



## Action Plan for the region of Sofia



### General information

Project: CityZen - Enhancing scalable innovations and new business models based on urban farming ecosystem values

Municipality: Sofia Municipality

Partner organisations concerned: Sofia Development Association (Sofia Municipality), ARC Fund

Country: Bulgaria

NUTS2 region: South-West Planning Region (Yugozapaden)

Contact person: Sevdalina Voynova

Email address: [s.voynova@sofia-da.eu](mailto:s.voynova@sofia-da.eu)

Phone number: +359 2 904 13 53, SOfiaGreen office



## Policy context

- The Action Plan aims to impact:
- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
  - European Territorial Cooperation programme
  - Other regional development policy instrument

## SofiaGreen programme for sustainable development of Sofia Municipality

Sofia Municipality is committed to strengthen its tools and approaches on city greening that can include urban farming (UF) as new activities with clear socio-economic values. SOfiaGreen – a strategic programme of the Municipality, can link municipal policies with global trends and bottom-up demands such as UF as emerging sector for the municipal policy mix.

As part of its strategic framework SOfiaGreen is planning to give additional funding to the programme “My Green School / My Green Kindergarten” that is implemented in close partnership with the Sofia Deputy Mayor on Environment. The programme aims to bring more nature in schools, kindergartens and nurseries by planting trees. SOfia Green will open up more opportunities for urban farming by financing vertical urban gardens for school and kindergarten projects alongside with growing trees.

Due to the pandemics, the initial CityZen policy instrument on setting Regional Innovation Centers under the OP ‘Competitiveness and Innovations’ was cancelled.

## **ACTION: Add-on call for vertical urban gardens complementing an existing programme for schools and kindergartens**

### Relevance to the project

The action directly upgrades the ‘DIY vertical urban gardens’ Pilot Action from Phase 1, so that more vertical gardens are scaled up in schools and kindergartens within the “My Green School / My Green Kindergarten” programme.

This action also got inspiration from the CyL school urban farming projects on greening school yards and educating children on healthy food production, sustainable use of resources and composting.

### Nature of the action

Greening of schools and kindergartens is a growing trend where urban farming can be successfully integrated to bring multifold benefits to children, teachers and families. The programme “My Green School / My Green Kindergarten” has been running since three years already where schools and kindergartens can apply and receive small trees to be planted at their sites, thus ensuring better access to green spaces and improving the air quality in the urbanized areas. The overall implementation of the programme is carried out and financed by the Sofia Deputy Mayor on Environment, where SOfiaGreen will be the main partner to provide additional budget for the new add-on call.

Besides green tree islands, schools and nurseries can also accommodate small production sites where children grow herbs, spices, small vegetables and berries while learning the basics on sustainability, food production and composting. The harvest from the vertical gardens can be used in the canteens to save



some food costs but mainly to bring sense of fulfillment and recognition of the nature resources by the little gardeners. Vertical designs can be a good model for mini urban gardens due to their versatile outdoor and indoor for year-round use.

This Action steps upon the Pilot Action on “DIY vertical urban gardens” and will extend the recent call for tree planting at schools and pre-schools by providing financial support to build vertical urban gardens as well. Sofia schools and kindergartens can apply for a fixed amount of 125 EUR within this add-on call to build a mini vertical garden together with seeds, seedlings and composted soil for planting.

SOfiaGreen will finance up to 10 mini vertical garden projects for the first year of the add-on call by addressing schools and kindergartens as new group of beneficiaries beyond the Pilot Action sites in Ph 1. The first badge of 10 project also complies with the SOfia Green annual budget that is available and already fixed for the year 2022. The call will provide guidance and technical schemes of the 4 vertical gardens models designed by the Pilot Action in Phase 1 ([The CityZen Guide on DIY vertical urban gardens in Bulgarian language](#)).

The call for 10 mini vertical gardens will provide valuable feedback on the needs of schools and kindergartens for safer and versatile designs for children that also offer educational, amusement and mobility features such as use of magnets, charcoal paint, wheels, smart watering appliances for older children, etc. Once the feedback is analyzed and integrated the “My Green School / My Green Kindergarten” programme will support larger number of school and kindergarten projects over the next years.

## **Stakeholders involved**

SOfiaGreen and Sofia Development Association (SDA) as Managing Authority to coordinate activities within the Action, to finance the call on vertical mini gardens at schools and kindergartens and to provide expert support.

Sofia Deputy Mayor on Environment as partner of “My Green School / My Green Kindergarten” programme.

Sofia Municipality composting facility to provide composted soil for the vertical gardens.

Local schools and kindergartens as applicants to the call.

ARC Fund team will provide support to SOfiaGreen and SDA for the Action implementation.

## **Timeframe**

1 Aug 2022 – 31 Jul 2023

Launch of the add-on call –Sept/ Oct 2022 after the start of the school year.

Assessment of the call’s outcomes – spring 2023 via online questionnaire to teachers and parents, a workshop will be also organized with the beneficiary schools/kindergartens to gather more participatory feedback.

Analysis and adjustments of the call to meet school and kindergartens specific needs – by Jul 2023

## **Costs**

1250 EUR to fund 10 vertical gardens for 1 year.



Eligible costs include the materials for the mini garden, seeds and seedlings. Composted soil will be provided free of charge to each garden within the municipal programme on composting food and organic wastes.

### Funding sources

SOfiaGreen budget within the “My Green School / My Green Kindergarten” programme.

**Date:** 12 May 2022

**Name of the organisation:** Sofia Development Association

**Signature of the relevant organisation:**

**Date:** 12 May 2022

**Name of the organisation:** SOfiaGreen

**Signature of the relevant organisation:**