

Green Cities 2030+
(EPLUG project)
Centre of Professional Excellence
at VOŠ a SZeŠ Benešov

SURVEY
**the issue of urban greenery in
municipalities with extended powers
in the Central Bohemian Region**

June 2024

The Centre of Professional Excellence – Green Cities 2030+ (hereinafter referred to as CoVE) at the Higher Vocational School and Secondary Agricultural School Benešov (hereinafter referred to as VOŠ and SZeŠ Benešov) has prepared and implemented a survey within the international project European Platform for Urban Greening (hereinafter referred to as EPLUG), in which the school represents the Czech Republic, which addressed the environmental departments of municipalities with extended powers (hereinafter referred to as ORP) in the Central Bohemian Region.

The aim of the survey was to map the way of ensuring the care of urban greenery at the level of individual municipalities, to share their examples of good practice, to evaluate the importance of urban greenery and also to find out the educational priorities of the municipalities in the field of establishment, maintenance and development of urban greenery. The results of the survey will be presented within the EPLUG project and will be used to set the educational goals and priorities of CoVE in the next period from 2025.

A total of ten municipalities participated in the survey, of which one ORP (Rakovník) processed and sent the questionnaire twice. According to the time of sending, the first questionnaire sent was included in the evaluation, the second, later sent, was discarded.

The survey contained a total of eight questions. Filling in all questions was not mandatory.

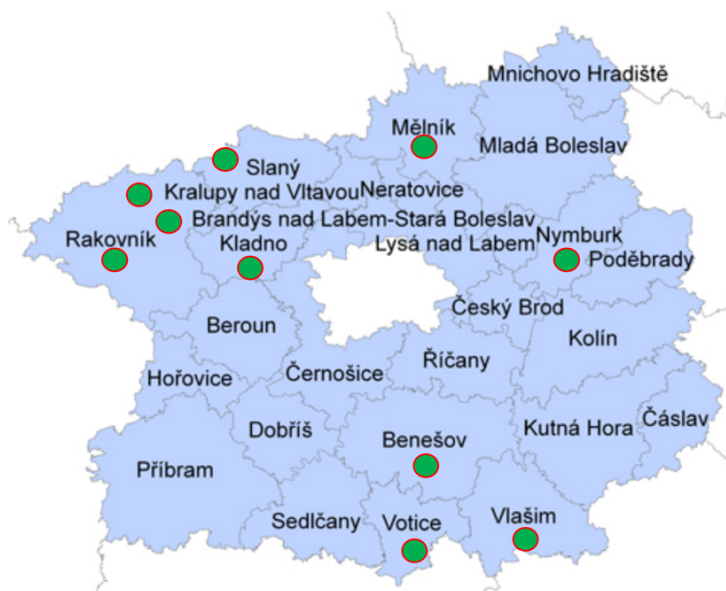
The survey was conducted and evaluated in the months of May to June 2024.

SURVEY RESULTS

Question 1 – Name of the municipality with extended competence

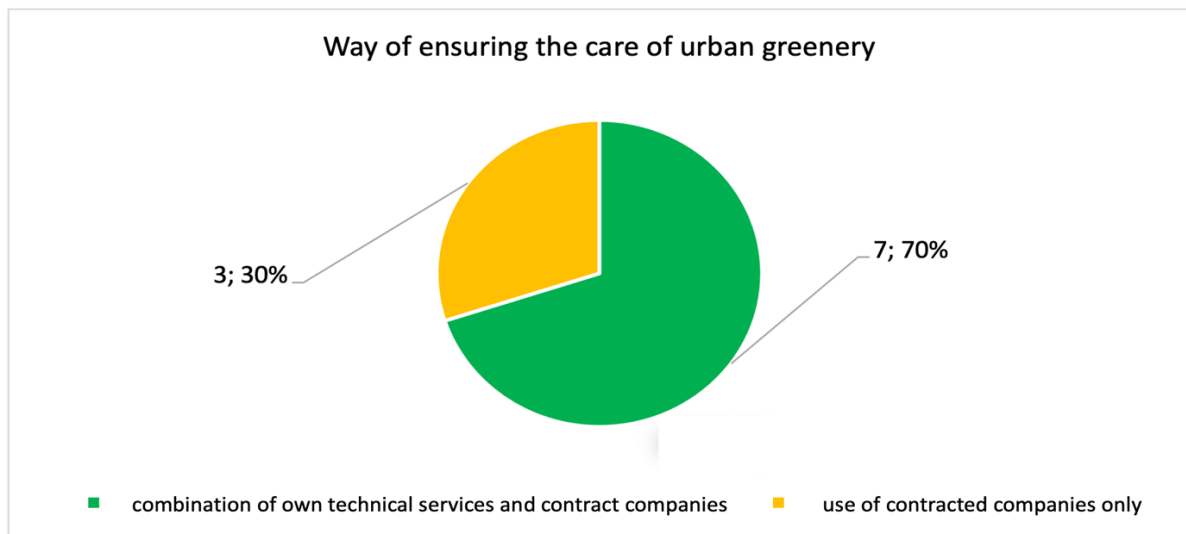
Overview of ORPs involved in the survey	
Benešov	Poděbrady
Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav	Rakovník
Kladno	Slaný
Kralupy nad Vltavou	Vlašim
Mělník	Votice

Central Bohemian Region



Question No. 2 – Does your municipality have its own technical and gardening services that take care of urban greenery or use contractors?

The ORPs had a choice of three options for how they provide care of urban greenery. Either only through their own technical and gardening services or through only contractual companies, or a combination of both of these forms. The result showed that all municipalities take care of urban greenery, seventy percent of them by combining services provided by their own organizations and services of contractual companies that provide special and highly professional activities such as tree pruning, risky felling, etc. Thirty percent of the municipalities uses only the services of contractors to take care of urban greenery and does not establish its own organizations for this purpose.

**Question 3 - Comment on Question 2**

The commentaries name examples of reasons that lead the municipality to use a combination of its own capacities with external service providers, or to use only contractual companies. The reasons vary according to the conditions at individual municipalities and the different approaches of local governments in dealing with the care of urban greenery.

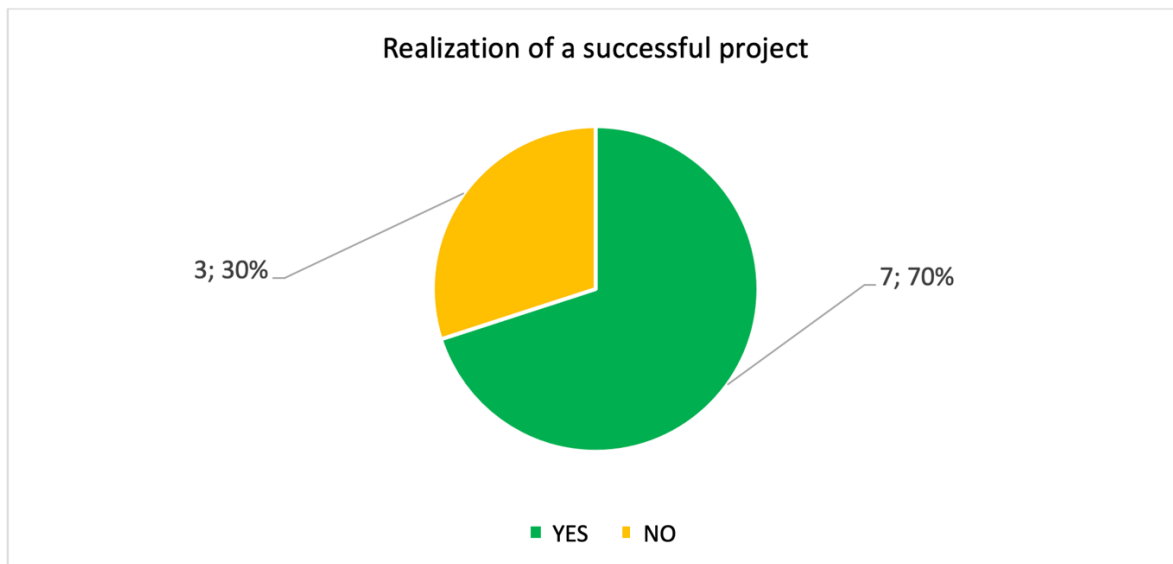
- the need for specialized and highly professional care, which ORP's own technical and horticultural services are not able to provide
- lack of its own professional staff
- lack of funds for its own experts
- privatisation of municipal technical and gardening services carried out in the past

Question No. 4 – Has your municipality implemented a successful project/projects related to the establishment, maintenance and development of urban greenery in the last three years?

Seven municipalities (Benešov, Votice, Rakovník, Mělník, Kladno, Kralupy nad Vltavou, Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav) have implemented a number of projects in the last three years, with a total of

twelve mentioned as examples. Three municipalities stated that they had not implemented any successful project in the field of urban greenery (Vlašim, Slaný, Poděbrady).

The result shows that the majority of municipalities (70 %) are very active in the field of urban greenery and intensively develop urban greenery. The remaining municipalities (30 %) that did not report any successful project are likely to deal only with routine maintenance of urban greenery.



Question 5 – If the answer to question 4 is positive, briefly describe the implemented project(s) (name, implementation period, source of funding, subject of the project, or other information - max. 200 words)

Benešov

- modifications of individual streets and spaces in the city - e.g. the alley in Jirásek street and perennial beds on squares, etc.

Votice

- revitalization of the park on Masaryk Square
- revitalization of a housing estate greenery Phase I
- planting alleys

Rakovník

- planting of a linden alley, subsidy from the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, implementation of the 3rd quarter of 2021
- revitalization of greenery in the Na Zátíší housing estate, own financing, implementation of the 3rd quarter of 2022 – planting of trees, shrubs and perennial beds

Mělník

- reconstruction of Fričova street – now running, planting by innovative methods (Swedish system, structural substrate) – planting in autumn
- planting from Norway Grants – completed

Kladno

- for example, greening roundabouts; Gravel beds with perennials were set up inside

Kralupy nad Vltavou

- revitalization of housing estate greenery (replacement of unpromising trees and shrubs with new planting)

Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav

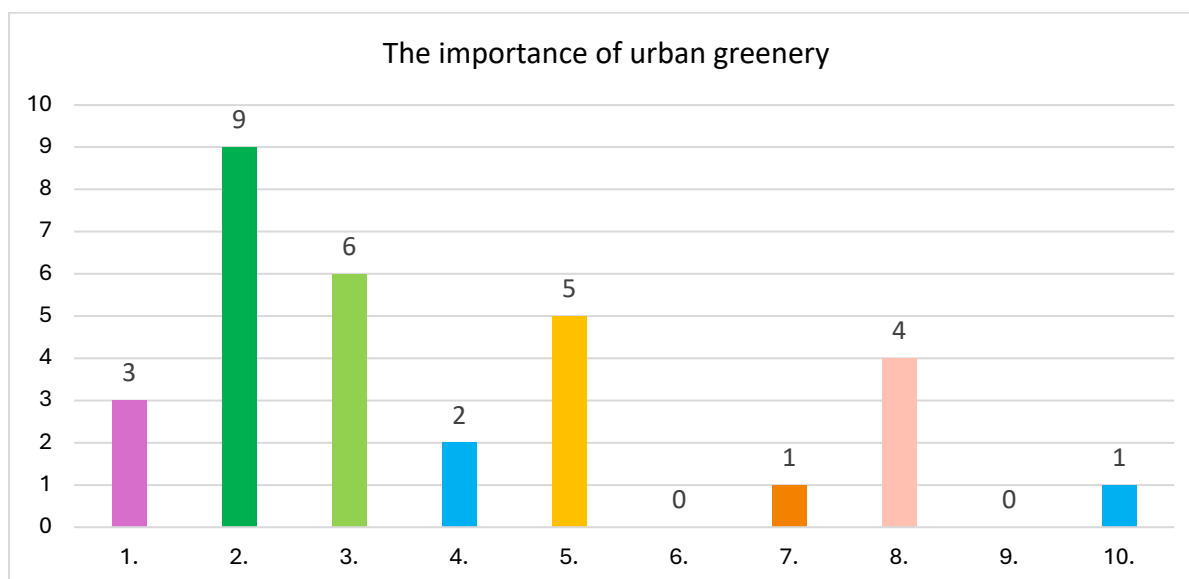
- plantation restoration 2023 (part of the castle garden, greenery + furniture) - financing from subsidies
- tree planting in streets Kostelecká, Okružní, Třebízského, Poleradská, Popovické stromořadí, Boleslavská and in Mariánské square (greenery around the roundabout) 2023 – city finances

Question 6 – If Question 4 is answered in the affirmative and Question 5 is answered: Would it be possible to provide the described project(s) as an example(s) of good practice that would subsequently be presented in the Czech Republic and abroad within the EPLUG project?

Three municipalities (Mělník, Kralupy nad Vltavou, Brandýs nad Labem – Stará Boleslav), which have implemented a project in the field of urban greenery in the last three years, have agreed to present their projects as examples of good practice.

Question No. 7 – Choose from the following statements (10), characterizing the importance of urban greenery, a maximum of three options that you consider to be the most important. Urban greenery:

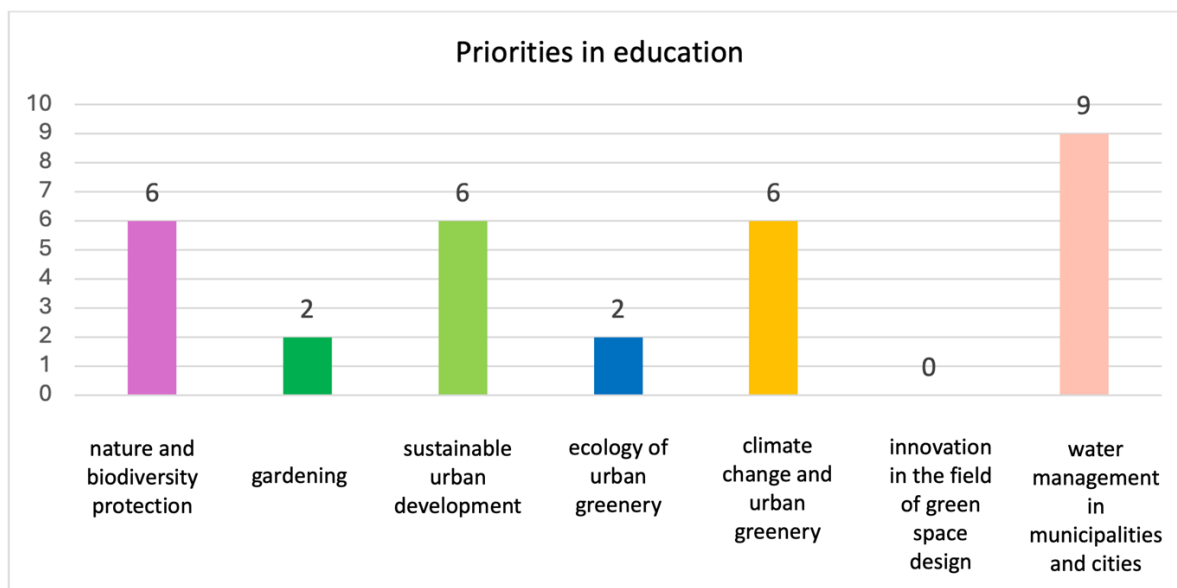
1	contributes to cleaning the air of harmful substances and reduces environmental pollutions	3 votes
2	provides natural shade and protection from excessive sunlight, which helps maintain a comfortable climate in urban areas	9 votes
3	improves the aesthetic appearance of the city and contributes to the well-being and quality of life of the inhabitants	6 votes
4	has a positive effect on the mental health of the population, reduces stress and anxiety	2 votes
5	provides a habitat for urban fauna and flora and helps preserve biodiversity	5 votes
6	serves as flood protection and reduces the risk of flooding in urban areas	1 vote
7	improves the quality of the environment by absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen during photosynthesis	0
8	helps reduce temperature in urbanised areas and minimise urban heat islands	4 votes
9	it promotes social interaction between residents and creates space for sports, recreational and cultural activities	0
10	has economic significance, contributes to the value of real estate and increases the attractiveness of the city for residents and visitors	1 vote



By evaluating the responses of individual municipalities, it was found that the greatest importance of urban greenery is seen in the area of climate improvement (90 %), aesthetic appearance of cities and municipalities (60 %), preservation of biodiversity (50 % agreement) and also in reducing temperature in urbanized areas (40 %).

Question No. 8 – Choose a maximum of three of the following educational areas (7) that you consider to be the most important and necessary in the professional training of employees of municipal authorities and workers of technical and horticultural services.

1	nature and biodiversity protection – education in the field of protection and sustainable use of natural resources, preservation of biodiversity and support of ecosystems in cities,	6 votes
2	gardening – education in the field of gardening as a means of promoting green zones in cities and creating space for relaxation and recreational activities of the inhabitants,	2 votes
3	sustainable urban development – education in the field of sustainable urban development, which includes planning and management of green spaces in cities with regard to the needs of the inhabitants and the environment, planting and maintenance of urban greenery,	6 votes
4	ecology of urban greenery – education in the field of ecology of urban greenery, focusing mainly on the relationships between the environment in the city and its inhabitants, ...	2 votes
5	climate change and urban greenery – education in the field of the impact of climate change on urban greenery and the possibilities of adaptation and mitigation using green infrastructures,	6 votes
6	innovation in the field of green space design – to educate in innovative approaches to proposals for the creation of green spaces that take into account the needs of residents, the environment and climate change,	0
7	water management in municipalities and cities – rainwater retention, use of water management methodology, irrigation systems,	9 votes



By evaluating the responses of individual municipalities, it was found that the greatest priority in the professional education of municipal and municipal office employees and workers in technical and horticultural services is clearly the area of "water management in municipalities and cities", which was selected by 90 % of municipalities. The following topics were chosen as the next most important topics for education (60 %) by the same number of votes (60 %).

CONCLUSION

The survey, in which a total of ten municipalities with extended powers in the Central Bohemian Region participated, confirmed the assumption that the ORPs in their majority are trying to develop urban greenery and not just maintain it. Several examples of good practice were given, and in three cases, a willingness to share the implemented projects was also expressed.

For the purposes of determining methodological recommendations and further steps in the EPLUG project and CoVE – Green Cities 2030+ activities, the confirmation of priorities in the field of further professional education of workers who participate in activities or directly perform them in the field of establishing, maintaining and developing urban greenery seems to be extremely valuable. These priorities coincide with the priorities set by the CoVE at VOŠ and SZeŠ Benešov and all involved foreign partners within the EPLUG project.

The results confirmed the assumption of a majority consensus of the ORPs on the importance of urban greenery, such as protecting and improving the climate, improving the aesthetic appearance of cities and municipalities and preserving biodiversity.

The needs for professional training of workers in the field of urban greenery in the priority topics were also confirmed, where the topic of "water management" clearly dominated, followed by the topics of "sustainable development of cities and municipalities", "biodiversity protection" and "climate protection".

In their comments, some ORPs also indicated certain challenges that the ORPs have to deal with, such as, for example, the lack of professional and motivated workers in the field of urban greenery.

The individual examples of good practice presented by the ORPs in the survey are undoubtedly inspiring, especially those that the ORPs expressed willingness to share with other municipalities and organizations within the region, the Czech Republic and at the international level. The presentation of successful ORP's projects can be a good impulse and motivation for other municipalities that did not participate in this survey and many of which have certainly implemented various projects in the field of urban greenery, which would also deserve to be mapped and shared by professionals and public and would be a good presentation of individual municipalities and the results of their care for urban greenery and efforts to improve the quality of life of their citizens. Therefore, one of the goals of the CoVE in the next period from 2025 will be to further develop communication with the ORPs and their environmental departments in cooperation with the Department of the Environment and Agriculture of the Central Bohemian Region.

The survey and its results will be presented within the EPLUG project and provided to partner organizations in the project and will also be provided to all municipalities in the Central Bohemian Region and the Department of the Environment and Agriculture of the Regional Authority of the Central Bohemian Region for possible use.

Benešov, June 2024

Project team of CoVE – Green Cities 2030+, Central Bohemian Region, Czech Republic