



New Danish district heating cooperation will help China achieve its climate goals

Today, around a third of the world's energy is used on heating and cooling. Especially in China, the potential for green heating is huge. Based on this, UNEP DTU Partnership and the Danish Energy Agency are entering into a new cooperation agreement on district heating in China. By sharing Danish know-how with regulatory framework conditions, the cooperation aims to contribute to speeding up the green transition, helping China fulfil the Paris Agreement commitments.

China is not only the world's most populous nation, but also the largest CO₂ emitter. The large CO₂ emissions and air pollution challenges are a strong driving force for China in terms of switching to a greener energy system. The vast majority of energy used in heating buildings in China today comes from coal. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), China has the world's largest district heating network, and it is estimated that there is a huge potential for green heating to more than 200 million Chinese people. Many Chinese cities want to implement CO₂-saving projects, however, they lack concrete knowledge and good regulatory framework conditions to optimize implementation of green district heating.

A new Danish collaboration now aims to change that. The Danish Energy Agency and UNEP DTU Partnership, which is a collaboration between the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the Technical University of Denmark (DTU) and Danida, will today on 1 July sign a strategic collaboration agreement, making it easier to exchange technical and regulatory knowledge and experiences with selected countries, including China and later on Ukraine. The collaboration paves the way for a coordinated effort to promote green district heating solutions and at the same time strengthens Denmark's current climate efforts in China. The Danish Energy Agency collaborates with Chinese authorities on green energy transition, and UNEP DTU Partnership has for several years worked directly with Chinese cities to develop and implement

concrete green solutions for district heating.

“By entering into a collaboration with UNEP DTU Partnership, Denmark's global efforts can better support each other, create good synergies and thereby help countries like China to achieve their climate goals. In Denmark, we have unique knowledge and know-how about green district heating, which we are happy to share with the rest of the world. With this new initiative, we will strengthen co-thinking and join forces. In this way, we can stimulate the strategic approach in our cooperation with China and support the transformation of the Chinese energy system, for the benefit of us all,” says Kristoffer Böttzauw, Director General of the Danish Energy Agency.

Virtual platform for knowledge sharing

The agreement supports among other things the establishment of a virtual platform 'Clean Heating Knowledge Center', which will give Chinese decision-makers access to world-leading Danish know-how, that both UNEP DTU Partnership and the Danish Energy Agency specialize in. To realise the ambition to promote green district heating in China, the Danish experiences must be translated into a Chinese context.

“Through our work with cities in China and other parts of the world, we see a huge need for energy-efficient and green solutions. It's not just about achieving the global climate goals or meeting Sustainable Development Goal 7 on affordable and clean energy, but about solutions that can directly improve the air quality for millions of people. By building on and expanding our collaboration with the Danish Energy Agency, we will now be able to increase the quality of life for many and share our Danish expertise and green solutions with even more. In short, it is the perfect match to promote green district heating,” says Susanne Pedersen, Director of UNEP DTU Partnership.

The strategic cooperation agreement between the Danish Energy Agency and UNEP DTU Partnership is based on previous collaborations in China, working on the preparation of district heating projects and capacity building with Chinese stakeholders among other things.

Facts

- Today, around a third of the world's energy is used on heating and cooling. Modern district heating systems, which use significantly less energy than individual solutions, are therefore key in the global green transition.

- The strategic cooperation agreement between the Danish Energy Agency and UNEP DTU Partnership is a coordinated effort to promote green district heating. For example by sharing Danish know-how and experiences with framework conditions. The agreement is signed by Kristoffer Böttzauw, Director General of the Danish Energy Agency, and Susanne Pedersen, Director of UNEP DTU Partnership, on Thursday 1 July in the UN City in Copenhagen.
- [The Danish Energy Agency](#) has 16 government-to-government collaborations on energy with countries that collectively emit more than 60 percent of the world's CO₂. By sharing and expanding knowledge and capacity in the partner countries' national authorities, policy makers are empowered to make sustainable and cost-effective energy policy decisions. The district heating effort is part of a comprehensive collaboration with China on meeting China's goal of climate neutrality by 2060.
- [UNEP DTU Partnership](#) is a leading international research institution in energy, climate, and sustainable development located in the UN City in Copenhagen. The partnership is collaborating with developing countries worldwide on climate adjustment, reduction of CO₂ emissions, and implementation of green technology focused on meeting goals number 7 on green energy and number 13 on climate action in the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#).
- This year, the Chinese city of Xi'an has initiated the construction of a 100% green district heating system based on geothermal energy and residual heat from wastewater. The project covers over 500,000 sqm of the city and has been developed in collaboration with UNEP DTU Partnership and UNEP District Energy in Cities Initiative while the Danish Energy Agency has supported the training of local stakeholders.
- The Danish Energy Agency and UNEP DTU Partnership have worked together to promote green district heating solutions in China. Among other things by capacity building at national level and training in the use of the Danish Energy Agency's tools for assessing the costs and benefits of district heating compared with individual heating.

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