

Environmental sustainability zagreb

Zagreb, recognised as the greenest capital in the EU by the European Environment Agency, is embarking on a groundbreaking initiative to enhance its green spaces and achieve climate neutrality. The project focuses on transforming private and semi-public outdoor spaces into carbon-free, green areas. The goals include expanding carbon sinks, addressing suburbanisation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fostering a local coalition for climate neutrality through citizen engagement.

The key component of the project is the Climate Neutral Greening Hub, which serves as a central hub for ecosystem and community activities, bringing together various stakeholders and seeks to promote entrepreneurship in landscaping.

However, the initiative faces barriers, including technical challenges related to infrastructure and coordination, structural issues in governance and systemic change, institutional hurdles in policies and data systems, socioeconomic barriers with a lack of private sector incentives, and cultural challenges involving skills deficits and unsupportive behavioural patterns. Overcoming these obstacles is crucial for the success of the systemic transformative project relying on social innovation.

The key pilot activities in Zagreb involve implementing Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) in apartment and business courtyards, incorporating elements such as tree planting, green spaces, permeable surfaces, sun-reflecting surfaces, compost facilities, urban furniture, LED lighting and sustainable practices like rainwater repurposing.

The initiative also includes developing a scalable framework, enhancing local capacity for net-zero solutions through workshops and training, building collective and institutional capacities, forming a dedicated city administration team for climate neutrality, and reinforcing public participation platforms.

The goal is to create a transformative model that not only enhances the urban environment with sustainable features but also fosters community engagement and innovation for a net-zero, climate-neutral future.

The Climate-Neutral Greening Hub, established by the project, should continue to provide support to citizens and stakeholders in other activities that contribute to climate neutrality. This includes offering guidance and resources for implementing sustainable practices, facilitating collaborations between different parties, and promoting awareness on the importance of reducing carbon footprints. By continuing to serve as a central point for information and assistance, the hub will play a significant role in accelerating the transition towards a more environmentally friendly society.

Zagreb's comprehensive decarbonisation initiatives encompass energy retrofitting for public buildings, a residential and private structure deep retrofit programme and a reconstruction project for the

historic centre integrating energy efficiency, renewables, and green infrastructure.

The city's efforts to revitalise its district heating system are an important step towards sustainability and reducing carbon emissions by proactive approach to modernising its infrastructure. Pilot projects with solar PV modules on public buildings demonstrate the city's commitment to renewable energy. By exploring geothermal energy and sustainable heating solutions the city aims to reduce its environmental impact. Waste management improvements promote a circular economy and responsible consumption, positioning the city as a leader in sustainability.

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