



## Bridging the Climate Gap

### **Study: How Can Municipalities Contribute to a Carbon Neutral Society?**

**Most global emissions are attributable to urban areas. Nevertheless, most cities and municipalities are making little progress towards achieving their sustainability goals and those of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. In their joint study *Bridging the Climate Gap*, thinkstep AG and Drees & Sommer have investigated what is hindering them and what solutions are available. The experts analyzed 15 European cities, including Aarhus, Glasgow, Helsinki, Munich and the Swedish city of Växjö. One of the key findings is that more than 60 percent of participating cities lack stronger political support.**

What strategies and action are cities and municipalities pursuing for climate protection? What obstacles and opportunities are they facing? Are the current steps sufficient to stay below the 1.5°C temperature increase recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and prevent the worst effects of climate change? These questions are the focus of the study entitled *Bridging the Climate Gap* by Martin Blumberg, VP Sustainable Building & Construction at thinkstep AG, and Drees & Sommer's *Blue City* team leader Gregor Grassl, urban planner and expert planner for energy efficiency. The study is based on interviews and surveys with representatives of municipal administrations and other empirically derived facts.

### **More Political and Financial Support Needed**

All the cities in the study claimed to be affected by the consequences of global warming, and they regard the effects of climate change as relevant to their city. At the same time, they do not all feel equally compelled to take action. More than 60 percent of the cities currently lack greater political support, although they believe it is necessary. 'If you were to ask politicians, no one would say that we do not care about CO<sub>2</sub> savings. However, I believe that in practice it is not the number one priority,' said Martin Blumberg.

40 percent of surveyed cities also believe that they lack administrative structures for multi-disciplinary climate protection measures. In relation to funding, 70 percent of the cities replied that they lack the financial resources to set more ambitious climate protection targets. As far as expertise and capabilities are concerned, two-thirds of the cities included in the survey mentioned a lack of personnel with the right technical skills. Even more see a lack of education, guidance and training as a barrier.



'The findings make it clear that we need more courage and comprehensive expertise to decarbonize our society and industry. Low CO<sub>2</sub> technologies are our business models of today and will create the prosperity of tomorrow,' said Gregor Grassl.

In order to obtain a uniform picture across the survey, the authors developed critical internal and external success factors for effective climate engagement, such as multidisciplinary collaboration, commitment, funding and regulatory framework conditions.

### **Växjö and British Columbia as positive examples**

In their study, Drees & Sommer and thinkstep AG also identified criteria and leverage that help cities to become more climate-friendly and livable. Based on this, the authors developed a framework model and an operational advisory initiative to support cities and municipalities on their way to achieving the '2°C target'. Specific measures could include the development and implementation of recyclable buildings, sustainable mobility strategies or alternative methods of funding.

The results of the study are demonstrated by a case study of the Swedish municipality of Växjö. The award-winning city shows how the early and broadly-based introduction of strategies and steps to reduce greenhouse gases can lead to economic growth and prosperity. In another case study of the Canadian province of British Columbia, *Bridging the Climate Gap* also reveals how 182 municipalities can align toward a common climate goal.

The complete study in English is available for download at the following link:

[Bridging The Climate Gap](#)

### **About thinkstep**

*thinkstep enables organizations worldwide to succeed sustainably. Our industry-leading software solutions, databases and consulting services help businesses drive operational excellence, exploit product innovation potential, enhance brand values and comply with regulatory issues.*

*The company's 20 offices worldwide serve more than 8,000 clients, including 45 percent of the Fortune 100 enterprises, such as BASF, Hewlett-Packard, Interface, Siemens, Unilever and Renault.*



***About Drees & Sommer***

*Drees & Sommer is your innovative partner for consulting, planning, construction and operation. The leading European consulting, planning and project management enterprise, Drees & Sommer has supported private and public clients and investors for almost 50 years in all aspects of real estate and infrastructure – both analog and digital. The result is cost-effective and sustainable buildings, profitable real estate portfolios, people-oriented working environments, and visionary mobility concepts. The company's 3,200 employees in 40 locations around the world work in interdisciplinary teams to provide support for clients from a wide variety of sectors. All the services provided by the partner-run company take into consideration both economic and ecological concerns. Drees & Sommer calls this holistic and sustainable approach 'the blue way'.*