Frankfurt 2050 zero-carbon masterplan

When people think of Frankfurt, they typically think of the stock exchange, the airport, the euro, St. Paul’s Church, Goethe, sausages, or the skyline. Frankfurt am Main is a dynamic mix of history and culture in a modern, international cityscape.

Located in the centre of Germany, Frankfurt is the smallest metropolis in the world, with 700,000 inhabitants and hundreds of thousands of commuters. And although its glass and steel downtown appears very corporate, the city aspires to be ever more green and low carbon.

For decades, Frankfurt has been working to become climate friendly and to make smart use of new energy technologies. The city co-founded the Climate Alliance of European Cities and established one of the first municipal energy and climate protection agencies in the 1980s. It updates its energy and carbon footprint annually, with the goal of eliminating carbon emissions by 2050. Emissions have already been cut by 15% since 1990, despite the fact that the economy has grown by more than 50%, and that office floor area has increased by over 80%. 
Frankfurt was the first city to promote electricity saving by giving cash awards to residents. Children are involved, too. Since 2002, primary schools in Frankfurt have run energy workshops and games. In one energy-saving game, schoolchildren explore their school buildings with measuring devices and, with their teachers, look for energy leaks. They also think of ways to reduce individual consumption. The project does more than impart information — in 2008, a total of 50 participating schools reduced their CO₂ emissions by 1,400 tonnes.

The city supports programmes that bring 19th-century buildings into line with modern energy-efficiency standards. It is also building an extensive district heating system and has its own green architecture award. City programmes support cycling, electro-mobility and the recovery of waste heat from the sewerage system. The city organises popular climate tours that look “behind the scenes” at Frankfurt’s climate protection players. As a local energy expert put it, “The transition to a low-carbon economy starts here and now, in cities.”