

# WORLD GREEN ROOF & GREEN FAÇADES CONGRESS ORGANIZED IN BASEL - WORLD CAPITAL OF GREEN ROOFS

March 2025

Organized by the Urban Ecology Research Group ZHAW Institute for Environment and Natural Resources IUNR, the [World Congress on Green Roofs and Façades Basel 2025](#) will be held on June 5 and 6, 2025, in the historic Kollegiengebäude at the University of Basel.

The World Congress 2025 is aimed at scientists, planners, architects, landscape architects, construction experts, greening specialists and representatives of public authorities.

[Basel, Switzerland boasts the world's highest green roof area per capita.](#) The initiative, driven by energy-saving and biodiversity goals, has been promoted through incentive programs and legal mandates, expecting to bring significant adaptation benefits. 20 years after the 1st World Congress in Basel, the organizers are inviting international and national guests to the 'world capital' of green roofs. With 8 m<sup>2</sup> of green roofs per inhabitant and 50% of flat roofs covered with greenery, the city offers an impressive scenery and excellent opportunities to present the topic of green roofs and façades during the congress, as well as with a variety of excursions in Basel and throughout Switzerland.

Global warming increases the overheating of cities worldwide. More and more people today live in traffic-optimized urban areas characterized by concrete and asphalt. Significant cooling effects can be achieved on and around buildings with plants and their evaporation capacity.

Basel is considered the "world capital of green roofs". With the scientific-practical World Congress 2025 as well as a complementary Green Building Week 2025, knowledge transfer is combined with illustration on practical examples. Climate adaptation and the greening of cities are top priorities and the Organizers of the Congress wonder: which strategies and measures in the field of roof and façade greening are proving to be effective and successful? Challenges lead to solutions and new strategies, technical innovations and developments, which will be presented and discussed at a scientific, practice-orientated Congress.

[The city of Basel in Switzerland has the largest area of green roofs per capita in the world.](#) Initiatives aiming to increase the provision of green roofs in Basel were initially driven by energy-saving programmes, and subsequently by biodiversity conservation.





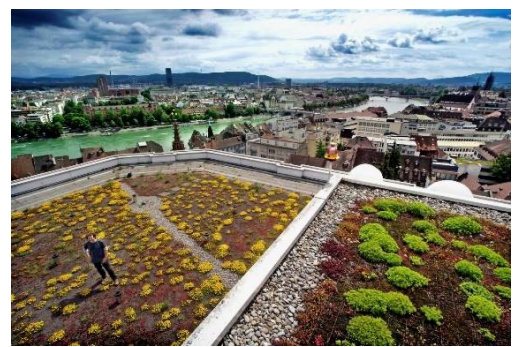
[The "Green Roof Strategy" \(2005-2007\)](#) is an initiative of the city of Basel in Switzerland with the main aim to increase the coverage of green roofs using a combination of financial incentives and building regulations. The instrument is the successor of an earlier initiative that provided subsidies for the installation of green roofs between 1996 and 1997. As a nature-based solution, the green roofs promoted by this policy instrument offer multi-functional benefits, such as climate change mitigation (reduced energy consumption of buildings), adaptation (lower temperatures, reduced surface runoff, etc.), and protection of biodiversity. The strategy has been supported by an awareness-raising campaign to promote the acceptance of the measures.

A comprehensive suite of mechanisms, from incentives to statutory regulations, has ensured a wide uptake of green roofs in Basel and laid the foundation for the second funding round to support the strategy. Outcomes of the renewed green roof strategy (2005-2007) include the delivery of climate change mitigation benefits (e.g. reduced emissions and carbon sequestration) and adaptation benefits (reduced temperatures), improved risk management and resilience, enhanced physical and mental well-being (e.g. provision of health services, a more natural urban environment), and increased awareness of green roofs and their effectiveness and potential co-benefits. Already in 2019 the city of Basel in Switzerland had the record of being the largest area of green roofs per capita in the world and for developers, installing green roofs is now considered routine and they make no objections to installing them.

While the original motivation was to save energy, the focus of the strategy shifted over time to concentrate on biodiversity and then to the role of green roofs in adapting Basel to climate change. The strategy also serves as a good example of seeking out and utilising opportunities for climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation that are provided by urban and infrastructure developments that are driven by other goals. Championship of the project, for example, by the Zurich University of Applied Sciences also contributed to the initiative's success. The involvement of all stakeholders from the beginning of the initiative helped to address questions and concerns and ensured that everyone's goals were met. During the incentives programme in 1996-97, the media interest was high, and newspapers and posters were used to inform residents of Basel about the subsidies. This played an important role in its success because it increased awareness of green roofs across a range of stakeholder. A number of technical lessons emerged from the implementation of the strategy, relating to the growing medium and ecological requirements of green roofs to maximise their benefits.

[An article published by the guardian in 2025](#) highlights that "Hidden high above the streets of Basel is an unappreciated environmental wonder: thousands of gardens perched on otherwise unused roofs. As a result of policies set decades ago, the city boasts some of the greenest rooftops in Europe – averaging more than five square metres (50 sq ft) per person in 2019, or about the size of a large balcony. Supporters praise green roofs as a cheap tool that cities short on space can use to create natural oases in urban areas. Like parks, green roofs cool the air during heatwaves and store water during storms. They also shield citizens from noise, reduce air pollution and provide a home to wildlife that people can also enjoy".

As an added benefit, parallel and accompanying the World Congress of Green Roofs, [the Green Buildings Week 2025](#) will take place from June 2 to June 7, 2025 with a variety of excursions, guided tours, lectures and specialized courses. In addition to the



Congress, a roof and façade greening trade show open to the public with associations and company presentations, will be organized for congress participants and other visitors. And an extensive excursion program will be offered for all interested parties.

**To know more**

[Green Roofs and Facades Congress website](#)

[News in greenroofs.com](#)

[Article in climateadapt.eea.europa.eu](#)

[Article in interlace-hub.com](#)

[Article in theguardian.com](#)

[Article in constructivevoices.com](#)

[Article in greenroofs.com](#)

[Article in greenroofs.com](#)

[Article in researchgate.net Green roofs. How nature returns to the city](#)

[Article in euronews.com](#)

[Green Roofs in Wikipedia](#)

[World Green Roof Day.com](#)

