Applicants for the competition were asked to either design small to medium vegetable gardens or propose solutions to upgrade existing gardens.

Designs were required to address a range of sustainability criteria, including biodiversity conservation and enhancement, waste management with particular attention to recycling practices and efficient water management. In addition, the design also needed to promote increased production and foster increased social inclusion.

A total of 81 applications were submitted from across Europe and three of them were chosen by a diverse jury made up of several professional organisations. The winner received a prize of 11,700€ and the right to draw up the design and direct the implementation of three different public vegetable gardens, the financing for which was already accounted for in the 2015 municipal budget.

The simple design of this initiative makes it so that other municipalities around the world can replicate its key elements in order to encourage increased urban agriculture and promote practical awareness of global environmental challenges among residents.

Innovation in the Municipality of Bologna

If food is indeed the one true international language, there are few cultures where it is spoken with the verve and passion that one finds in Italy.

In order to translate this passion into action, the Urban Center of Bologna, together with the Municipality of Bologna and other local partners, initiated the international architectural design competition Ortipertutti - which translates to vegetable gardens for all - in 2014.

By connecting key sustainability issues to a topic of interest throughout local communities - food - the Ortipertutti initiative also offered ways to enhance inclusion within the community and raise public awareness about healthy, organic and local food production.

The initiative was enriched by opportunities for residents to engage with urban farming experts and municipal practitioners; exhibitions; informative knowledge products; and community meetings.

The Municipality selected specific areas for the competition. These areas were representative of different spaces where vegetable gardens are found in Bologna: between houses, within existing public gardens, on rooftops and in marginal areas within the city.

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability is the leading global network of over 1,500 cities, towns and regions committed to building a sustainable future. RUAF has over 20 years of experience in working with local and subnational governments in over 20 countries on urban agriculture and city region food systems. The CITYFOOD network aims to accelerate local and regional government action on sustainable and resilient city-region food systems by combining networking with training, policy guidance and technical expertise to its participants.