



CLEVER
Cities

Press Kit

Smart. Green. Inclusive.

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www.clevercities.eu

WHAT IS CLEVER CITIES ABOUT?

CLEVER Cities is a €15m five-year project funded by the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Programme to foster sustainable and socially inclusive urban regeneration in cities across Europe, South-America and China.

Built on an innovative community-driven approach, the project involves local governments, citizens, businesses, knowledge partners and district-level stakeholders in identifying and implementing urban interventions that tap on the unparalleled potential of nature to tackle development challenges, also known as nature-based solutions (NBS).

CLEVER Cities fosters knowledge exchange, inclusive collaboration and multi-disciplinary learning to deliver tangible social, environmental

and economic improvements at the local level while also helping cities to contribute to EU and UN sustainability goals.



Image: ROOFmatters & Ambiente Italia

WHAT ARE NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS?

Nature-based solutions (NBS) means planning and designing natural features such as trees, plants and green spaces in a way that can help address urban challenges in sustainable ways.

Three-quarters of the European Union's population live in cities, and deprived areas of those cities often lack quality green spaces. Degraded physical environments and limited access to natural resources often result in low levels of social cohesion, elevated crime rates and high levels of perceived insecurity.

By integrating nature into the urban fabric, cities can deliver multiple benefits, such as creating economic opportunities in vulnerable communities, improving the environment, citizen security, public health and well-being. Green areas also bring people together and boost urban resilience to climate change.

For further information, please see the [European Commission](#) and the [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#) definitions of nature-based solutions.



Image: ROOFmatters & Ambiente Italia

WHO ARE THE CLEVER CITIES?

As front-runner members of CLEVER Cities, **Hamburg** (Germany), **London** (United Kingdom) and **Milan** (Italy) are leading the way in implementing natural interventions for the regeneration of their neighbourhoods, buildings and infrastructure. The three cities have established a series of CLEVER Cities Action Labs, which serve as hubs and test grounds for the co-creation of green urban areas that support ecosystems, improve quality of life and foster sustainable local businesses.

Belgrade (Serbia), **Larissa** (Greece), **Madrid** (Spain), **Malmö** (Sweden), **Sfântu Gheorghe** (Romania) and **Quito** (Ecuador) share and learn from, and with, London, Hamburg and Milan on how to adapt nature-based interventions for the needs of their districts.

WHAT MAKES THE CLEVER CITIES PROJECT UNIQUE?

CLEVER Cities is among the first European Horizon 2020 projects to address nature-based solutions at the city level through the implementation of concrete interventions in pilot districts by its front-runner cities. With a strong societal approach, the project aims to firmly integrate public participation and co-creation into the planning and policies of cities.

Member cities are equipped with a systematic approach for testing and developing nature-based solutions models while supporting their rapid replication and adaptation to the local context of fellow-cities.

Ultimately, the project aims to generate lasting results in cities, deliver a CLEVER Cities package with innovative solutions and guidance and contribute open-sourced data and information to the EU nature-based solutions reference framework.

CLEVER Cities is a city-centered and city-driven initiative, which makes it quite unique in comparison with other research and innovation projects:

- It is city-led – with the city of Hamburg as its lead.
- It is city-driven – developed and pushed forward by its front-runner cities.
- It is city-based – with all innovation action taking place there.
- It is city-centered – as all scientific and technical support centers around the improvement of urban spaces.
- It is city-targeted – as cities and its residents are a key target group of communication and dissemination activities.



Image: Greater London Authority

WHAT ARE CLEVER CITIES DOING IN PRACTICE TO EMBRACE NATURE?

Below are some examples of the nature-based interventions planned by participating cities:

- **Hamburg** is in the process of expanding the district of Neugraben-Fischbek, which is planned to house thousands of new residents in the coming decades. To achieve a cohesive and inclusive community, the City of Hamburg is developing a green corridor, green roofs, schoolyards and community gardens which foster interaction between different groups of residents.
- Bringing communities together through shared activities while increasing awareness of the importance of promoting local biodiversity is a focus of CLEVER Cities **Milan**. There the local team is planning to re-design the Tibaldi railway station together with local citizens, through green and innovative elements such as green walls, natural noise barriers and external green spaces such as waiting areas.
- The architecturally iconic Thamesmead area of south-east **London**, where the population is expected to double in the next 50 years, is implementing a series of nature-based solutions; ranging from 'nature-based solutions on the doorstep' with raingardens in courtyards and

swales along walking routes, to the installation of a wetland project to turn an unsightly polluted lake, into a place for leisure and recreation.

- **Belgrade** is gathering proposals to transform the area around a historic railway track in the neighbourhood of Dorćol into a linear park, while **Sfântu Gheorghe** aims to use natural features to protect surroundings of the Debren stream from regular flooding and mud that forms during rain.



Aerial view of the Southmere Lake in Thamesmead, London



Images: Paul Sanders

WHO ARE THE PROJECT PARTNERS?

The CLEVER Cities consortium consists of 34 partner organisations, including cities, knowledge partners, NGOs and businesses.

Please see the complete list [here](#).



The CLEVER Cities Consortium

FACTS & FIGURES

- 8 European cities, 1 in South-America and a consortium of Chinese universities involved in the project
- Project duration: June 2018 to May 2023
- Total budget of €14.86m over five years, of which €14.21m contributed by the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Innovation Action Programme
- 34 partner organizations
- 9 CLEVER Action Labs created in Front Runner cities
- 4 key urban regeneration challenges addressed:
 - > **Human health and well-being**
 - > **Sustainable economic prosperity**
 - > **Social cohesion and environmental justice**
 - > **Citizen security**



Image: steg Hamburg

STATEMENTS

“CLEVER Cities’ unique double approach combines public participation with technical expertise to ensure that key urban regeneration challenges are tackled in a sustainable and inclusive way, providing concrete solutions, examples and guidelines for other cities in Europe and beyond.”

Martin Krekeler

CLEVER Cities Project Coordinator, Senate of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg

“Smart cities respond to the challenge of interoperability between technological systems. CLEVER Cities go beyond in that they respond to the challenge of integrating natural, technological and societal systems.”

Holger Robrecht

Deputy Regional Director, ICLEI Europe

IMAGES

See **photos** of CLEVER Cities members and their teams in action.

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