we are seeing and experiencing the impacts of extreme weather conditions including heat waves, wildfires and droughts, poor air quality, flooding and tropical storms. As these effects of climate change take their toll on our urban and rural environments, affecting everything from infrastructure, plant and animal life, to our mental and physical well-being, what we need are immediate solutions that respond to new climate realities.

The challenge is to re-imagine cities and urban life quickly enough to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change, while adapting to the effects that can't be averted.

Thanks to the quickly evolving field of Urban Greening, this great re-imagining is within reach. In fact, it is happening right now. Cities globally are transforming to become greener and more sustainable, but in order to keep pace with the needs of tomorrow we must continue to innovate, share our knowledge and develop our practical skills today.

Urban Greening, as it is coming to be more broadly understood, is key to the evolution of our urban life. It is a dynamic field that is widely applicable and not only provides abundant economic opportunities, but it gives us a real chance to make cities more liveable and equitable in the 21st century. Without a doubt, the answer to our question is green.





## INTRODUCTION

# What Is Urban Greening?

Up until now, Urban Greening has most commonly been used to refer to public landscaping projects that create a mutually beneficial relationship between city dwellers and their environment, such as the installation of parks and tree-lined streets. However, the scope of Urban Greening today goes far beyond these types of green spaces.

Creative and exciting initiatives including living buildings, indoor landscaping, vertical gardens and green roofs are becoming increasingly sought after by city planners and private developers, particularly as their multitude of benefits become ever more apparent.

Aside from beautifying our cities and improving our well-being, these new green initiatives are helping urban areas have a positive environmental impact and are an essential part of reaching our climate targets. For example, green installations like vegetative roofs or vertical gardens absorb harmful amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere while improving pollution by pumping vast amounts of oxygen into the air.

More greening in the urban environment also creates new habitats for wildlife that had previously been displaced and boosts biodiversity to create thriving eco-systems. It helps to cool cities, prevents flooding and above all, ensures a healthy living environment.

If adaptation is an essential part of our response to climate change then the Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) offered by Urban Greening must become more widely adopted.

As innovations in Urban Greening continue to transform our cities, so too do the professional opportunities, skills and expertise associated with it. Our ability to harness the experience, knowledge and best practices in this field will be fundamental to our successful adaptation to climate change and in the future, greening will be an essential part of a liveable city.





## Examples of Urban Greening

- Vegetative green roofs
- Living green walls and vertical gardens
- Indoor landscaping
- Flowering plants in urban areas
- Creating favourable habitats for pollinators
- Hydroponic plant growth
- Biodiverse gardens
- Rain gardens
- Urban vegetable patches and boxed gardens
- Circular water management
- Sustainable irrigation systems
- Rainwater capture
- Green building design and maintenance
- Eco-friendly machinery for landscaping

## Why is it important?

Adaptation is an essential part of our response to climate change. As such, Urban Greening is a critical field, because it offers tangible solutions and benefits for climate adaptation while combating carbon emissions. In order to meet climate targets, we must start by removing Co2 from the atmosphere and Urban Greening initiatives have an exceptional impact towards this aim.

## Benefits of Urban Greening

- Improves the quality of life for people living in urban environments
- Creates economic benefits, including new jobs and sustainable infrastructure
- Supports existing wildlife and protects biodiversity in cities and urban centres
- Creates new habitats to sustain wildlife and encourage pollinators
- Improves the aesthetics of urban spaces, making them greener and more appealing to the eye
- Provides eco-friendly solutions for improving air quality and oxygen levels
- Combats excess pollution by capturing carbon dioxide
- Improves mental health and physical well-being of urban populations
- Provides immediate solutions for adapting to climate change
- Reduces noise pollution in urban areas
- Creates a cooling effect in cities through green buildings
- Helps prevent flooding



# European Platform for Urban Greening

Creating impact by connecting all aspects of Urban Greening on one platform.

**The European Platform for Urban Greening is the first platform of its kind in Europe and it is fast becoming a world-class reference point for all aspects of Urban Greening.**

Funded by the European Commission, the Platform aims to increase the knowledge and skills required to address biodiversity, climate adaptation and well-being in urban areas and to broaden the expertise in Urban Greening practices among students and professionals.

The Platform brings together educational institutions from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Romania, and Spain, that are working together with leading industry partners and governments to form a network of Centres of Vocational Excellence across Europe.

Having commenced in January 2021, these Centres of Vocational Excellence have identified the regional priorities that need to be addressed in order to advance curriculum and training in the field of Urban Greening.

By intensifying collaborations within regions and between countries, the expertise and challenges faced by different climates represented across the Platform can be shared to boost the pace of innovation and create better training and impactful green solutions everywhere.

Each Centre of Vocational Excellence has outlined actionable initiatives that will address their top priorities; exciting projects are already underway for the year ahead.

***“Public-private partnerships can catalyze a skills ecosystem that is required for a thriving, future-proof society. With the Centres of Vocational Excellence on Urban Greening we aim to contribute to the green transition we are currently embarking on.”***

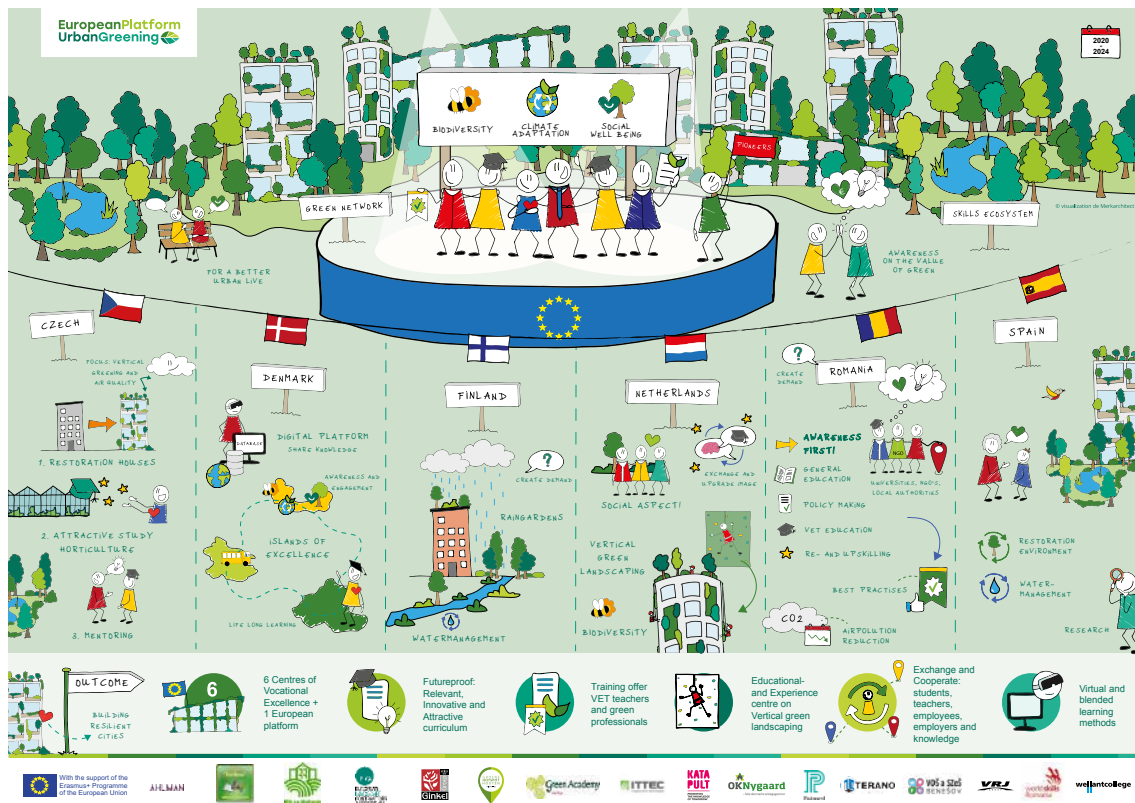
*- Jan Jeronimus, Project Leader,  
European Platform for Urban Greening*





## Shared Priorities Across Centres of Vocational Excellence

- Raising greater awareness about Urban Greening
- Recruiting for the new Green Labour Market
- Creating meaningful opportunities for knowledge transfer
- Developing high-quality curriculum and educational activities





## CASE STUDY

# Czech Republic

Developing a Basic Skills Toolkit for education and training in Urban Greening.

### Who are the partners?

**VOŠ a SZeŠ Benešov School of Agriculture  
ITTEC, s.r.o.**

Celebrating 125 years since its founding, VOŠ a SZeŠ Benešov is an Agricultural College and Agricultural Secondary School offering a range of vocational studies. The Secondary School focusses on four main branches of study: agricultural enterprising, horticulture, veterinary studies and natural sciences and offers three apprentice programs in farming, horse breeding and horticulture. At the Agricultural College there are two branches, which include studies in agricultural enterprising and veterinary care.

In establishing the Czech Republic as a Centre of Vocational Excellence in the field of Urban Greening, VOŠ a SZeŠ Benešov has formed a partnership with green industry leader ITTEC.

Founded in 1995, ITTEC is a private company focused on irrigation systems and turf technologies, specialising in the eco-friendly management of sports fields, golf courses and municipal public parks. As a leader in the Czech Republic and Central Europe in finding solutions around the intelligent use of water and importing eco-friendly machinery and large-scale irrigation systems, they are helping to reduce noise and emissions in cities and municipalities around the country.



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## Project Highlight

### Green Playground

Following the destruction left by an F4 tornado that struck seven municipalities in the South Moravian Region in June 2021, Platform partners in the Czech Republic came together to reconstruct an elementary school playground for children.

In just under six weeks the collaboration resulted in the donation of expertise, products and labour from industry partner ITTEC, that greened the existing space and restored the environment. The impact of this project has been felt throughout the wider community and has improved the physical and mental well-being of local children in particular.



The tornado was the strongest ever documented in modern Czech history and was the deadliest European tornado since 2001. Urban Greening projects like this one can offer healing and wellness to communities most affected by climate disasters.

## The Continental Climate

Covering the central and eastern parts of Europe, the Continental Climate is characterised by cold and long-lasting winters and predominantly warm, humid summers. Surrounded by extensive mountain ranges, the Czech Republic is a landlocked country that has mainly temperate conditions and four distinct seasons.

### Features:

- USDA Hardiness Zone 6b – 8b
- Highlands and lowlands with a wide range of precipitation
- Rainwater harvesting
- Green rooftops



### Their Top Three Priorities

#### Raise Awareness

To ensure the Czech Republic stays up to speed with the latest trends in Urban Greening, it is a priority to first raise awareness amongst the country's wider population about key green issues including social responsibility, sustainability, biodiversity and climate adaptation. One way to do this is to implement new projects that garner greater public interest in Urban Greening, such as green facades or rooftop gardens. At the same time, these projects can give industry professionals the opportunity to advance their skills and implement new industry best practice in specific areas such as water management, irrigation and rainwater harvesting.

#### New Curriculum & Life-Long Learning

Specialised curriculum needs to be created in order to promote knowledge, skills and expertise in Urban Greening. This curriculum must first address specific gaps in knowledge for Horticultural educators, providing them with flexible opportunities to re-skill, in turn, giving them the tools and knowledge needed to continue developing new courses and curriculum in the green sector, particularly in the areas of Ecology and Sustainable Development.

#### Partnerships & Knowledge Exchanges

The establishment of new partnerships in Urban Greening is a priority across the Czech Republic. Specifically, creating collaborative opportunities for practical training and up-skilling around green roofs and vertical gardening is a key area of focus. Partnerships with industry leaders and educational centres across Europe must aim to provide insights into aspects of green buildings such as energy savings, using heat from waste water, soil and substrates, and long-term management.

*“Co-operation with Benešov school and all other partners of the European Platform gives us a great opportunity to help create new curriculum and improve public knowledge about the needs in Urban Greening.”*

*– Pavel Prucha, ITTEC, s.r.o.*





## THE YEAR AHEAD

### Initiatives for 2022

#### Basic Skills Toolkit

Through consultation with other Platform partners a Basic Skills Toolkit, that serves as a best practice training guide, will be created for the Czech Republic. This will help train professionals across the sector by allowing them to identify where expertise is lacking and source the right partners from across Europe who can help them develop the skills required to implement new green initiatives.

#### Public Lectures & Workshops

Public lectures and engaging activities will be created to educate the general public about the value of Urban Greening and what it involves. This includes workshops in areas such as Biodiversity Gardening that explain the benefits of incorporating a diversity of 100% native plant species that support and attract local wildlife such birds and insects, which are key for a thriving ecosystem.

#### Study Abroad Trips

Opportunities for students to go and study with other vocational centres and Platform partners will be created throughout the year. The Netherlands has already been identified as a key Centre of Vocational Excellence that students and professionals will collaborate with to gain new expertise and experience.



# Summary of Activity

In the past year, partners of the European Platform for Urban Greening have created partnerships and knowledge exchanges that are having real-world impact across the continent. Their activities have resulted in the implementation and planning for a wide range of green initiatives, highlights of which include:

- A Bio-gardening course
- A Biodiversity course
- An Interior Planting & Landscaping Course
- A European Qualifications Framework Workshop
- Virtual courses and exchanges
- An Ambassador Program
- Activation of a Lobbyist Group
- The creation of an Urban Greening Day
- 'The Value of Green' campaign
- An Ideas Competition
- Youth engagement activities and internships
- Summer camps
- Study abroad trips
- The creation of blended and micro-learning resources
- The co-creation and development of new curriculum
- Short course qualifications in Urban Greening and Landscaping
- Public relations and events
- Media and social media campaigns
- Public lectures and workshops
- Seminars and video conferences
- Planting vegetable gardens in schools
- A Basic Skills Toolkit for best practices in Urban Greening
- An Atlas for Professions and Competencies in Urban Greening
- An Atlas of Emerging Trends in Urban Greening

**EuropeanPlatform**  
**UrbanGreening** 

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