

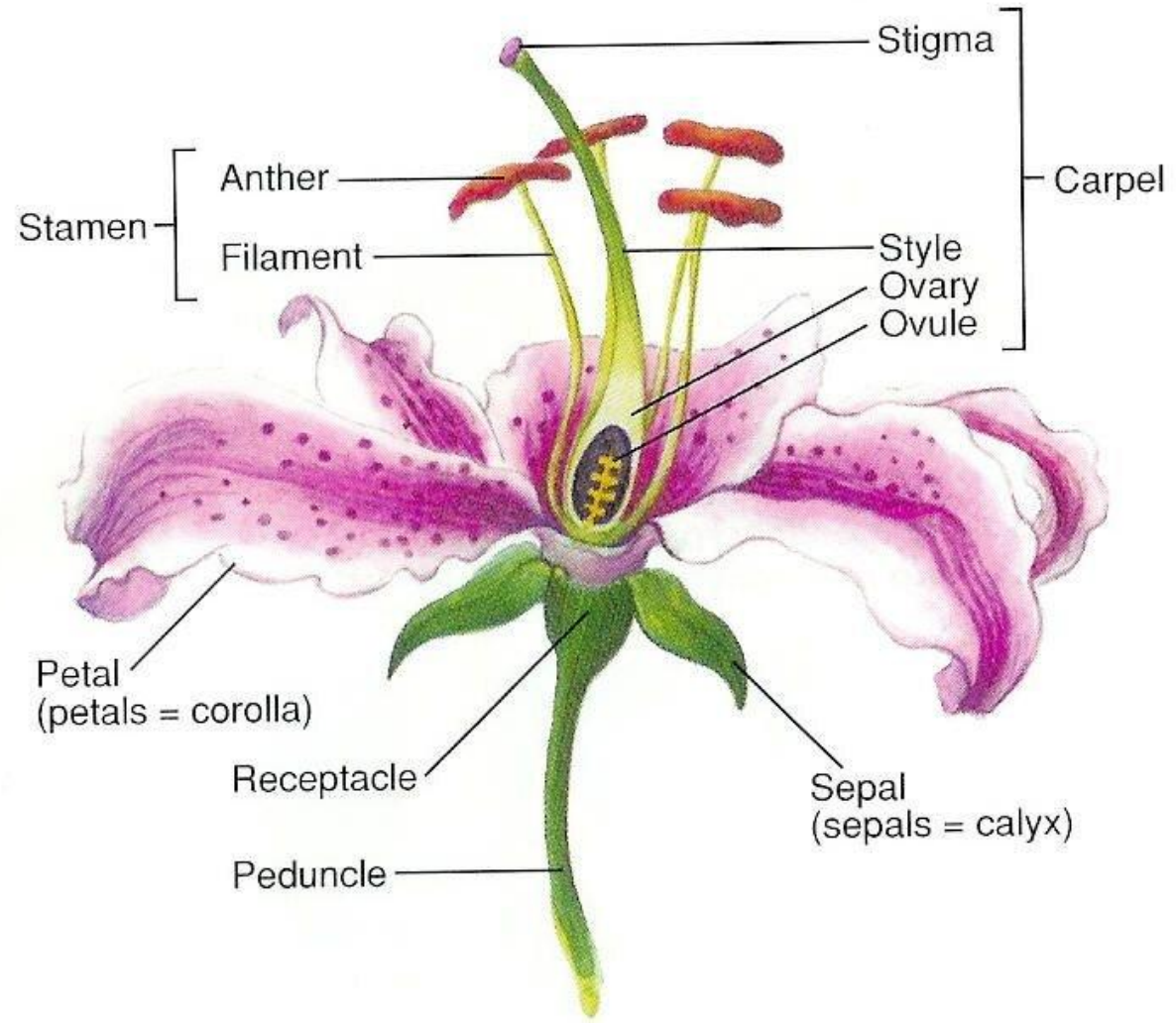
Dissecting the Green Deal

how local and regional authorities can use
EU policy to drive change on the ground?

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CEESEU-DIGIT conference, Zagreb



Quick show of hands: How many of you feel the Green Deal is...

- A. Vital, but distant**
- B. Full of jargon**
- C. Full of opportunity**
- D. A bit of all of the above**

What is the Green deal, again?

The **European Green Deal** is the European Union's flagship strategy to make its economy sustainable, climate-neutral, and inclusive by **2050**. It's not a single law but a **comprehensive policy framework** that guides environmental, energy, transport, industry, agriculture, and finance policies

Still relevant?

EU sustainability rules watered down in omnibus package



Ursula von der Leyen leads the European Commission. Thierry Monasse/Getty Images.

Omnibus = bus for all



The EU Omnibus regulation

“ The EU Omnibus Regulation is a legislative package introduced by the European Commission in February 2025 to simplify and streamline some of the EU’s most complex sustainability rules.”

The EU Omnibus regulation

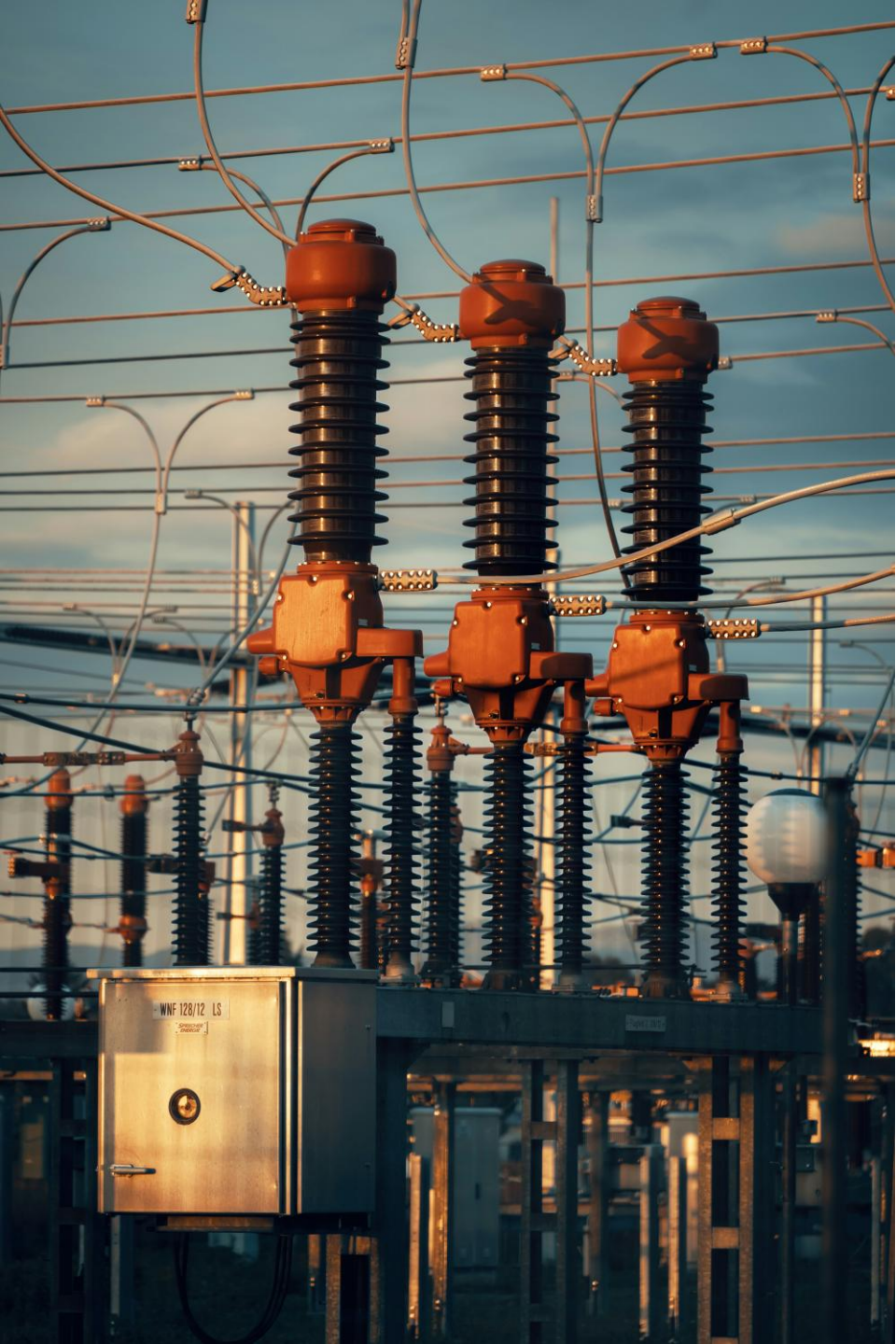
- Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)
- Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)
- EU Taxonomy Regulation
- Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)
- InvestEU Regulation

Clean Industrial Deal

- Industrial Decarbonisation Bank: A €100 billion fund aiming to leverage €400 billion from private investments.
- Affordable Energy Action Plan: Proposes measures to save €260 billion annually by 2040 through energy efficiency and infrastructure modernization.
- **Simplified Public Procurement: Prioritizes European companies in clean tech sectors.**
- Circular Economy Act: Encourages recycling and reduces feedstock costs.

So yes, still very relevant.

But what does it mean locally?



ENERGY EFFICIENCY DIRECTIVE

- **1.9% annual energy consumption reduction** for public sector (Art 5)
- Municipalities need to annually **renovate at least 3%** of heated and/or cooled buildings (Art 6)
- Cities with >45.000 inhabitants -> **need local heat and cooling plans**

ENERGY PERFORMANCE OF BUILDINGS DIRECTIVE

- 2028 all new public buildings owned by public authorities, and in 2030 all new buildings -> **Zero Energy Buildings** (Article 7)
- public building roofs must be **equipped with solar panels** where feasible (Article 9)
- **one-stop shops for energy performance of buildings** for 80.000 inhabitants at least one per region (Article 18)





EU NATURE RESTORATION REGULATION LAW

- Post 2030, ensure an increase in both urban green space and tree canopy cover
- **3% increase in green space** by 2040 (Article 8)
- **Restore at least 25.000 km of rivers** to free flowing rivers (Article 9)

ELECTRICITY MARKET DESIGN DIRECTIVE

- local public authorities to invest in energy sharing

EU AMBIENT AIR QUALITY

- Update air quality plans by 2030



From policy to practice.
How to translate this to local action?

What's your biggest challenge in this area locally?"

Turn to someone next to you. Pick one topic:

Energy, Nature, Waste, or Transport.

Talk for one minute.

Policy instrument grid | axes

| | TARGETED / TECHNICAL → Aimed at specific behaviors, technologies, or sectors | STRATEGIC / SYSTEMIC → Broad structural or planning-level interventions |
|---|---|--|
| DIRECT CONTROL → Policies that <i>mandate</i> or <i>prohibit</i> actions (e.g. regulations) | | |
| INDIRECT INFLUENCE → Policies that <i>incentivize</i> or <i>inform</i> (e.g. subsidies, campaigns) | | |

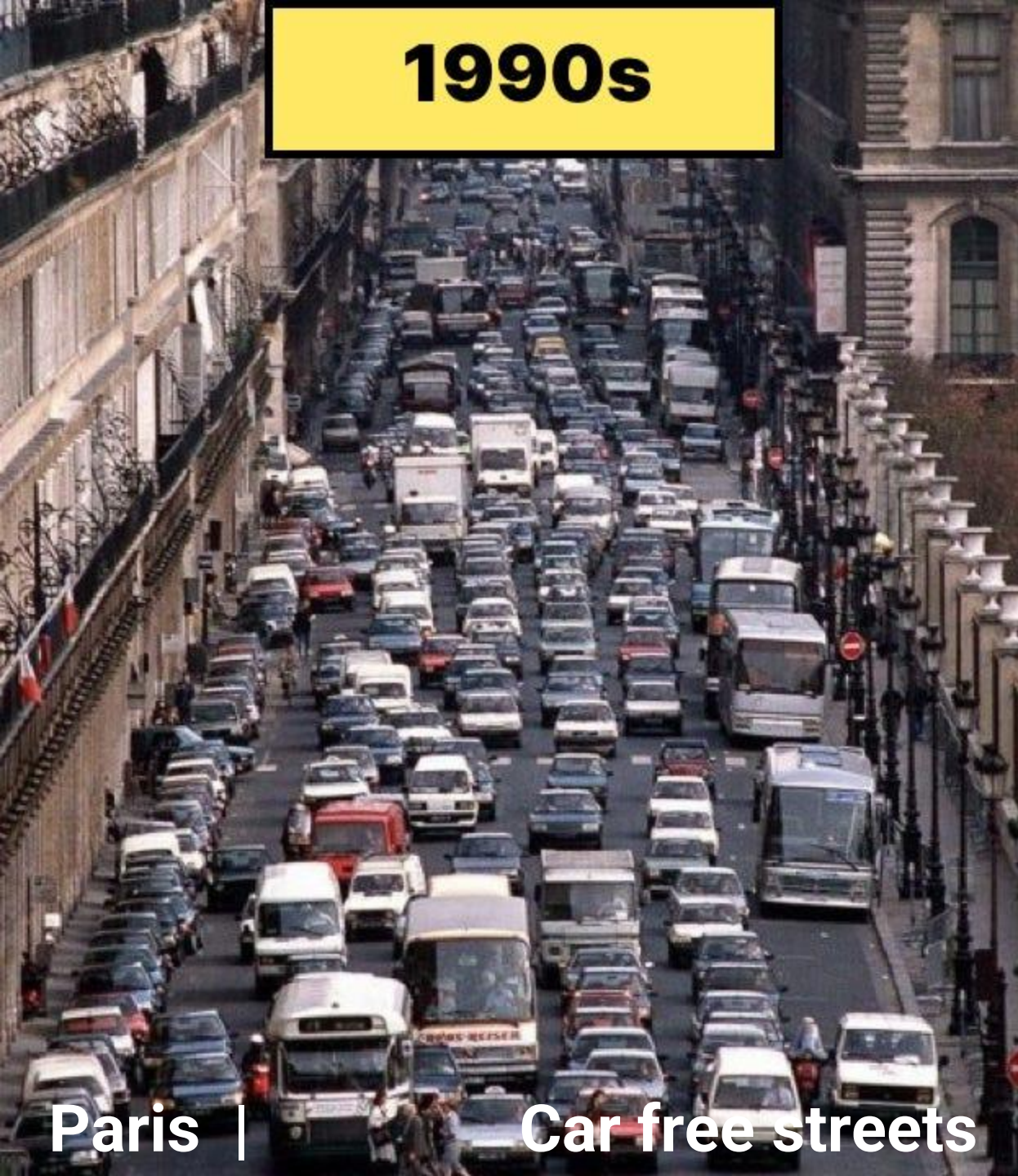
Policy instrument grid | examples

| | TARGETED / TECHNICAL | STRATEGIC / SYSTEMIC |
|--------------------|--|---|
| DIRECT CONTROL | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Zoning/building codes◆ Fossil heating bans◆ Low-emission zones | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Climate-neutral building codes for entire sectors◆ Long-term environmental regulation frameworks |
| INDIRECT INFLUENCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Energy retrofit grants◆ EV charging subsidies◆ Public transport incentives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Green public procurement◆ Citizen climate assemblies◆ Climate action plans & SUMPs |

Policy instrument grid | best practices

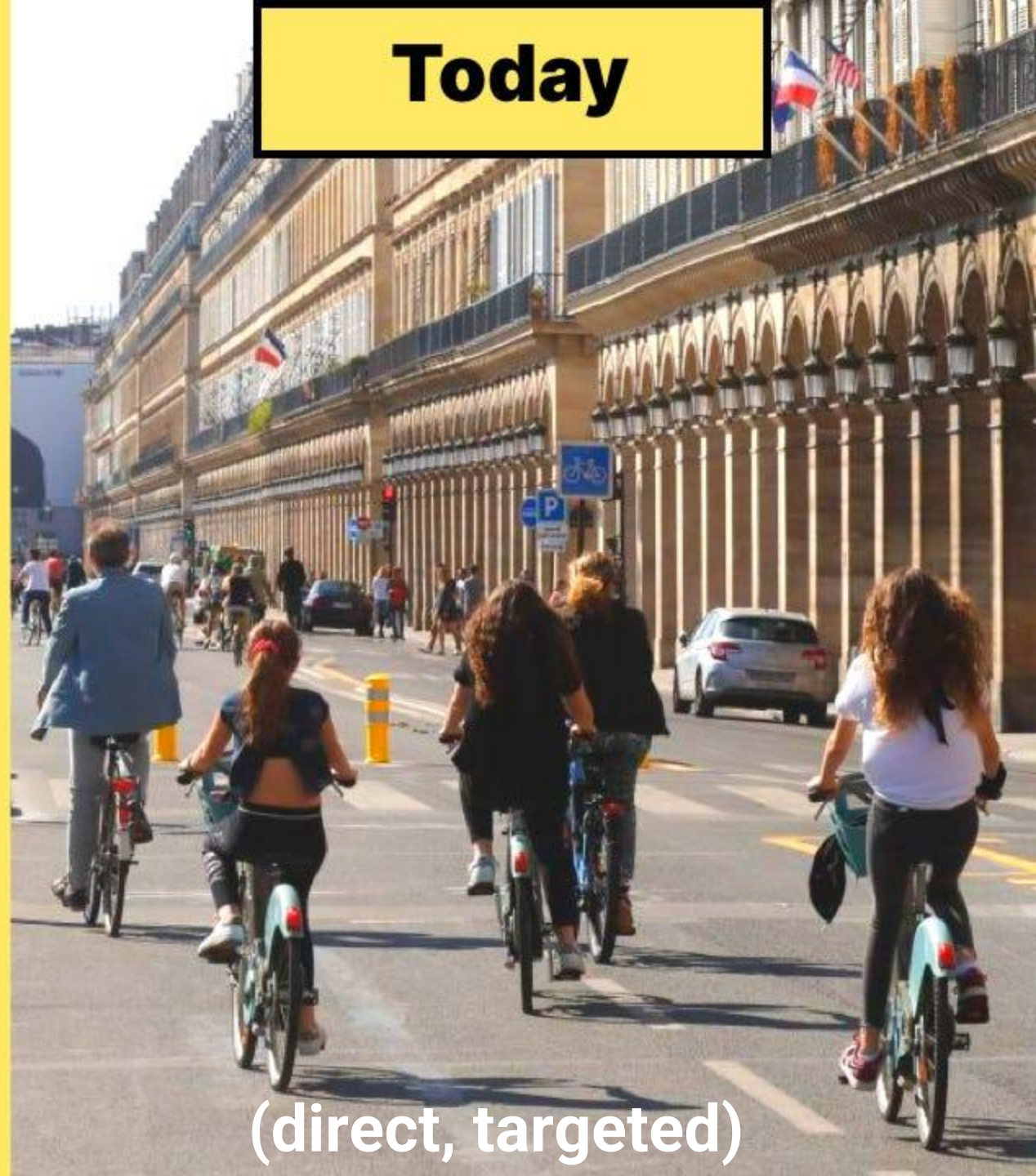
| | TARGETED / TECHNICAL | STRATEGIC / SYSTEMIC |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| DIRECT CONTROL | Paris | Amsterdam |
| INDIRECT INFLUENCE | Germany | Oslo |

1990s



Paris | Car-free streets

Today



(direct, targeted)

Paris | Car free streets

March 2014: One of the most severe smog events in recent years led to **free public transportation** and **traffic restrictions (LEZ)**

Parking Reductions (2014-2024): Approximately **70,000 parking spaces** have been eliminated across Paris. That is about 50% of all parking spots in the city

March 2025: 500 streets voted to become carfree, 220/6000 roads already car free + in addition to removing 10.000 parking spots

Amsterdam | Rainwater ordonance (Direct, strategic)



Smartroof 2.0, Amsterdam - Onderzoeksdak

Example Amsterdam: Hemelwaterverordening Amsterdam

Challenge: Between 2003 and 2016, Amsterdam experienced an 11% decrease in green space due to urban densification.

Scope local law: New Buildings and buildings structurally renovated must capture and manage the first 60 mm per m² of rainfall per hour on-site, either through infiltration or storage

A stormwater storage facility:

- a. Has at least a capacity of 60 liters per m² of built-up area;
- b. discharges a maximum of 1 liter per m² of built-up area per hour to a public sewer;
and
- c. is empty after 60 hours.



Oslo | Green Procurement (indirect , strategic)

Oslo | Green Procurement (indirect , strategic)

The Challenge – started in 2019

Sixty-two percent of Oslo's greenhouse gas emissions come from transport, and more than 25% of that total is attributable to construction vehicles and machinery

Results

Achieved 16% reduction from 2009 to 2019 on public constructing sites

By 2023, 77% of the machinery deployed in municipal construction sites was zero-emission.

Starting in 2025, “emission-free” construction equipment becomes mandatory for all public projects.



**Germany | Energy Caravaan
(indirect , targeted)**

Germany | Energy Caravaan (indirect , targeted)

The Energy Caravan is a **municipal energy consulting campaign** to increase the rate of retrofitting of private building stock

Consultations: Over 12,000 energy consultations were conducted for households

Renovations: At least 7,000 privately owned buildings underwent energy-efficient retrofits as a result of the campaign

Rate Increase: The Energy Caravan led to an increase in the renovation rate of up to **15%** on a neighborhood basis, compared to the German average of 1%

Energy Savings: On average, the individual retrofits achieved a **50% reduction** in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions

Closing

Write down one Green Deal goal you'll revisit when you return home—and **one small step** you'll take to move toward it.

“OK,” the young man challenged. “So what’s the answer?”

“There isn’t one,” I told him.

“No answer? You mean we’re just doomed?” He smiled as though he thought this might be a joke.

“No,” I said. “I mean there’s no single answer that will solve all of our future problems. There’s no magic bullet. Instead there are thousands of answers – at least. You can be one of them if you choose to be.”

By Octavia Butlers (1993)

