



# PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

- a binding environmental partnership between municipalities

[greencities.dk](http://greencities.dk)

## Introduction

The Green Cities municipalities have set ambitious goals and have a strong willingness to engage in a binding partnership. The partnership is intended to result in member municipalities inspiring one another and to develop their individual climate and environment policies.

The member municipalities are geographically representative of Denmark. The work of Green Cities is founded on the member municipalities' pooled experience and know-how and will create better framework conditions for the municipalities' work within the climate and environmental field. In fact, Green Cities meets a specific need: At regular intervals, the municipalities hit an impenetrable wall of regulations and economic barriers, which effectively prevent the individual local authority from realising ambitious goals. The political debate on advancing the opportunities open to the municipalities should be intensified. More than any other player, the municipalities are expected to create the climate and environment policy results that citizens expect.

Green Cities has ambitions, results and experience of everyday political decision-making processes, which makes the organisation the obvious choice of political platform to develop the Danish municipalities' overall climate and environment policy. Our aim is to use this platform to create a better environment for the benefit of the people who live in the municipalities. Our aim is built on substantiated experience of real life in the municipalities.

On the steering committee's behalf

Leif Pedersen  
Chairman of Green Cities

## Vision

Our vision is to create a sustainable society. We will do our utmost to work for the environment through a binding partnership and taking the political lead.

- Where environmental issues are concerned, the member municipalities of Green Cities are making determined efforts to become the most ambitious municipalities in Denmark.
- Green Cities is taking the political lead. We are working to create and develop sustainable policies at the local level.
- Through national and international cooperation, Green Cities intends to further develop our environmental ambitions.
- Green Cities strives to improve the societal framework for sustainable development.
- Via our activities, Green Cities seeks to inspire and motivate other parties to intensify their efforts towards achieving sustainable development.
- The Green Cities partnership is based on involvement, cooperation and anchorage.

## Common goals

We are committed to working towards achieving common goals. We agree that, within three years, we must move all our goals in a positive direction in every member municipality.

### Climate

We aim to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

#### Goal:

- Our electricity and heating consumption will be CO<sub>2</sub> neutral by the end of 2025
- Before the end of 2015, we will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 25% compared to 2006.

### Groundwater

Green Cities is taking action to ensure that our groundwater is pure and plentiful.

#### Goal:

- We protect the areas surrounding our wells and aquifers.
- We will reduce municipal water consumption and achieve annual reductions with a view to achieving:
  - Average consumption of 100 litres a day per inhabitant by 2015.
  - A 25% reduction in the water consumption of municipal buildings by 2020 compared to 2010.
  - Maximum 5% water loss from water works by 2020.

### Organic food

We will promote organic food production at local and national levels by increasing production and consumption of organic food products.

#### Goal:

- At least 75% of municipal food consumption must be organic by 2015.
- At least 20% of agricultural land within the municipal boundaries will be farmed organically by 2025.

To achieve this goal, the individual municipality must achieve overall positive results in both areas.

### Natural environment

We will preserve and develop the natural environment for the benefit of fauna, flora and the human population.

*Goal:*

- We will increase biological diversity by 2015.
- We will make our natural environment, including the urban natural environment, more accessible. We will encourage people to use and learn about it.

**Traffic**

We will encourage sustainable mobility and accessibility. Mobility and accessibility must be maintained within our towns and between town and country.

*Goal:*

- Bicycle traffic and public transport must increase by 25% of the total volume of traffic in the member municipalities by 2020. Alternatively, vehicle traffic must be reduced by 25% compared to 2010.
- By 2025 at least 50% of vehicular transportation must be powered by alternative types of fuel.
- The quantity of microparticles in the urban atmosphere must be reduced by 2015.

**Waste**

We will make an active and appreciable contribution to achieving more recovery.

*Goal:*

- A 30% reduction in the volume of combustible household waste by 2018 compared to 2010.
- 25% recycling of plastic materials and 20% recovery of metals from households by 2018 compared to potential development in these areas.

## Cornerstones

The Green Cities partnership is founded on three cornerstones:

### **Green Cities Partnership**

The Green Cities Partnership is based on a series of principles, with which member municipalities are obliged to comply.

#### *Ambitious and binding common goals*

If our environmental policy is to be credible, we must work together towards achieving ambitious and binding goals. We wish to show that Green Cities is committed to the environment and that we give high priority to political efforts to preserve the environment. Green Cities has therefore formulated common environmental goals that are more exacting than the general requirements, with which the municipalities are legally obliged to comply. Our common goals are clear and concise. They present our razor-sharp and determined environmental profile.

#### *The means to achieve our ends*

Green Cities has identified a series of means which member municipalities can apply. The individual municipality is free to organise its own efforts towards achieving Green Cities' goals but is obliged, however, to pursue our goals by means of specific activities. The member municipalities draw up an action plan for individual initiatives to reach our common goals. The action plan describes the tools they will use to achieve the goals and ensures that there will be positive development towards all Green Cities' common goals within three years. The municipalities' individual activities will be supplemented and supported by joint Green Cities activities. Each year Green Cities will prepare an activity plan describing joint activities.

#### *Communicating results*

Green Cities' political impact depends heavily on how the initiative substantiates its activities and the progress made towards achieving our common goals. Green Cities municipalities must lay their environmental cards on the table and demonstrate that they have an open and transparent approach to publishing their data and documenting their progress towards the common goals. Member municipalities will therefore publish annual progress reports. Based on these reports, Green Cities will prepare joint documentation, e.g. a joint annual report, including figures, text and graphics, to account for the member municipalities' results. This joint annual report will be publicly accessible. The documentation produced will be shaped to provide inspiration for other local authorities.

#### *Joint projects*

Green Cities develops and executes common projects which support our common goals or which contribute to sustainable development in some other way.

### *Joint communications*

Green Cities' will provide professional communication and we will react fast. In our political reality, these characteristics are imperative. Like all other political decision-making processes, environmental politics require that players present clear proposals in the right place at the right time. Green Cities must therefore act fast and produce professional, well-thought-out points of view – always bearing in mind that Green Cities is an environmental political, rather than a party political, initiative.

### **Green Cities and sustainability**

Green Cities is working towards the creation of an environmentally sustainable society to meet current needs and requirements, and to ensure that the needs of future generations' will also be met.

Green Cities defines sustainable society in relation to the natural resources at our disposal and to how our daily lives impact the environment.

Our natural resources comprise soil, water, air and the natural environment. In this respect, sustainability is all about ensuring that:

- Soil quality is maintained and that the soil remains healthy for us to use.
- Drinking water quality is good and all that is needed to purify it is a simple water treatment process.
- We do not use groundwater faster than it is regenerated.
- Emissions into the atmosphere are free of substances that may be harmful to the environment or human health.
- There are ample and varied opportunities for our citizens to experience the natural environment.

Our daily lives impact the environment, in many different ways, including climate, noise, chemical substances, waste, nature conservation, planning and anchorage. In this respect, sustainability is all about ensuring that:

- Our energy consumption is CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral.
- The indoor climate in residential housing and public spaces is free from noise levels that may be harmful to health.
- We bring an end to the consumption and emission of harmful substances and products.
- We handle waste without causing adverse impacts on the environment
- We preserve the natural environment in accordance with organic principles, and maintain a high level of biological diversity.
- All our plans are environmentally sustainable. An environmental impact assessment is an indispensable part of this process.
- Citizens, enterprises and the public authorities act with respect for the environment and are actively engaged in environmentally sustainable development.

### **Green Cities tools**

The following describes the tools which the Green Cities municipalities apply in their attempts to live up to the vision of a sustainable society. These tools are no less important to the Green Cities than our common goals. The tools may be applied in different ways and will be adapted to suit the individual municipality's situation. The Green Cities municipalities are obliged to substantiate how the tools are applied. The documentation will typically form part of the municipalities' greenhouse gas accounting and the Green Cities' overview.

#### *Greenhouse Gas Accounting and Green Cities joint documentation*

In the pursuit of our common goals it is imperative that the individual municipality details its environmental impact. Greenhouse gas accounting or an alternative calculation of the member municipality' environmental impact is therefore a prerequisite. Beyond the environmental results, greenhouse gas accounting can also communicate the initiatives and "good stories", which often serve as sources of inspiration for others.

Green Cities produces joint annual documentation of the municipalities' green results and environmental initiatives, e.g. by means of our joint annual report. The member municipalities' own reports (greenhouse gas accounting) must be approved at the political level.

#### *Environmental management*

Environmental management is a tool which is applied to ensure that a player works systematically with environmental issues throughout the municipality and that environmental initiatives are followed up on. Environmental management is an effective tool, by which to ensure that environmental efforts have anchorage in the local area.

#### *Green sourcing*

Member municipalities must ensure that they take environmental issues into account when they purchase goods and services, including construction work. They may introduce a municipal green sourcing policy or other initiatives to ensure that the municipality is engaged in green sourcing.

#### *Sustainability in planning and development at municipal level*

Member municipalities must work with sustainability as an indispensable element in planning and development at municipal level. Sustainability must be fundamental to all municipal policies.

#### *Involving citizens and enterprises in environmental work (anchorage)*

Member municipalities must involve citizens and enterprises to ensure that environmental initiatives have widespread anchorage in the municipality.



## Code of conduct

The municipalities are mutually obliged to comply with the Green Cities code of conduct.

### **Partnership**

Partnership presupposes that member municipalities are obliged to comply with the basic principles of the partnership and to work towards achieving the vision and common goals stated in the partnership agreement.

### **Members**

Any municipality can apply to join the partnership and to sign the applicable partnership agreement.

Any municipality may join the partnership, even if it is unable to meet all the requirements. The municipality must however be prepared to work towards meeting them. Membership presupposes that, within 12 months of acceding to the partnership agreement, the municipality prepares an action plan for achieving the common goals. The action plan must be adopted by the municipal council.

A municipality can apply to take part in the partnership with observer status for a period of up to 12 months at no cost.

### **Structure**

#### *Steering committee*

Each municipality elects a political representative to the steering committee.

In addition to the permanent representative, each member municipality can also opt to nominate a political substitute to take part in steering committee meetings.

The steering committee prioritises Green Cities' initiatives and areas of interest, approves activities and projects to be implemented by Green Cities, sets membership fees, appropriates financial support for activities and projects implemented by Green Cities, and evaluates Green Cities activities and projects on an ongoing basis. The steering committee is also responsible for Green Cities' overall financial framework.

The steering committee holds ordinary meetings at least four times a year. Extraordinary meetings may be convened at the chairman's discretion or when a majority of the permanent members of the steering committee requests that the chairman calls an extraordinary meeting. The steering committee is competent to transact business when half of its members are present.

The municipalities take turns to take the chair of Green Cities for a period of two years. The municipality which steps down from the chairmanship is deputy chairman in the coming year. The municipality which takes up the chairmanship is deputy chairman in the final year of the previous chairmanship period.

The steering committee nominates a group of civil servants. The civil servants' group prepares annual recommendations for the activity plan, which are presented to the steering committee. All member municipalities are free to volunteer to coordinate activities of their choice. The steering committee also has a mandate to appoint working groups.

#### *Secretariat*

The secretariat function is a permanent function in one of the member municipalities. The secretariat takes care of coordination – in relation to not only professional work but also political profiling and communication. The secretariat also performs general administrative tasks and prepares material for the steering committee meetings in cooperation with the chairman.

#### **Finance and authority to sign**

An overall budget framework for operations and activities under the auspices of Green Cities is prepared and discussed by the steering committee in the second quarter of the year before the budget year.

Each member municipality contributes to Green Cities by means of a membership fee. Membership fees are set according to the size of the municipality and in conjunction with discussing the overall budget framework in the second quarter. Municipalities which have more than 100,000 inhabitants pay twice as much as municipalities which have less than 100,000 inhabitants.

A final budget is presented to the steering committee for approval at the final meeting in the year before the budget year.

The initiative seeks to collect as many subsidies as possible from subsidy schemes, etc., for Green Cities activities.

The accounting period is the calendar year.

Green Cities operations and activities are accounted for as specific accounts.

The accounts as of 31 December are presented to the steering committee for approval not later than the end of March in the year after the end of the accounting period.

The chairman and deputy chairman can sign for Green Cities on behalf of the steering committee jointly. The chairman and deputy chairman may delegate authorisation to sign for Green Cities.

**Evaluation**

Green Cities carries out an annual evaluation of progress made towards reaching the Green Cities goals. The Green Cities annual report is prepared for publication in August at the latest. The annual report follows up on measurements and is prepared in accordance with the steering committee's guidelines.

**Partnership agreement**

The Green Cities partnership agreement is approved by the municipal council in Green Cities member municipalities.

Amendments to the partnership agreement will be discussed by the steering committee, which forwards proposed amendments to the municipal councils. Amendments to the partnership agreement must be adopted by all Green Cities member municipalities.

**Termination**

The Green Cities partnership is to be regarded as an ongoing partnership.

If a Green Cities member municipality wishes to withdraw from the partnership, a letter of resignation must be submitted to the steering committee at not less than three months' notice. Resignation from the partnership is only possible with effect from 31 December.

If a member municipality wishes to withdraw from the partnership, this party has no legal claim to Green Cities' positive assets (if any). If Green Cities' assets are negative, the resigning municipality is obliged to pay a share of the negative assets corresponding to the basis of distribution between the member municipalities applicable to the setting of membership fees.

In the event of dissolution, Green Cities' assets or debts will be distributed proportionately among the member municipalities on the date of dissolution in accordance with the basis of distribution between the municipalities, applicable to the setting of membership fees.