

2030: The Road to Climate-Neutral Cities



Photo: Unsplash

Achieving climate-neutrality in cities is crucial. Although cities cover only 3% of the Earth's surface, they generate 72% of global emissions, while consuming over 65% of the world's energy. This makes cities focal points for policy innovation. In Europe, bold efforts are underway to achieve the EU mission of 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030, with the Swedish program Viable Cities at the forefront.

From Vikings to Visionaries

Sweden has a long history of innovation. The Swedish innovation program Viable Cities has developed the Climate City Contract as a visionary framework for how local and national governments can lead the way in accelerating the transition to climate-neutral cities. It is signed annually by mayors and national government agencies and each year more ambitious targets are set to achieve climate and sustainability goals faster. Local governments commit to reducing emissions in the city, which means engaging and cooperating with citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders.

Each city commits to a Climate Action Plan and a Climate Investment Plan, driving local and national alignment towards climate-neutrality. To date, 48 cities in Sweden, covering 50% of the Swedish population, have signed up. This reflects Sweden's unwavering commitment to achieving environmental sustainability and technological advancements in urban planning.

“Thanks to an early dialogue between Skanska and the City of Stockholm, we could live up to Stockholm’s vision of a fossil-free construction site in Stockholm. Such an approach is crucial for utilizing the power of purchases for climate-neutral cities.”

- Lena Hök,
Executive Vice President of Sustainability and
Innovation at Skanska, during European Viable Cities
Day in December 2024

Purchasing Power – a City Super Power



Photo: Fredrik Persson

Global collaboration is key to amplifying impact and accelerating the green transition. Viable Cities has pioneered the Climate City Contract in Sweden and strongly influenced the development of the now implemented European Climate City Contract.

Together with the GTI – Sweden’s Green Transition Initiative – Viable Cities invites local, national and global partners to further build on important lessons learned within the impactful process of the Climate City Contract, by exploring game-changing initiatives with global relevance.

Such initiatives include system demonstrators to test and verify, thereby reducing risk of investments when scaling. Cities can use their purchasing power to set new standards and drive forward for climate-neutral cities.

Innovation for Livable and Lovable Cities

The Climate City Contract offers a proven framework to mobilize and align stakeholders, and steer cities toward net-zero emissions, sustainability goals and their core mission of improving citizens' quality of life. This approach allows cities to better align locally, with collaboration both on state-level and internationally.

By engaging in the development of innovative governance models, cities in the United States can tackle underlying challenges more effectively and establish the "new normal" in critical areas, as well as reduce political polarization concerning climate issues. This accelerates the transition to climate-neutrality by applying the principles of the Climate City Contract in practice – and inspires other cities globally to do the same.

Now, Time For a Little Bit of Humblebrag



Learn more about how Sweden creates jobs per state here: swedencreatesusjobs.com

Over

50%

of the Swedish population lives in a city aiming for climate neutrality by 2030.

Ranked among the top three most innovative countries globally.

The aim is to be the world's first fossil-free welfare nation by

2045

98%

of electricity generation is fossil-free.

A robust industrial sector driving sustainability forward.

Sweden supports more than

379k

jobs in the United States.

In 2022, Sweden was the

10th

largest foreign investor in the US.

Fully electrified construction in North Carolina,
powered by Swedish technologies.
Photo: Brian Gomsak



Signing of City Climate Contract, Sweden.
Photo: Fredrik Persson



Emission free zone, Stockholm.
Photo: Stockholms Stad

Come for the Innovations, Stay for the Partnerships

Viable Cities is a strategic innovation program with the mission of achieving climate-neutrality in cities by 2030, with a good life for all within the planetary boundaries. The program is funded by multiple government agencies and is hosted by KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm.

For more information: viablecities.se

GTI – Sweden’s Green Transition Initiative – aims to strengthen innovation, trade and investment ties between Sweden and the United States, serving as a hub for companies, cities, universities, organizations and other partners to accelerate adoption of sustainable solutions.

For more information: gti-sweden.se

