

## CASE STUDY

# Prato Urban Jungle



*"We want to turn marginal and decaying neighbourhoods into green, active and life-giving city hubs"*

Stefano Mancuso,  
Founder of PNAT



## PROFILE SNAPSHOT

Website	<a href="http://www.pratourbanjungle.it">www.pratourbanjungle.it</a>
Social channels	<a href="#">f @PratoUrbanJungle</a> <a href="#">t @PratoUrbanJungl</a> <a href="#">i @pratourbanjungle</a> <a href="#">v @CittàdiPrato</a>
Contact us through Alliance	Camilla Pandolfi (urbanjungle@pnat.net)
Country	Italy
Main sector	Public
Uforest thematic discipline	Urban landscape planning
Stage of development	Pilot



By installing smart technology to filter indoor air pollution and renew infrastructures that support local economic development.



By offering inclusive, green spaces for the entire community and safeguarding cultural heritage.



By reusing old or degraded buildings and spaces and employing energy-and-water efficient technologies.



By increasing urban afforestation.





## START-UP

In 2019, the **Urban Innovative Action (UIA)** funded Prato Urban Jungle. This project is based on the idea of using plants to greenify the neighbourhoods of the city of Prato (Italy), by integrating nature and architecture. With plant-based solutions and energy efficiency criteria, this initiative aims at improving air, water and soil quality, regulating rainwater, mitigating temperatures, as well as improving the city's biodiversity and people's wellbeing.

### PRATO URBAN JUNGLE'S GOALS:

- Regenerate disused, underused, or declining urban areas through the reallocation of buildings and spaces to new, more creative and sustainable use.
- Create community, high-density green hubs with open spaces, social quarters, and cultural areas.



## INITIATIVE MODEL

### MAIN ACTIVITIES:

#### What does Prato Urban Jungle do?

- It develops highly dense green areas - urban jungles - by planting trees and vegetation and creating community gardens and orchards.
- It recovers existing spaces and buildings through soil restoration, opening up new functionalities, converting mineral surfaces into green filters, using phytoremediation for contaminated areas, covering external surfaces with plants, using recycled materials, etc.

### BENEFICIARIES:

#### Who benefits from Prato Urban Jungle's activities?

1. **Citizens**, primary school and high school students and local farmers enjoy these new, socially inclusive spaces and learn about food education, sustainable agriculture and ecology.
2. **Scientists**, who can collect big data for their research.
3. **The Municipality of Prato**, which aims at relaunching the city as an attractive, liveable place with thriving economic, ecological and social wellbeing.

### PROMOTION:

#### What is Prato Urban Jungle's promotion strategy?

Prato Urban Jungle's communication strategy and channels:

- Online news.
- Public advertising.
- Public introduction meetings.

### GOVERNANCE:

#### How does Prato Urban Jungle implement its activities?

- The **Municipality of Prato** leads the project management and coordination, gives political and administrative support to pilot sites and defines management strategies to ensure sustainable use of the city's territory.
- **Designers** and **plant scientists** develop creative strategies and solutions based on scientific discoveries, transferring knowledge on plant behaviour into technological innovations.
- **Architects** and **urban planners** design and research on architectures of sustainable biodiversity, social housing and urban development.
- **Bioeconomists** define strategies and develop technologies and operational solutions that trigger the resilience and sustainability of territorial and productive systems.
- **Energy operators** design and manage energy services and the production of energy from renewable sources.





- **Scientific environmentalists** supervise the aesthetic and protection aspects, and the quality of life.
- **IT developers** and **experts in sustainability, engagement, and communication** create digital solutions to promote sustainable lifestyles and to involve people in collaborative afforestation.
- **Partners:**
  - PNAT (Project Nature) develops the Fabbrica dell'Aria in the Macrolloto Zero Site and designs the Farm Park.
  - Boeri Architects designs the facades for the Estrada pilot site design.
  - CNR IBE (Istituto per la BioEconomia del Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche) develops the monitoring platform.
  - ESTRADA gives support to the Estrada pilot site.
  - Legambiente Toscana develops two toolkits and carries out workshops.
  - greenApes develops the app, and monitors stakeholders.
  - Treedom develops the platform, engages and communicates to stakeholders.

## **FINANCES:**

### **What are Prato Urban Jungle's main resources?**

As a pilot project of the Municipality of Prato, the project's resources are mainly based on **public funding** from the EU's 2019 Urban Innovative Actions initiative (UIA).

## **POLICY AND STANDARDS LEADING THE INITIATIVE:**

Prato Urban Jungle adheres to standard regulations related to construction, fire-fighting, electricity and water consumption, etc.



### What makes Prato Urban Jungle a one-of-a-kind project?

- The installation of **Fabbrica dell'Aria** (Air Factory), a unique tool that removes indoor contaminants.
- The **design of greenhouses** that include state-of-the-art technologies for cultivation and low energy consumption (e.g.: hydroponic systems).
- The use of a **social and sustainable approach** to re-value derelict industrial sites and dysfunctioning urban areas to favour citizen's wellbeing and biodiversity, and to spur the local economy.
- The **combined participation of the Municipality and associations** operating in the city.



## EXPECTATION

By **2025**, Prato Urban Jungle aims at serving as a representative example for other cities to restore degraded areas for the benefit of both nature and society.

### What does Prato Urban Jungle need to be successful?

- Scale up the initiative.
- Maintain and expand the partner network.

### What are today's main challenges?

- Limiting soil consumption.
- Designing and implementing projects that require both low energy and inputs, and low plant maintenance.
- Ensuring citizen participation and reaching out to different segments of the population.



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