



SCALE Stockholm

Stockholm Pilot City for Climate & Health: Building Capacity to Scale

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Emissions domains addressed by the Pilot Activity



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



Multi-sector waste management & disposal



Consumption of electricity generated for buildings, facilities & infrastructure



All vehicles & transport (mobile energy)

Key Terms

Transition Arenas | Neighbourhood co-creation | Climate and health integration | Bottom-up methodology | Local stakeholder engagement | Cross-departmental collaboration | Participatory governance | Urban cultivation | Energy efficiency | Sustainable food | Circularity | Sustainable mobility

Levers of Change

Data and Digitalisation | Democracy and participation | Financing and funding | Governance and policy | Learning and capabilities | Procurement | Social innovation | Technology/infrastructure

Description of the Pilot Activity

SCALE Stockholm uses neighbourhood-scale "Transition Arenas" where civil society organisations and businesses co-create pilot projects for climate mitigation and improved health. The methodology is genuinely bottom-up: the project maps local conditions, engages communities on their own terms, and supports stakeholder-initiated actions — by design, the specific pilot projects were unknown at the outset. Year 1 established four Transition Arenas in Järva, Hammarby Sjöstad/Norra Djurgårdsstaden, Årsta-Enskede-Vantör, and Södermalm/Innerstaden, each themed around local priorities including urban cultivation, energy efficiency, sustainable food, circularity, and sustainable mobility. A major public gathering ("Kraftsamling") brought together 100 participants from 35 organisations, generating 48 ideas. Follow-up gatherings developed these into 25 supported pilot projects. Two districts withdrew during the year, but the design proved resilient. Stockholm's Climate Action Plan, adopted December 2024, directly incorporates the SCALE approach, ensuring the methodology continues beyond the pilot period.

Year One Highlights

"SCALE Stockholm's defining commitment is that pilot projects emerge from what communities care about — not from what the municipality has already decided to do. Year 1 was spent building the infrastructure to make that genuinely possible. Transition Arenas were established in four Stockholm neighbourhoods — Järva, Norra Djurgårdsstaden, Årsta-Enskede-Vantör/Hammarby sjöstad and Södermalm/Innerstaden — each developed with the relevant City District Department and themed around local conditions. A major public gathering brought together 100 participants from civil society and local businesses, generating 48 ideas for climate and health initiatives. Three follow-up local gatherings developed these into nearly 30 concrete pilot projects out of which 25 now being supported by the city, including repair cafés, bike-friendly workplaces, sustainable food initiatives, and energy communities — all driven by stakeholder priorities. Significant internal work preceded this: anchoring the approach within City District Departments, training staff in one-on-one dialogue techniques, and building the trust between city and civil society that genuine co-creation requires. When two of the original six City Districts withdrew — one due to local security priorities, one due to reduced capacity — the project continued with four arenas, demonstrating design resilience. Stockholm's Climate Action Plan, adopted December 2024, directly incorporates the SCALE approach and requires City Districts to sustain local collaboration arenas beyond the pilot period.

Innovation Highlights

SCALE's most transferable insight is that genuinely generative engagement — where outcomes are unknown in advance — requires fundamentally different planning, staffing, and evaluation approaches than consultative engagement where the municipality already knows what it wants to do. The investment in internal capacity building proved as time-consuming as external community engagement, reflecting a reality that most participation programmes underestimate.

Key Insight: *SCALE Stockholm demonstrates that genuine bottom-up engagement produces concrete results — 30 pilot projects initiated by stakeholders who will implement them because they designed them. But the methodology requires accepting uncertainty about outcomes, investing heavily in internal anchoring, and designing evaluation frameworks that match the approach. The payoff is community ownership that top-down programmes cannot achieve.*

Twinning with Manchester (United Kingdom)

Three key insights: Manchester's Climate Agency model (operating independently from the city but in close collaboration, enabling more flexibility to include external partners and funding); neighbourhood climate action plans developed for each of Manchester's 32 local wards with support from three climate officers; and ward climate funds providing £20,000 per ward for implementing local climate actions. The most valuable twinning insight was institutional — the Climate Agency model offers Stockholm a governance template for scaling the SCALE approach.

