

Cooler, healthier cities: blueprint for a Dream

An ambitious
Climate-KIC programme
that transforms the
quality of urban life is
gathering momentum
rapidly. Project leader
Čedo Maksimović
isn't so much surprised
as delighted

Climate-KIC's €3m Blue Green Dream initiative has generated widespread interest so emphatically that its legacy looks increasingly enduring.

'For years you push for progress,' says Čedo Maksimović, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Climate-KIC partner Imperial College London, 'but the breakthroughs can happen in just a few decisive meetings or moments.'

Blue Green Dream helps urban planners, landscape architects, water managers and others work together towards more sustainable cities in a way that improves urban liveability, lowers the impact of heatwaves, fights drought, protects against flooding and increases biodiversity while also saving money.

At established test sites across Europe – the Tempelhof redevelopment site in Berlin, Germany (below), the new Blue Green Wave building at the École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées in Paris, France (right), and sites being developed in the UK and the Netherlands – the

programme demonstrates the benefits of improving urban ecosystem services in areas like air quality, noise pollution, aesthetics and human health when integrating the functions of water (blue) and vegetation (green) infrastructures.

Massive opportunity

With strong interest from Scandinavia and a new regional focus on southern Europe, the project is already pushing its own boundaries. 'The plan,' says Čedo, 'was to concentrate on Europe until 2014, going global after that. But things are happening much sooner than in our most optimistic forecasts.'

In Singapore, a key regional hub, Blue Green Dream has three projects in hand with government, civic and academic partners, including use of the Garden by the Bay resource as an open space lab. With partner Bonn University, the programme is in talks about sustainable water management in sub-Saharan Africa.

In London, Blue Green Dream has had positive contact with major





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developers about various London sites. Says Čedo: ‘When our philosophy is embedded in their corporate strategy we can save developers money on construction while residents save on energy bills.’

Blue Green Dream isn’t about the complex or new. ‘This isn’t rocket science,’ says Čedo. ‘All we’re doing is bringing together things that used to be done piecemeal and demonstrating the benefits of integration.’

As the EU announces a major initiative on green infrastructure that will attract significant new funding in the period to 2020, Čedo sees a massive opportunity to shape the agenda using blue-green solutions. ‘We have the knowledge, conviction and courage,’ he says, ‘to take our pitch to the highest level!’

