Creative Climate Cities Profile

**OSLO**

**GEOGRAPHICAL AREA**
480.76 sq. km

**POPULATION**
681,067

**GDP**
$50,984 (PPP) million

**CITY STRATEGY LINKS**
- Oslo's climate strategy and climate budget
- Oslo's Agency for Cultural Affairs
Introduction

Oslo, the capital and most populous city of Norway, constitutes both a county and a municipality. It is the economic and governmental centre of Norway which is known for its abundant natural landscapes, egalitarian spirit and the highly-covetable Scandinavian aesthetic, expressed in design, fashion, film and television. Oslo is strongly shaped by its natural setting: 68% of the municipal area is publicly accessible green space, surrounded as it is by the Marka forest which extends within and beyond the city. The city of Oslo’s state-of-the-art developments – such as the new urban waterside – melt into the surrounding lush forests and fjords.

The city has become a capital of contemporary architecture. Recent years have seen the emergence of a brand new skyline through the onset of city development projects that transform old areas and create new ones. As part of this skyline, three major cultural institutions are moving to new buildings in 2020, including the Munch Museum, the National Museum and the new main library. Oslo has a humid continental climate with warm summers and cold winters, however recent decades have seen increasing warming temperatures. On 30 May 2018 the city saw temperatures rise to 31.1°C, making it the hottest May temperature on Oslo records2.

Environmental Ambition

Oslo’s reputation as a green city is due to much more than its parks and surrounding forests. Citizens, urban planners, politicians and businesses of different kinds have worked hard to reduce the city’s carbon footprint and support a more sustainable society. Their efforts have been recognised and rewarded by the European Commission, which has named Oslo C40. https://www.c40.org/cities/oslo#city-emissions London Datastore. https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/leggi Public meteorological office. https://www.yr.no/sted/Norge/Oslo/rekorder.html

Culture Fact

Several large scale cultural infrastructure projects are being built along the city’s harbour front, including a new National Museum, Munch Museum and a new main library. All are due for completion in 2020.

Climate Fact

Oslo’s greenhouse gas emissions were 2.6 million tonnes in 20131. Tackling climate change is a high priority for Oslo and in 2019, it was awarded ‘European Green Capital’. The city aims to cut emissions by 50% by 2020 (compared to 1990) and to be carbon neutral by 2050.
‘European Green Capital’ for 2019. The award is given to a city that has a consistent record of achieving high environmental standards, is committed to ongoing and ambitious goals for further environmental improvement and sustainable development, and can act as a role model to inspire and promote best practice to other European cities. The European Green Capital programme offers an exciting opportunity to showcase and develop the environmental initiatives of Oslo’s leading arts and cultural community.

Connecting Creative & Climate Action in Oslo

1. Creative Programmes & Campaigns

Creative content and activities that engage audiences on themes of climate and the environment

- During the 2019 European Green Capital, Oslo is hosting hundreds of different events that highlight and celebrate sustainability and the environment, from citywide festivals to small markets and children’s workshops. Events include:
  - Passion for Ocean festival which includes environmental awareness-raising with sailing yachts, divers, surfers, kite-surfers, paddlers, biologists, cooks and innovators, as well as music and other cultural activities.
  - Repurpose festival at Norsk Folkemuseum, where audiences are invited to trade, reuse and repair items and see exhibits of vintage clothing.

- Oslo Rooftop Festival is a programme of cultural activities which highlight the rooftop as a social meeting spot and a contributor to urban diversity, local food productions and climate adjustments.

- As a result of their environmental commitments, some of Oslo's large annual events are forming part of the European Green Capital programme, for example, Øya Festival (well-known for its environmental credentials) and International Dance Day (established in 1982 by UNESCO and celebrated in more than 60 countries) which encourages citizens to “take back the city” by filling the urban landscape with movement and dancing bodies.

- Oslo’s Nobel Peace Centre is presenting Klimalab, a vibrant exhibition about climate, nature and people. The exhibition has been designed to be incomplete, and in asking visitors to help finish it, the exhibition will highlight that addressing climate requires everyone to work together to find solutions (such as living without meat for 30 days and planning holidays that do not involve flights).

- The Future Library project (Norwegian: Framtidsbiblioteket) is a hundred year long public artwork commissioned by Bjørvika Utvikling and created by artist Katie Paterson, which will collect an original work by an author every year from 2014 to 2114; the manuscripts will be published in 2114. One thousand trees were specially planted for the project in the Nordmarka forest, providing the paper on which the books will be published. The Manuscripts will be housed in a specially designed room in the new main library which is currently under construction.

- Losæter is a new cultural institution on a common along the waterfront in Bjørvika dedicated to a range of activities related to art, urban farming and local food production. This unconventional use of a common area was initiated by the art collective Futurefarmers, with Amy Franceschini as the lead artist.
2. Resources & Support

Investment, training and materials that support environmental knowledge and practical action

- In light of the city’s status as European Green Capital, grants have been made available to the art and cultural sector through the municipality’s grant mechanism to support the inclusion of environmentally friendly measures at cultural events. Funding has also been made available to create access points for green electricity at the sports and nature park Ekebersletta.

- The ‘Platform for City Government cooperation 2015-2019’ confirms the City Government will present sustainability goals in the annual budgets for the City of Oslo and make these the basis for policy development across departments, including climate budgets and emission ceilings by sector.\(^5\)

3. Partnerships & Innovation

Diverse disciplines and communities sharing and co-developing ideas and resources that accelerate environmental action

- To embed culture across the city and to sustain many smaller cultural groups that do not receive large subsidies, the City also aims to increase the use of municipal buildings, particularly schools and libraries, to provide space for out-of-hours cultural activity. Extending and optimising the usage of existing buildings contributes to environmental good practice, where extended use offsets the need for developing new cultural venues and infrastructure. As a temporary solution, empty municipal buildings awaiting new use have been temporarily rented out as artists’ studios, further optimizing the use of existing buildings.

- Sustainability has been a guiding principle of many of Oslo’s recent large-scale construction projects, including Vulkan, a former industrial site transformed into an environmentally-conscious neighbourhood. On the waterfront, the Tjuvholmen development – which houses the Astrup Fearnley Museum and sculpture park – includes artificial reefs. These protect underwater wildlife by mimicking natural reef systems that provide material to encourage reef organism settlement.

- FutureBuilt is a ten-year collaborative\(^6\) programme supporting climate-friendly urban development in the Oslo region. The pilot projects aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% from transport, energy and materials, with many located near major transport hubs to promote walking, cycling and safety. Pilot projects include a variety of public and private buildings, including cultural buildings.\(^7\)

4. Policy & Strategy

Guiding policy and strategy frameworks that drive climate and environmental action, investment and accountability

- The national strategy ‘Cultural Policy for the Future (2018-2019)’ includes a section called ‘Artists and environmental engagement’ referring to the Norwegian Writers’ Climate Campaign and the Norwegian Artists’ Climate Campaign. It also includes a section calling for ‘bold cultural policy’ – which describes how cultural policy impacts other areas of civic policy such as education, welfare and climate: ‘Cultural policy can thus play a positive role in the transformation of Norway’.\(^8\)

\(^5\)Platform for City Government cooperation 2015-2019
\(^6\)It is a collaboration that includes the municipalities of Oslo, Bærum, Asker and Drammen, the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, The Norwegian State Housing Bank, The Agency for Building Regulations, Green Building Alliance and the national Association of Norwegian architects.
• In May 2019, the City Government approved a new event strategy for the City of Oslo, which aims to make Oslo a more event friendly city. The City will create a new events unit to guide and support event organisers, as well as developing measures for encouraging greener events. There is also a focus on increased and smarter use of public space and the need to connect green infrastructure to events – this could include access to points for electrical power, recycling and bike racks.

• The ‘Action Plan for Increased City Life’ is encouraging a more environmentally friendly city by reducing cars and bringing people and life back onto the streets to create a more friendly and inclusive city. The Plan helps ensure culture plays an important role in the creation of new public spaces, prioritising pedestrianisation and traffic reduction through innovative design, and facilitating initiatives within arts and culture to creatively use the new spaces. These have included the creation of mobile stages for cultural performances with access to electricity (negating the need for air-polluting generators), and the installation of new street furniture and lighting.

Spotlight
ØYA FESTIVAL

Øya Festival, which receives funding from the Municipality, has worked extensively to find sustainable solutions for waste, food, transportation, energy and procurement. Its aim is to be fossil-fuel free, plant-based and the embodiment of circular economy principles. It is ranked as one of the top sustainable festivals by the Greener Festival Award. Current sustainability initiatives include:

• Over 90% of all food served is organic, and almost 40% of the 100,000 portions of food sold is meat-free.
• The festival has been renewably-powered since 2009 in partnership with local energy company Hafslund, and has also expanded its use of LED lighting.
• 98% of all audience arrive by walking, biking or using public transportation.
• 60% of waste is re-used or recycled into new products. The “Recyclomat” project engages the audience in recycling during the festival.

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1Future built. https://www.futurebuilt.no/English
2World Cities Culture Forum: World Cities Culture Report 2018
5RIGHT: Kultur - og idrettstbygg Oslo KF
Highlights

1. **Creative Programmes & Campaigns**

   During the 2019 European Green Capital, Oslo is hosting hundreds of different events that highlight and celebrate sustainability and the environment, including: Passion for Ocean festival, Repurpose festival and Oslo Rooftop Festival.

2. **Resources & Support**

   The Platform for City Government cooperation 2015-2019 confirms the City Government will present sustainability goals in the annual budgets for the City of Oslo.

3. **Partnerships & Innovation**

   Future built is a ten-year collaborative programme supporting climate-friendly urban development in the Oslo region. Pilot projects include a variety of public and private buildings, including cultural centres.

4. **Policy & Strategy**

   A new event strategy aims to make Oslo a more event friendly city, developing measures for encouraging greener events.
Where Next?

A number of opportunities have been identified by Julie’s Bicycle:

1. **Share good practice**
   Research creative and cultural initiatives across Oslo which engage with environmental themes and practices, making them publicly available. This will encourage new collaborations and good practice exchange and help build environmental knowledge, awareness and inspiration within Oslo’s cultural sector.

2. **Collaborate and connect cultural and environmental strategy**
   Scheduling regular meetings that support ongoing collaboration between cultural and environmental departments would support implementation of city strategy and continuing the legacy of European Green Capital 2019. Topics could include environmental management advice for cultural buildings and events, public art commissions, artist advocacy and citizen engagement. Connecting with local creative and environmental businesses, academics, community leaders and other city stakeholders could produce new knowledge, partnerships and resources.

3. **Collect and communicate data**
   Develop surveys for cultural organisations to collect attitudinal insights on environmental issues such as food, biodiversity and environmental justice – this survey could be repeated periodically to understand changes in opinions. In addition, calculate the return on investment of energy-efficiency projects to evidence the cost and carbon saved.

4. **Embed environmental sustainability in public art**
   Build on cultural venues’ and events’ environmental programming by formally embedding environmental sustainability as a theme within public art policy. This could be further supported by resources and practical guidelines for artists relating to the environmental impact of materials, sourcing, construction and transportation.

5. **Provide professional development opportunities**
   Provide cultural professionals with environmental advocacy and training opportunities to give them the skills and support they need to take on positions of influence and decision-making. By delivering training through a networked approach, Oslo can create better conditions for sharing practice and scaling solutions.
With special thanks to:

Department for Culture and Sport, City of Oslo