



# Green and growing

Picture Amsterdam in 2020: Electric cars glide silently past canals, solar panels dominate rooftops, wide-spread district heating has reduced carbon emissions. Utopia or a viable future?

Text: David Scherpenhuizen | Illustration: Isabel Funken

**U**nder European Union regulations, European cities have to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent by 2020, which is why Amsterdam wants to become more sustainable. Besides that, being “green” is also a great marketing tool, so the city was looking for partners to reach its sustainability goals. Nuon courted the city with a proposed partnership, which was gladly accepted.

Martijn Hagens, City Business Partner for Amsterdam, explains why: “We share a long history because the former municipal energy company is now a part of Nuon. Besides that, we offered them a programme containing solutions that are of common interest and mutual benefit. We are also active in other European cities like Uppsala, Hamburg and Berlin so we can offer international expertise and best practice examples.”

As Amsterdam already had an extensive Climate and Energy programme as well as an Air Quality programme, Nuon proposed new collaborative projects focussing on commercial opportunities. After long talks, a memorandum of understanding was signed in May 2013.

A major deal like that is a complex, sensitive and time-consuming business. As Ingrid Giebels, Project Manager Sustainable Cities, states: “We had to agree on the best way to combine



Marcel Bakker

**Martijn Hagens**  
City Business Partner for Amsterdam

“We are well positioned to help Amsterdam reach its targets.”

**Martijn Hagens**



Amsterdam



Amsterdam's sustainability goals with ours in an economically viable way. Amsterdam did not want to commit to only one company and the main incentive for Nuon was to create profitable business opportunities."

The talks resulted in various projects, such as the "smart energy solutions" district campaign by BU Sales B2C. The campaign offers customers energy saving solutions while informing them of city subsidies for energy saving. It is a win-win situation.

Merel van Straten



**Ingrid Giebels**  
Project  
Manager  
Sustainable  
Cities

Furthermore, BU Heat is rolling out district heating in the city. This is an ambitious plan, aimed at connecting 230,000 housing equivalents to the network by 2040. This applies to new buildings as well as existing houses and businesses.

Additionally, BU Sales B2B is investigating possibilities and possible solutions for improving the energy usage of data centres (DCs). Amsterdam is one of the world's leading internet hubs with many DCs that consume a lot of energy. The city wants to attract more DCs, but it also wants to lower energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions in the sector.

BUs B2B, Projects & Solutions, B2C and Heat are all involved in an ambitious project in Amsterdam's Houthaven district, where solutions are being piloted and implemented to help developers, future residents and businesses become fully climate neutral.

**The City Partnership** (CP) team in Amsterdam plays a coordinating role in the Sustainable Cities project. The CP team gets the ball rolling on various topics with Amsterdam's Climate and Energy Office and helps the BUs to forge new collaborations. The BUs, however, are responsible for realising the business benefits.

Giebels explains: "We look at what topics the city is working on and find out which projects our BUs are interested in. We also bring BUs together to think about certain topics like wind participation or climate neutral districts and how to combine our expertise in the best way."

In general, Nuon's Amsterdam prospects are looking good. As Hagens

says: "We are well positioned to help Amsterdam reach its targets while expanding our business at the same time. In the short term, we will focus on achieving the benefits of the agreed projects for 2013. In the longer term, we see opportunities to expand our market share in Amsterdam for our traditional business, as well as new prospects for renewables and value-added services."

There is still a long road ahead in realising a sustainable future for Amsterdam, but Nuon and the city are on the right track. ■

@ Find out more:  
<http://sustainablecities3d.vattenfall.com/>