



DK2020
Municipalities leading
the way

DK2020

Preface

Science tells us that we must cut emissions from greenhouse gases in half by 2030 if we want to avoid runaway climate change: To support this global moonshot effort, in the spring of 2019, Realdania launched an open call for municipalities in Denmark to join a first-of-its-kind project – DK2020. The basis of this initiative was ambitious yet simple: 20 municipalities across the country would follow in the steps of cities such as Durban, Los Angeles, Paris and Rio de Janeiro, and develop inclusive climate action plans in line with the objectives set out in the Paris Agreement. The following municipalities stepped forward – most of them aiming for a 70 % reduction by 2030 – ready to raise their climate ambition and reduce their emissions in the next ten years and they are: Aarhus, Albertslund, Allerød, Assens, Fredericia, Frederiksberg, Frederikshavn, Helsingør, Høje-Taastrup, Jammerbugt, Køge, Lejre, Lemvig, Lolland, Middelfart, Randers, Roskilde, Samsø, Sønderborg and Vejle.

Today, all 20 municipalities have climate action plans in place, and have set ambitious targets and identified the bold actions needed to achieve them in partnership with civil society organisations and businesses. The climate actions contained in these plans will collectively help these municipalities play their part to help humanity avoid catastrophic climate breakdown.

The aim of the DK2020 pilot project was to help municipalities raise their climate ambition by following the steps of megacities and using the same tools as they have. This was not an easy task, given the specific and unique circumstances of smaller Danish municipalities, many of whom have large industrial and agricultural sectors. Their success is therefore all the more inspiring and across our three organisations, we applaud their leadership.

DK2020 is now open to all remaining municipalities in Denmark, and another 75 have joined the initiative, making Denmark the first country in the world where virtually all of its municipalities are developing climate action plans committed to keeping global heating to 1.5°C. In addition, cities, municipalities, funders and other partners around the world will be able to look to the DK2020 scheme in Denmark for inspiration and be encouraged to develop ambitious climate action plans of their own or replicate the DK2020 model in a new region or country.

We look forward to following the progress of these 20 Danish municipalities and seeing how they put their inclusive climate plans into actions that will benefit our economy, environment and people's general health and well-being.

Jesper Nygård
CEO of Realdania



Christian Peter Villefrance Ibsen
CEO of CONCITO



Mark Watts
Executive Director of C40



DK2020 pilot project

There is scientific consensus, which is reinforced by the UN's recent **climate report**, that if we are to stop runaway climate change, we need to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the necessity is that any green transition must also be just and fair and include all members of our communities. Through the Realdania DK2020 pilot project, Danish municipalities have had a unique opportunity to further evolve, upgrade and/or adjust their existing work on climate action through committing to global best practices, by developing inclusive climate action plans committed to keep global heating to 1.5°C.

These climate action plans describe how to achieve resilient, inclusive and carbon-neutral municipalities by 2050 at the latest and also set ambitious short-term targets for adaptation and

emission reductions. Throughout the pilot project, the participating municipalities have received support and assistance from the Danish green think tank CONCITO and the global city network C40 Cities.

The project has now entered a new phase where the remaining municipalities in Denmark have been invited to take part in DK2020. In addition to the 20 municipalities that have already taken part in the pilot project, another 75 have just started their journeys to develop climate action plans.

Read more about the project [here](#)

Read UN's recent climate report [here](#)

"Sustainability is a common thread in Realdania's philanthropic activities. So, while we have a natural focus on projects in Denmark, climate change affects us all and respects no national borders. We wanted to create a project that could inspire Danish municipalities to act on climate change, based on knowledge from our partnership with C40 Cities. With this in mind, DK2020 has been a perfect example of a project that is directly derived from our vision and financial support to C40 Cities. DK2020 provides a framework for cities, municipalities, and others to share knowledge and inspire each other, and it creates added value for the society as well as improving the quality of life in the Danish municipalities, cities and towns. DK2020 will hopefully inspire local governments across the world to adopt similar Paris agreement compliant climate action plans."

Jesper Nygård
CEO of Realdania

C40's Climate Action Planning Framework

The DK2020 municipalities used the C40 Climate Action Planning Framework to develop their climate action plans. C40 is one of the largest and most successful global organisations tackling climate change, supporting a network of mayors from 97 of the world's leading cities. C40 supports cities to collaborate effectively, share

knowledge and drive meaningful, measurable and sustainable action on climate change. The Climate Action Planning Framework tool was developed to support cities in developing climate action plans aligned with the objectives of the Paris Agreement by addressing the three pillars below:



Focuses on the plan's governance and coordination and the need for community and business engagement, and communications, throughout the plan's development and implementation.



Considers the evidence base and existing city conditions, including baseline emissions, 2050 emissions trajectory, climate risk, and socioeconomic priorities.



Defines the transformational action and implementation plan, including the development and prioritisation of actions and the processes of monitoring, evaluation, reporting and revision.

The Framework was developed in collaboration with cities that participated in C40's Climate Action Planning pilot programme (Boston, Durban, London, Los Angeles, Melbourne, Mexico City, New York City and Paris). These cities were part of C40's Deadline 2020 Programme, the first ever Programme for cities dedicated to developing and implementing 1.5°C compatible plans.

The Framework has since been peer-reviewed by key external organisations dedicated to climate change, adaptation and achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement, and is continuously updated in response to the learnings from cities that work with the Framework to maintain its value.

Read more about the Climate Action Planning Framework and additional resources [here](#)

The starting point for Danish municipalities

The DK2020 project took into account geographical balance, municipal and sectoral differences, and a municipality's experience in regard to working with climate action planning, to ensure a representative pilot project. A few insights on the Danish climate context may be of help for an international reader in understanding the starting point for the DK2020 municipalities journey:

Agriculture takes up most of the land

Most of Denmark's land is used for agriculture. In addition, almost a fourth of Denmark's total emissions come from agriculture¹. For some of the 20 municipalities in the pilot project, agriculture is generated to supply demand elsewhere and plays a significant role in their total emissions.

Coastal country

No municipality in Denmark is further than 52 km [32 miles] from the coast. As the second lowest-lying country in Europe, Denmark is undeniably vulnerable to climate-related risks from inland and coastal flooding.

Climate mitigation and adaptation

It is a national requirement that municipalities have to develop climate adaptation plans. This has not been the situation for climate mitigation and therefore it varies across the pilot project to what extent the municipalities already had plans and initiatives in place.

Longstanding focus on energy

For many of the municipalities, working with renewable energy and energy efficiency has been a focus for many years. Denmark's energy revolution began in the aftermath of the oil crisis in the 1970s and since then, the country has become a leader in wind energy and energy efficiency in the built environment.

District heating

More than 60% of all households in Denmark are connected to district heating. Across the country six large central district heating systems are located around bigger cities and urban areas, and 400 smaller decentralised district heating systems in less dense areas².

Climate awareness, context and political focus

When the 20 municipalities joined the DK2020 pilot project, climate change was at the top of public awareness and the political agenda. This became evident after the current government took office in 2019, who proposed a new **climate law** - with legally binding climate targets - that aimed to reduce emissions by 70% by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050. This law was passed by a broad majority of political parties in the Danish Parliament. Also, an opinion poll from 2018 showed that 80% of Danes perceive their municipalities as important actors in tackling the climate crisis³.

¹ <https://lbst.dk/tvaergaende/klima/drivhusgasser-fra-landbruget/>

² <https://ens.dk/en/our-responsibilities/global-cooperation/experiences-district-heating>

³ https://concito.dk/files/dokumenter/artikler/klimabarometeret_2018_endelig_rev2.pdf

Learnings that can inspire global cities and municipalities

One of the key objectives of the DK2020 pilot project is to share knowledge and experiences from the Danish municipalities who are taking part, so other cities, urban areas and locales across the world will be inspired to develop their own climate action plans. With inclusive climate action plans being implemented in 20 Danish municipalities, a number of innovative approaches and solutions on climate mitigation and adaptation are being developed. The DK2020 pilot project showcased a number of overall learnings, from technology innovation to democratic approaches to engage the local community.

Innovation partnerships

Facilitating the development of new climate technologies is an important undertaking which has been identified by the Danish municipalities. Denmark is known for inventing commercial wind turbines and energy efficient building components. Several of the DK2020 municipalities have a strong focus on collaborating with local businesses and knowledge institutions through their climate action plans and will support the development of future technologies such as carbon capture, Power-to-X, and large heat pumps. These partnerships are built to ensure tangible climate impacts but also to ensure the creation of new green jobs.

Carbon neutral heating

Almost two-thirds of Denmark's households are supplied by district heating. The DK2020 municipalities aim to expand the district heating network in smaller cities and rural areas, while ensuring that district heating will be supplied by carbon neutral energy sources. A strong focus on sus-

tainable individual heating, rather than using oil and gas, has been a priority focus of the climate action plans.

Climate adaptation

For a long period of time, Danish municipalities have been at the forefront of creating innovative solutions to prevent flooding from the sea and to divert water from cloudbursts. These solutions have been developed in close collaboration with the private sector, local communities and utilities, to protect and enhance people's lives.

Green mobility

Larger cities wish to reduce car-use and promote public transport and cycling as measures to cut emissions. However, some of the DK2020 municipalities are located in rural areas where people depend on having a car due to the long travel distances required for work and leisure purposes. In these areas, concerted efforts have been put into facilitating green mobility measures, such as strategies for electric vehicles and charging stations, promoting car-sharing solutions, and working intensively with sustainable freight. A few of the municipalities even wish to supply heavy transport with local sustainable fuel production to help reduce emissions.

More sustainable agriculture

Several DK2020 municipalities have built new relationships with the agricultural sector and formed partnerships with farmers, businesses and knowledge institutions to create the future of sustainable agriculture. Actions include re-wetting carbon rich peat soils, promoting plant-based diets and purchasing land for afforestation. In the coming years

more initiatives and solutions will be developed, building on the ongoing work of these different agricultural partnerships.

Regional planning

Denmark is divided into five regions, each with their own distinct administrations. One of the learnings gained from the DK2020 climate action plans is the importance of regional collaboration with other municipalities to ensure a coordinated regional infrastructure. This relates to the district heating network, climate adaptation, public transport, biking highways and waste handling.

Democratic commitment

Almost all DK2020 municipalities have experimented with the democratic involvement of local communities in the development of their inclusive climate action plans. The municipalities have actively engaged residents and businesses in setting the agenda for their climate action plans through different processes such as climate councils, meetings, and festivals. The municipalities have tried to create broad ownership of the proposed climate targets, emphasised by the strong focus on inclusive actions to ensure marginalised groups are prioritised in a just transition to a carbon neutral society.

These learnings can inspire global cities and municipalities in their journey to make climate action plans committed to keeping global heating to 1.5°C, for instance, the **Cities Race to Zero** programme led by C40 Chair and Mayor of Los Angeles, Eric Garcetti. This initiative enables cities around the world to mobilise and sign up to the Race to Zero, committing to implement inclusive and resilient climate action at the UN Climate Change negotiations [COP26] in Glasgow and into the future.

In the coming years, as the DK2020 municipalities start implementing their climate action plans, further innovation, knowledge and learning will emerge. The DK2020 pilot municipalities will not only serve as a guiding force for the remaining areas in Denmark who have yet to create their own climate action plans, but also as inspiration for other cities, municipalities, funders and partners worldwide who seek to follow in their footsteps.

Sustainability shorts

- 20 stories of climate action planning from Danish municipi- palities

Albertslund

Allerød

Assens

Ballerup

Billund

Brøndby

Brønderslev

Bornholm

Egedal

Esbjerg

Fanø

Favrskov

Faxe

Fredensborg

Fredericia

Frederiksberg

Frederikshavn

Frederikssund

Furesø

Faaborg-Midtfyn

Gentofte

Gladsaxe

Greve

Gribskov

Guldborgsund

Haderslev

Halsnæs

Hedensted

Helsingør

Herlev

Herning

Hillerød

Hjørring

Holbæk

Holstebro

Horsens

Hvidovre

Høje-Taastrup

Hørsholm

Ikast-Brande

Ishøj

Jammerbugt

Kalundborg

Kerteminde

Kolding

Køge

Langeland

Lejre

Lemvig

Lolland

Lyngby-Taarbæk

Læsø

Mariagerfjord

Middelfart

Morsø

Norddjurs

Nordfyn

Nyborg

Næstved

Odder

Odense

Odsherred

Randers

Rebild

Ringkøbing

-Skjern

Ringsted

Roskilde

Rudersdal

Rødovre

Samsø

Silkeborg

Skanderborg

Skive

Slagelse

Solrød

Sorø

Stevns

Struer

Svendborg

Syddjurs

Sønderborg

Thisted

Tønder

Tårnby

Vallensbæk

Varde

Vejen

Vejle

Vesthimmerland

Viborg

Vordingborg

Ærø

Aabenraa

Aalborg

Aarhus



Albertslund

Albertslund is located in Greater Copenhagen and is covered by green areas and forest. The municipality is often referred to as a place where the city and nature walk hand in hand. It is known for its experimental and innovative approach to urban planning, which integrates water and green spaces in its architecture and couples its adaptation initiatives with a focus on biodiversity. The adaptation initiatives laid out in the climate action plan will ensure a resilient municipality and aim to safeguard its residents against future climate risks. In its climate action plan, Albertslund aims for all district heating to be carbon neutral by 2025 and electricity by 2030 and reaching carbon neutrality and zero waste by 2050.

In its climate action plan, the municipality has developed two cross-cutting themes, which focus on the concepts of the circular economy and sustainable urban development as methods to address the indirect emissions from consumption and buildings. The circular economy and sustainable urban development are mainstreamed across Albertslund's inclusive climate action plan to ensure the synergies and wider benefits of the climate actions implemented in the municipality. This is especially important in the light of the expected population growth in the municipality.

"Thinking globally and acting locally are rooted within the DNA of Albertslund. Environmental, and later climate issues along with biodiversity, have all been local areas of action since the Municipality was established in the 1960s. These issues are deeply rooted with our many active residents in our town as they continue to push forward. Participating in the DK2020 project is completely in line with the traditions of Albertslund. We have received many committed contributions from resident groups to the final climate plan. This gives us great confidence in succeeding with the Paris Agreement by making the town carbon neutral and climate adjusted by the year of 2050."

Steen Christiansen

Mayor of Albertslund Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Albertslund [here](#) [in Danish].



Allerød

This municipality is famous for its biodiversity and nature is one of the key motivators for people moving to the municipality. The DK2020 climate action plan was developed alongside a new policy 'Nature, Environment and Climate' to strengthen the municipality's connection to nature. Allerød aims to cut emissions by 70% by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, focusing primarily on heat, electricity and transport, which are the sectors that account for approximately 87% of the municipality's emissions. Allerød Municipality has a strong focus on integrating the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** into its decision-making processes and policies, strategies and plans. The municipality wishes to approach the climate action plan holistically and innovatively, while strengthening work across municipal departments and collaborating with different stakeholders.

The adaptation plan is developed in collaboration with the municipal owned utility, Novafos, and neighbouring municipalities, to ensure alignment and added value, as well as harnessing the power of the different learnings across all stakeholders. In the planning process the municipality aims to ensure synergies between nature protection and biodiversity. It also aims to link climate adaptation initiatives to the creation of green areas for residents, an aim that is currently being explored through ongoing conversations between the municipality and the Danish military about the conversion of

military-owned lands, to give an example. The goal is to explore opportunities to create wetlands used for carbon sequestering, while improving the conditions for wild nature and biodiversity, as well as for residents of the municipality.

"The Municipality of Allerød is proud to be among the first municipalities in Denmark to publish a climate action plan which fulfils the Paris goals of a CO₂ neutral and climate-robust society, goals which we can only achieve through strategic cooperation. The municipality of Allerød has cooperated with civil society and private companies for more than 20 years to achieve common goals regarding the transition to a sustainable community. These collaborations are necessary to achieve a CO₂-neutral society. DK2020 has given the municipality of Allerød valuable insight and inspiration on a range of actions to fulfil these goals. The long timeline and understanding the necessary need for a transition of the community has at the same time increased the focus on integrating climate considerations into major planning decisions made at all levels of the organisation."

Karsten Längerich

Mayor of Allerød Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Allerød [here](#) [in Danish].



Assens

Assens Municipality is located on the west coast of the island of Funen in central Denmark. In its climate action plan the municipality has set a target to reduce emissions by at least 70% by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. The actions are distributed across five sectors: energy, transport, agriculture and land use, sustainable choices and climate resilience. The climate action plan places a strong emphasis on starting a 'we-movement' to ensure the municipality will become climate neutral. Some of Assens' many climate initiatives cover a range of actions such as engaging with energy intensive industries about energy efficiency, the phase out of oil and gas from individual heating, retrofitting the municipal buildings, and a variety of climate adaptation initiatives to secure a resilient municipality.

The 'we-movement' invites people, local councils, businesses, the public sector, grassroots organisations and many more to become part of a movement to face these challenges, taking responsibility for them, and developing the solutions needed. To facilitate this movement, the municipality has launched more than 30 specific initiatives in the climate action plan. The municipality has established several climate partnerships with private and public stakeholders committed to create a carbon neutral and resilient municipality. In addition, a climate fund has been created to initiate projects

led by residents and local organisations. In order to receive funding, the applicants must develop a project that is scalable, has engagement from the local community, and will be implemented in collaboration with other stakeholders.

"In the Municipality of Assens, we want to be ahead of the national goals for the green transition. We take responsibility for the future and for sustainable development. This was confirmed by the City Council with the 'Vision 2030 - With Will and Heart'. We are therefore proud to be a DK2020 frontrunner municipality with a new, certified, and ambitious climate action plan, which we are already busy implementing. We take a local climate responsibility and put ourselves at the forefront of what can best be described as a large, collective movement. Action is needed from all actors in society. Amongst other things, we have entered into climate partnerships with local key stakeholders and are included as one of the first municipalities in the '70by30' project with a focus on public commitment to the climate."

Søren Steen Andersen

Mayor of Assens Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Assens [here](#) [in Danish].



Fredericia

Located in the centre of Denmark, Fredericia is one of the country's major traffic hubs and is also home to a sizeable transport and logistic industry. The municipality has set a target to reduce emissions by 70% by 2030 and to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. In a municipality where 60% of all trips are by car, a target has been set to ensure that the number of cars on the streets in 2017 remains the same by 2030. This goal will be achieved through interim targets, such as ensuring 50% of all travel within the municipality are by bikes, walking and public transport, and providing car-sharing accessibility in all dense areas of Fredericia. Out of Fredericia's total emissions, half of them come from industry and therefore the municipality wishes to explore opportunities to facilitate the development of new technologies such as carbon capture and Power-to-X.

The Municipality of Fredericia has a partnership with *Business Fredericia*, an organisation that supports the local business community in creating growth and development. This partnership wishes to create a business platform that invites local stakeholders to interact and develop climate solutions that can make an impact, and further promote Fredericia as a green metropolis. These efforts are already starting to pay off, and just recently two leading organisations representing Denmark's energy sector decided to move

to Fredericia due to its ambitious climate action plan. In addition to the close collaboration with *Business Fredericia*, the municipality is also working together with educational institutions and job centres to help unemployed people acquire new competencies, with a stronger focus on sustainability, to prepare them for the green job market.

"In Fredericia we want to be the Danish energy metropolis and create more jobs in the energy sector. Together we are stronger, and the Climate Action Plan has been developed in co-creation with citizens, organisations and businesses. We want to create the future sustainable city with focus on communities, health and wellbeing. We are looking forward to implementing the climate action plan and engaging all stakeholders in the municipality to complete our target of being CO₂-neutral in 2050."

Steen Wrist

Mayor of Fredericia Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Fredericia [here](#) [in Danish].



Frederiksberg

Frederiksberg is Denmark's most densely populated municipality and is located as an enclave within the City of Copenhagen. The municipality has set an ambitious target to become carbon neutral by 2030, and at least 85% of the emission reductions will come through initiatives within the municipality, with the remainder from outside. In 2050 Frederiksberg will achieve carbon neutrality solely through reductions within the municipality. The climate action plan focuses primarily on buildings, district heating, transport, and electrification. Frederiksberg has a strong focus on green mobility and aims to increase the number of electric vehicles on the district's streets by providing all residents with charging infrastructure no more than 250 metres from their home by 2021. In addition, the municipality will promote car-sharing solutions and encourage residents to bike, walk or use public transport.

In 2021 the **Sustainability Lab** was established to facilitate an engagement process with residents, educational institutions and businesses, and explore and develop sustainable solutions. The municipality asked the local innovation house Station - a student-led organisation - to manage the laboratory and ensure an inclusive process, taking on board the perspectives of the different stakeholders, including input from a wide variety of communities, including those that are generally harder to reach. The municipality also wishes to engage its

youngest residents with the concept of sustainability through learning about different topics in school. As an example, one of the schoolyards in Frederiksberg is used to manage cloudbursts and serves as a space where students can play, while learning about green solutions and water management.

"Climate change is a reality, and communities and cities around the world need to act in order to secure our society for the future. Carbon emissions need to go down and the green transition is important globally but also locally. I am therefore happy that our climate action plan at Frederiksberg Municipality has been approved by C40 and aligns with international standards. At Frederiksberg our goal is to be carbon neutral in 2030, and green district heating, as well as transforming the transport sector, will be huge drivers towards obtaining that goal. The DK2020 partnership is important for maintaining a close collaboration with other municipalities and the city of Frederiksberg intends to maintain a strong focus on climate work so it can continue to be a frontrunner in the fight against climate change."

Simon Aggesen

Mayor of Frederiksberg Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Frederiksberg [here](#) [in Danish].



Frederikshavn

Frederikshavn is the northernmost municipality in Denmark and has a longstanding ambition to become a green and climate-friendly municipality. Aligning with national climate targets, Frederikshavn has committed to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 with a short-term target of 70% reductions by 2030. The municipality aims to install large amounts of solar energy and wind turbines to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2030. The municipality established a committee in 2020 to ensure that the municipality prioritises the UN's 17 sustainable development goals and facilitate a coordinated and inclusive engagement process across the entire locale to strengthen its climate action plan. This committee consists of politicians and representatives from local businesses and civil society, who have committed to ensure that climate actions will be developed and implemented in a sustainable way putting the local community at the centre.

Frederikshavn prioritises creating jobs and attracting new residents to the area, which has naturally led to a strong emphasis on job creation in the development of the DK2020 climate action plan. Therefore, the municipality decided to identify the growth potential of each of its climate initiatives to secure engagement and commitment from politicians, businesses and the local community. This analysis shows that if all the initiatives

in the climate action plan are implemented, the total growth potential in the period of 2020-2030 is estimated to create approximately 2,300 jobs, with 485 of them being permanent.

"An approved DK2020 climate plan enables Frederikshavn Municipality to make a solid effort to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, support green growth, increase local employment and strengthen the competencies of educational institutions. A climate-friendly municipality is attractive to move to, both as a citizen and a company."

Birgit S. Hansen

Mayor of Frederikshavn Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality Frederikshavn [here](#) [in Danish].



Helsingør

The municipality is located in the Capital Region overlooking the Øresund sea. Helsingør has been an active climate municipality for the past ten years and its target is to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. In addition to Helsingør's 2045 target, the municipality aims to reduce the individual emissions from 4.3 tonnes today down to 1.7 tonnes annually per person in 2030. This will be achieved through a variety of initiatives including dialogues with residents about energy retrofitting and phasing out individual fossil-fuelled heating, creating infrastructure for electric cars and buses, requirements for use of energy in new buildings and many more. The municipality has linked their adaptation initiatives with a focus on improving biodiversity and restructuring agricultural land owned by the municipality. Helsingør is also a partner of a cross-municipal collaboration focusing on coastal protection of the northern part of Zealand.

When the municipality carried out a thorough modelling exercise, analysing different scenarios in the DK2020 climate action plan, it became evident that biomass was needed to achieve carbon neutral district heating by 2030. In its climate action plan, Helsingør acknowledges that sustainable biomass is only a temporary solution in district heating and one which will need to be phased out in the near future. Helsingør has therefore

requested the municipal-owned utility company to present a long-term strategy that demonstrates how the municipality can phase out biomass and convert to more renewable energy sources, such as heat pumps and geothermal heat. This long-term vision will support Helsingør in choosing the right pathway towards carbon neutrality in 2045.

"We started the climate journey in 2008, and we give high priority to efforts in relation to climate. That is why it is important to us that we have now received recognition in the DK2020 project for our efforts to be ambitious and meet the requirements of the Paris Agreement."

Benedikte Kiær

Mayor of Helsingør Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Helsingør [here](#) [in Danish].



Høje-Taastrup

Høje-Taastrup Municipality is located in Greater Copenhagen and contains both urban and green areas. Høje-Taastrup has a target of net-zero emissions by 2050 and a short-term target to cut emissions by 50% by 2030. The municipality has defined 2017 as the baseline for measuring the impact of its climate actions. Høje-Taastrup's climate action plan has set out a number of sub-targets for 2030 that include reducing heat consumption in all existing buildings by 1% annually, installing 120 MW solar plants, and electrifying 30% of all private vehicles. The municipality has a strong focus on co-creation with residents, businesses and housing associations in order to ensure these targets are being met.

The municipality has implemented a data-based energy management system to accelerate more cost-effective energy reductions in municipal buildings. This strategic tool allows the municipality to have an overview of all buildings, and by systematically benchmarking the buildings the municipality can identify where energy efforts will have the greatest impact. The tool includes real-time monitoring of their electricity, heat and water consumption through automatic and intelligent meters. The municipality also collaborates with different stakeholders to develop new climate technologies that can be tested in selected municipal buildings.

"In Høje-Taastrup, climate and energy are not considered as an extra task or a project. They are part of a safe and modern life. They are part of everyday life in a municipality with growth. That is why we consider ourselves the municipality with the greenest growth in Denmark. Our DK2020 Climate Plan 2030 describes the path to achieving our ambitious goals, but as a municipality we cannot achieve them alone. So we want to intensify existing collaborations and invite new ones."

Michael Ziegler

Mayor of Høje-Taastrup Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Høje-Taastrup [here](#) [in Danish].



Jammerbugt

The Municipality of Jammerbugt is located in the north of Jutland and is commonly referred to as the pantry of Denmark. The agricultural sector accounts for a significant part of the municipality's total emissions but Jammerbugt does not shy away from this climate challenge and aims to cut emissions by 70% by 2030, and becoming climate neutral by 2050. One of the ways the municipality wishes to reduce the emissions from agriculture is through multifunctional land use. In a bid to find sustainable solutions in the agricultural sector, Jammerbugt has taken part in a three-year-long pilot project 'Collective Impact', together with two other municipalities. *Collective Impact* focuses on optimising land use while taking different sectoral aspects into account, such as impact on emissions reductions, adaptation, biodiversity, accessibility and many more.

As part of the DK2020 journey, Jammerbugt Municipality has taken the initiative to develop a climate partnership with three of the main agricultural organisations in the municipality, Agri Nord, Bæredygtigt Landbrug and LandboNord. The purpose of this partnership is to strengthen the conversation around the opportunities and barriers for transitioning to a more sustainable agricultural model. The partners will meet on a regular basis to develop plans for land use, re-wetting carbon rich peat soils and identify

new measures that will reduce emissions from agriculture.

"As Jammerbugt is an agricultural municipality, it is important to us that we have a strong collaboration with the local farmers and the organisations representing them. We have taken a great step in the right direction. With the climate partnership we are able to strengthen the dialogue between us and discuss concrete pathways to achieve reduction of emissions through actions related to agriculture and through political initiatives from the municipal side."

Mogens Christen Gade

Mayor of Jammerbugt Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Jammerbugt [here](#) [in Danish].



Køge

Home to a harbour, industry, agriculture and one of the busiest highways in Denmark, the emissions in Køge Municipality are above the national Danish average per person. Nonetheless, the municipality has adopted an innovative and ambitious climate action plan which aims to deliver a carbon neutral municipality by 2050. The plan includes 40 specific actions that will help reduce emissions, both within and outside the municipal border. Køge wishes to reduce the use of biomass in district heating by facilitating the introduction of large heat pumps, solar heating and geothermal energy. The municipality also wishes to use the principles of the *Doughnut Model* in their climate action plan to ensure a focus on fulfilling its residents' social needs without further damaging the world's climate and environment.

In addition to the proposed adoption of the doughnut model, Køge has ambitiously addressed its levels of consumption-based emissions and has put numbers on the reduction potentials for following sectors: food, textiles, electronics and the built environment. The climate action plan addresses the emissions stemming from the municipality's own value chain but will also create awareness and aims to influence residents to adopt more sustainable practises. One of the initiatives focuses on reducing food waste and shifting to a climate-friendly diet in kindergartens, schools and

other municipal institutions, which will hopefully also inspire the local community to follow suit. In addition, Køge will promote actions that ensure textiles and electronics last longer, are of a better quality, and are reused, both internally and externally. The municipality will monitor and reduce emissions levels of the built environment through the requirement of carbon inventories, recycling initiatives and use of sustainable materials. If all goes well, this could reduce Køge's consumption-based emissions by up to 110,000 tonnes by 2030.

"This climate action plan looks beyond traditional CO₂ accounts, and addresses where the municipality actually has the opportunity to make an impact. Therefore, this climate action plan does not only focus on the physical framework and technical parts of the transition to a carbon neutral energy supply. It also includes efforts to pave the way for sustainable consumption, sustainable urban development and the improvement of biodiversity and quality of life. The realisation of the measures will thus also support our work with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals"

Marie Stærke

Mayor of Køge Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Køge [here](#) [in Danish].



Lejre

The municipality consists of 49 smaller towns and perceives itself as the countryside which is also close to the bigger cities. Engagement with residents lays at the heart of the municipality's climate action plan 'Our Place – Our Climate Action'. The plan sets the target of climate neutrality by 2050 with an aim to cut emissions by 70% by 2030 at the latest. Lejre is proud to be home to a strong local community that prioritises sustainability and organic farming practices. This makes the municipality very attractive for small-scale farmers, such as the ones selling to world famous restaurants like Noma in Copenhagen. Lejre acknowledges the need to engage with local farmers to reduce emissions from the agricultural sector and has outlined a number of measures which support this goal, such as afforestation, carbon sequestration and improving the demand for plant-based farming, to name just a few.

Lejre does not only describe its climate action plan as a pathway to a carbon neutral community, but the municipality also invites people and businesses to join the journey. A key element is to integrate climate actions into everything carried out in Lejre. In the climate action plan, the municipality refers to all of its 2,000 employees as climate coordinators and each of the 28,000 residents as climate ambassadors. For the past few years, the Mayor of Lejre has been touring the municipality

in the 'Our place – bus' - named after the municipality's vision - bringing him closer to the residents and making the area's political - and climate work - more accessible.

"Climate considerations must not become an activity alongside everything else we do in the municipality. On the contrary, it has to be an integral part of everything. It is the sum of our commitment and all the ideas, initiatives and actions that ensure that we reach our goals together. In this way, Lejre Municipality will have 28,000 ambassadors for climate action."

Carsten Rasmussen

Mayor of Lejre Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Lejre [here](#) [in Danish].



Lemvig

The municipality is located on the coast of Jutland and is replete with major industries such as agriculture, fishing and production. The climate action plan aims to reduce all emissions by 55% by 2030 and to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. Fortunately, Lemvig Municipality has a significant surplus production of renewable energy that comes from wind turbines, solar power and biofuels but in the coming years, efforts need to be made to electrify heavy industries and the transport sector. Agriculture is the greatest source of emissions and the pathway to reduce these is only partly laid out in the climate action plan. Tackling this climate challenge will be an ongoing process and it will require support from national institutions to ensure targets are met. The municipality has started a partnership with the local association of farmers to discuss the challenges and explore opportunities to develop solutions such as new barn and feeding technologies, changes in plant breeding and increasing the production of plant-based foods, amongst others.

Lemvig is home to the new international climate centre known as the '**Climatorium**' (shown in the image above) with a mission to provide sustainable solutions to current and future climate challenges. These will be developed and implemented through partnerships with the private sector, knowledge institutions and civil society. The Cli-

matorium will also host an annual climate summit for residents, politicians and experts to discuss climate actions, which also includes hosting Denmark's *Children's Climate Summit*. In addition, the municipality wants to graduate Denmark's first climate students from the public high school. The students will learn about climate changes, develop solutions together with scientists and experts, and explore how the business community can become more sustainable, to list just some of their studies.

"The Municipality of Lemvig is particularly exposed to the climate with its location by the North Sea and the Limfjord, so the green transition is very important to us - and the transition must focus on innovation and business development."

Erik Flyvholm

Mayor of Lemvig Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Lemvig [here](#) [in Danish].



Lolland

Home to the world's first offshore wind farm, Lolland is an island located in the southern part of Zealand who has a longstanding tradition of working with renewable energy both onshore and offshore. The municipality has set a target of 70% emission reductions by 2030 and aims to become carbon neutral by 2050. Through the climate action plan the municipality identifies itself as the facilitator of partnerships and places a strong emphasis on collaborating with residents, businesses and local utility companies. Lolland Municipality plans to strengthen their position as frontrunners on sustainable energy, with projects focusing on utilising excess heat from businesses in the district heating sector, optimising the infrastructure for electrifying private cars and many other ambitious initiatives.

The climate action plan has identified that one of the major emitters on the island is the agricultural sector. To address this challenge, the municipality supports local initiatives that can reduce the emissions from agriculture, together with support from partners. Lolland has also brought together a group of relevant stakeholders, including the local farmers' association and SEGES [a leading agricultural knowledge and innovation centre in Denmark], to discuss and develop solutions to reduce emissions. Over the coming years, more solutions for the agricultural sector will be identified through this innovative partnership.

"Joining the DK2020 project gave us the opportunity to look at all our activities in the municipality. We have calculated more accurately on the CO₂ emissions and pinpointed the big hurdles. We have decided to target the hurdles in this new plan for climate actions and take action. The plan will be continuously upgraded, and we hope the national regulations will support us."

Holger Schou Rasmussen

Mayor of Lolland Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Lolland [here](#) [in Danish].



Middelfart

Located on the west coast of the island of Funen, this municipality has the goal to become one of the most proactive municipalities when it comes to climate change and hopes to further strengthen their position as a laboratory for climate solutions. This ambition builds on years of focused work to link sustainable growth and the green transition. Through its climate action plan, the municipality focuses on making the green transition a just transition, and this vision is one of the key drivers behind the annual **National People's Climate Summit** that invites people, experts and politicians to meet and discuss the climate agenda. Middelfart has developed a list of more than 100 initiatives to support a green and just transition, which include phasing out oil and gas from individual heating, retrofitting buildings, infrastructure for electric vehicles and support for the sustainable transport of goods within the municipality. Through all these initiatives the municipality wishes to develop a more beautiful, more fun, and liveable city for all residents.

Middelfart is focusing on making sustainability and the climate agenda an integral part of the municipality and its decision-making processes. To support this approach, the municipality has developed a method to evaluate political proposals and the municipal budget planning process against the impact on the climate and sustainable

development goals. This will ensure that political decisions in Middelfart will be negotiated with the overall target of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 in mind.

"To be a frontrunner you must be ambitious and walk the talk. Therefore, the city council has a strong focus on governance. Prior to deciding the annual budget, we scrutinise if we are on track with our climate goals. If there is any inconsistency with climate goals, we will adjust the budget with fewer or more measures to secure reaching the climate goals. We have been training this embedding in the organisation for over a year, by having climate and sustainability on all political agendas. This way of working is an excellent way to co-operate and co-create with residents, as well as public and private partners. They are more and more often, reaching out to us simply because they know we have incorporated climate and sustainability into our day-to-day operations. And this is important because partnerships are a precondition for reaching our climate goals."

Johannes Lundsryd Jensen

Mayor of Middelfart Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Middelfart [here](#) [in Danish].



Randers

Randers is located in the central part of Jutland and has Denmark's longest river flowing through it. The municipality aims to become climate neutral by 2050 and has a short-term target aiming for 70% of the energy consumption and transport to be supplied by renewable energy by 2030. Randers' climate action plan consists of 40 actions across six themes that vary from nature and agriculture to business, industry, and logistics. In addition, Randers has developed 24 concrete sub-targets to manage the pathway towards climate neutrality, which include afforestation with an aim to increase the total area covered by forest from 11% to 23% before 2050. Also, the municipality has set a target that by 2030, 20% of all trips will be by bike, and by 2050 all vans will be driving on renewable fuels.

To create a solid foundation for the climate action plan, Randers has developed a representative platform from the local community, consisting of businesses, organisations, residents and the municipality itself. It is called **The Climate League** and aims to involve the local community to ensure an inclusive and collaborative approach to climate action planning in the municipality. Another interesting approach is the focus on sustainable living, where Randers is aiming to recycle 70% of household waste by 2030 and to go even further by 2050, with the goal of 85%. Also, 2030 is set

as the target date where every child in the municipality will learn about sustainable development goals and what a sustainable lifestyle entails, so as to ensure early commitment from Randers' future adults.

"With our Climate Plan 2050, the City Council is putting all its efforts into the climate battle, and both citizens and businesses are invited to join forces to reach our goal of climate neutrality by 2050."

Torben Hansen

Mayor of Randers Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Randers [here](#) [in Danish].



Roskilde

The Municipality of Roskilde has set a target of becoming carbon neutral by 2040. Additionally, it aims for all electricity and district heating to be carbon neutral by 2030, as well as the municipality, as an organisation, being carbon neutral by 2035. Roskilde wishes to improve and enlarge its sustainable transport options. Therefore, the municipality wants to further develop the connection between different transport modes, expand the charging infrastructure for electric vehicles, support accessibility for car-sharing in Roskilde, and be the first municipality in Denmark to introduce electrical busses on all internal routes. These combined actions will make it easier to choose sustainable transport and will lead to less pollution, while making the roads quieter and the air cleaner, thus improving the health and safety of all of the municipality's residents

Roskilde approached the DK2020 project in an analytical manner, which is demonstrated by the development of an organisational overview identifying all strategies and plans that have an impact on the municipality's main sectors: transport, energy, waste, adaptation, agriculture, and land use. In this overview, the different roles in which the municipality can influence the six main sectors through the plans and strategies aforementioned were identified. This approach allows Roskilde Municipality to mainstream climate

actions and create ownership of them across the municipality.

"Climate change knows no boundaries. Thus, every country, city and citizen can make a difference. In the Municipality of Roskilde, we have chosen a pathway that can inspire the individual and the collective. We are working towards neutrality by 2040. We are doing this by focusing on three main areas: green solutions, a sustainable municipality and a green transition of the energy sector. As a municipality, we have chosen to lead by example by retrofitting our buildings, through more solar energy, switching to EVs, waste management and investing heavily in the shift to e-buses. This is an example of how frontrunner initiatives can create inspiration in one place and a ripple effect in others."

Tomas Breddam

Mayor of Roskilde Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Roskilde [here](#) [in Danish].



Samsø

Samsø is an island in Kattegat and with a population of less than 4,000 people, it is the smallest municipality taking part in the DK2020 pilot project. However, for more than 20 years, together with the local community, Samsø has been working for a green transition and has been a showcase for renewable energy. With the approval of its climate action plan, Samsø has committed to reduce its emissions by 70% by 2030 and become a climate neutral island by 2050. However, islands face different challenges from municipalities on the mainland, one of them being the ferries owned by the municipality connecting the island to the mainland. These ferries are alone responsible for almost 60% of Samsø's emissions from the transport sector. To overcome this climate challenge, Samsø is looking into fuelling the ferries with biogas produced on the island and using electricity coming from their own renewable energy sources.

The municipality is currently exploring ways to develop a circular agriculture on the island, looking at management of compost, water and waste, while improving biodiversity. The agricultural sector takes up 66% of the land on Samsø and it is a cornerstone of the island's economy, producing food for the rest of Denmark. But agriculture is also one of the island's primary sources of emissions, and therefore many actions are

recommended to reduce them, such as optimised manure handling, biochar, converting marginal farmland into wetlands and forests, to name just a few. In the next decade, Samsø Municipality will engage with consumers and producers to find new ways of reducing the emissions from agriculture to achieve their 2050 target.

"We are happy to have a climate action plan that looks for the best solutions together with the most emitting sectors to reduce our climate impact. It is difficult with the food production and tourism sector, but as a municipality, we can also take action on the public transport sector – mainly the ferries. It is a challenge, but we as municipalities have a critical role to play towards 2030 and 2050."

Marcel Meijer

Mayor of Samsø Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Samsø [here](#) [in Danish].



Sønderborg

The Municipality of Sønderborg is a leader through some of their ambitious climate actions co-driven by the public private partnership **ProjectZero**. This partnership supports the municipality, local community and utilities in achieving carbon neutrality by 2029. The municipality has set a number of interim targets with the following milestones: 50% emission reductions by 2020; 75% by 2025; and 100% by 2029. In early June 2021, Sønderborg announced that the 2020 milestone had been achieved with a 52% reduction in emissions. The municipality's climate action plan focuses on transforming the energy system, reducing the energy consumption in buildings and other sectors, and making it easier for people in Sønderborg to choose sustainable transport solutions.

ProjectZero and Sønderborg Utility have both been active partners for Sønderborg in the DK2020 project and have ensured the engagement of both the private and public sector in the climate action planning process. The partnership is supporting the vision of carbon neutrality for Sønderborg, while promoting sustainable growth, innovation and green jobs, and showcasing solutions on energy, participation, technologies and businesses. Some of the strategic actions taken by the partnership include a masterplan to become carbon neutral by 2029 and a detailed roadmap 2025 which outlines how to achieve 75%

emission reductions by 2025. One of the more project-oriented approaches includes the **ZERO-company** business initiative, improving and promoting green business innovation across Sønderborg municipality.

"Sønderborg's ProjectZero vision has since 2007 been a guiding star for the transformation of Sønderborg into a carbon-neutral community by 2029. Establishing ProjectZero as a public private partnership has enabled the city council to think out of the traditional municipal box and create climate partnerships with the private sector. The DK2020 Climate Action Planning process has taught us the importance of integrating CO₂ reductions from the energy system, farming and climate-adaptation into a DK2020 Climate Action Plan, being compliant with the Paris Agreement. We will soon create an updated strategy and action plan for the remaining journey towards 2029. We will continue to learn and share best practices from cooperation with other municipalities across Europe. Our ambition is still to remain at the forefront of ambitious climate action in cities – across the planet."

Erik Lauritzen

Mayor of Sønderborg Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Sønderborg [here](#) [in Danish].



Vejle

The municipality is located in the southeast of Jutland in an area commonly known as the 'Triangle Region', often regarded as Denmark's third largest region after Aarhus and Copenhagen. This region is a hub for transport, production and logistics. Vejle aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, with an interim target of cutting emissions by 70% by 2030. The climate action plan has a strong focus on collaboration with stakeholders and has identified a number of partnerships for the nine sectors outlined in the plan. The partnerships will lay the road for climate-friendly industry in the region. A few examples include the cross-municipal partnership Triangle Energy Alliance that collaborates on developing shared solutions such as charging infrastructure and power-to-X, and also more concrete partnerships with freight companies focusing on sustainable fuels and logistics. Creating partnerships in all sectors is an important step towards achieving Vejle's ambitious climate target.

The municipality also focuses on communication and outreach to the residents. This is evident at one of the first pages in the climate action plan, where 20 climate recommendations for residents are highlighted varying from individual heating, carpooling, to encouraging people to shift to a more climate-friendly diet. Through initiatives such as '**Økolariet**' and '**Grønt Forum**', Vejle is engaging

residents and raising awareness about sustainability. To strengthen democratic engagement, the municipality has decided to establish a people's climate council inviting residents and local climate actors to come up with ideas and ways to be more ambitious and creative when it relates to the climate work in Vejle.

"Through the DK2020 collaboration, Vejle Municipality is committed to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, and with our Climate Plan we have put words and direction on the paths we must follow to achieve the goal of climate neutrality in 2050. The plan provides both an overview, indicates concrete actions, and will in future be the foundation for what we politically decide as a municipality. Because that is our most important task as politicians. Making decisions and setting the framework that allow citizens to make alternative and greener choices that can help us reach our goals."

Jens Ejner Christensen

Mayor of Vejle Municipality

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Vejle [here](#) [in Danish].



Aarhus

Aarhus is the second largest city and municipality, and home to one of the youngest populations in Denmark. Located on the coast and with a river running through the region, water is recognised as a resource in the climate adaptation plan, which identifies new opportunities to create a resilient municipality, while improving recreational spaces and the quality of life for the people. This is achieved together with a range of local stakeholders such as the utility company, Aarhus Water, and local residents. In 2008, the municipality set a target to become carbon neutral by 2030 and has already succeeded in cutting emissions in half. The new climate action plan consists of measures distributed across several sectors: energy, transport, buildings, industry, local engagement, and the municipality as an organisation. In 2020, the City Council decided on binding annual climate targets; if these annual targets are not met, the City Council will take additional actions to bring the climate action plan back on track.

A key objective for Aarhus is to accelerate actions related to transport and mobility and to guarantee real emission reductions, thus avoiding the need for climate compensation. When considering the city's goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2030, Aarhus places a strong emphasis on the emissions that are still to be released into the atmosphere on the road towards achieving this target.

They refer to this as their historical 'carbon debt'. The municipality will address its climate debt through facilitating the development of technologies such as carbon capture and storage. In the future, when Aarhus becomes carbon neutral, carbon capture allows the municipality to have a negative emissions profile and thus can then start to reduce its carbon debt.

"The climate challenge is global, but has to be solved in local communities. Therefore, we have a responsibility – no matter how big or small our communities are – to make an effort to solve the climate challenge. If we do it smart, we can overcome the challenge and also create better communities for the benefit of everyone, both now and in the future."

Bunyamin Simsek

Deputy Mayor

Department of Technical and Environmental Services in the City of Aarhus

Read more about climate action in the Municipality of Aarhus [here](#) [in Danish].

The added value through DK2020

After the pilot project was finalised, CONCITO asked each of the project managers in the 20 DK2020 municipalities to reflect on the added value of the project. Their responses included:

Political commitment and priority

A fundamental criteria in the C40 Climate Action Planning Framework is political commitment. For some of the DK2020 municipalities this political commitment has raised awareness of the climate actions that have already been implemented, the opportunities they have, and the challenges they face.

Mainstreaming climate action

The DK2020 project has pushed municipalities to strengthen collaboration across municipal departments and mainstream mitigation and adaptation actions, while ensuring inclusion and added value from climate action.

Engagement with local community

The climate action plans have been developed in close collaboration with the local community, and this has strengthened the engagement with the local residents and strengthened the dialogue with businesses and stakeholders.

A collective voice and platform

The DK2020 pilot project provided the municipalities with a shared platform to discuss climate actions, to seek support from each other, and to share ideas and experiences. This has opened the door for more collaboration and peer-to-peer learnings between the municipalities, and importantly, DK2020 has provided them with a collective voice to raise municipal climate issues in Denmark.

Partners

Realdania

Realdania is a self-endowed philanthropic association with approximately 170.000 members. The goal of the association is to improve the quality of life in the built environment – meaning the physical framework of our everyday lives. This includes urban development, construction projects and preservation of historic and cultural environments. Sustainability is a common thread in Realdania's philanthropic activities. Since 2000, Realdania has supported approximately 4.300 projects with more than 2.7 billion EUR. Everyone owning real estate can become a member for free.

Read more [here](#)

CONCITO

CONCITO is the leading green think tank in Denmark. Established in 2008 with the purpose of translating knowledge into action by channeling science and knowledge-based analyses and information on pathways towards a net-zero emission and a climate robust society. CONCITO wishes to build a bridge between the solutions seen in Denmark and the global green transition.

Read more [here](#)

C40

C40 connects nearly 100 of the world's largest and most influential cities to take bold climate action, leading the way towards a healthier and more sustainable future. Representing 700+ million people and one quarter of the global economy, mayors of C40 cities are committed to delivering on the most ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement at a local level. C40 is a global organisation with its headquarters in London and larger offices in New York City, Beijing, Rio de Janeiro, and Copenhagen.

Read more [here](#)

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