



Three Danish cities at the forefront of sustainable urbanisation

The Danish Energy Agency, the municipalities of Copenhagen, Aarhus, Sonderborg and The Danish Ministry for Housing, Urban and Rural Affairs have released a new publication that focuses on three Danish cities at the forefront when it comes to implementing green urbanization and new energy solutions. In connection with the release of the publication a joint workshop on green urbanisation will be organized together with the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development in China on 24 September 2014.



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“Green Urban Denmark” is a new publication jointly prepared by the Danish Energy Agency (DEA), the municipalities of Copenhagen, Aarhus and Sonderborg and the Danish Ministry of Housing, Urban and Rural Affairs. It highlights how Copenhagen, Aarhus and Sonderborg have developed and implemented green urbanization and new sustainable energy initiatives in order to become carbon neutral cities with green profiles, which also boost green growth businesses. The green initiatives range from extensive retrofitting of buildings, reorganisation of energy supply, radical changes in transport patterns to environmental and climate change awareness campaigns. All of which have the goal to encourage citizens to reduce their energy consumption and increase energy renovation of private homes. Copenhagen, Aarhus and Sonderborg’s energy and climate action plans are excellent examples of how local authorities can make sustainable green urbanization and economic growth.

The Danish National Energy Policy Approach

Denmark’s long-term commitment to creating a green sustainable society is historically grounded in an early green vision which is closely linked to the decentralized governance system of Denmark. The Danish green transition is

partly driven by national policy, but to a major extent also by visionary local authorities and citizens. Several Danish regions and municipalities have adopted their own ambitious climate and energy targets that also respond to the Danish National Energy Policy Approach of having 100% renewable energy in the energy and transport sector by 2050.

As an example, utility companies are often owned by the municipalities and the local governance levels are to a large extent responsible for the detailed implementation of national policies through regional and municipal plans for urban and industrial development, district heat planning, location of power plants etc. The local governance level also plays a key role in enforcement e.g. of Danish building codes.

In Denmark, as in most OECD-countries, up to 40% of the total energy consumption is consumed in buildings. The energy performance of new buildings has since 1961 been regulated in the Danish building code, which covers energy for heating, cooling, ventilation, domestic hot water and lighting. The building code has been further tightened in the Energy Agreement of 2012, which also contains a number of initiatives aimed at reducing the energy consumption of existing buildings, including government subsidies for investments in energy conservation, an energy savings package for rented housing, and a new strategy for energy retrofitting of existing buildings. Today, the heat demand of new buildings is only about 25% of what it was before 1977, which is a result of a long-term commitment towards reducing the total energy consumption.

Achieving the 2050 goal of having 100% renewable energy requires not only a long-term national policy to set the general direction and policy framework. It also requires an active and creative cooperation at the regional and local levels from cities and citizens to implement policy. Last but not least, it involves developing and testing new concrete green solutions to create a better and more livable urban environment.

A joint workshop on green urbanisation will be held on the 24 September as a part of the 2014 Conference on Urban Development and Planning in Tianjin organised together with China's Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development.

 [Publication: Green Urban Denmark](#)

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