5.1.2.2 Circular solutions at Cascina Falchera

The Cascina Falchera pilot applies a circular economy approach to create a resilient and self-sustaining urban farm. The economic model combines diversified revenue streams, including socially differentiated plot fees, sales of seedlings, short food supply chains with local actors, and income from educational activities. Initial investment and operational costs are supported by EU funds and private foundations, while local employment is generated through garden management, maintenance, and training roles.

Resource used within the farm follows circular principles: vegetable seeds are collected and reused for subsequent planting cycles, and crop residues and food waste are composted to produce nutrient-rich soil amendments. Automated irrigation and expert guidance support efficient, low-impact operations. Training programs and workshops engage the community in circular farming practices, seed conservation, and sustainable land management.

By integrating indigenous seed varieties, circular resource management, community involvement, and educational initiatives, the pilot ensures both environmental sustainability and long-term economic viability, strengthening the farm's role as a social, educational, and ecological asset.

5.1.2.3 Social inclusion, environmental education and community well-being

A central element of the Cascina Falchera pilot is the active involvement of the community in decision-making and agricultural practices, fostering a sense of belonging and enabling locally adapted solutions. Communal gardening sessions engage families, friends, and youth volunteers in maintaining shared areas and exchanging knowledge, while a year-round calendar of educational and social activities targets children, schools, and broader community groups. Collaboration with ITER and local educators provides hands-on learning experiences in agriculture, biology, and ecology, and workshops on sustainable farming, organic gardening, and environmental stewardship reinforce practical skills.

The farm dedicates plots to NGOs and vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, unemployed individuals, young families, and other disadvantaged citizens, offering reduced fees and access incentives. Guidelines on sustainable and safe gardening practices ensure environmental protection and community well-being, complemented by monthly recreational and health promotion activities. These initiatives collectively strengthen social inclusion, environmental awareness, and community cohesion.

Overall, the combines permaculture-based farming, circular resource management, diversified revenue streams, and active community engagement to create a resilient, sustainable, and socially inclusive urban farm that supports biodiversity, environmental education, and local well-being.

5.1.3 Testing a mixed-use UF scenario (Krakow)

The Krakow pilot within the CoFarm4Cities project represents a mixed-use urban farming model developed on municipal land, integrating environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and economic viability. The initiative transforms underutilized urban green space into a new gardening model that combines allotment gardening with a community-managed mini urban farm, led primarily by allotment holders. This new model contributes to sustainable land use, urban resilience, and improved quality of life for residents.

The project is aligned with the city's strategic framework, particularly the "Directions for the development and management of green areas in Krakow for the years 2019–2030", and reflects broader European objectives such as the EU Green Deal and Agenda 2030.

The pilot site, located on Orla Street, is managed through a collaborative governance model involving the Kraków Municipal Green Authority (ZZM) and a selected non-governmental organization acting as the site operator.

The Krakow CoFarm4Cities pilot represents a holistic approach to urban farming that integrates environmental responsibility, economic feasibility, and social inclusion. By transforming municipal land into a vibrant community-managed space, the project contributes to sustainable urban development, enhances biodiversity, and strengthens local communities.

The solution offers a replicable model for cities seeking to promote resilient food systems, multifunctional land use, and inclusive urban environments.

Key elements of the solution

5.1.3.1 Food Sovereignity at the Individual Level

The Krakow mixed-use urban farm strengthens food sovereignty by enabling individuals and households to actively participate in food production. Residents cultivate their own plots, gaining direct access to fresh, chemical-free produce while increasing their awareness of sustainable food systems.

The model promotes self-sufficiency at a small scale, allowing participants to partially meet their own food needs while developing practical skills in organic agriculture. Through composting, seed-saving, and low-input cultivation methods, gardeners reduce dependency on external food supply chains.

Educational activities, including workshops on sustainable agriculture and cooperation with schools and universities, further reinforce knowledge transfer and empower citizens to make informed food choices. The pilot also serves as a demonstration site, promoting urban agriculture as a viable component of resilient local food systems.

5.1.3.2 New Economically Sustainable Model of Management

The Krakow pilot introduces a hybrid and scalable management model that combines municipal support with community-based operation. The land is publicly owned and provided by the municipality, while daily management is delegated to an NGO acting as the site operator.

The long-term economic model is based on plot subscription fees paid by gardeners, complemented by revenues from educational activities, workshops, and community events. This diversified approach enhances financial resilience and reduces reliance on external funding.

Operational efficiency is achieved through shared infrastructure, community engagement, and the use of locally available resources. The involvement of volunteers and collective work further reduces costs while strengthening ownership among participants.

The model also creates opportunities for local employment, particularly through the role of a site coordinator or urban farm manager. Over time, the site aims to achieve financial self-sufficiency while maintaining affordability and accessibility.

5.1.3.3 Socially Inclusive and Community-Oriented Urban Farm

The Krakow mixed-use urban farm is designed as an inclusive space that fosters community integration, social cohesion, and equal access to green infrastructure.

The project actively involves a wide range of stakeholders, including local residents, schools, universities, and civil society organisations. It prioritises the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as elderly people, youth, individuals with disabilities, migrants, unemployed persons, and families with children.

Participation is supported through preferential access to plots, targeted workshops, and community events that encourage interaction and mutual support. The farm serves as a platform for building social connections, reducing isolation, and strengthening neighbourhood ties.

In addition to food production, the site offers recreational and educational opportunities that contribute to physical and mental well-being. Public events, open days, and co-creation activities further enhance community engagement and acceptance.

5.1.4 Testing public orcharg and bio-waste resue based UF scenario (Zagreb)

The urban orchard in Brestje, the neighborhood in the eastern district of Sesvete in Zagreb, established in the framework of CoFarm4Cities, has been a new addition to the urban gardens project, implemented in the city of Zagreb since 2013, with great success and great interest of the citizens.

To make a step forward and enrich the existing scheme, the city began implementing urban orchards as a crossover between a public park and an edible forest. The Brestje orchard is the second one in Zagreb.

The project provides the local people with the opportunity to spend time in natural surroundings, which has been proven beneficial to both mental and physical health. Although Brestje is a neighborhood with a lot of greenery, there aren't many public green areas for the residents, and most of the greenery is either undeveloped and inaccessible, or on private plots. The orchard provides a space for socializing, food production, relaxation and education, and a community is built with the help of public and inclusive green spaces.

Key elements of the solution

5.1.4.1 A new green/edible community space in the neighbourhood

The urban farm in Zagreb is conceived as a public green space with the orchard containing different varieties of fruit trees (apples, pears, cherries, currants, aronia...), a multifunctional lawn as the main space for standard park activities (play, recreation, rest and relaxation) and biodiversity meadows which attracts pollinating insects and birds and adds to the overall biodiversity of the area.

The equipment in the urban orchard (benches and trash cans) further enhance the leisurely character of this area, making it a green outdoor living room for the community living in a green area with limited public green spaces, as the majority of green surfaces are either inaccessible or private. It’s situated in a residential area, dominated by single-family homes, and next to the elementary school and kindergarten. The community was included through involvement of the school and kindergarten children into the planning of the orchard, and they take major part in maintenance and in use of the fruits for school lunch.