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CityZen News | #03 2021

Welcome to the third CityZen newsletter,

a new newsletter means another semester of our CityZen project is coming to an end! COVID-19 still leaves us no choice but to share our regional urban farming projects and experiences online.

We are happy that we are still able to have inspiring, lively meetings (like our first Impact Workshop) and to continue with our regional activities in any way possible. We invite you to have a look at what has been going on - as always, feel free to share your experiences on urban farming and any feedback with us.

Enjoy reading, stay safe and keep in touch via our social media channels!

The CityZen team

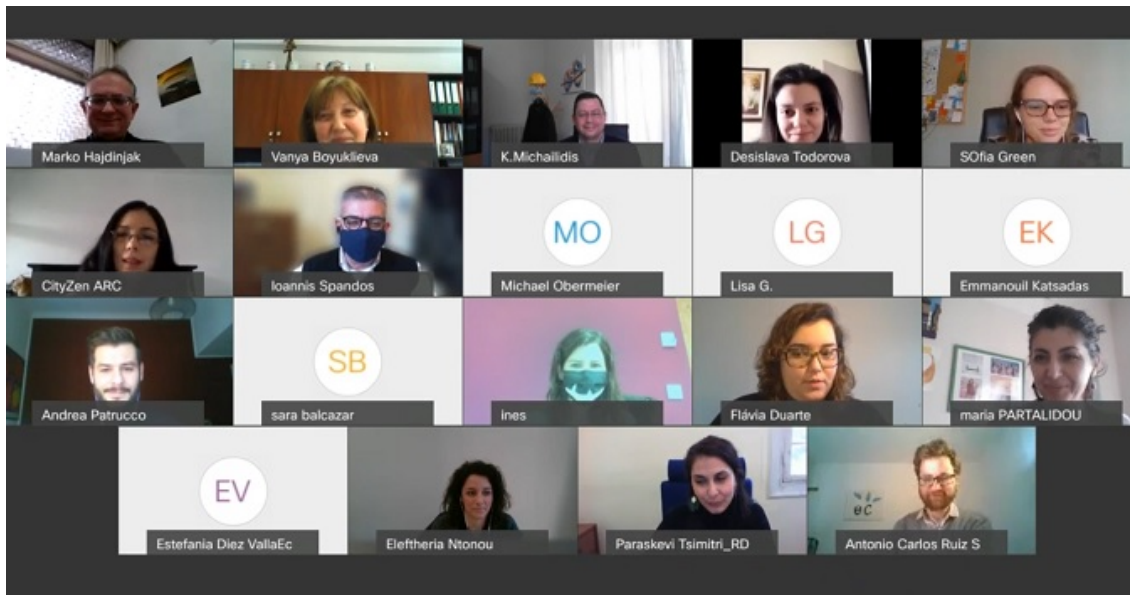
CityZen is implemented by seven partners (see below):

Applied Research and Communications Fund (Lead Partner) - Bulgaria, Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia - Greece, Municipality of Beja - Portugal, Higher Technical School of Agrarian Engineering & University of Valladolid - Spain, Institute for Rural Development Research at Goethe University Frankfurt/Main - Germany, Baixo Alentejo Intermunicipal Community (CIMBAL) - Portugal, Natural Heritage Foundation of Castilla y León - Spain.

highlights

Impact Workshop #01

Urban farming policy implications in the current economic system, business models and supply chains



The first CityZen Impact Workshop (online) from January 21st - 22nd dealt with urban farming in relation to business models, economic systems and technology and innovation. Our hosts from [ARC Fund](#), [Natural Heritage Foundation of Castilla y León](#), [University of Valladolid](#) and the [Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia](#) welcomed a variety of external speakers who presented different perspectives on urban farming and concrete case studies of successful projects, as well as 40 participants.

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What are the key issues related to urban farming?



Urban Farming in Europe – Key Issues and How to Solve Them

CityZen is a cooperation project funded by INTERREG Europe. It aims to create a knowledge pool of urban farming policies, social initiatives and business models for better resource efficiency and well-being in cities. CityZen promotes urban farming as a driving force for social and economic change in five European partner regions!

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1. Inclusive governance, policy change, legislation	2. New business models	3. Technology and innovation	4. Support and sustainability	5. Communication with stakeholders
<p>Initiators of urban farming activities are often civil groups and citizens. They have limited access to policy makers who, in turn, rarely see urban farming as a top priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Empower urban farmers in talking to public and managing authorities. ➤ Enhance public authorities' knowledge and interest in urban farming so they can offer adequate support services (land access, new technologies, funding, good practices). ➤ In cooperation with a variety of stakeholders introduce or review legislation for the use of land for urban farming, consumption and sale of local urban farming products. ➤ Improve integrated land planning to avoid conflicts among urban land users – professional farmers, construction companies, private initiatives, non-commercial enthusiasts. 	<p>Urban farming has untapped potential as a contributor to local economies. It can spark new jobs and start-ups, trigger policy change, raise social inclusion and engage young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Capacity building on new business models for policy makers and funding entities with good practices of urban farming models, key technologies, methods and promotional tools. ➤ Scale up green construction and infrastructures which include urban gardens/farms. ➤ Engage with design and construction companies so they can include outdoor and indoor urban farming spaces while developing new buildings and public places. 	<p>New digital services and tools offer many opportunities to increase and promote urban farming activities in regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Design and diffusion of new digital services in marketing, training, knowledge exchange and administration of urban farms. ➤ Better funding opportunities for pilot innovation projects in urban farming. ➤ Better links between regional value chains and R&D to improve the role of local knowledge providers to sustain city resources. 	<p>There is room for improvement and design of new support measures to foster urban farming activities in our regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Show how urban farming contributes to resource efficiency and sustainable cities to gain political support. ➤ Offer steady financial and administrative support for urban farming projects to foster new businesses, stakeholder partnerships, knowledge exchange and management skills. ➤ Apply responsive design for support measures by taking on board all actors and meeting real life challenges of the urban farming community. 	<p>Effective communication with multiple actors (citizens of all ages and backgrounds, businesses and authorities) is needed to create successful, long-lasting urban farming projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organise meetings with specific groups (e.g. policy makers/researchers/farmers/young people) to identify challenges and find solutions, share experiences and knowledge. ➤ Create multi-actor networks, working groups and new initiatives on common interests. ➤ Support cooperation with local knowledge providers to present new technologies and trends to urban farming practitioners and decision makers.

In our peer to peer workshops, these 5 topics have crystallised as our key issues in all regions. See what they are and how we are planning to solve them during the

Regional spotlight

Urban farming in Thessaloniki

Shaping Policies

Thessaloniki, the capital of the Region of Central Macedonia in Greece, is an example of a densely populated city in a predominantly urban region.

How can urban farming help making life greener, more sustainable and resilient for its inhabitants? Find out how our partner Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia wants to support innovative urban farming activities & has already shaped regional policies.

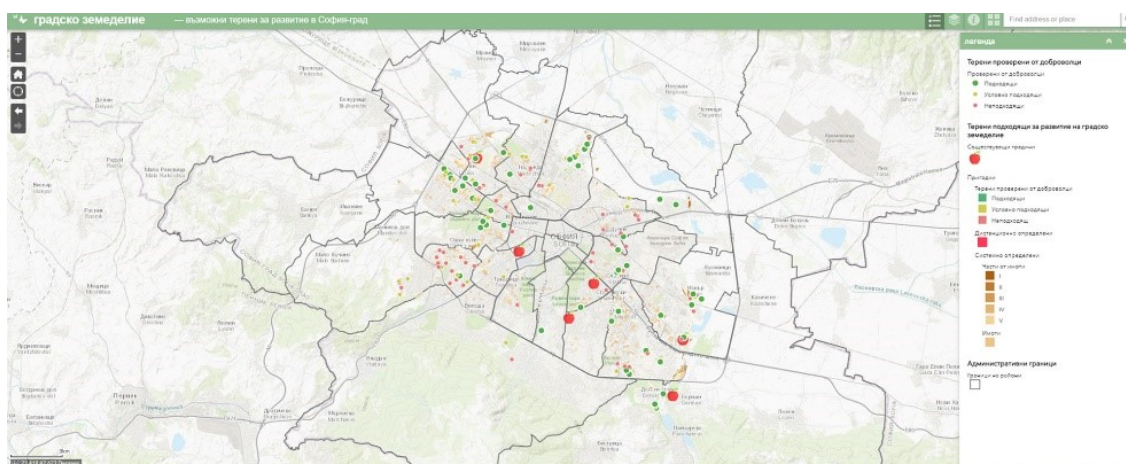


Picture: Argo Social Enterprise

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Good Practice in Sofia, Bulgaria

Digital map of city areas suitable for urban agriculture



To scale up urban farming activities, suitable spots in cities are needed - yet, knowledge about and access to them often don't exist.

Find out how a civil society organisation & a municipal enterprise cooperated in Sofia to solve this issue. By developing and maintaining a digital map with potential land plots, they created a win-win situation for citizens & authorities.

Picture credit: sofiaplan.bg/en/portfolio/urban-agriculture-2

Latest CityZen News



Spain: Urban farming improves climate resilience

In the past years, the positive impacts of urban farming on cities' food security, resource efficiency, sustainability and community building have been recognized more and more. Supporting it became part of many EU strategies & initiatives.

Our partners [Patrimonio Natural](#) and the [University of Valladolid](#) summed up some of them and present an inspiring pilot action from Valladolid, the Orchard Schools.

Picture credit: Cherry tree in CEIP Cristobal Colón schoolyard, Patrimonio Natural

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Germany: Alternative agricultural models in RhineMain

How can we raise appreciation (and support) for urban agricultural production among consumers & politicians in the RhineMain region? Our German partner [Institute for Rural Development Research](#) and the [Regionalpark RheinMain](#) put that into focus in a meeting on alternative agricultural models.

Experts from regional initiatives like *Ernährungsrat Frankfurt* or *Gemüseheldinnen Frankfurt*, farms & authorities identified possible synergies among local initiatives & the

Picture credit: C. Mathias, IfLS

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Spain: Community empowerment through urban agriculture

Learn about *Vallaecolid*, a community workshop and collection center for organic products in Valladolid. The idea is for local organic producers to have a space to store (collection center) and transform the products in an artisanal way (community workshop).

The community workshop is currently being built, the collection and distribution center located in the front of the warehouse has already started recently, with six product distribution lines:

final consumer, ecological stores, consumer groups, restaurants, school canteens and distribution centers. The project shows that only with the help of the union of small and medium-sized local producers, the needs of the community can be satisfied - reaching final consumers, who would not have access otherwise.



Read More

On Social Media



'Urban farming policy implications in the current economic system, business models and supply chains'.

We welcome people from outside our CityZen community to join us, too - contact us if you're interested:

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/.../impact-workshop-01-online/>



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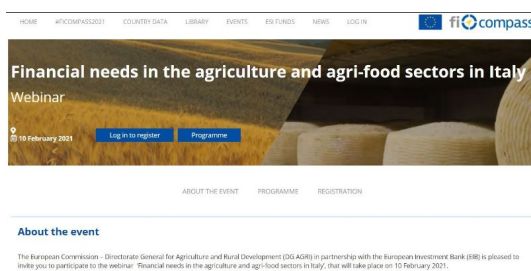


Recommended Content



Ecopolis is a holistic food security solution from Pasig City, Philippines. In a city where about 99 % of space is already used, floating farms on the city rivers offer more space to grow edible crops and to compost food waste. A mobile app then connects people to nearby floating urban farms, like-minded farmers and information. What a great way to make fresh food locally available!

Another inspiring project can be found here (in Spanish), a website about the city of Salamanca and its city hall, which has planted 600 new orchards.



The European Commission – Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) offer an online seminar ‘**Financial needs in the agriculture and agri-food sectors in Italy**’ on 10 February 2021.

The focus is on the financial environment in which farmers and processors operate in Italy. - you can register [here](#).

CityZen Interreg Europe

CityZen is a four-year long project supported by the INTERREG EUROPE 2014-2020 programme.



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If you want to know more about each partner, follow the links below:



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