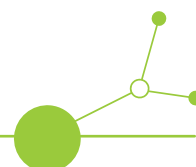


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Zagreb Action Plan



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Table of contents:

1. Introduction	2
2. Objectives.....	2
3. Zagreb Action Plan	2
3.1. Goals of the Action plan	3
3.2. Stakeholders mapping and co-design.....	3
3.3. Risks and mitigation	4
3.4. Policy recommendations.....	4
3.5. Integration and implementation	5
3.6. Activities, budget, schedule	6
3.6.1. New urban gardens.....	6
3.6.2. New urban orchards	6
3.6.3. Inclusive common area to urban garden	7
3.7. Monitoring and Evaluation.....	8



1. Introduction

This document provides an outline of the specific steps and actions, i.e. a roadmap to creating replication models of the Zagreb pilot action developed within the CoFarm4Cities project.

The Urban Gardens project, whose primary objective is to make the city-owned arable land to the citizens for the purpose of production of food (vegetables and berries), herbs and other plants for personal needs, was launched in 2013 at the initiative of civil organisations.

As a follow up of the programme, and leaning on its development directions, the City plans to further enhance the sustainable land use and community building by implementing edible parks - urban orchards in the local communities.

Originating within the scope of the CoFarm4Cities project, the urban orchard model serves as a community building zone that integrates a green area - park and outdoor classroom, together with the educational values and access to healthy food. Urban orchard also offers the opportunity of direct access to food, which brings people closer to nature and its healing properties.

As an additional learning and nature preserving tool, a composting device is installed in the local school next to the pilot area, where the food waste from the school kitchen catering to 900 children will be transformed into compost that will be shared with the local community and used at the orchard and the school garden.

2. Objectives

The goal of the action plan is to outline all the necessary steps needed for successful and sustainable implementation of urban gardens and urban orchards with the overall goal of protecting the unbuilt city areas from urban sprawl, and to promote healthy lifestyle and waste reduction through technologically advanced composting practice.

The local pilot action will have a strong social, aesthetical, and community building character. It will serve as a platform for all parts of the society to converge, and will be equipped with all the necessary features that will ensure relaxation, education and quality time for all the members of the community.

3. Zagreb Action Plan



3.1. Goals of the Action plan

According to the development strategy for green urban renewal of the City of Zagreb, Zagreb is a sustainable city in which greenery is the default setting in the space, improving the quality of life in the city and encouraging rich urban biodiversity.

Within the CoFarm4Cities project, cofounded within the Interreg CE programme, Zagreb has decided to explore the potential of urban orchards as communal spaces, hybrids of a green park and an urban farm or garden, gathering the local people in a new model of sustainable land use.

The city has defined goals in line with the development strategies, and implemented them on a piece of land owned by the city and situated next to the Brestje elementary school.

Zagreb action plan goals:

- **Food security:** make local fresh food available.
- **Multi-functional land use:** combine production, biodiversity and recreation.
- **Circular resource flows:** composting, nutrient cycling.
- **Equitable access:** inclusion of children, youth and marginalized groups.
- **Resilience & adaptation:** climate smart practices (drought tolerant crops, agroforestry, soil conservation).

In line with the aforementioned goals, the City of Zagreb is continuously researching the city-owned land to find suitable locations for new urban gardens and urban orchards.

3.2. Stakeholders mapping and co-design

In Zagreb, the stakeholder mapping process was started before the very start of the project. Through a previously implemented EU funded project proGleg, the City started a campaign of mapping stakeholders in the space and project of urban gardens, and recognized this practice as key in any process of modification of the existing program of urban gardens and related programs.

For the urban orchard, the environment and potential users have been explored and contacted through direct approach, with the user list being open to potential new members. Among the proposed users were the local school and local gardeners, along with some smaller groups of people. The main contact points were the school personnel, who were eager to participate, and the district council that gathers all parts of the community.

The city has already organized several workshops with the local community and the interest was great. This also provided an insight into specific population groups' wishes



and requirements, and at the same time the different perception of time of different groups: local children were happy with future plans and slow development of an intervention, while the residents of the retirement home prefer the interventions to be planned in the near future and possibly in the vicinity of the retirement home.

In the spring of 2024, four workshops were held with interested public and future users of the urban orchard. The workshops have provided the city with a clear vision of what a periurban community wishes to see in a new park, and what are their needs and wishes. The design was informed by the workshops results, and the final design integrated them into a coherent urban park.

This process utilized in the Brestje urban orchard can be replicated in other periurban areas of Zagreb and other cities, but the monitoring process will be crucial in recognizing the positive and negative characteristics and learning from the process.

3.3. Risks and mitigation

Risk and mitigation measures are fundamental components of effective project management and organizational planning. Risk refers to the potential for events or conditions that could negatively impact objectives or outcomes within the project implementation.

To address these uncertainties, mitigation measures are developed to minimize the likelihood or impact of potential risks. Implementing well-structured risk management and mitigation strategies not only enhances preparedness and resilience but also supports informed decision-making, ensuring that projects and organizations can achieve their goals even in the face of challenges.

Risk management requires identifying, controlling, and recording risks, highlighting the related consequences, and managing mitigation actions. Risk assessment methods are applied to minimise deviations from the expected results and schedule.

Table below shows an overview of the critical risks and potential mitigation measures:

- **Risk:** Vandalism. **Mitigation:** use of the orchard in all times of day, education of potentially problematic individuals.
- **Risk:** Water scarcity. **Mitigation:** Use of communal water for watering.
- **Risk:** Contamination of soils. **Mitigation:** Testing, raised beds, crop restrictions.

3.4. Policy recommendations

Introduction of urban gardens and orchards is based on already existing procedure that complies with relevant laws and regulations and fits into the strategic plans of the



municipality. It is particularly following the guidelines of The Development Plan of the City of Zagreb for the period until the end of 2027, a strategic document focused on economic, social, and environmental development which serves as a framework for sustainable growth and uses EU funds for infrastructure and social improvements, and the Green Urban Regeneration Strategy of the City of Zagreb (2023) which aims to create a sustainable, resilient, and green city by increasing green spaces, mitigating urban heat islands, improving public spaces, and enhancing biodiversity.

The programme is also in line with the national regulations, and the spatial planning documents of the City.

3.5. Integration and implementation

The City of Zagreb has an ongoing, active urban gardens project and accompanying policies and funding. Every year the city dedicates a substantial amount to managing and maintaining of the gardens, and the urban orchards will fit into that scheme.

The city government continuously searches for adequate land to expand on the project, and in cooperation with the district councils, the city plans and organizes new plots.

The urban orchards will be implemented as a hybrid between a public park and urban garden, providing leisure and healthy food in a communal space.

Upon finishing the Brestje orchard, the city will monitor the use of the orchard and learn from the process. This will enable the city to plan further implementation of urban orchards in cooperation with the district self-government and the interested NGOs, together with schools and kindergartens as complementary institutions interested in participation, codesign and use of space.

When a site is chosen and approved by the district council, the city will create a timeline with milestones with a clear roadmap, defined parts of the process, and suggestions for stakeholder engagement.

Every new site will be planned with a Gantt chart to provide a visual representation of a project's timeline, tasks and milestones.

The city will provide funding for the projects, but the possibilities of funding from other sources will be explored in the planning phase.

Both the startup costs and operational costs are provided in the city budget, and the works are being executed by the City holding company, Zrinjevac branch.



3.6. Activities, budget, schedule

3.6.1. New urban gardens

Zagreb is running the "Urban Gardens" scheme since 2013. The "Urban Gardens" project is a successful example of sustainable land use in Zagreb, enabling citizens to produce food (vegetables and berries), herbs and flowers for their own needs. The city continuously expands the project by searching for new city-owned sites suitable for agriculture, and the demand is higher than the supply, resulting in long waiting lists.

Schedule: ongoing, implementation of an urban garden lasts for 18-24 months

Budget: 100.000 -250.000€

Sources of funding: Budget of the City of Zagreb, EU funds

Maintenance cost per one garden: 12.000 € per year

Preparatory activities: research of land, soil analysis, communication with the local residents.

Responsible: Department of Agriculture (City of Zagreb)

Sub-activities:

- Selection of a land plot
- Division into smaller plots (50 square meters)
- Construction of a fence, soil preparation
- Public competition for issuing of the gardening plots, signing of the contracts
- Ongoing maintenance.

3.6.2. New urban orchards

Expansion of urban orchards scheme is an ongoing initiative on behalf of the City of Zagreb, based upon the existing urban gardens project. Currently there are two different urban orchards in Zagreb, one is very basic line of fruit trees, and the other, developed through CoFarm4Cities project, is a community-based initiative providing education, leisure area and community building space. The City is researching potential zones for new urban orchards.

Schedule: ongoing, implementation of an urban orchard lasts for 24 months

Budget: 120.000-300.000€



Sources of funding: Budget of the City of Zagreb, District council budget, private investors, EU funds

Preparatory activities: research of land, soil analysis, water drilling, codesign process.

Responsible: Department of Agriculture (City of Zagreb)

Sub-activities:

- Selection of a land plot
- Construction of a fence, soil preparation
- Codesign phase
- Design by the landscape architect
- construction
- Public competition for issuing of the gardening plots, signing of the contracts
- Ongoing maintenance.

3.6.3. Inclusive common area to urban garden

Zagreb is expanding the urban gardens scheme by creating an inclusive common area to the urban garden, starting in the Sopot area in the Modernist neighborhood of New Zagreb. This is being funded as a pilot area of the Horizon Europe project Bauhaus Bites, and if proven successful, the city will explore possibilities of expanding the scheme to other urban gardens.

Schedule: late 2026- end 2028

Budget: 150.000€

Sources of funding: Budget of the City of Zagreb, District council budget, EU funds

Preparatory activities: communication with the garden users and the local community, codesign process with the local stakeholders

Responsible: Department of Agriculture and Department of Preparation, Presentation and Implementation of Projects (City of Zagreb)

Sub-activities:

- Geodesic survey
- Codesign with the local stakeholders
- Design by a landscape architect
- Construction



- Regular activities on site

3.7. Monitoring and Evaluation

It is necessary to follow up on the activities in order to make the initiatives durable and to ensure that the initial idea continually provides the city and citizens with the benefits that have been key in planning of the intervention.

The city gardens use a system of measuring and monitoring ecological determinants - water, air and soil samples. The planned intervention brings a soft quality to the already existing system, which will be measured less by numbers and more by testimonies. However, in order to monitor the change brought by the project, the number of people and the number of arrivals to the common garden space, as well as the number of users of the planned raised beds, will be measured in cooperation with partners.

The citizens currently have at their disposal 15 urban gardens with over 2,200 gardening plots stretching over an area of 22.5 ha. The City Department for Agriculture and Forestry drafted the Gardening Handbook as the fundamental tool for expert assistance to the users of the gardening plots. It contains practical advice based on the organic production principles. The urban gardens make healthy food available, improve the condition of the citizens' household budgets, contribute to the preservation of a healthier surroundings, preservation of biodiversity and to the citizens' ecological awareness. They strengthen the bond with nature, promote a healthy lifestyle, as well as develop the partnership between the City of Zagreb and its citizens.

Since our urban gardens are situated in an urban surrounding, which makes them vulnerable to potential pollution from various sources, a programme for monitoring on the condition of soil and water, pollution intake and the safety of agricultural products has been established.

The above mentioned principle is valid for the urban orchard as well.

Since the urban orchard is a hybrid between an urban farm and a park for the community, the main benefit that the community gains is related to social cohesion, including bringing together the school children with the rest of the community, bridging the generation gap, involving all members of the community in communal maintenance and educational activities.

These “soft qualities” will be monitored by occasional surveys and by keeping in touch with the school, and planning events and gatherings in the future.