

02 HOW PUBLIC DECISION MAKING CAN MAKE CITIES LIVEABLE

HOW IT IS DONE

It is a rather simple task to build energy-efficient buildings or transport facilities. The challenging part is to create solutions that contribute to building resilience, while also enhancing quality of life in a city. Consider these steps:

- Identify and understand needs and wishes for society development at all relevant stakeholder levels.
- Work from a common vision and set up goals. All strategic decisions should support and enhance this vision, guiding the city towards its liveability goals.
- Use necessary investments to enhance urban equality and security, both in terms of socioeconomic development and climate change risks.
- Prioritise efforts within as many of the five driving forces for liveable city development as possible: social coherence, economic growth, environmental sustainability, good governance and urban planning.

The challenge of getting to know your stakeholders

More often than not, public authorities do not know the needs and wishes for development at different stakeholder levels, and organisational structures might not support a holistic approach where multiple purposes are included into climate initiatives. For instance, silo mentality can become a heavy barrier for progress, and Key Performance Indicators often do not allow or motivate overlapping activities and co-creation.

Another challenge is urban inequality. Urban areas with run-down buildings, high crime rates and poor or socially vulnerable people may be more at risk and less resilient to the impact of climate change, but might not have the financial clout to act. In other words, the people paying for investments are not always those who enjoy the benefits. This can reinforce the lack of incentives for funding and collaboration and widen the inequality gap.

Climate vision starts with liveability

Climate change decisions tend to focus on emissions reductions. To support liveability goals, public decision making should be focused on turning the city into an even better place to live. Liveable city development must be defined as the primary objective, while cutting carbon emissions and building resilience remain prerequisites for this.

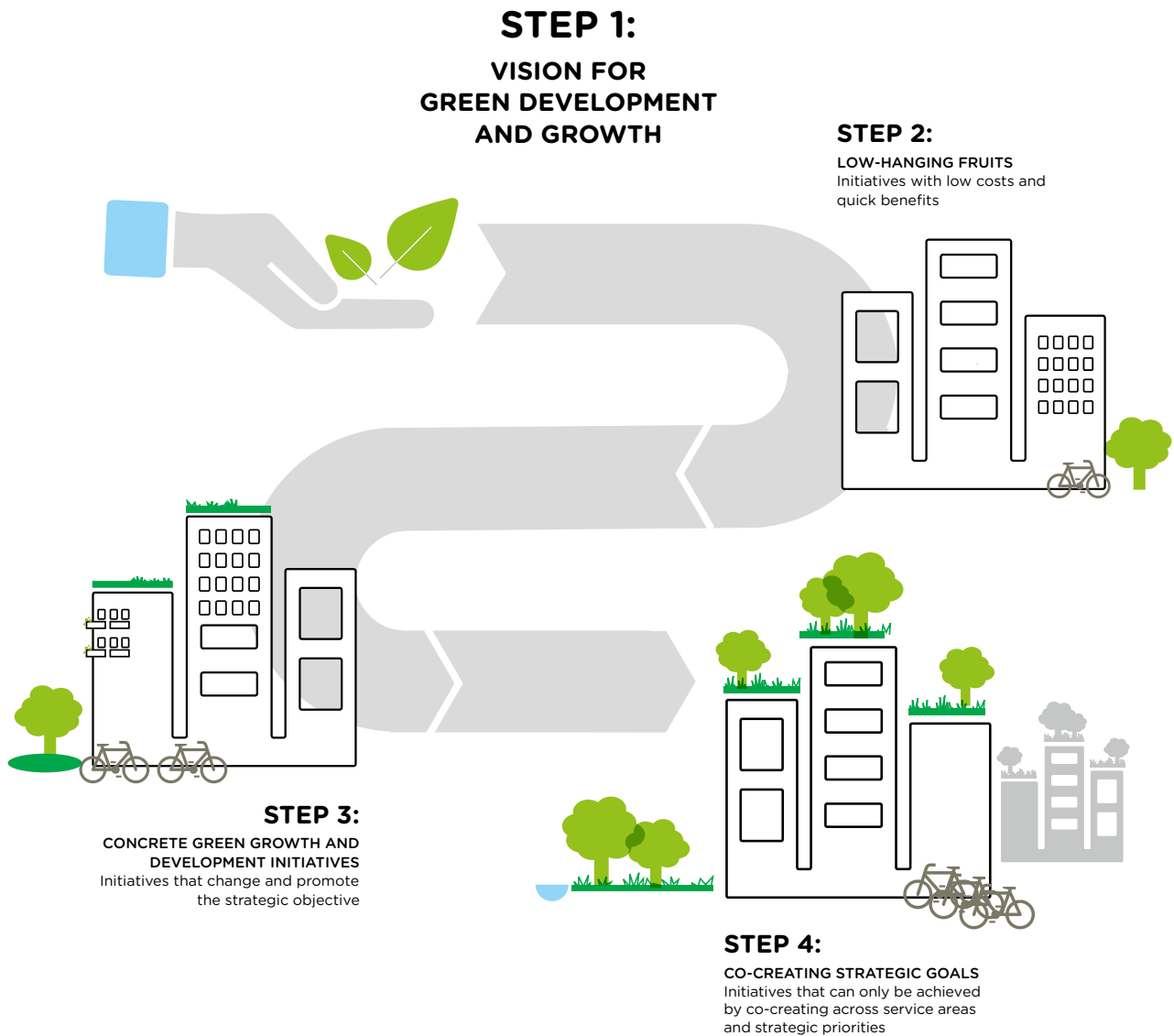
The city administration must understand local needs and wishes for sustainable development and growth by engaging in stakeholder dialogues with businesses, civil society engagement groups, and knowledge, social and cultural institutions. This development analysis will allow the municipality to define a city strategy with a common vision.

Co-creation is key

Decision makers must involve their own organisation and facilitate horizontal and vertical dialogue throughout the city administration internally to utilise existing relations and expertise. The environmental, social and economic motivation must be defined and aligned between stakeholders to reach the necessary level of commitment. In other words, co-creation is key.

The liveability goal is the guiding star of all related initiatives. Making strategic decisions that support the common vision requires stakeholder insights, e.g. via benefit realisation mapping, but also an ability to scale projects. Not every climate project in a city will serve all purposes. Many of the lower hanging fruits to reduce emissions will be less-integrated projects, which are easier, downscaled and cheaper to implement.

CO-CREATION OF A VISION FOR GREEN DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH



Co-creating a vision with the inclusion of public stakeholders strengthens all steps in a phased process, and ensures increased social, economic and environmental strength.

As maturity grows and basic infrastructure, such as sustainable transport and energy solutions, are in place, development initiatives can become more integrated, advanced and multidisciplinary by working across service lines and strategic priorities.

In other words, strategists must apply a holistic approach from planning to construction, covering the whole line from vision to goal-oriented development initiatives and daily operation, procurement and performance tracking.

For most administrations, limited resources are the biggest stumbling block on the road to long-term, liveable answers to climate challenges. To ensure that the investment has maximum impact, cities should:

- Perform comprehensive cost-benefit analyses.
- Identify the most vulnerable areas calling for urgent action.
- Focus on lifting neighbourhoods while adapting to the changing conditions and stimulating green growth.
- The most sustainable and feasible investments enhance urban equality and security at the same time.
- Understand their stakeholders needs and wishes for development through active and early engagement.

Building a foundation for increased social, economic and environmental strength

If public decision makers manage to design and co-create urban planning solutions for multi-functionality, they will build the foundation for a resilient and liveable city with increased social coherence, economic growth and environmental sustainability.

If a holistic approach is adopted, the strategy can lead to smart city solutions that ensure energy stability, democratic and healthy transportation systems, connectivity and mobility. A socioeconomic focus can enhance social equality and make poor areas more resilient.

A strong business focus on small-, medium-sized, large and international corporations can result in green growth, job creation, emerging start-up communities, new competences, competitiveness and innovation.

Climate change is not just a threat. It presents an opportunity to co-create recreational urban environments that are prepared for a future with changing conditions.

THE IDEA BROUGHT TO LIFE

Transition to a green growth society, Denmark

Gate 21 is a green growth partnership between Danish municipalities, businesses and knowledge institutions, facilitating knowledge sharing and projects that support Denmark's green transition and growth.

As a part of this process, Gate 21 has worked with the Capital Region of Denmark, KTC – Association of Municipal Engineering and Ramboll to develop a decision maker's guide on how municipalities can formulate green transition and growth initiatives in their planning activities and municipal strategies. The guide contains suggestions and inspiration on how to realise visions, goals and strategies by involving the right stakeholders, and how to ensure solutions that consider the needs for climate adaptation projects and the long-term wishes for development and growth.

From concrete canal to recreational river, Singapore

By its island nature, Singapore is an exposed city and state with limited land to collect and store water. As a response to heavy tropical rainfalls, the country has turned many natural rivers into concrete canals. One of them used to run through one of the most popular public parks, Bishan – Ang Mo Kio Park. The drainage system has now been converted into a 3.2 km natural river. Rather than being separate components, the idea of water and its surrounding area is thought of as a whole, where recreation and community bonding occur amidst the water conveyance system. The highlight of this project is the revitalisation of the river.

The changing waterscape creates multiple land use in the park. When the water level in the river is low, users can get closer to water and enjoy recreational activities along the river banks. During heavy rain, the river doubles up as a conveyance channel, carrying the flow downstream.

**CITIES ACCOUNT
FOR 75% OF THE
GLOBAL ENERGY
CONSUMPTION**