

CASE STUDY OR ROUNDTABLE

On our way to sustainable and attractive cities:
development, management, monitoring and communication
of climate action plans in one handy online tool,
FutureproofedCities.

Cases of Belgian cities: Vilvoorde, Overijse and Antwerp

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Sometimes it seems like communities around the world are facing an impossible task: transitioning to a fossil-free, sustainable economy while meeting the world's growing water, food, energy, and materials needs.

Yet, at Futureproofed, we believe that these challenges bring about unprecedented opportunity for people, cities, and businesses to thrive. In fact, we believe the biggest business opportunity in a century is knocking on our door.

Our goal is to be catalysts of this transition. Therefore, Futureproofed helps among others cities and municipalities create economic value while accelerating the shift to a fossil-free, sustainable society.

Indeed, when it comes to climate change, cities and municipalities are the center of the action. Mayors around the world are leading communities towards a prosperous, fossil-free future. City officials are working hard to articulate climate plans, turning them into reality, and forging sustainable cities and municipalities where it is great to live and work.

A city's climate action plan is the bedrock of this transformation, and FutureproofedCities facilitates this change. It is a powerful, easy-to-use, online software designed to help city officials develop, monitor, manage, and visualize their city's climate action plan and better engage with their citizens.

Develop – If the city has a climate action plan, it can be configured in a simple and systematic way in the FutureproofedCities web app. The city is then ready to get things done. If instead the city wishes to develop a new climate action plan, they can begin by picking measures from a predefined list, adapting them to the city's needs and goals, and immediately see the expected cost, savings and CO₂-savings of each measure.

Monitor & manage – Once the climate plan is set up, FutureproofedCities helps monitor the progress and manage the work to be done by the teams.

This can be done by using actions. Actions are concrete steps to reach the target of a measure. These actions enable to organize the work, assign it to team members in order to engage politicians, citizens, and other stakeholders to make the measures happen.

Visualize & engage – FutureproofedCities makes it easy to share updates with the team and encourage citizens to engage in climate action. The city chooses what to work on exclusively internally and what to share publicly. Always up-to-date and easy-to-understand

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information and visuals allow citizens to see how the city is improving, read about the latest actions, and understand how they can act – making the climate action plan a reality.

Altogether, FutureproofedCities is a simple way to develop climate action plans, starting from a kit of predefined measures; to share the work to be done and to communicate about it with citizens. By narrowing the gap between plan and action and bringing tangible, visible benefits that improve quality of life, leaders can start a virtuous cycle that encourages and sustains a pleasant urban environment.

As far as we know, such a platform does not exist on the market so far. This project does still depend of Futureproofed, our consultancy company. Within a few months from now, if the sales are still going up, we will create a cooperative named FutureproofedCities. Meanwhile, it gives us an advantage to sell the app with our Futureproofed cap, as we have worked with a lot of Belgian cities, groups of communes and provinces in the past. We have a lot of contact but also a proven track record that are both convincing a few cities already.

We have developed FutureproofedCities through a participation process, involving cities and municipalities from the very start. We name it outcome-driven innovation, starting from our client's most important challenges. Our first idea was to enable cities to follow their emissions in real-time. But it appeared that this was not answering the first need of these cities, which was to take action now about climate change – instead of receiving an extra report, which often stays on a shelf and is hardly used by city officials, or only by the one responsible for environment. Therefore, we completely changed our product so that it fits with our clients' needs and challenges: take action.

With FutureproofedCities, the step from plan to action is indeed simplified, as witnessed by our very first clients: Vilvoorde, Overijse, Antwerp, Kortrijk, Bruges, etc. These cities, first real users of the app, see for themselves that the move towards a fossil-free future helps to bring about very tangible outcomes, today. They witness the importance of taking concrete actions today to make the transition to an attractive future for all their citizens.

The actions chosen by each city help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, usage of natural resources and increase protection of nature. For example, within the standard measures list are:

- Roof insulation in households
- Installation of solar panels in the tertiary sector
- Expansion residual heat network for neighborhoods
- Purchase 100% green electricity by the municipality
- Reduction municipal public lighting
- Collective district renovation to very low energy standard (30 kWh/m²)
- Replacement of old electric appliances
- Car-free zone in the city
- Mobility budget for workers
- Purchase of forest's hectares

The emission reduction of these measures and a whole bunch of others financial parameters are estimated and included in the tool, to highlight their contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. That way, backed by data, cities are guided to reduce their carbon emissions while saving costs, reducing risks, developing new opportunities for their citizens,

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and reinforcing their image. We already see with Vilvoorde, Overijse and Antwerp how it helps cities to see tangible outcomes that will speed up their transition to a profitable and sustainable economy, to an attractive future.

In a nutshell, our solution fits into our vision of the global transition: it fulfils the needs of cities and already helps a few Flemish cities act on climate change and make a step forward to make the future more attractive for all the citizens.

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PROPOSAL 1

Give a presentation together with one of the cities using the app and answering the questions of the audience to show how FutureproofedCities helps this city and could further help other cities transition to a sustainable, attractive future.

PROPOSAL 2

Take part in a roundtable together with one of the cities using the app and answering the questions of the participants to show how FutureproofedCities helps this city and could further help other cities transition to a sustainable, attractive future.

Keywords: Sustainability, environment, climate action plan, development, management, communication, city, FutureproofedCities