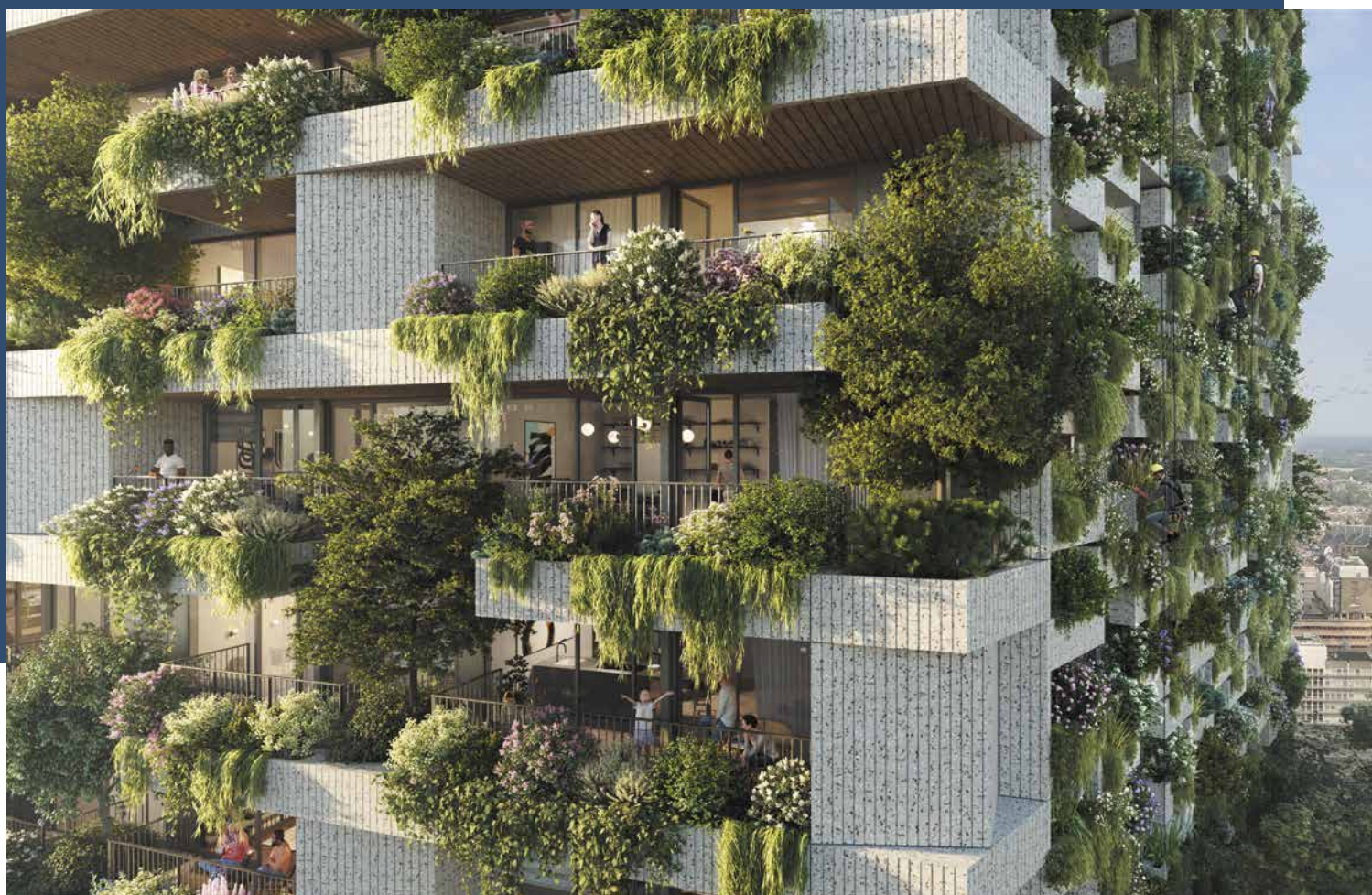


# European Platform for Urban Greening

Case Study *Denmark*



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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 Denmark

## 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 catalyst 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*





- 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



# Denmark

Using blended and micro-learning initiatives to educate the landscapers of tomorrow and up-skill today's.

### Who are the partners?

**Green Academy**  
**OKNygaard**

Based in the heart of Denmark, Green Academy, founded in 1889, is one of Europe's first vocational schools dedicated to the green sector. Offering a range of degrees and courses, Green Academy encourages life-long-learning and study abroad knowledge exchanges in all green areas including landscaping, gardening, floristry, forestry, farming, and animal care and nursery.



In partnership with Denmark's leading landscape design and maintenance company OKNygaard, that works with over 600 landscape gardeners and climate specialists, they are fast-tracking the country's Urban Greening initiatives and using the Platform's network to make advances the field.

Known for being a frontrunner in creating climate adaptation solutions, ranging from climate protection construction projects to creating new biodiverse green spaces in urban environments, OKNygaard's collaboration with Green Academy ensures that Denmark is in the vanguard of Urban Greening.

### The Oceanic Climate

Influenced by the Atlantic Ocean, North Sea and Baltic Sea, Denmark's Oceanic climate region generally experiences mild, wet winters and cool humid summers. Characteristically avoiding winters with a long harsh frost as well as really hot summer periods provides countries in this climate zone with longer growing periods and a wide variety of Urban Greening opportunities.

#### Features:

- USDA Hardiness Zone 7b – 9b
- Long growing period
- Heavy precipitation
- Rainwater collection







## Project Highlight

### Biodiversity Training Course

In the first year of working together, Green Academy and OKNygaard collaborated to develop a one-day training course on Biodiversity. The course aimed to share the perspectives and knowledge of landscape practitioners and provide them with expertise on how they can better approach biodiversity when it comes to the management and maintenance of green spaces.

With over a dozen management level employees from OKNygaard participating, the course presented the latest thinking around biodiversity, covering topics ranging from ecosystems that supply oxygen and clean air in urban environments to the pollination of plants and pest control.



Using the resources and expertise available through the Platform, a specialist in Biodiversity from Yuverta college in the Netherlands was invited to speak to the best practices in biodiversity management.

This course used a blended learning approach that incorporated classroom teaching with writing exercises that could help participants reflect on their learnings and offered a podcast to allow them to revisit the expertise. Based on the outcomes from the first year, this training course is further being development in order to reach a wider audience.

*“By working together, we speed up the process of developing new courses within the field of Urban Greening. Together we are making the transformation faster.”*

– Jakob Vest Artler, OKNygaard

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### Their Top Three Priorities

#### Recruitment

Starting with primary school students, it is a priority across Denmark to develop stronger recruitment techniques in the field of Urban Greening. As part of the solution to climate change, Urban Greening must become an area of focus within education at every level, including being seen as an area for life-long learning that attracts new professionals to the sector. This will require stakeholders from across the industry to help demonstrate the variety of new career paths and highlight exciting aspects of Urban Greening that have a real impact on climate change.

#### Continuous Education

In order to meet the needs and demands of their clients and communities, across Denmark it is a priority to help professionals such as landscape architects, gardeners or civil servants up-skill and retrain quickly and flexibly as new information, techniques and innovations in Urban Greening emerge. To keep pace with the latest trends, the creation of specialised courses must be developed between education providers and industry that offers continuous education opportunities which are easily accessible to a wide range of learners.

*"We are very proud to be the first vocational institution in Denmark to participate in a European-wide platform for Urban Greening. By collaborating with OKNygaard we are bridging the gap between education and industry and creating a meaningful exchange of knowledge and skills in the green sector."*

*– Karolina Sikala, Green Academy Aarhus*

#### Virtual Learning & Exchanges

To harness the opportunities provided by the digital realm for knowledge exchange, regionally, nationally and internationally it is a priority to get new curriculum and courses online. The more Denmark can create virtual exchanges amongst other vocational schools, the more it can ensure its education in the field of Urban Greening is up to speed with the latest thinking in areas such as biodiversity, climate adaptation and well-being in the urban environment.





# THE YEAR AHEAD

## Initiatives for 2022

### Youth Engagement Events & Internships

New collaborations with industry will be implemented to create events and internships that enhance early recruitment. This involves co-creating an elective course on Urban Greening within elementary schools that offers opportunities to gain practical experience and insights for students. Industry internships will aim to showcase some of the real-world applications for Urban Greening and highlight new career paths that are emerging in the sector.

### Blended & Micro-learning Resources

To help professionals across industries and sectors up-skill and retrain in Urban Greening, flexible and customised learning opportunities will continue to be developed. For example, micro-learning resources could include courses delivered via podcasts that cover specific topics such as Biodiversity that can be listened to in short burst of time on a drive to work. Using blended learning methods that integrate technology and digital media into traditional instructor-led classroom activities, can help remove barriers to continuous-education and make professional development more accessible.

### Virtual Courses & Exchanges

In the year ahead, key courses at Green Academy will start to be made available online for a wider audience of potential students. Invitations to participate in these courses or create exchanges will be sent to other vocational schools and key industry representatives both nationally and internationally.



# 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

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