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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For immediate release**



## **Hamburg, London and Milan launch major new project to regenerate deprived city districts with nature-based solutions**

8 June, Hamburg, Germany – The city of Hamburg and a team of 33 other cities and organizations in Europe, South America and China this week launched the international European-funded CLEVER Cities project. Cities coordinate and lead the project and will use natural interventions, such as building new green spaces, to address social, economic and environmental problems. The cities will bring in local residents and businesses to collaboratively decide, design and build so-called ‘nature-based solutions’ in key districts affected by issues like high crime rates, social inequality, unemployment and child poverty.

Holger Robrecht, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability said, “Smart cities respond to the challenge of interoperability between technological systems. We believe that in CLEVER Cities we should go beyond that: it also responds to the challenge of interoperability of environmental, economic and societal systems.”

The green interventions will include a green corridor along a railway line in Milan, redevelopment of part of the Thamesmead area of London and nature-based solutions in a district of Hamburg, where half of the inhabitants have an immigrant background and where major new housing developments are planned including refugee accommodation.

Thomas Jacob, Senate Chancellery Hamburg and project coordinator, said “The buildings in Neugraben-Fischbek are from the 1960s and ‘70s and the unemployment rate in Neugraben-Fischbek is remarkably higher than that of the rest of Hamburg. It is one of the fastest growing areas in Hamburg and the community there is diverse and multicultural with huge potential. I am sure we can find some nature-based solutions, with which we can solve problems together.”

In addition to Hamburg, London and Milan, six other cities in Europe and South America will work as part of the project on stimulating nature-based solutions locally: Sfântu Gheorghe, Quito, Madrid, Belgrade, Larissa and Malmö, as well as the involvement of Chinese research organizations and cities.

Ariana Nastaseanu, EU Executive Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises (EASME) said, “The EU grant money is in practice seed funding for further mobilizing other financial instruments. CLEVER Cities is very keen on improving the health and wellbeing of citizens, and to empower them. We want vulnerable citizens to become more entrepreneurial.”

Marie Yeroyanni, Senior Expert in Innovating Cities at the European Commission’s Directorate General for Research and Innovation said, “This is a very timely moment, because it’s the moment the European Commission is launching its strategic agenda for cities and citizens. The nature-based solutions are not isolated, but they are the glue in the intersection of a wider approach. CLEVER Cities commits to developing the European research and innovation agenda for innovating cities.”

More information is available at <https://sc5.easme-web.eu/?p=776604>. News on the project is available from the project’s Twitter account at [https://twitter.com/CLEVER\\_Cities](https://twitter.com/CLEVER_Cities).

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**Images:**

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**Notes to the editor:**

CLEVER Cities

Co-designing Locally tailored Ecological solutions for Value added, socially inclusive Regeneration in Cities

Hamburg (DE), London (UK) and Milan (IT) have decided to create CLEVER Cities. Led by Hamburg, a well-balanced, competent partnership will position the EU as global leader in nature-based solution (NBS) innovation. CLEVER Cities applies a city centric approach, starting by key urban regeneration challenges and employing strong local partner clusters, to foster sustainable and socially inclusive urban regeneration locally, in Europe and globally. We will co-create, - implement, and -manage locally tailored NBS to deliver tangible social, environmental and economic improvements for urban regeneration. We are committed to make the interventions in front-runner cities (FR) cases for successful NBS and prepare robust replication roadmaps in fellow cities (FE), that also have NBS experience and expertise to offer. We will ensure long-term sustainability of actions in FR and FE by initiating urban innovation partnerships that will use SMART city principles to engage residents, establish new governance procedures, generate innovative financing and investment strategies. CLEVER Cities will employ partners' large global networks to generate rapid and durable uptake of NBS by capacitating businesses and a CLEVER Solutions Basket with innovative technological, business, financing and governance solutions, in Europe and globally. The influential and committed FR will serve as role model for FE and global cities in East Asia and South America. All cities will actively engage in replication, thus, help to meet EU and UN sustainability goals and profile the EU as global leader in green innovation. CLEVER Cities materialises in strong local clusters around FR with partners, which can both support local co-creation as well as transversal activities with specific knowledge and expertise. This makes it a distinct, exciting project that will generate lasting results in cities and deliver a CLEVER Cities package with solutions, guidance and open-sourced data EU NBS reference framework.

Topic: Demonstrating innovative nature-based solutions in cities

Project Type: Innovation (IA)

Total budget: 14.864.689 €

EU Contribution: 14.214.661 €

Call ID: H2020-SCC-NBS-2stage-2017

Start date: 01/06/2018

End date: 31/05/2023

**Partners:**

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