



COLAB

Committed to Local Climate Action Building

MANNHEIM, AACHEN, MÜNSTER - GERMANY

Emissions domains addressed by the Pilot Activity



Consumption of non-electricity energy for thermal uses in buildings & facilities



Multi-sector waste management & disposal



Land use (agriculture, forestry & other land uses)



Consumption of electricity generated for buildings, facilities & infrastructure



All vehicles & transport (mobile energy)

Key Focus Areas

Radical collaboration | House of Change | Local Green Deal | Civic innovation | 1.5°C lifestyle | Behavioural change | Strategic experiments

Levers of Change

Democracy and participation | Governance and policy | Learning and capabilities | Social innovation

Description of the Pilot Activity

How do you change the daily habits of an entire city? Three German cities formed a coalition to answer this question, recognising that consumption-based emissions—from food choices to mobility patterns to heating decisions—require far more than technical fixes. CoLAB created a shared framework called the "House of Change," combining physical transformation spaces, digital engagement tools, and new governance structures to make climate action visible, accessible, and social. Led by Mannheim, the project tested whether cities can shift behavioural norms at scale.

Impact & Results

CoLAB delivered governance transformation first. All three cities implemented the City Transition Team Model—dedicated teams with clear roles (core team, mission group, local coalition) that became the backbone for designing Climate City Contracts and securing stakeholder commitments.

Mannheim launched a Heat Transition Academy, training over 200 participants and hosting 14 public information events to build citizen capacity for the heating transition. Aachen's Clever Mobil programme engaged 28 companies and 30,000 employees in corporate mobility transformation, with 610 test bookings demonstrating real behaviour change. Münster's deep renovation campaigns showed measurable results.

The digital tools developed across all three cities share a common framework: the "Seven Doors from Knowledge to Action" (Awareness → Understanding → Motivation → Decision → Action → Habit → Advocacy).e acceleration—approved applications grew from 154 in 2020 to 320 in 2023.

All tools integrate with national resources, creating infrastructure beyond individual cities.

Capacity building reached 98 public officers in Year 1 and 105 in Year 2 in Mannheim alone. A national "stronGER cities" network now extends learning beyond the three pilots. Twinning with Jyväskylä and Vilnius led to direct adoption: Leipzig created its own climate visibility wall, and follower cities including Cork and Kalamata are adapting the approaches.

Innovation Highlights

The House of Change model combines online presence with physical spaces—cultural venues, climate offices, model apartments for sustainable living—creating infrastructure for dialogue, co-creation, and visible citizen ownership. The model works because it addresses three elements simultaneously: structures for change (transition teams with clear roles), spaces for change (accessible physical locations), and communication about change (campaigns, dashboards, tools). A House of Change Book and card set, produced in English, enables any city to adopt the approach.

