

MLGP4Climate

JULY 2026 NEWSLETTER



MLGP4
CLIMATE

Building Climate-Resilient Cities Together

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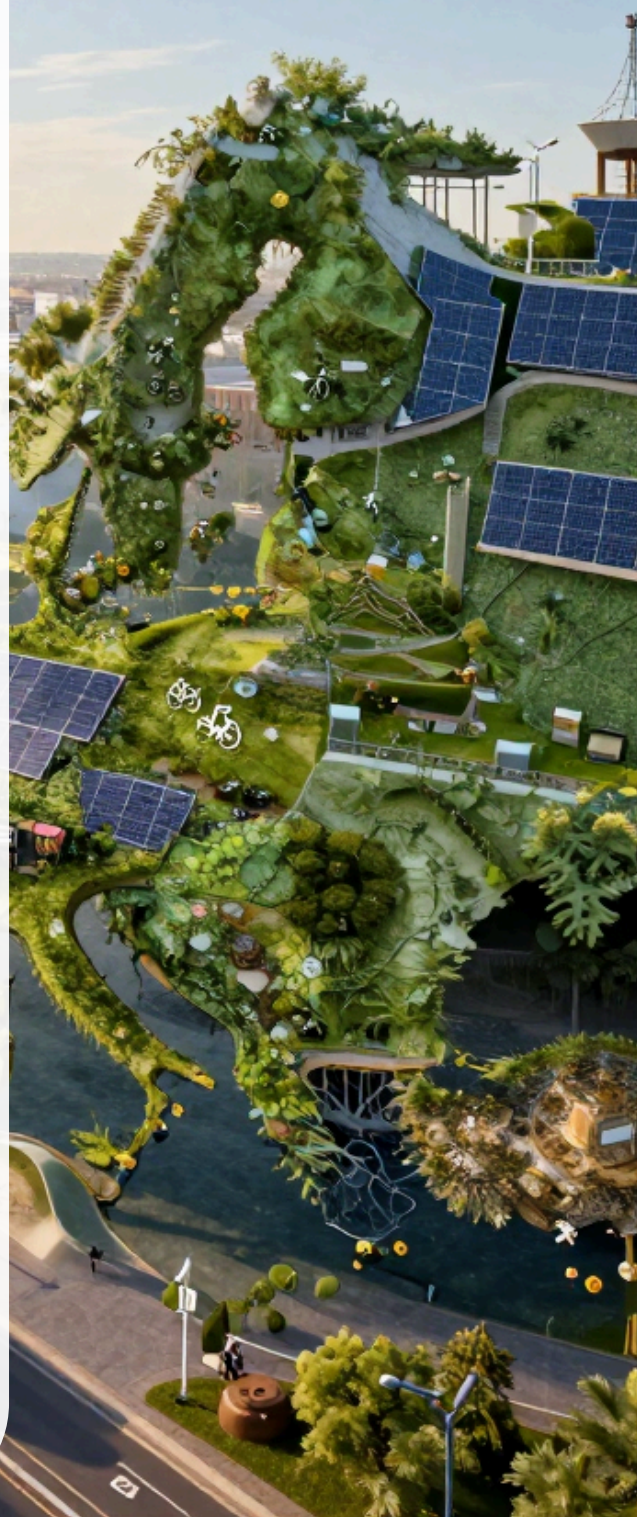
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KNOWLEDGE • PARTNERSHIP • CLIMATE ACTION

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"At MLGP4Climate, we believe that successful climate action begins with strong local partnerships and shared capacity."

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Daiva Matoniene
MLGP4Climate voluntary

Turning Climate Ambition into Local Action

Dear MLGP4Climate Community,

July has reminded us, once again, that climate change is no longer a distant challenge—it is shaping our daily lives. Across Europe and beyond, unprecedented heatwaves, water stress, and extreme weather events have highlighted the urgent need for resilient cities and stronger local climate action.

These challenges also reinforce an important truth: the transition to climate-neutral and climate-resilient communities can only succeed through collaboration. Local governments, national institutions, academia, civil society, and international partners all have a vital role to play in turning ambitious climate goals into tangible action.

Over the past month, MLGP4Climate has continued to strengthen this collaborative ecosystem by sharing funding opportunities, innovative practices, policy developments, and practical tools that support municipalities in their sustainability journey.

From climate adaptation and renewable energy to nature-based solutions and citizen engagement, our growing network demonstrates that knowledge sharing remains one of the most powerful drivers of change.

As preparations for COP31 continue, this is also a timely moment to transform experience into implementation. Every successful local initiative, every partnership established, and every lesson shared contributes to building stronger and more resilient communities across our region.

Thank you for being an active part of the MLGP4Climate community. Together, we are not only responding to today's climate challenges—we are helping shape a more sustainable future for generations to come.

Let us continue working together to turn climate ambition into local action.

Cooling Cities:

Building Urban Resilience in a Warming World



July 2026 served as another powerful reminder that climate change is no longer a future concern—it is an everyday urban reality. Across Europe and many other regions, prolonged heatwaves have placed unprecedented pressure on public health, energy systems, water resources and urban infrastructure.

Extreme heat is now recognised as one of the fastest-growing climate risks for cities. Yet, it is also one of the risks that local governments can actively address through better planning, smarter investments and nature-based solutions.

Throughout this month, MLGP4Climate highlighted inspiring examples from around the world—from cool roofs and reflective materials to urban forests, climate-responsive buildings and innovative public space design.

Adapting to rising temperatures is not simply about responding to emergencies; it is about redesigning cities to become healthier, safer and more resilient places to live, ensuring a higher quality of life for all citizens.

"Resilient cities are not built after crises—they are planned before them."

Be Kind to Nature, Because Nature Is Life.



Nature Is Our Greatest Climate Ally

The growing impacts of climate change—from extreme heat and prolonged droughts to floods and biodiversity loss—remind us that nature is far more than a resource. It is the foundation of resilient communities and sustainable development.

Healthy ecosystems provide clean air, safe water, fertile soils and natural protection against climate hazards. They also improve public health, support biodiversity and make our cities more liveable.

Building climate resilience is not only about reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It also requires restoring ecosystems, protecting biodiversity, managing water resources sustainably and embedding nature into urban planning.

Nature-based Solutions are increasingly recognised as one of the most effective and cost-efficient approaches to addressing climate challenges while delivering social, environmental and economic benefits.

"When we take care of nature, nature takes care of us."

The Cities of Tomorrow Are Being Built Today



Every Decision Shapes Tomorrow's City

The cities of the future are not created through one single flagship project. They are built through thousands of thoughtful decisions made every day.

Across the world, municipalities are accelerating the transition towards more sustainable, climate-resilient and people-centred communities. Together, they form the foundation of the next generation of cities, ensuring long-term prosperity.

Circular economy principles, renewable energy investments, climate-resilient infrastructure, Nature-based Solutions, sustainable mobility and digital innovation are no longer separate initiatives.

Through SECAPs, energy efficiency programmes, renewable energy projects and stronger citizen participation, municipalities are actively shaping healthier, smarter and more competitive communities today.

"The future is not waiting. It is being built today—one local decision at a time."

Building Homes Is Not Enough. We Must Build Liveable Neighbourhoods.



A Home Is More Than Four Walls

Housing is no longer simply about constructing buildings. Creating truly liveable communities means ensuring that homes are connected to essential services, quality public spaces and resilient infrastructure.

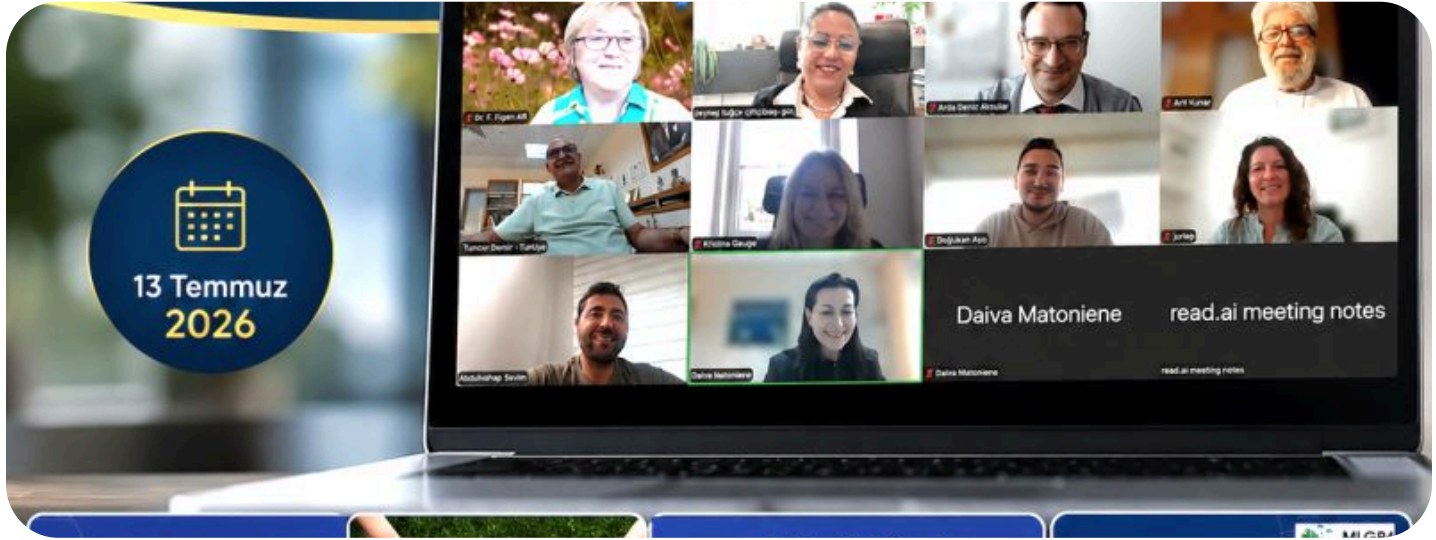
Access to clean water, reliable energy, public transport, healthcare, education, digital connectivity and green spaces all shape people's quality of life. Well-planned neighbourhoods prepare communities for climate challenges.

As highlighted by UN-Habitat, housing policies should be fully integrated into urban planning, social inclusion and climate resilience strategies.

Well-designed neighbourhoods create healthier communities, strengthen local economies and reduce inequalities. For local governments, housing is a long-term investment in resilient, inclusive and sustainable cities.

"Strong cities begin with strong neighbourhoods."

13th MLGP4Climate Monthly Experts Meeting



MLGP4Climate successfully convened its 13th Monthly Experts Meeting, bringing together international experts, municipalities, academia and partner organisations to review recent achievements and define priorities for the months ahead.

The meeting followed the publication of the June 2026 MLGP4Climate Newsletter and reflected on the outcomes of the Eskişehir International Climate Change and Environment Symposium, highlighting new opportunities for international cooperation and strategic partnerships, including with the University of Michigan.

Participants also discussed emerging EU funding opportunities, municipal project development, SECAP implementation, climate finance, energy poverty and the Social Climate Fund.

Today, MLGP4Climate connects nearly 200 municipalities alongside national and international experts, universities, civil society organisations and development partners. Through collaboration, knowledge exchange and joint project development, the platform continues to strengthen local climate action and sustainable urban development.

Together, we are building stronger partnerships for more resilient, climate-neutral and liveable communities.

"Strong cities are built through strong partnerships."

Strengthening Local Climate Action

MLGP4Climate Meets Osmangazi Municipality



Advancing Climate Action Through Local Partnerships

Collaboration between local governments and technical experts is essential for accelerating climate action and building more resilient communities.

MLGP4Climate recently held a productive working meeting with **Osmangazi Municipality (Bursa)** to discuss key priorities for sustainable urban development and climate governance. This partnership emphasizes local action.

Discussions focused on the preparation and implementation of SECAPs, the development of the Baseline Emission Inventory (BEI), Climate Risk Assessments, and capacity building through the Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM).

By combining technical expertise and strategic cooperation, municipalities can accelerate their transition towards low-carbon, climate-resilient and more liveable cities.

"Climate action grows stronger through local partnerships."



From Commitments to Action: Why Climate Delivery Must Become Our Global Priority

By Simon Stiell

Executive Secretary, UN Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Climate change is no longer a distant challenge. It is reshaping our economies, testing our institutions and affecting people's daily lives today, demanding urgent, coordinated action across all levels of governance.

Across the world, communities are experiencing more frequent heatwaves, floods, droughts and extreme weather events. Geopolitical tensions and volatile energy markets continue to expose the vulnerabilities of fossil-fuel dependence. This is why climate action is an economic necessity, a development priority and a cornerstone of global security.

The international community has established a common direction. Yet ambition alone is no longer enough; implementation is the defining challenge of this decade.

The science is clear and the economic case for climate action continues to strengthen. The question is whether we can deliver at the required pace and scale. This demands stronger institutions, more effective cooperation and greater investment.

Cities have become indispensable partners in this transition, transforming global commitments into tangible actions that improve people's daily lives on the ground.

"The defining challenge of this decade is no longer ambition—it is implementation."

Every Climate Action Is Also a Promise to Nature

"Protecting the climate means protecting every form of life."

Nature and Climate: One Shared Future

Climate change affects far more than rising temperatures. Every disappearing wetland, every degraded forest, and every lost habitat weakens the natural systems that sustain life.

Climate action is therefore much more than reducing emissions. It means restoring ecosystems, protecting biodiversity, securing water resources, and creating healthier, more resilient communities.

Nature-based Solutions demonstrate that when cities work with nature instead of against it, they become cooler, safer, and more liveable for everyone.

"When nature thrives, communities thrive."

The Climate Equation

Mitigation or Adaptation? | *Both pathways are critical for resilient local action.*

MITIGATION

Reducing future climate risks

- **Renewable Energy:** Solar & Wind Power
- **Clean Mobility:** Low-carbon transport
- **Efficiency:** Energy-smart buildings
- **Nature Carbon Sinks:** Forest conservation
- **Circular Systems:** Minimizing waste

**CITIES
NEED
BOTH**

ADAPTATION

Preparing for impacts already happening

- **Water Management:** Sustainable supply
- **Nature-Based Solutions:** Cooling bioswales
- **Flood Protection:** Climate-resilient storm infrastructure
- **Heat Resilience:** Green space networks

The Policy Horizon:

YESTERDAY
High emissions / low awareness



TODAY
Visible impacts & climate



TOMORROW
Resilient + Low-carbon

Why Both Matter: Driving the SECAP Framework

Climate mitigation reduces future greenhouse gas emissions and limits the severity of global climate change. Simultaneously, adaptation helps our local communities prepare for and withstand the physical impacts that are already locked in and can no longer be avoided.

Cities are on the front lines, experiencing more frequent extreme heatwaves, flash flooding, droughts, and severe water stress. Building true urban resilience requires integrating both mitigation pathways and adaptation measures directly into local master planning, municipal infrastructure budgets, and local climate governance frameworks.

Through Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs), municipalities can strategically map out emissions-reduction targets while laying down the physical, natural, and social infrastructure to protect citizens from future climate hazards. MLGP4Climate coordinates these twin pillars to ensure no city is left behind.

**"Mitigation protects our future. Adaptation protects our present.
Together, they protect our cities."**

ONE PLANET ONE SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

"The future of humanity depends on the choices we make today."

Our Future Starts Here

Every climate action matters.

Every restored ecosystem
strengthens resilience.

Every renewable energy project
reduces emissions.

Every sustainable neighbourhood
improves quality of life.

Every municipality that acts today
helps build a safer tomorrow.

"There is no Planet B."

The Problem Isn't the Rain.

It's How We Build Our Cities.



"Floods are not caused by rain alone. They are the result of how we choose to build our cities."

When Rain Becomes a Disaster

Extreme rainfall is intensified by climate change, but local flooding is largely driven by impermeable concrete surfaces and rapid urbanisation that strip cities of natural drainage systems.

Designing Cities for Water

Permeable pavements, rain gardens, and bioswales act as sponge mechanisms, safely storing and infiltrating runoff directly into the ground instead of flooding drains.

From Drainage to Resilience

Future cities must shift from merely draining rainwater as fast as possible to keeping and reusing it locally. Working with nature helps transform severe climate risks into vital urban assets.

Implementing Principles

Through SECAPs and local investments, MLGP4Climate helps municipalities integrate water resilience directly into urban planning, creating cooler, safer, and healthier communities.

Sponge

Investing in Nature. Investing in Resilience.

Nature is more than an environmental resource. It is one of the most valuable forms of infrastructure protecting our communities.



The Investment Gap

When discussing disaster resilience, attention often turns to engineered infrastructure—levees, drainage systems, and concrete flood barriers. Yet one of the most effective investments begins long before concrete is poured. It begins with nature.

In 2023, an estimated **US\$7.3 trillion** was directed toward activities that degrade ecosystems, while only **US\$220 billion** was invested in Nature-based Solutions. This severe imbalance weakens the forests, wetlands, and coastal systems that naturally protect our cities.

Nature as Critical Infrastructure

Healthy ecosystems absorb floodwaters, regulate rising temperatures, and protect biodiversity. They are critical natural infrastructure.

At **MLGP4Climate**, we believe resilient cities are built through sustainable finance. Redirecting capital flows from environmentally harmful activities to investments that restore natural systems is the defining challenge of our decade.

"The safest cities of tomorrow will be those that invest as much in ecosystems as they do in infrastructure."

THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FINANCE GAP (ANNUAL FLOWS)

US\$ 7.3 Trillion

Flows to Nature-Negative Activities
(Fossil fuels, harmful subsidies,
deforestation)

US\$ 220 Billion

Flows to Nature-Based Solutions
(Conservation, restoration, green
infrastructure)

Nature Doesn't Produce Waste.

It Creates Cycles. The circular economy is not a human invention—it is nature's oldest design.



Nature's Blueprint

Long before humanity coined the term circular economy, nature had already perfected its principles. Walk through a forest and observe a fallen tree: it is never wasted. Fungi break it down, insects transform it into habitats, and nutrients return to the soil, nourishing new plants and starting the cycle anew.

Learning from Living Systems

This is the true essence of circularity: designing human structures where the output of one process becomes the direct input for another, entirely eliminating the concept of waste.

Designing Futures

As our cities grow and resources become increasingly constrained, natural wisdom offers a powerful blueprint. By reducing waste, reusing materials, and actively regenerating natural capital, we build resilient economies.

Regenerative

The Ultimate Teacher

At MLGP4Climate, we believe sustainable cities should emulate biological networks. Perhaps sustainability's greatest teacher has never been modern technology—it has always been nature itself.

Climate Change Is Keeping Us Awake

When Hot Nights Become an Urban Challenge



"A resilient city is one where people can sleep well—even on the hottest nights."

The Hidden Cost of Urban Heat

The climate crisis no longer ends at sunset. Recent global data reveals that rising nighttime temperatures are becoming a critical public health challenge. When cities remain hot, human bodies struggle to regulate temperature, reducing sleep quality and increasing physiological stress.

An Unequal Burden

The impacts are not shared equally. Older adults, low-income households, and communities without access to active cooling face the highest risks of sleep loss, fatigue, and long-term health consequences.

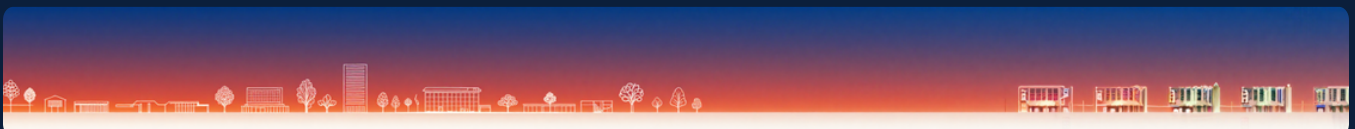
Designing Cooler Nights

Solving this challenge goes far beyond air conditioning. By expanding urban canopy cover, building green roofs, and designing ventilated residential courtyards, cities can passive-cool naturally.

Defining Resilience

True urban resilience must be measured by daily well-being. Ensuring that everyone can rest, recover, and live healthy lives under a warming climate is the ultimate objective of resilient urban planning.

NIGHT TEMPERATURE GRADIENT IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS



A 15-Minute City Is Measured by Opportunity

The question is not whether everything is fifteen minutes away. The question is whether everyone has the same opportunity to reach it.



Beyond Walkability

The concept of the 15-minute city is often associated with walkable streets, cycling networks and vibrant neighbourhoods. But the most important question is not how far people travel. It is what they can actually reach. Can they access quality schools, healthcare, and green spaces, or are these opportunities still socially or economically out of reach?

"A city becomes truly walkable only when opportunity is within everyone's reach."

Neighbourhoods That Leave No One Behind

A successful 15-minute city is measured by fairness. By ensuring equal distribution of public services, urban forests, and reliable public transport, municipalities can close the opportunity gap.

Access Creates Equality

According to UN-Habitat, proximity does not always translate to access. If rising housing costs force families to the fringes, the city becomes more unequal, not more liveable.

"The shortest distance between two people is equal opportunity."

THE OPPORTUNITY PATH: CONNECTING EVERYDAY LIFE



Today's Hottest Summer May Become Tomorrow's Coolest

Climate change is reshaping not only our future, but also the way future generations will remember the present.



Heat Is Becoming the New Normal

Many people have said the words: *"This is the hottest summer of my life."* For today's children, those words may already be true. Yet when they look back decades from now, the summer of 2026 could be remembered as one of the coolest they ever experienced.

This is the unsettling reality of climate change. Extreme heatwaves are becoming more frequent and lasting longer, placing immense pressure on public health, water resources, and urban infrastructure.

Designing Cooler Futures

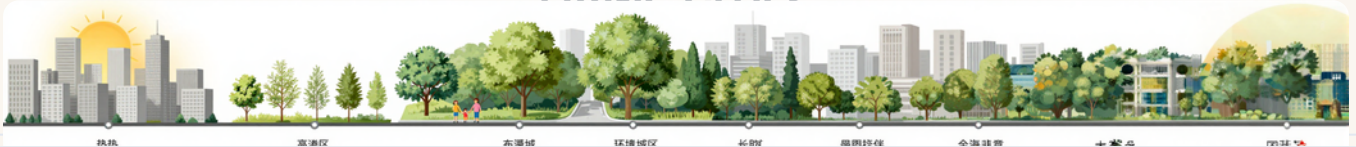
Preparing for this future means redesigning our cities to stay cooler. Expanding urban forests, investing in blue-green infrastructure, and developing shaded corridors are no longer optional.

Decisions That Outlive Us

At **MLGP4Climate**, we believe that the decisions we make today will shape the climate future our children inherit. We must choose to invest in resilient, living spaces while we still have the time.

"The climate future our children inherit is being designed by the decisions we make today."

URBAN RESILIENCE PATHWAYS: FROM HEATWAVES TO RESILIENT LIVING CITIES



Renewable Energy: Powering Economic Resilience

The energy transition is no longer defined only by emissions. It is shaping competitiveness, energy security and economic prosperity.



Beyond Decarbonisation

The global energy transition is no longer driven solely by environmental ambition. It is increasingly shaping economic resilience, industrial competitiveness and long-term energy security.

Investments in solar power, wind energy and battery storage do far more than reduce emissions—they lower dependence on imported fossil fuels, strengthen domestic energy supply, and stimulate skilled manufacturing employment and industrial innovation.

A Smarter Energy System

Battery storage technologies and smart grids are the nervous system of this transition, balancing demand and maintaining grid stability during peak consumption.

At **MLGP4Climate**, we believe the energy transition is an investment in the long-term competitiveness of our cities. The strongest economies of tomorrow will be powered by the cleanest and most intelligent systems.

"The future belongs not to the countries that consume the most energy, but to those that manage it most intelligently."

INTEGRATED CITY ENERGY FLOW NETWORK



Climate-Resilient Cities Begin with Better Design

The resilience of tomorrow's cities is determined long before the first building rises. It begins with every planning decision made today.



Heat Is Designed Into Cities

Cities are becoming hotter every year. Climate change is a major driver—but it is only part of the story. The way we design our neighbourhoods also determines how heat is absorbed, stored and released across the urban landscape.

Dense concrete development, dark asphalt surfaces, limited vegetation, and structures that block natural ventilation create Urban Heat Islands, putting vulnerable populations at severe risk.

Designing Cooler Neighbourhoods

Many of these risks can be passive-cooled through better urban design. Integrating urban forests, bioswales, reflective materials, and prioritizing pedestrians over vehicles creates naturally resilient microclimates.

At **MLGP4Climate**, resilience is not a later addition. It is a fundamental principle that must shape the very first lines drawn on a planner's drafting table.

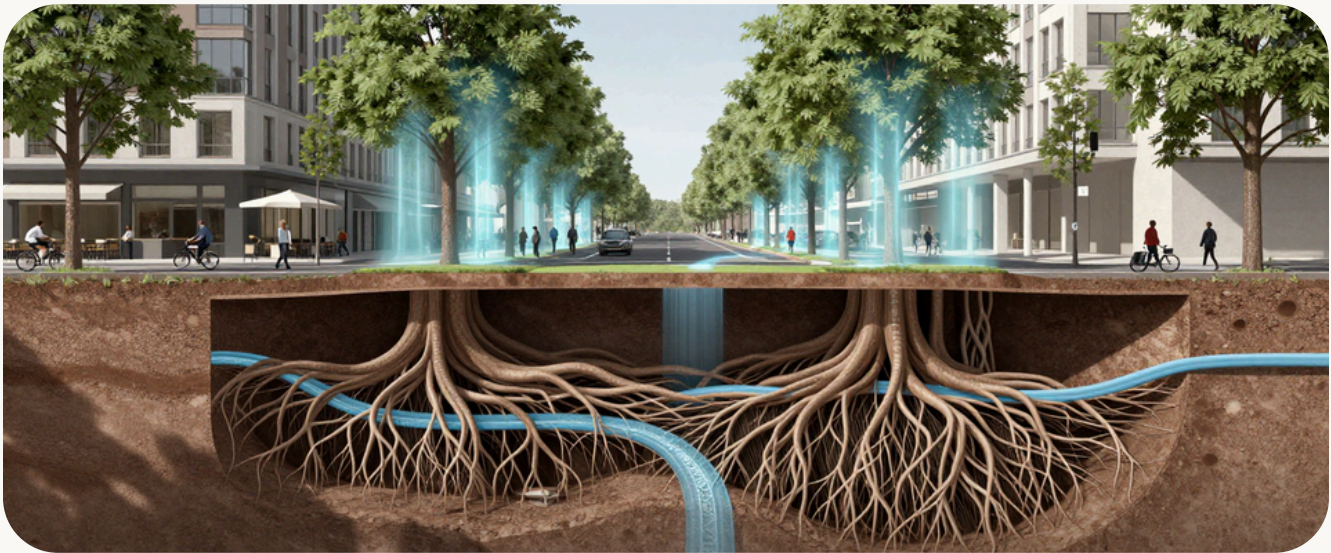
"Every resilient city begins as a line on an architect's drawing board."

INTEGRATED RESILIENT URBAN DESIGN LAYERS



The Invisible Infrastructure: Cooling Cities from the Ground Up

The most effective cooling system in a city is often the one hidden beneath our feet.



Beneath Every Healthy Tree

Cities do not all experience heat in the same way. Two streets in the same city on the same summer afternoon can differ in surface temperatures by as much as 9°C. This difference is designed.

Trees intercept solar radiation before it reaches asphalt. Through evapotranspiration, they release moisture, naturally cooling surrounding neighborhoods like a living climate control system.

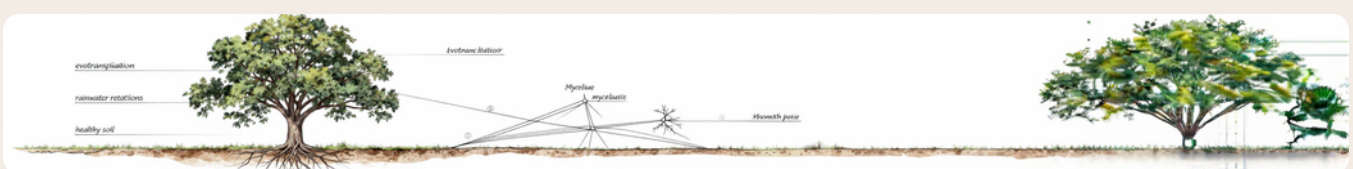
Cooling Begins Underground

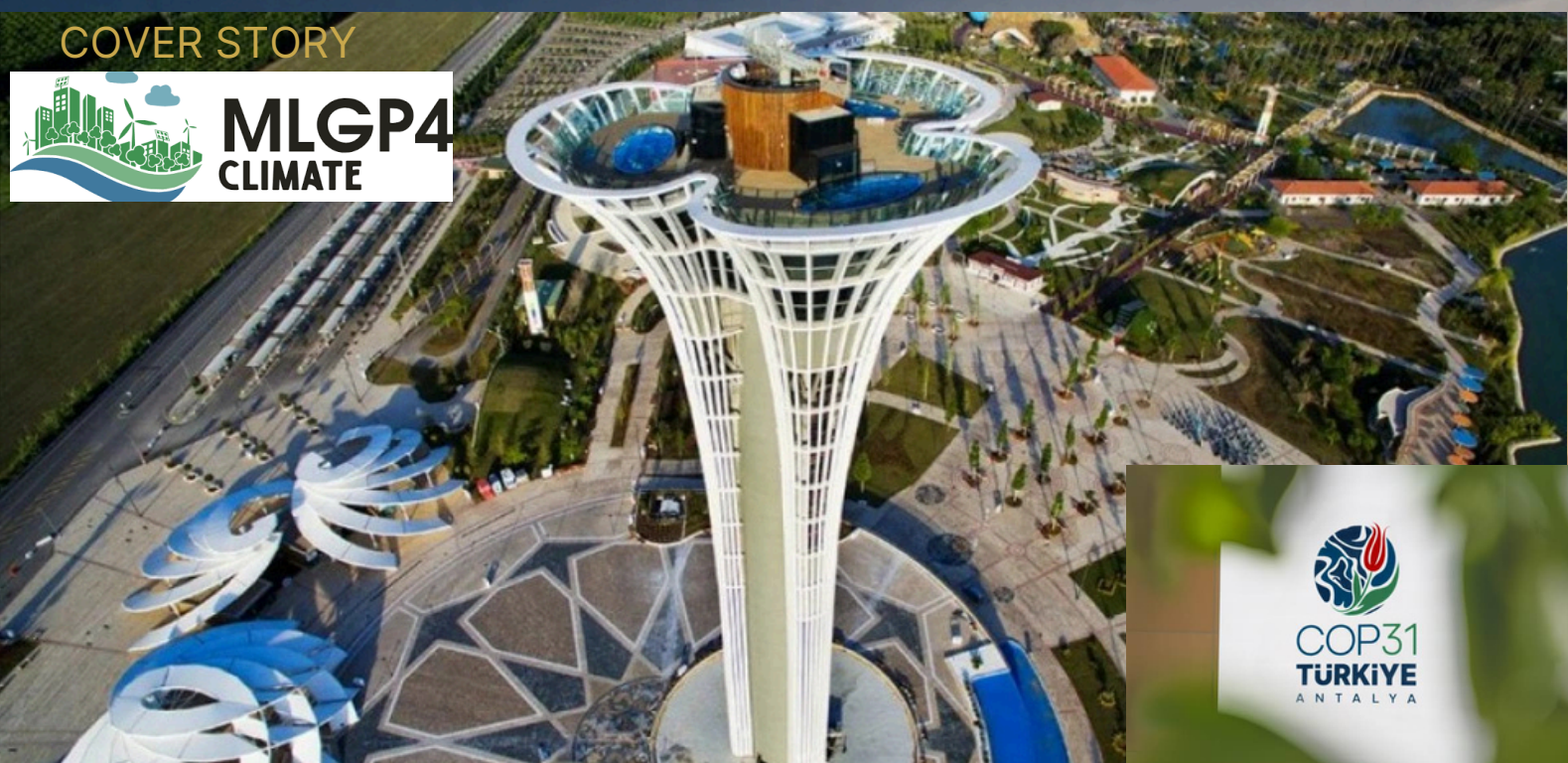
This invisible process requires underground networks. Healthy root systems, rich soil, and underground water absorption are the foundation.

At **MLGP4Climate**, we believe green infrastructure is essential urban engineering. The coolest cities are often those whose most important systems cannot be seen at first glance.

"The most valuable urban infrastructure is often the part of the city we never see."

BIOPHILIC URBAN X-RAY: ANATOMY OF A COOLING SYSTEM





Beyond Commitments

Turning SECAPs into Investment Pipelines on the Road to COP31

Daiva Matoniene & Abdulvahap Sevim

"The next generation of climate leadership will not be measured by commitments alone—but by the investments cities are able to mobilise."

●
SECAP

●
Urban Climate
Strategy

●
Project Pipeline

●
Climate Finance

From Planning to Investment

Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans were designed as roadmaps. But roadmaps without financing remain aspirations. Across Europe, municipalities are learning that the gap between a signed SECAP and a funded project is not technical—it is institutional. COP31 demands that cities close this gap.



Investment

Implementation

Climate Neutral
City

COP31 Legacy

Why COP31 Matters

COP31 represents a decisive shift from ambition toward implementation and climate finance. For the first time, cities will be evaluated not by the plans they have signed but by the projects they have financed and delivered. This is the moment when municipal climate governance must prove it can mobilise capital at scale.

The Evolving Role of GCoM

The Global Covenant of Mayors is evolving from a reporting framework into a Climate Investment Accelerator. By connecting cities directly with international financial institutions, development banks, and private capital, GCoM is building the institutional architecture that transforms local plans into bankable projects.

MLGP4Climate: The Bridge

MLGP4Climate operates as the bridge between municipalities, investors, financial institutions, and European cooperation frameworks. By translating SECAPs into investment logic and structured engagement with IFIs, the platform coordinates across Türkiye, the Western Balkans, the Baltic countries, Ukraine, and EU cities—turning cooperation into practical, shared capacity.

"Climate plans create ambition. Climate finance creates transformation."

The Great Energy Shift

Renewables Take the Lead

For the first time in modern history, renewable energy has become the world's largest source of electricity. The balance of energy is entering a new era.

A Historic Turning Point

The global energy landscape has reached a historic turning point. In 2025, renewable energy became the world's largest source of electricity generation, overtaking coal for the first time.

This milestone represents far more than a shift in the power sector. It signals a broader transformation towards cleaner air, lower carbon emissions, stronger energy security and more resilient economies. Three forces have accelerated this: rapid advances in solar/wind, falling technology costs, and reducing dependence on fossil fuels.

Cities Power the Transition

For governments and businesses alike, energy is a strategic driver of long-term economic stability. Cities are playing an increasingly critical role. Energy-efficient buildings, local renewable energy projects, and sustainable mobility systems are helping municipalities reduce emissions while strengthening local capacity.

At **MLGP4Climate**, we believe that the future energy system will not simply be cleaner—it will be decentralised, secure and accessible for everyone.

"The energy transition is not simply replacing one fuel with another. It is reshaping the foundations of modern society."

THE GEOLOGICAL ENERGY STRATA: THE TRANSITION OF ERAS



A Green Building Is Designed, Not Added Later

The most sustainable buildings do not rely on a single innovation. They succeed because every component works together as part of one intelligent system.



Design Before Technology

A truly sustainable building is not defined by a single technology. Solar panels alone do not make a building green. Sustainability begins much earlier—at the very first sketch, where every design decision shapes how a building will consume energy, manage water, and support occupants.

The most successful buildings work as integrated systems where natural daylight, shading, passive airflow, and circular materials are designed in harmony.

Every System Matters

From rainwater harvesting and vertical gardens to high-performance insulation and integrated smart energy storage, every element serves as a vital organ in a unified living body.

At **MLGP4Climate**, we believe sustainable cities emerge from these intelligent, foundational design decisions made from day one. Smart design always outlives simple technology.

"Sustainability is not a feature added to a building. It is a principle embedded in every design decision."

BUILDING ANATOMY PATHWAY: INTERCONNECTED ECOSYSTEMS



Environmental Leadership Is Built, Not Awarded

The world's highest-performing environmental policies are not built overnight. They are the product of decades of consistent choices.



Long-Term Commitment

Outstanding environmental performance is never the result of a single policy or a short-term initiative. It is the outcome of decades of consistent decisions.

This year's Environmental Performance Index (EPI), developed by researchers at Yale and Columbia University, ranks Estonia as the world's leading environmental performer—a recognition shaped by long-term commitment rather than isolated achievements.

The Ingredients of Success

Estonia's recipe combines accelerating renewables, reducing fossil oil shale reliance, and protecting more than half its territory through forests and wetlands.

At **MLGP4Climate**, we believe every city and country can strengthen its environmental performance by turning ambition into consistent, science-based actions. The most successful policies outlive the cycles that announced them.

"Environmental leadership is not measured by a single achievement, but by decades of consistent decisions."

THE FORMULA FOR LONG-TERM ENVIRONMENTAL SUCCESS

Understanding the Colours of Energy

Clean, Renewable, and Green

Not every clean energy source is renewable. Not every renewable source is equally green. Understanding these distinctions helps build smarter energy systems.

The global energy transition is often described using three familiar terms: **Clean Energy**, **Renewable Energy**, and **Green Energy**. Although frequently used interchangeably, they do not mean exactly the same thing.

Clean energy is the broadest concept. It refers to energy sources that produce little or no greenhouse gas emissions during operation.

Renewable energy comes from naturally replenishing resources such as solar, wind, hydropower, and geothermal. However, being renewable does not automatically mean that every environmental impact throughout its lifecycle is minimal.

Green energy represents the renewable energy sources with the lowest overall environmental footprint, considering ecosystem impacts alongside carbon emissions.

"The energy transition is not about choosing one colour. It is about understanding the full spectrum."

THE CONTINUOUS ENERGY SPECTRUM METAPHOR



Funding Opportunity: Energy and Carbon Reduction Support

Transforming climate ambitions into measurable results requires not only vision, but also access to the right financial instruments.

The EKA Support Programme

The transition to a low-carbon economy requires more than ambition—it requires investment. To accelerate energy efficiency and carbon reduction, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Türkiye has launched the **Energy and Carbon Reduction (EKA) Support Programme**.

Applications will be accepted through the EVDES platform between **1 July and 30 September 2026**. The programme is open to manufacturing facilities, hotels, shopping centres, hospitals, and office buildings.

A Key Strategic Opportunity

Eligible applicants may receive grants covering **up to 30% of their 2026 energy expenditures**, with a maximum support of **TRY 18,061,775**.

Municipalities can play a key enabling role by informing local stakeholders, promoting participation, and integrating such opportunities into broader local climate and energy strategies. At **MLGP4Climate**, we encourage cities to actively guide local businesses to transform opportunities into direct action.

"Climate funding delivers its greatest impact when local institutions help transform opportunities into action."



EKA PROGRAMME: STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY TIMELINE PATHWAY

From Local Ideas to European Impact

Every transformative climate initiative begins in one place. The greatest impact comes when knowledge is shared beyond its community.



Inspiring Climate Education

Innovative climate education does not have to begin on a global stage. It often starts in a classroom, a municipality, a university, or a community workshop that inspires people to think differently about climate action.

The **Education for Climate Coalition's Inspiring Projects Call 2026**, launched by the European Commission, offers organisations across Europe—including Türkiye—the opportunity to showcase successful climate education on an international platform.

From Community to Europe

Selected initiatives will be invited to present their work at **Education for Climate Day 2026** in Brussels. Beyond recognition, participants will gain valuable visibility and strengthen international partnerships.

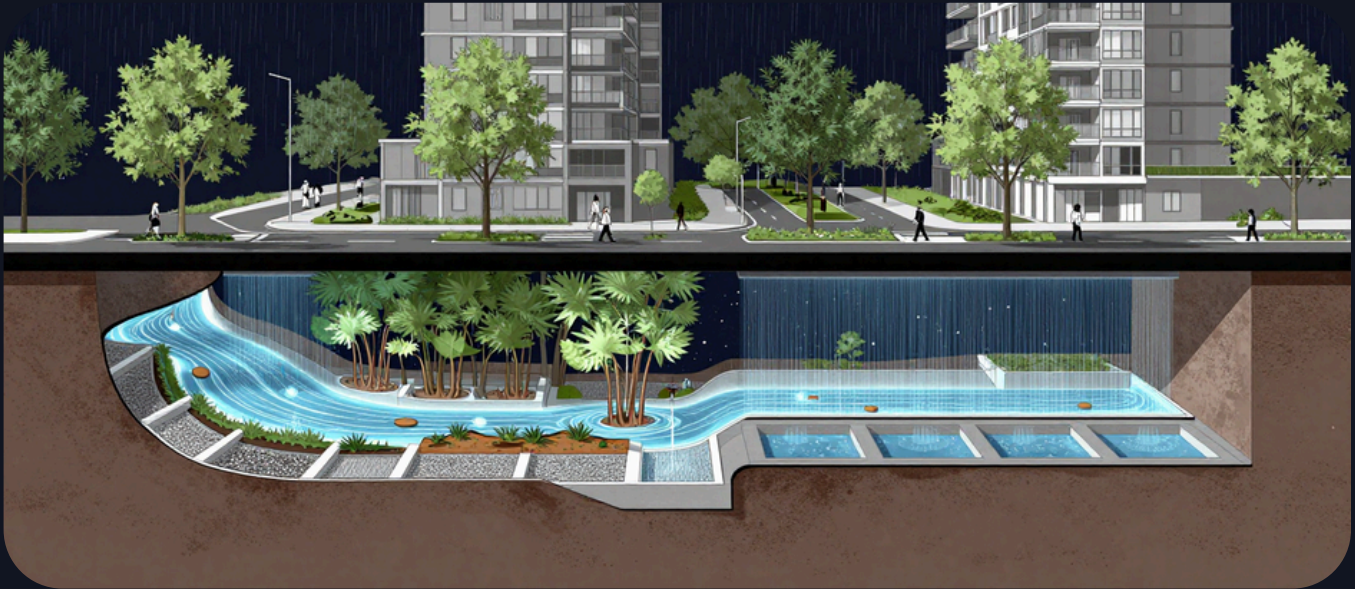
At **MLGP4Climate**, we encourage municipalities, schools, and local organisations to demonstrate how local innovation can inspire climate action across Europe. Knowledge expands through shared learning.

"The most powerful climate solutions often begin as local ideas—and grow through shared learning."

THE PATHWAY OF INFLUENCE: FROM CLASSROOM TO EUROPEAN IMPACT

The Problem Isn't the Rain

It's How We Design Our Cities



Beyond the Storm

Rain has always been part of nature. Urban flooding is not. When streets become rivers after only a few hours of rainfall, the real issue often lies beneath the surface—not in the clouds.

Climate change is increasing the intensity of extreme rainfall events, but the severity of urban flooding depends largely on how our cities are designed. Impermeable surfaces, disappearing green spaces, and inadequate stormwater networks prevent water from following its natural path. Instead of replenishing ecosystems, rain becomes destructive runoff.

Designing with Water

Building resilient cities requires more than expanding drainage networks. It means redesigning urban environments to work with water rather than against it.

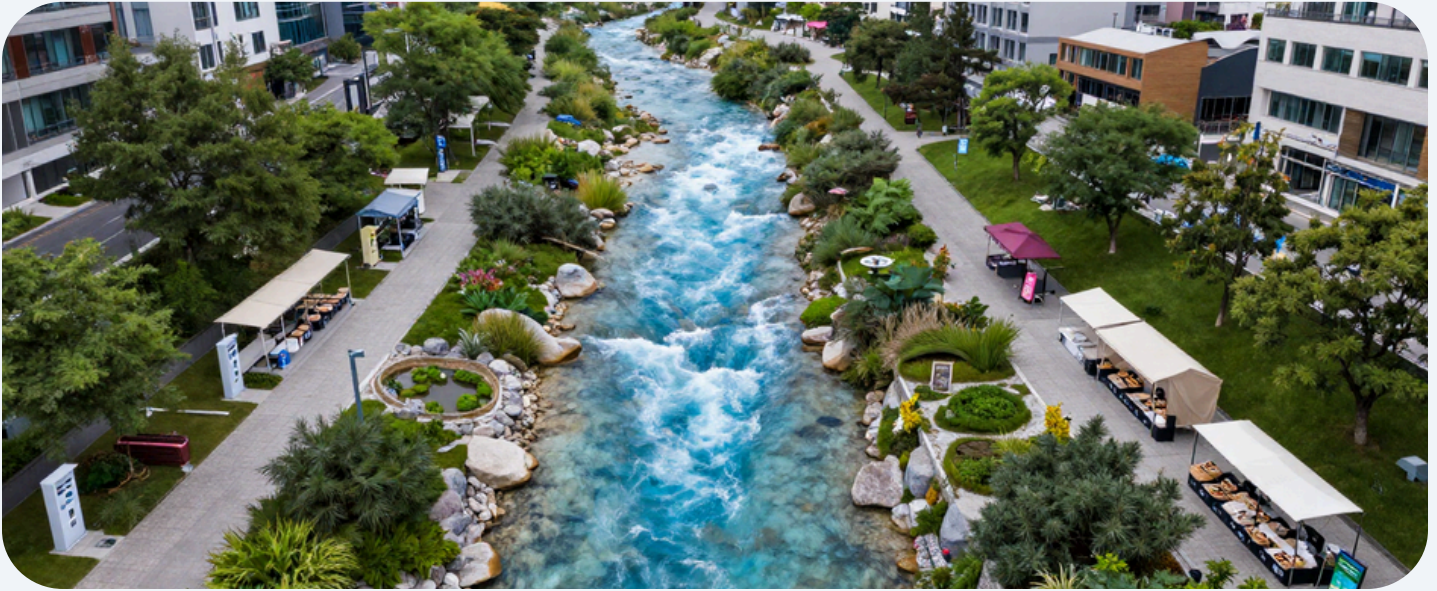
Permeable pavements, rain gardens, urban forests, and sponge city strategies allow cities to absorb, store, and gradually release rainwater while strengthening local biodiversity.

"The future of urban resilience depends not on moving water away faster, but on giving it a place to belong."

THE PATHWAY OF RESILIENCE: JOURNEY OF A RAINDROP

Stopping Plastic Before It Reaches Our Rivers

The most successful plastic pollution strategy is not collecting more waste—it is preventing it from entering the environment in the first place.



The UPSTREAM Opportunity

The fight against plastic pollution does not begin in the ocean—it begins upstream. Recognising that prevention is more effective than clean-up, the EU-funded **UPSTREAM Project** has launched a new call to support municipalities in developing innovative local solutions to reduce plastic.

The **"Prevention & Zero-Waste"** call focuses on pilot actions that stop plastic waste at its source. Selected projects may receive grants of up to **€70,000** for an eight-month implementation period, with Türkiye fully eligible to participate.

Prevention Over Cleanup

Priority areas include plastic reduction initiatives, bio-based alternatives, microplastic digital monitoring, and nature-based community engagement.



"The cleanest river is not the one that is cleaned most often, but the one that is protected before pollution begins."

THE PATHWAY OF SOURCE PREVENTION: UPSTREAM FLOW

Connecting Europe to Restore Our Oceans

Healthy oceans and rivers are not restored by isolated projects. They are restored through connected knowledge and coordinated action.



A European Mission

Healthy oceans and freshwater ecosystems depend on more than scientific knowledge alone. They require active, coordinated collaboration across institutions, disciplines, and borders.

To strengthen this collective effort, the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) has launched a new **€1.7 million call for tenders** under the EU Mission "**Restore our Ocean and Waters.**" The selected platform will help coordinate the mission over the next 36 months.

Connecting Science and Action

The platform will bridge research, public policy, technical support, and citizen engagement. This opportunity is open to universities, public authorities, consultancies, and NGOs working across the blue economy.

"Restoring our waters begins by connecting the people, knowledge and institutions that protect them."

THE BLUE PLATFORM: INTEGRATED COOPERATION STRATEGY

IF FACTORIES COULD SPEAK...



Listening to the Signals of Green Transformation | **By Dr. F. Figen AR**

"What if factories could speak?"

They would ask us to save energy, measure data, prevent waste, and value our people.

During a recent green economy training in Gaziantep, one critical question united businesses across different sectors: **"How can we remain competitive in the future?"**

The answer pointed in a single direction: green transformation is no longer optional—it is becoming a prerequisite for global competitiveness.

Discussions extended well beyond basic carbon footprints. True sustainability is defined not just by raw environmental performance, but by how we manage precious resources, treat people, and build robust structures of transparency and trust.

- *"Don't waste my energy."*
- *"Every drop of water matters."*
- *"Waste is a resource waiting for a purpose."*
- *"Listen to my data—it shows where efficiency is lost."*

"Green transformation does not begin with building new factories. It begins by learning to listen—to data, to people and to nature."

From Waste Collection to System Transformation

How Antalya Is Redefining Circular Economy Through Behavioural Public Policy



Dr. Z. T. Çiftçiabaşı Güç

*Head of Foreign Relations Department, Antalya
Metropolitan Municipality
MLGP4Climate Expert*

Waste Is a System Issue

For decades, waste management was viewed merely as a technical municipal service. Today's challenges reveal a deeper truth: waste is a design flaw. True circular economy begins by redesigning consumption and governance.

Designing Behaviour

Antalya's Farmer Card initiative uses behavioural public policy. Rather than relying on regulations, it voluntarily incentivizes farmers to return pesticide packaging, using positive reinforcement.

From Data to Better Governance

Through digital tracking, Antalya generates reliable data that supports evidence-based municipal decisions. Citizens transition from passive service users to active, empowered sustainability partners.

A Model with Global Recognition

Antalya's innovative model won the prestigious *Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation (Honour Award)*, celebrating pioneering local solutions.



"The smartest cities are not those that collect more waste—they are those that design systems that produce less of it."

From Blueprint to Breakthrough

Innovation reaches its full value when promising ideas become practical solutions for society.



Accelerating Renewable Innovation

Groundbreaking renewable energy technologies create real value only when they move beyond research and into practical application. To accelerate this journey, the **European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)** has launched a €2.5 million call supporting the commercialisation of promising solutions.

"The most valuable renewable energy innovation is the one that moves beyond the laboratory and transforms everyday life."

The initiative aims to strengthen the pathway from innovation to market by helping technologies achieve greater technical maturity, attract investment, and build strategic partnerships across Europe.

Bridging Research and Industry

The programme is open to SMEs, start-ups, universities, and research organisations. It focuses on increasing technical and commercial readiness, improving access to private finance, and fostering collaboration.

THE PATHWAY OF MATURITY: FROM LAB TO MARKET IMPACT



Project Municipalities and Access to International Financing

Dr. Arda Deniz Aksular,
PMP



Until the mid-1990s, municipal administration in Türkiye was seen as a classic public service. That is; basically "infrastructure" work such as providing electricity, water, gas distribution, laying sewage, building sidewalks and providing transportation. In the last 30 years, we see that this approach has transformed significantly. Municipalities no longer distribute gas and electricity. Although the letters "G" and "E" still exist in the logos of municipal companies, they are actually just a matter of nostalgia now.

Similar trends have been seen in Europe as well. Most municipalities no longer even handle garbage collection themselves. Who knows; perhaps they don't even want to be associated with a concept like "garbage". Because, managing a municipality is now a matter of "prestige." Anne Hidalgo's bicycle paths, policies to reduce vehicle traffic in the city center, and green transformation projects in Paris are cited as examples all over the world. Many decisions in Paris now affect not only Paris but also European urbanism. Bologna Mayor Matteo Lepore frequently participates as a speaker at European Commission events. Today; When climate change, transportation, and urban planning are discussed, the world media frequently features the views of London Mayor Sadiq Khan. He is invited to many international summits alongside heads of state. The Amsterdam City Hall logo, with its medieval origins, has already become a popular culture item.



In short, municipal governance has become less about "building cities" and more about "managing them," and even "prestigious management" like a sports club: a management, even participatory "governance" business. It's possible to say that this transformation started relatively earlier in Europe than in Türkiye. Of course, there are also some administrative differences within Europe. For example, in countries with a unitary and strong governorship system like Türkiye (like France, Portugal, and Greece), municipalities remain more focused on infrastructure, while in more decentralized, federative countries, municipalities can collect taxes strongly and even manage tasks jointly with the police (like Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands). In some countries like Austria and Finland, however... The municipality is so powerful that, be careful, when you mention the governor, people might ask, "Are you referring to the mayor?"

From Infrastructure to Social Areas

In project trainings, when people are told to "design a project," their minds still initially go to constructional works such as bridge and buildings. However, for example, the most inefficient way to use an EU fund is to invest in infrastructure. Because you can actually do this with national funds. Initially, building roads with EU funding may sound appealing. Indeed, many EU countries have made this mistake for a long time. The result is the very disadvantageous situation of becoming dependent on EU funds for projects that should be developed under the purview of the ministries. More importantly, the opportunity to allocate EU funds to a truly marginally valuable area has been missed: for example, the transfer of R&D from abroad that is not available in the country, or the creation of a partnership structure that would be difficult to find.

When it comes to grants alone, the problems that stand out are: insufficient project preparation capacity, lack of foreign language skills, difficulty in finding international partners, lack of project management experience, need for co-financing, lack of political and institutional continuity, lack of coordination between units, and late follow-up of calls for proposals. As can be seen, there are points of intersection between these two categories. In recent years, in addition to these, needs such as digital municipal capacity, data management issues (compliance with GDPR), disaster resilience, climate adaptation plans, ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) criteria, and the lack of a performance-based monitoring and evaluation structure have also come into play.

In any case, it is not entirely accurate to separate these problems from each other. Because municipalities no longer have the luxury of simply seeking grants, and even within an institution like the EU, which has a budget of 2 trillion Euros in the new era, meaning extensive financing opportunities, blending mechanisms that combine loans and grants are coming to the forefront.

Regardless of the outcome, in both Europe and Türkiye, municipal governance has become much more than just infrastructure work; it's now more community-oriented, communication-based, service-focused, and essentially a "brand building" business. In other words, municipal governance is now about "creating and implementing projects," and municipalities are only as strong as they are "project municipalities." As mayors say, "I'm coming with my projects!" However, a project no longer means sewage systems, sidewalks, or bridges; new project areas are emerging every day. Everyone is trying to stand out with their projects, and they are using their visibility to the fullest extent, appearing on television, billboards, social media, and adding their signatures to their municipal names. Municipalities are increasingly focusing on citizen services such as culture, art, social assistance, childcare, and even local participation. Climate policies are one of these areas. In fact, this area is much newer and broader than others. As with everything, the early bird gets the worm.

Today – and in the near future – considering that roughly one-third of EU funds are directed towards green deal-related areas, municipalities' increased involvement in this field presents enormous opportunities. Every step taken in this area can yield returns in terms of more funding, visibility, and services for citizens. However, there are challenges as well as opportunities in this area.

Challenges

The challenges municipalities face in accessing international financing for projects can be addressed in two main categories. The first is access to loans, and the second is access to grants. The main problems in accessing loans can be summarized as: dependence on the central government – which is actually the biggest problem – and related borrowing limits, lack of project preparation capacity, exchange rate risks, weak revenue structure, related credit rating, political uncertainties, differences in tender regulations, co-financing problems, shortage of technical personnel, English language and international communication, climate and sustainability criteria.

Focusing

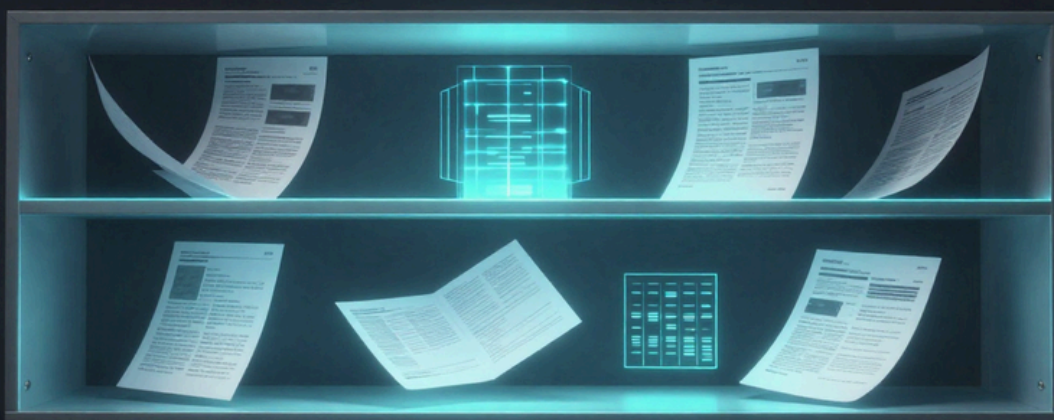
Accordingly, a project that will support municipalities' access to international financing needs to take a holistic approach to the problems and focus at least on the "manageable" part of the problem. Because one of the worst project designs is the one that "tries to achieve everything," and this mistake is quite common in projects where the strategy analysis has not been done well. Under these conditions, what can a realistic project achieve? For example; dependence on the central government, exchange rate risks, political uncertainties... these problems can be accepted as given. Because a project doesn't have much chance of changing these things. However, it can certainly focus on problems such as insufficient project preparation capacity, lack of foreign language skills, difficulty in finding international partners, lack of project management experience, and delayed response to calls for proposals. When support such as disaster resilience, climate adaptation plans, ESG criteria, and performance-based monitoring and evaluation are added to these, good projects can emerge.

In conclusion, it should also be said that the approach to project management, as well as the approach to municipal administration, has transformed considerably since the 2000s. While classical project management defined the project with a certain time, place, and budget constraint and the tangible "products" that emerge, modern project management frames the project more in terms of services, "temporary" efforts, processes, and most importantly, "value produced." In this sense, what matters is not "how many buses you buy," but how much you touch the lives of the people who use those buses.

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Latest updates, funding opportunities, and resources from our European cooperation network.

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