

InterregCo-funded by
the European Union**North-West Europe****Cool Neighbourhoods**

september 2025



Cool Neighbourhoods – A Closer Look at the Pilots

The Cool Neighbourhoods project is transforming urban landscapes across North-West Europe, with nine pilot areas in four countries. These pilots fall into three typologies: Inner City Neighbourhoods, Deprived Areas, and Green Hubs. Each pilot site serves as a living laboratory for innovative climate adaptation strategies tailored to local challenges.

Expected Impact

The project is set to deliver multiple benefits, including:

- Reduced heat stress, creating cooler, more comfortable urban spaces.
- Enhanced biodiversity and green infrastructure, leading to improved air and water quality.
- Social benefits, such as increased recreational opportunities, stronger community ties, and enhanced mental well-being.
- Economic growth, through green job creation and eco-tourism opportunities in revitalised neighbourhoods.

The Pilot Locations

- Inner City Neighbourhoods: Middelburg (NL), Goes (NL), Wimereux (FR)
- Deprived Areas: Saint Omer (FR), Middelburg (NL)
- Green Hubs: Ettelbruck (LU), Province of Antwerp (BE), Differdange (LU), Goes (NL)

Each of these Cool Neighbourhoods pilot demonstrates how targeted interventions can help cities adapt to climate change while improving liveability. Through collaborative efforts, Cool Neighbourhoods is setting a roadmap for greener, more resilient urban environments across North-West Europe. Now we shall look at the two deprived pilots in this newsletter, then other inner city and green hub pilots shall be in subsequent newsletters.

[Subscribe to our newsletter](#)



Cool Neighbourhoods Partners Gather in Utrecht to Drive Urban Resilience

In spring partners from across North-West Europe gathered in Utrecht for the Cool Neighbourhoods Partner Meeting, a key event focused on tackling urban heat stress and enhancing liveability. Over three days, experts and stakeholders shared knowledge, explored innovative solutions, and strengthened collaboration to accelerate the transition From Grey to Green.

Key Discussions and Insights

The meeting featured a series of workshops, presentations, and strategy sessions, covering the following

- **Neighbourhood typologies** – Tailoring interventions for Inner Cities, Deprived Areas, and Green Hubs.
- **Cost-benefit analysis** – Evaluating the financial and social returns of heat stress interventions.
- **Cool Neighbourhoods Livability Index** – Progress updates on measuring climate resilience at the neighbourhood level.
- **Empowerment and engagement** – Sharing best practices for involving communities in climate adaptation.
- **Strengthening communication** – Enhancing outreach strategies to maximise project impact.

A Collaborative Path Forward

The event reinforced the collective commitment to creating greener, cooler, and more liveable urban spaces. Partners left with actionable insights and a renewed drive to implement nature-based solutions in their cities.

Stay tuned as we continue to showcase progress from our pilot sites and share lessons learned from this dynamic collaboration!

#Livability #UrbanResilience #ClimateAdaptation #SustainableCities #Livability #Collaboration

Empowerment Process Guidebook – A Practical Tool for Community-Led Climate Action



The Empowerment Process Guidebook is now ready to download from the Cool Neighbourhoods website, providing an invaluable tool for local authorities, NGOs, urban planners, and active citizens eager to strengthen grassroots-led climate action.

Produced within the Cool Neighbourhoods project, the guidebook builds on the experiences of nine pilot areas across the Interreg North-West Europe region. It supports neighbourhoods in tackling urban heat, boosting biodiversity, and enhancing liveability through collaborative and community-based approaches.

What can you find inside?

- A step-by-step empowerment pathway designed for practical use
- Clear roles, tools, and timelines for diverse stakeholders
- Real examples and lessons learned from Cool Neighbourhoods pilot projects
- A flexible structure that can be adapted to different local contexts

Why does it matter?

Citizen empowerment is not just a trend – it is essential for building lasting climate resilience. The guidebook is designed to help you:

- Build stronger relationships and dialogue between municipalities and residents
- Foster community ownership of green transformation projects
- Turn top-down policy goals into bottom-up action

Whether you're launching a new initiative or reinforcing existing community networks, this guidebook offers guidance and inspiration at every stage of the journey.

Download the Cool Neighbourhoods Empowerment Process Guidebook today and take the next step towards creating cooler, greener, and more liveable neighbourhoods. <https://coolneighbourhoods.nweurope.eu/>

Greening Saint-Omer's Deprived Neighbourhood



The Saint-Omer pilot focuses on transforming the deprived Quai des Salines area into a greener, more liveable space. Positioned between two canals and heavily paved, the neighbourhood is highly vulnerable to heat stress and lacks sufficient green infrastructure. As part of a broader urban renewal effort, the project integrates climate adaptation while respecting the area's heritage status (PSMV).

Challenges and Actions

With limited funding, complex ownership structures, and the need for community engagement, the pilot prioritises cost-effective, high-impact solutions:

- Greening initiatives – Introducing shade trees, rain gardens, and permeable surfaces to combat heat stress.
- Community involvement – Engaging social housing residents through workshops and co-creation.
- Sustainable maintenance – Developing long-term strategies with local stakeholders to ensure upkeep.

A Step Towards Climate Resilience

Despite financial and policy challenges, strong political support and collaboration with regional and European partners position the project for success. By enhancing greenery and involving residents, Saint-Omer's deprived neighbourhood is becoming a model for urban climate adaptation.



Together, We Achieve More: Co-Creation in Edelstenenbuurt Drives Climate Action

On Wednesday 14th May, the city of Middelburg hosted its second co-creation workshop for the Edelstenenbuurt pilot as part of the EU Interreg Cool Neighbourhoods project. With contributions from multiple municipal departments and local organisations, the event drew a strong turnout and showcased how community participation can power urban climate resilience. Edelstenenbuurt, a neighbourhood with limited greenery and extensive paved surfaces, is being reimagined as a cooler, greener, and more liveable place. Residents shared their ideas for shaded play areas, social meeting spots, and increased biodiversity - all vital elements in reducing urban heat stress and improving quality of life.

Participants completed a survey on local liveability, which will inform future planning. Results revealed that experiences of heat vary widely. Older adults, children, and those from different cultural backgrounds experience heat differently, highlighting the importance of tailored solutions.

Fellow Cool Neighbourhoods partner Except Integrated Sustainability collected community input on design priorities, while the sustainability desk distributed practical advice in the form of a helpful flyer: ["24 Tips for a Cooler Home and Greener Neighbourhood."](#)

Adding a personal touch, residents had the chance to plant herbs and flowers to take home - marking their first step toward greening their own spaces.

The event was supported by Woongoed, the local police, Vizita, and various city departments. It stood as a powerful example of collaborative urban transformation - turning local insight into action.

This co-creation initiative reflects the spirit of Cool Neighbourhoods: empowering citizens, promoting climate adaptation, and inspiring change From Grey to Green.

Stay tuned for more community-led stories in our next Newsletter.



Climate Adaptation in Edelstenenbuurt, Middelburg Deprived Area Pilot

Originally developed in the 1980s without climate resilience in mind, Edelstenenbuurt in Middelburg is now facing pressing environmental and socio-economic challenges. Extensive paving, a lack of greenery, and deteriorating public spaces contribute to heat stress and reduced liveability, making climate adaptation both necessary and urgent.

Overcoming Social and Environmental Barriers

Edelstenenbuurt presents a complex landscape of challenges.

- Socio-economic vulnerability, with high levels of social deprivation limiting available resources for large-scale interventions.
- Environmental exposure, as the lack of green spaces exacerbates urban heat stress.
- Legal and ownership constraints, particularly regarding housing corporations, complicating large-scale changes.
- Community engagement barriers, requiring culturally sensitive approaches to involve residents in climate solutions.

Despite these hurdles, there is growing political awareness of the need for climate adaptation, creating an opportunity for gradual but meaningful change.

Small-Scale, Cost-Effective Solutions

Recognising the area's constraints, the Edelstenenbuurt pilot focuses on practical, community-driven interventions that can be implemented efficiently and affordably.

- Greening initiatives, including depaving unnecessary surfaces and adding mobile greenery to cool public spaces.
- Shade creation, achieved through tree planting and shade structures to provide much-needed relief from heat.
- Integrated infrastructural planning, aligning climate adaptation efforts with ongoing maintenance of underground cables and pipes to ensure cost-effective implementation.



Strengthening Community Involvement

A key goal of the pilot is to foster local participation and long-term stewardship of green spaces.

- Culturally sensitive engagement, using visual communication and community leaders to encourage inclusive participation.
- Encouraging community stewardship, by involving youth groups and introducing vandal-resistant designs to ensure long-term care and protection of public spaces.

Leveraging Technology for Resilience

Innovative but accessible technologies will be integrated into the pilot, ensuring solutions are tailored to the socio-economic realities of Edelstenenbuurt. Simple, practical tools will help residents combat heat stress while promoting a sustainable urban environment.

Building a Sustainable Future

The Edelstenenbuurt pilot is designed not only to provide immediate relief but also to serve as a scalable model for other deprived urban areas. Future steps include:

- Social outreach, linking climate adaptation with broader community improvement strategies.
- Monitoring and evaluation, to assess the effectiveness of interventions and guide future expansion.

A Blueprint for Climate-Resilient Neighbourhoods

Edelstenenbuurt's transformation represents a significant step towards a more climate-adaptive future. By focusing on small, cost-effective measures and prioritising community engagement, Middelburg is demonstrating how deprived urban areas can address both climate resilience and social well-being in tandem.

Join us on LinkedIn



Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

North-West Europe

Cool Neighbourhoods

Contact

Lead partner: Municipality of Middelburg

Contact person: Tiny Maenhout

Email: t.maenhout@middelburg.nl

For more project news, please visit our website and subscribe to our Cool Neighbourhoods newsletter.



coolneighbourhoods.nweurope.eu



Join us on LinkedIn

Don't want to receive this email anymore? You can remove your name from the list [here](#).