
PRESS RELEASE

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Many cities lack a plan for managing extreme weather

This summer's intense rain and floods, together with the IPCC's alarming report about more extreme weather, are turning all eyes on water supply and management in our cities. To secure a healthy future and prevent system failures, Sweco proposes three water strategies in a new report.

The IPPC's latest report sounds the alarm on the devastation caused by more frequent and extensive rainfall and flooding. We saw clear evidence of this last summer in many places around the world. The sewer systems in many European cities, often built over 100 years ago, are sorely unprepared for such extensive flooding. As freshwater and sewage systems in European cities deteriorate, the sewage infrastructure might collapse in 10-20 years due to material failure.

At the same time, droughts and water shortages have become a reality. If there is no change in global water consumption, the demand for water will exceed the available supply by 40 per cent in 2030 due to the growing population, increased urbanisation, climate change and a shift in our food consumption.

"The increased frequency of extreme weather conditions is creating elevated health and safety risks across Europe. Actions are needed to minimise the risks of flooding, pollution and health hazards", says Tia Savolainen, water management engineer at Sweco Finland and a report co-author.

The report highlights the challenges identified by engineers and designers and reveals potential breakthrough innovations in underground and surface water systems that directly impact our health.

"To secure a future with sufficient clean water and successful water management that prevents system failures, we propose three water strategies that also deal with health challenges. First, we need to give back space for water and people, secondly reintroduce nature in cities, and thirdly reduce, reuse and purify wastewater", explains Steven Raes, bioengineer in environmental technology at Sweco Belgium and a report co-author.

[Healthy water cities](#) is the third in a series of Urban Insight reports from Sweco on the topic of Urban Health and Well-Being, in which experts highlight specific ideas, solutions and scientific findings needed to plan and design safe and resilient future urban environments.

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