



**NET
ZERO
CITIES**

NetZeroCities

Enabling City Transformation (ECT) Handbook

Version N°1.0

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Disclaimer

The content of this document reflects only the author's view. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

History of reviews

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All amendments to this Handbook will be communicated directly to the beneficiaries via email.

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1 NetZeroCities Enabling City Transformation Handbook

1.1 The Enabling City Transformation Team

We are excited to introduce our dedicated team, here to support you throughout your journey in the Enabling City Transformation. Over the next 18 months, our team is committed to providing guidance, addressing your inquiries, and incorporating your feedback and insights. Together, we will work to implement innovative actions that address systemic challenges in climate action, fostering city-wide transformation and creating replicable solutions for sustainable urban development and climate neutrality across European cities.

In addition to a brief introduction of our roles, we have provided a list of key content areas, each of which we will be your main point of contact for:

- Grant Management
- Learning and Sensemaking
- Twinning
- City Expert Support Facility (CESF)
- Boot Camp
- Calls
- Portal
- Communication and Storytelling

We do not assign you with a single Project Officer. Instead, for questions regarding any of the above areas, or any other matters, please reach out to us at ect@netzerocities.eu and one of us will reply to you.



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1.2 NZC Enabling City Transformation Q&A Forum

All matters related to the Enabling City Transformation (ECT) should be directed to a single email address: ect@netzerocities.eu. However, the ECT Team recognizes that a live conversation can often be more efficient and convenient for presenting cases or addressing questions. To facilitate this, the ECT Team will organize a recurring call open to all ECT beneficiaries.

This Q&A forum aims to address questions and concerns related to grant management for ECT activities, including periodic reporting, cost eligibility, employment, consortium management, and similar topics. Please note that this call will not include thematic experts.

The ECT programme Q&A sessions occur at the same time as the Pilot Cities Programme meeting, on the **1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month at 11 AM CEST/CET**. You can access it through the following link [here](#).

You can increase the chances of receiving an instant answer to your question by sending it first through email to ect@netzerocities.eu with " Grant Q&A Forum::..." in the subject line, and giving the Enabling City Transformation Team time to reflect on it. If a question cannot be answered during the meeting, the response will be sent later through an email.

The answers to the questions, if relevant, will contribute to the ECT FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions), that should always be checked at the end of the [Enabling City Transformation NetZeroCities](#) page before submitting a question, to ensure the question to the answer is not already present.

2 Enabling City Transformation

2.1 Enabling City Transformation Aim

The **Enabling City Transformation** programme is designed to address systemic challenges and support large-scale urban transformation toward achieving climate neutrality by 2030. The programme focuses on the implementation of innovative, scalable, and replicable solutions aligned with Climate City Contracts, enabling transformative action at the city level.

This initiative emphasizes collaboration, shared learning, and the integration of cross-sectoral approaches that combine technological, cultural, regulatory, financial, and governance innovations. The selected projects form a portfolio aimed at overcoming barriers, fostering systemic change, and advancing the broader goals of the EU Cities Mission.

The expected outcomes of the NZC Enabling City Transformation are:

- **Implementation of Innovative Solutions:** Deployment and testing of new technologies, governance models, policies, or business frameworks at scale.
- **Development of Knowledge and Capacity:** Strengthening of expertise, capacities, and institutional capabilities through practical application and learning processes.
- **Lessons and Insights Documented:** Comprehensive capture and dissemination of key lessons learned, providing guidance for similar efforts.
- **Scalable and Replicable Solutions:** Identification of interventions ready for broader application across European cities. Development of strategies for replication and scaling to maximize impact.
- **Holistic and Systemic Approaches:** Integration of cross-sectoral innovations, addressing challenges with a comprehensive and inclusive methodology.
- **Enhanced Collaboration and Synergies:** Establishment of collaborative frameworks and networks to leverage collective knowledge and drive coordinated action.

This programme aims to enable long-term transformation and accelerate progress toward the shared goal of climate-neutral cities across Europe.

The Enabling City Transformation Team has developed specific support documents to guide cities on their journey of implementing, delivering, and reporting pilot activities and associated costs. Always refer to the Call Guidelines, Financial Guidelines, Cost Reporting Guidelines as well as other documents and templates linked below. Feel free to contact the Enabling City Transformation Team and the grant manager for any additional advice. All the documents mentioned above are published on the Enabling City Transformation Group on Mission Portal and are regularly updated.

- [NZC ECT Call Guidelines](#)
- [NZC ECT Financial Guidelines](#)

Please find below the European templates at your disposal related to grants management:

- [DESCA Model \(recommended\) for consortium agreement](#)
- [MODEL FOR THE CERTIFICATE ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS](#)
- [TIMESHEET TEMPLATE](#)

PROCUREMENT: The core principles are transparency, equal treatment, open competition, and sound procedural management. At Due diligence check, the cities have provided internal procurement policies, the procurement for Enabling City Transformation should follow the usual standards in the internal policies and comply with the relevant national legislation. Please refer to the cost reporting for specific reporting requirements

2.2 Selected Cities

The final selected portfolio is comprised of twenty-six (26) proposals with a collective grant allocation value of €22.6 million, across forty-eight (48) cities (43 from MS; 5 from AC) and nineteen (19) countries (16 MS; 3 AC). Conversely, nineteen (19) proposals were not selected for the portfolio, across nineteen (19) cities and thirteen (13) countries (15 MS; 4 AC).

The final selected portfolio consists of sixteen (16) proposals at €0.5-0.6 million, four (4) proposals at €1.0 million and six (6) proposals at €1.5 million

The combination of the selected interventions from across the 26 proposals meet the selection criteria and enable the programme to progress against the objectives and intended impact of the Enabling City Transformation programme and wider EU Cities Mission.

Single City ECT Programmes			
No.	Proposal	City	Country
1	Cap4ClimB – Capacity for Climate Transition Budapest	<i>Budapest</i>	Hungary
2	Elbasan Climate-Neutral Innovation in Mobility (eCIM)	<i>Elbasan</i>	Albania
3	MADLESS	<i>Helsinki</i>	Finland
4	Climate Art City	<i>Klagenfurt am Wörthersee</i>	Austria
5	KReATIVE	<i>Kranj</i>	Slovenia
6	Towards zero-emission urban transport and logistics	<i>Lahti</i>	Finland
7	HALT	<i>Lappeenranta</i>	Finland
8	FACT - Financing Accelerated City Transformation	<i>Leuven</i>	Belgium
9	Building participatory governance model and capacity for climate action	<i>Liberec</i>	Czech Republic
10	SHIFT - Shaping Habits for Innovative Future Transformations	<i>Ljubljana</i>	Slovenia
11	CoGovernance	<i>Lund</i>	Sweden
12	Enabling Climate Transition Malmö	<i>Malmö</i>	Sweden
13	COLLECT - Collectively Enabling Effective Climate Investments	<i>Mannheim</i>	Germany
14	CLIMB	<i>Milan</i>	Italy
15	Developing the future of a climate neutral city	<i>Reykjavík</i>	Iceland
16	HK-ACT (Haags KlimaatAkkoord: Collaborative Transformation)	<i>The Hague</i>	Netherlands

Multi-City ECT Programmes			
No.	Proposal	Cities (Lead, partners)	Country
1	A+CLASS -Alliance for Climate Leadership	Guimarães , Lisbon, Porto	Portugal
2	Empowered Governance	Stavanger , Trondheim	Norway
3	Enabling Massive Change for Climate-neutral Cities	Vitoria-Gasteiz , Madrid, Valencia, Valladolid, Seville, Zaragoza.	Spain
4	GRIP (Green Responsible Innovative Procurement)	Oslo , Aachen, Košice	Norway, Germany, Slovakia
5	HYDROSYM-2030	Helsingborg , Umeå	Sweden
6	Intact (From the triangle of INaction To the wheel of ACTION)	Nantes , Turku	France, Finland
7	JET Cities- Boosting Green Workforce in Cities	Marseille , Dijon, Lyon, Paris, Grenoble Alpes	France
8	Metronome:Design, M&E,City-Transformative Intelligence	Ioannina , Kozani	Greece
9	NZD: sustainable districts in climate change scenario	Prato , Bergamo, Parma, Rome	Italy
10	ZERO-MOVE – Zero Emission Mobility Initiatives	Pécs , Cluj-Napoca, Velenje	Hungary, Romania, Slovenia

2.3 Enabling City Transformation and Climate City Contracts

All the cities in the Enabling City Transformation (ECT) programme are Mission Cities. As part of the Cities Mission, these cities will receive tailored support and advice from the Mission Platform, managed by NetZeroCities, to reach climate neutrality by 2030. The objective is to inspire other cities to follow this example by 2050. A key step for these cities is to develop their Climate City Contracts (CCCs), which lay out a comprehensive plan for achieving climate neutrality across sectors such as energy, buildings, waste management, and transport, alongside investment strategies to support these goals.

The ECT programme enables cities to integrate their ECT Programme activities with their Climate City Contracts, providing time, resources, and expertise to test and refine the actions necessary to reach 2030 climate neutrality. Cities will also work to ensure that the solutions developed through the ECT programme activities are financially sustainable and scalable. Support is offered in areas such as Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), governance, and financing.

It is important to note that while the ECT programme runs alongside the CCCs and will report results to the Cities Mission, the activities carried out within the ECT may differ from the specific obligations outlined in the CCCs. However, synergies between the two initiatives are encouraged, and cities are supported in identifying opportunities for alignment.

2.4 NetZeroCities Portal

The NetZeroCities Portal (Mission Portal) – netzerocities.app - serves as a secure platform for active members engaged in city sustainable development to facilitate interaction, exchange, collaboration, and discussions in the framework of NetZeroCities community. Developed as part of the NetZeroCities Project, the Portal continues to evolve in order to meet the diverse needs of its users.

The Portal provides cities with access to:

- An NZC onboarding module
- Case studies
- A Peer-to-Peer Social Network and Collaboration Space
- A Knowledge Repository
- Climate City Contract submission panel
- Contact points to City Advisors and City Expert Support Facility
- Other useful tools, such as the Climate Transition Map, NetZeroPlanner, Engagement Strategy Tools, Finance Guidance Tool, the Barometer, EU Climate Projects Navigator or Solution Bundle & Solution Outliner.

The Peer-to-Peer Social Network and Collaboration Space is the key module within the Portal for interactions between users, including cities, the NZC consortium, and the wider NZC Community of Practice. ECT Beneficiaries may use this for:

- Meeting, networking, and engaging with other NetZeroCities cities on activities, ideas, insights, and innovations
- Providing online space for virtual sense-making sessions
- Joining and forming groups of cities working on thematic topics
- Sharing their city's activities, ideas, insights, and innovations
- Learning and posting about events hosted by peer cities/ events of interest
- Forming consortia of cities for external funding opportunities
- Having private, bilateral conversations

Learn more about Portal's features [here](#).

2.4.1 Enabling City Transformation Group on Portal

The Groups feature provides a space for more structured and ongoing interactions, offering facilities for document sharing, online meetings, dedicated event calendars, and collaborative work. Every member of the Mission portal has the ability to create either a public or private group.

Enabling City Transformation Group is a public space on Portal dedicated to the Enabling City Transformation. It provides 2 main spaces with different content:

- **Group feed**, a public space where any information connected to Enabling City Transformation Programme can be published, such as relevant public information, opportunities or interesting events. Mission Cities, NetZerocities Consortium and the Community of Practice can publish in that space.
- **ECT Channel**, a private channel is available exclusively to ECT contact persons. The Enabling City Transformation Team utilizes this channel to publish relevant information specific to the call. This includes reminders about upcoming deadlines, Boot Camp materials, communication regarding the learning and sensemaking process, handbooks, reporting templates, and group learning sessions, presentations, and more. This is the space where all the **ECT proposals** can be found (files section). You can also use this channel to communicate with the Cities on the interesting opportunities related to our scope of work.

Access to the Enabling City Transformation Group is open and available via the following link:

<https://netzerocities.app/group-enablingcitytransformationprogrammegroup>

The group welcomes specifically:

- Community of Practice interested in the Enabling City Transformation
- Representatives of the ECT Cities selected in the Enabling City Transformation Call.

Access to the **ECT Channel** is granted per request only. To request access, please enter the channel and request for approval. We will grant it, if you are on the contact list of your City.

The Lead contacts of each city have the ability to request access to these channels on behalf of other members of their teams. To do so, they can send an email to ect@netzerocities.eu and provide the names of their colleagues who are registered on the Portal.

Enabling City Transformation Programme Group Groups directory

Awareness raising Circular economy Citizen participation Culture Education Finance Funding Governance and policy Social innovation Stakeholder engagement Systems innovation Tourism Air quality Biodiversity Climate resilience Food Green areas Health Local resource Nature based solutions Soil Waste Water Analytics and modelling Building Carbon capture Energy Industry Materials Sustainable fuel Technology Transport and mobility

18 POST | 77 MEMBERS

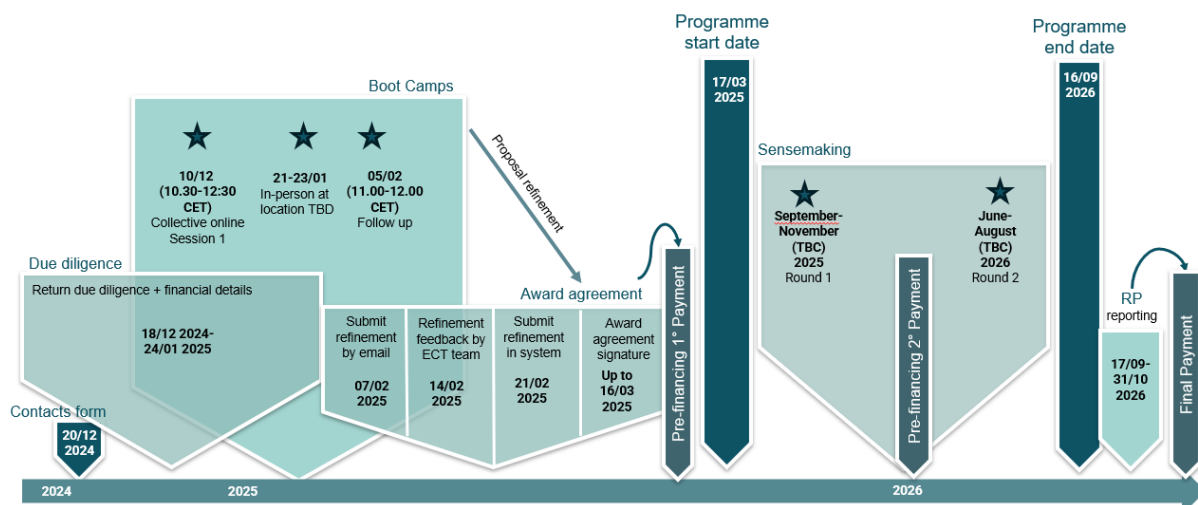
1 CHANNEL | 12 FILES

This group has been created as a public space dedicated to the Enabling City Transformation Programme. It welcomes both **Mission Cities** and the **Community of Practice** interested in the Programme.

The **Enabling City Transformation Call** invites Mission Cities to propose innovative actions to overcome systemic challenges faced when implementing climate action. This eighteen-month programme aims foster large-scale, city-wide transformation, building upon and progressing beyond the Pilot Cities programme.

3 ECT - Programme Schedule Overview

3.1 Grant timeline overview



The Enabling City Transformation takes place from 17 March 2025 to 16 September 2026.

For operationalisation and activity implementation to occur, the awarded city, if applicable as the leader of the cities' consortium, has been invited to undertake a due diligence process and join a Boot Camp immediately following the announcement of their selection in the programme.

From December to March, while the due diligence process prepared the practical field of collection of the financial, legal and operational information needed for contract compliance, the Boot Camp has offered a refinement period, providing additional critical thinking time to update and develop further activities description from the selected application and maximise the chance for success in a dynamic and constantly evolving learning environment, fostering agile adaptation to the cities' needs.

The Enabling City Transformation Award agreement aligns with the European fund rules for grant management under the Horizon Europe Programme. All legally binding obligations from the cities and expectations for activity delivery are integral components of both the core agreement and its annexes within the signed contract between the leading city and Climate-KIC. Upon signature of the Award Agreement, an initial pre-financing payment of 50% of the total award amount will be made within 30 calendar days from the agreement's signature, followed by a second pre-financing payment of 30% in January 2026. The final balance payment, calculated by deducting the payments received from the total actual cost claimed and capped at the maximum awarded amount, will be disbursed upon receipt and approval of the final project report by Climate-KIC and a positive final review of the SGA NZC 101121530 by CINEA.

3.2 Project audit

The Lead Beneficiary assumes responsibility for overseeing their ECT programme, maintaining this role for a duration of five years following the NetZeroCities (Grant Agreement no. SGA NZC 101121530) project's conclusion as part of its cascade funding and which ends on 30th November 2026. During this timeframe, the Lead Beneficiary is required to uphold records and comprehensive supporting documentation, serving as substantiation for the accurate execution of the Project and the declaration of eligible expenses. These records must be available for presentation upon request, and the Lead Beneficiary should also retain the original hard copies. However, it's permissible for digital records to suffice provided they adhere to the legal frameworks of the respective country.

Climate-KIC or designated third parties are vested with the authority to conduct assessments and evaluations to ensure the proper implementation of the Project and adherence to the obligations delineated within the Award Agreement. This encompasses the assessment of deliverables and reports. The Lead Beneficiary guarantees the information furnished is comprehensive, precise, and in

accordance with the prescribed format. Evaluations and audits are admissible up to five years subsequent to the final balance settlement and, if conducted during the Project's execution, could potentially yield recommendations for recalibration.

In the event that any constituent of the European Union elects to carry out inspections, evaluations, audits, or investigations pertinent to the project, the Lead Beneficiary is mandated to furnish all requisite information and documents. Climate-KIC will formally communicate such actions to the Lead Beneficiary. In scenarios where evaluations and audits reveal ineligible expenditures, substantive errors, anomalies, fraudulent activities, or grave breaches of obligations, resultant repercussions could encompass project suspension, termination, disallowance of certain expenses, diminution of rewards, and recourse mechanisms. Under specific circumstances, findings might warrant the inclusion of additional declared costs by the Lead Beneficiary.

3.3 Project contacts

There are three types of contacts assigned to your project:

- **Lead contacts** – The primary contact point for the project, responsible for receiving all information regarding the Programme and cascading it to all partners. The lead contact has the authority to add or remove contacts from the project and can request the full list of assigned contacts. They should be in the copy of all the emails connected to the programme sent by non-Lead contacts. There may be more than one lead contact.
- **Secondary contacts** – All other individuals who should be in the copy of general emails connected to the Enabling City Transformation (reminders about deadlines, general documentation updates, opportunities, etc.).
- **Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and Sensemaking contacts**– The primary contact for the MEL, reporting and sensemaking efforts, workshops and other learning insights aspects.

Any change to the contact list (addition/removal) can be requested only by the Lead Contact through an email titled **ECT Contact update – [NAME OF THE LEAD CITY]** to ect@netzerocities.eu.

The screenshot shows an email composition interface. At the top is a green 'Send' button with a dropdown arrow. Below it are 'To' and 'Cc' fields. The 'To' field contains 'ect@netzerocities.eu'. The 'Cc' field is empty. The subject line is 'ECT - Contact Update - (NAME OF LEAD CITY)'. The body of the email starts with 'Dear ECT Team,' followed by a blank line, then 'We want to assign two new contacts as secondary contacts to our ECT project.' Below this are two lines of placeholder text: '(Name, Email Address)' and '(Name, Email Address)'.

4 Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning & Sensemaking

4.1 What do we mean by it?

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (also known as, “MEL”) for NZC Enabling Cities are interlinked activities that support measuring progress towards climate-neutrality through respective ECT activities, as well as build synergies and collaborations amongst cities based on collective learning for impacts.

- **Monitoring** relates to the development and application of quantitative or qualitative indicators to track and analyse cities' progress towards direct impacts (like GHG emissions reduced) and indirect impacts (co-benefits), as well as the setup, management and maintenance of data collection tools, data governance and infrastructure.

- **Evaluation** denotes the analysis and assessment of monitoring information against set goals, targets, benchmarks, or pathways, with the aim of determining the degrees to which critical milestones, outcomes, and impacts have been achieved.
- **Learning** implies a structured and continuous process of stock-taking and synthesis to generate real-time insights help cities adapt and improve based on their progress on their envisioned pathways to impacts. Strategic Learning supports rapid and agile course-correction and decision making based on testing and experimentation on-the-ground.
- **Insight:** A narrative that tells a story about why and how actions are relevant for cities to achieve (or not achieve) their expected impacts and supports continuous improvement and adaptation.

The **Collective Sensemaking organised and facilitated by the ECT team from NZC Consortium** consists of structured, facilitated, and periodic processes of observation, reflection, stock-taking, and synthesis to generate real-time insights from ECT activities as they are implemented. This practice aims at enabling 'reflexive governance' (also known as adaptive management) which helps cities understand which solutions or interventions are working or not, in what contexts, for whom and why. These insights are captured, codified, and communicated not only for the benefit of cities using them to inform their strategies and constant improvement, but also for the overall learning and capability development of the entire ECT cohort. These sessions will also capture and consolidate evidence and knowledge on the scalability and transferability of ECT interventions across critical emission domains, levers of change, and city, multi-city or national contexts.

4.2 Process and timeline

During the 18-months ECT timeline, Pilot Cities representatives will be invited to participate in **two Rounds of online Inter-Cohort Sensemaking sessions**. These sessions will last for up to 3 hours each and enable peer-to-peer exchange within diverse learning groups. These breakout room discussions will include single-city or multi-city ECT activities along with other Pilot Cities Programme cohorts facing similar barriers and challenges. The ECT programme team along with the NZC Consortium shall organise these Inter-Cohort Collective Sensemaking sessions with a general cadence of **one session every nine months** and closely aligned with the ECT programme's MEL (monitoring, evaluation, learning) reporting process.

The sessions will aim at **synergising and cross-fertilising the enabling conditions and the city-wide transformation lessons** across ECT and pilot activities. These dialogues will also be curated to enable the participants to assess the progress of their city's implementation from a systemic perspective. The learning inquiries will encompass large-scale innovative actions with their city-wide outcomes, as well as pilot activities with their scaling or replication potential for long-term climate-neutrality.

The learning groups and break-out discussions will be clustered based on criteria such as – the thematic areas of intervention of respective ECT activities, their transversal levers of change, potential direct and indirect impacts or co-benefits, qualitative outcomes, scope of actions as city-wide or place-based, impacts pathways identified etc. As cities present their implementation progress, insights, and barriers (in their role of 'Storytellers'), all the participants will have the opportunity to learn from other cities' insights (in their role of active observers or listeners), through facilitated discussions, Q&A, and feedback.

The strategic insights, lessons learnt, and findings generated through the Inter-Cohort Collective Sensemaking sessions will be collated and summarised by the NZC Consortium through 'Insights Reports' at the level of the ECT cohort as well as the individual learning clusters and made widely available on the NZC Portal. Pilot Cities will also be able to capture their own project's qualitative or descriptive insights presented by them in their ECT project's 'Outcomes, Learning and Insights Reports', to be submitted at the end of the ECT programme. This Reporting also coincides with the MEL data reporting based on each project's pre-selected indicators (both direct impacts and co-benefits), as outlined in their respective Impact Framework templates. Reporting templates will be provided well in advance of the reporting windows by ECT team.

The ECT Collective Sensemaking process is planned to be organised by NZC Consortium in two phases, as follows:

- **“Act” Phase between October 2025 – January 2026 with Round 1 of Collective Sensemaking sessions.**

During this phase of Collective Sensemaking, ECT Cities will focus on capturing, sharing, and presenting their real-time insights and results, and their most recent experiences of implementing their portfolio of activities. While doing so, they will also engage in pattern-finding on their project successes and failures, barriers, and enablers.

For systemic interventions where there are no predetermined single sector solutions – as in the case of achieving rapid city-wide climate neutrality in cities – it is necessary to design and operationalise processes that generate rapid and tangible insights as well as feed these back into decision-making and policy/governance directions and the planning or implementation of new actions not contemplated beforehand. **‘Emergent Learning Loop’** implies such an active gathering and continuous application of knowledge for decision-making. By doing so, cities can deploy flexible models of learning and adaptation that allow them to accelerate impacts and become more resilient to internal and contextual changes.

To create such learning loops, specifically in Round 1 sessions, ECT Cities will be expected to highlight their short to medium-term progress achieved (also known as ‘Early Outcomes’) as envisioned in their project’s Impact Frameworks.

- **“Accelerate” Phase between June 2026 – September 2026 with Round 2 of Collective Sensemaking sessions.**

This concluding phase will enable ECT Cities to look back at their 18-month journeys and extract the most impactful stories from the implementation and deployment of their activities. The insights and lessons gathered in these sessions will not only help create a robust evidence base for cities’ reporting, storytelling, and communications to the wider world, but also support their organisational and governance practices towards scaling up and replicating their most effective solutions, practices and interventions for city-wide climate-neutrality.

The data and evidence collected in this phase will support cities in their final MEL data reporting at the end of the programme based on the indicators/impacts and Later Outcomes identified in their Impact Frameworks. Moreover, this data will also enable the ECT team to collate and assess the aggregated impacts of the ECT Programme for reporting to CINEA as well as support the communications and dissemination efforts around it.

The meeting invitations, along with agenda, session objectives, Zoom links, co-creation methods, Miro-board links for all Sensemaking sessions will be shared two to four weeks before each of the sessions, along with any instructions for any preparation that may be expected from participants representing their cities.

MEL indicator data reporting (quantitative) and Learning & Insights reporting (qualitative/descriptive) templates will be released three months before the final reporting window. Online Info-sessions will be organised by the ECT team ahead of both the Sensemaking sessions and MEL reporting period to clarify the content and process guidelines and to respond to queries.

4.3 Storytelling

The storytelling component of the Enabling City Transformation call will capture your ambitions and experiences throughout this process.

As a Mission City, you face complex challenges in implementing systems-innovation approaches to decarbonisation. Documenting your journey provides invaluable insights that are central to the NetZeroCities experience and contribute to the wider climate change narrative. These accounts help us understand both climate change and climate action, while bringing people together to facilitate meaningful change.

The storytelling process will draw from various programme elements and information shared with our team, including in-person bootcamps and learning activities, but will also depend significantly on direct communication with cities. We won't solely highlight obvious successes but will gather all experiences to build a comprehensive picture of climate solutions across different contexts, how they can be implemented and what lessons emerge as a result.

If you have any questions or would like to get in touch with us to set up an interview, please reach out to elisa.abrantes@climate-kic.org.

5 Reporting – Process and procedure

5.1 Reporting Timeline

Reporting serves two purposes: firstly, in support of grant management and assurance, particularly with regard to implementation progress, risks, and potential deviations/changes undertaken in the course of the work to date/emerging through it; and, secondly, to elaborate upon and articulate substantive learning through the act of implementing innovative solutions for critical challenges on the ground – to serve evidence-based and agile decision-making, as well as peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing.

The former is aimed at assurance compliant use of public funding within the given framework of rules, and that public value and impact is being derived from this (i.e. in the service of the programme's aims and objectives); but also serves as a point for reflecting upon how things are progressing and what risks and/or interim outcomes might lead to the need for formal amendments to the Award Agreements, and how the Enabling City Transformation team can support you.

The latter may surface through the structured Collective Sensemaking process that aligns with the Reporting schedule, or through the ECT activities' own governance and learning mechanisms: either way, the Reporting process is geared towards capturing these strategic insights that may be then synthesised within or across cities' portfolio, to develop actionable intelligence and knowledge to support all cities with their ambitious climate neutrality action-plans.

There will be one only reporting period covering all programme duration from 17th March 2025 to 16th September 2026. Reporting will be due within 45 days of the end of the reporting period, by 31st October 2026.

5.2 Reporting submission

Reporting will be submitted online accessing the proposal in the Grant Management System.

The reporting module will be opened closer to the opening of the reporting phase.

Understanding the need of Cities to prepare for future reporting duties already during implementation, though reporting will be online downloadable templates will be made available three months prior to the reporting opening to familiarise with the questions and to share offline with partners so that collective inputs can be gathered from each partner before accessing the system.

Additional access to the proposal platform shall not be requested as a “nice to have” but when the new user needs to actively contribute to online reporting not finding possible or convenient to contribute through the downloadable templates.

Please follow Grant Management System user registration instructions [here](#).

5.2.1 Reporting Content

The report consists of two parts:

- Technical Report and
- Financial Report

Both are introduced in the following paragraphs.

The Enabling City Transformation Team is available to support you and address any questions you may have while preparing reporting.

5.2.2 Technical Report

The technical report comprises a narrative section intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the ECT activities. It is imperative to detail both the accomplishments in accordance with the original plan and any deviations or modifications made. Incorporating examples from the programme to enrich the narratives is encouraged. All narratives and templates should be completed in English.

It is not mandatory to submit deliverables with reporting or during programme implementation. They may be spontaneously added to reporting by cities to complement the overview as they also may be required by the ECT team when better understanding of the narrative is needed. Deliverables can be written in the local language but when shared with the ECT team please complete them with a summary in English.

The following areas necessitate a narrative explanation:

- Project summary (a high level overview of the project suitable to be shared internally NetZeroCities and externally)
- Achievements in all work packages towards intended milestones, objectives, and deliverables.
- Progress towards intended impacts and learning, including insights and indicators progress
- Contributions from each partner
- Communication & Dissemination (summary with goals, channels used, performance indicators,...)
- Reflection on the future of the city's carbon neutrality journey after the end of the ECT programme.

The MEL and communication/disseminations sections will contain an upload functionality but it will also be possible to upload files considered relevant and not specifically requested in other sections.

5.2.3 Financial Report

The Financial Report consists of one narrative-based question and the attachment of the cost report and of the CFS.

The Financial Report summarises costs incurred in your programme against your programme's budget. We understand that actual costs may differ from the budgeted amounts. Deviations at the cost category level do not necessarily imply deviations at the project level.

Please provide an explanation when cost deviated > 10%.

All costs should be identified with cost category, WP and organisation.

The template will include breakdown per Activity to provide further detail to the ECT Team where relevant and to create traceability with the original budget. Not reporting at activity level won't influence the overall assessment of the report, however when significant deviations from original plan occur it is advisable to detail at a greater level than the one of the work package.

No supporting documents are requested in attachment, while recipients shall keep them for 5 years after close of the project and make them available to audits (i.e.: timesheets, invoices, ...).

Budget lines are flexible to category changes with exception made to the subcontract share and amount variations that impact the calculation of indirect costs and generally trigger an agreement amendment.

The Consortium lead must submit a Certificate on Financial Statement (CFS) on their project costs for the project's duration. The project lead is responsible for finding and contracting an independent auditor to perform the CFS audit. The auditor needs to use the CFS audit report template as per [HE AGA guidance](#).

5.2.3.1 Interim financial check

There will be only one reporting period in this programme, however, with the aim of preparing and reacting to eventual underspend before the end of the programme, after approximately the first nine months (half of the project) cities will be asked to perform a financial check.

During this very high level financial check cities will prepare a summary of expected project costs per partner and per cost category (eliminating the activity or work package level). This summary can be seen as an aggregated update of the original budget.

The financial check template can be downloaded [here](#). Few weeks before the requested deadline, each Lead city will receive a pre-populated file where figures taken from the approved budget have already been added in each dedicated cell and only actual/updated figures from cities are missing. Once the updated figures have been added it will be possible to check through the formulas of the excel where there could be underspend or overspend.

In case of significant deviations cities should comment on the impact these deviations could represent for the achievement of the Project goals.

6 Amendment – Process and procedure

During the execution of the ECT activities some cities could realise that unforeseen events or the natural evolution of the programme could lead to the need/desire to make certain changes to the proposal attached to the signed award agreement. In these cases an amendment to the award agreement may be necessary.

While not exhaustive, please find below a list of changes that could require an amendment to the award agreement:

- changes in the role and/or composition of the consortium (add/remove partner/linked third party, change in coordinator- valid for multi-city programme as for all programmes the lead must be represented by a city municipality);
- significant changes to the project description diverting from the original project plan (adding/removing deliverables and/or tasks, changing work package for deliverables/tasks, changes to project's schedule);
- budget transfer between partners or between budget categories (or both) which is linked to a significant change in the project's plan (adding/removing cost categories, budget changes significantly affecting the original delivery);
- changes to the impact framework.

Please note that smaller changes, especially adjustments in deliverable timeline or small budget shifts, will be recorded through the reporting process mentioned earlier. Only significant changes to the award agreement must be agreed upon by all parties involved and documented in an official amendment.

Please note that smaller changes, especially adjustments in deliverable timeline or small budget shifts, will be recorded through the reporting process mentioned earlier. Only significant changes to the award agreement must be agreed upon by all parties involved and documented in an official amendment.

This will be communicated to the relevant cities in their reporting feedback, as interim reporting is the best time to reflect on the need of an amendment.

Amendments may be requested by the project lead while compiling the interim reporting and must be submitted to the ECT Team for review and approval, sending the amendment request form to the ECT email.

Programme leads may be uncertain on which change to consider significant. In this case we recommend to fill in the amendment justification form and let ECT analyse it and provide directions on the need to continue with an amendment or simply keep the information in the reporting files.

The Amendment process will proceed as follows:

1. Cities must fill out the amendment justification template ([download](#)), outlining the changes they intend to make to their programme.
2. Cities must also attach the amended budget form, and/or amended Impact Framework form depending on the changes they are making (not attaching documents that they haven't changed).
3. If changes require modifications to the proposal narrative and work plan, the amendment justification form must be completed to illustrate all changes by providing the comparison table explaining which parts of the proposal narrative require changes. It can be found.
4. The ECT Team will review the documentation received and provide feedback within 15 working days by either approving/rejecting the changes or requesting further clarifications.
5. After the changes are accepted, the ECT team will create a revised award agreement modifying only the relevant sections of annex I that have changed and will send for signature by both parties.
6. The ECT team will ensure also the proposal in the system reflects the approved changes.

Only requests meeting the following criteria will be considered as valid amendments:

- Requests must be submitted in writing – an oral agreement is not binding.
- Changes requested still comply to the Call guidelines and to Call financial guidelines.
- The amendment enters into force after the signature of the project lead and the Climate-KIC representative.
- It takes effect on the date agreed upon by the parties (either retroactive or in the future).
- Amendments can only be implemented after the entry into force of the award agreement and before the final payment is made.
- It must be signed by persons having the same capacity to represent the legal entity as those who signed the initial award agreement.
- The amendment leaves all other provisions of the award agreement unaffected and continues to have full effect.
- It forms an integral part of the award agreement.
- It cannot have the purpose or effect of making changes to the award agreement which might call into question the decision awarding the grant or result in unequal treatment of beneficiaries or applicants.

Please note that an amendment only enters into force when the last party signs the letter confirming agreement with the request for amendment. The amendment will take effect either:

- On the day of its entry into force (i.e., the day of the last signature of the amendment).
- On the specific date(s) indicated and agreed upon in the amendment.

Given the short duration of the programme (18 months) amendment requests should be sent for review only in the first 12 months on the programme.

7 Branding and communications – ECT

You can use the below visual to promote your city being selected to join the Enabling City Transformation Programme. This banner can be used for a variety of purposes on social media, websites, emails, and as an illustration in documents. You will be able to add your city name, and (optional but recommended) a picture of your city. You can also add the title of your ECT activities if desired (two visual options are provided).



Steps:

- ☐ Download editable visual [here](#).
- ☐ Add your city name in the “Your City Name” text field.
- ☐ Optional: Add image in the right-hand “cloud” image frame.
- ☐ Download the final version as an image file.

How to present your city being selected to participate in the Enabling City Transformation Programme

[Name of your City] has been selected to embark upon unprecedented climate action, through the [Cities Mission](#) Enabling City Transformation Programme, an 18-month EU-funded programme managed by NetZeroCities.

Together within a cohort of 48 fellow Mission Cities, **[Name of your City]** will implement innovative actions to tackle major EU Cities Mission implementation challenges and explore enabling & replicable solutions that pave the way for comprehensive, sustainable transformation. Alongside **[add name of local partners or cities your city applied with]**, **[Name of your City]** will collaborate on a portfolio of transformative interventions including **[add examples of the activities you will be implementing as part of the ECT Programme, e.g. the title of your planned ECT Activities]**.

With the Enabling City Transformation Programme, **[Name of your City]** will move beyond testing, progressing towards full-scale, city-wide transformation to drive impactful climate actions and offer practical solutions that other cities can replicate and scale across Europe.

This programme is a unique opportunity for **[Name of you City]** to lead by example, setting the standard for innovation and collaboration while contributing to the EU Cities Mission's overarching goal of climate neutrality by 2030.

Sample Tweet Language to Use:

@CityNameAccount joins the Cities Mission Enabling City Transformation Programme run by @NetZeroCitiesEU!

Part of a 48 cities cohort, we are driving large-scale, climate-neutral action with scalable, replicable solutions!

<https://netzerocities.eu/enabling-city-transformation/>
#MissionCities #EUMissions

Sample LinkedIn post:

@CityNameAccount is proud to join the Cities Mission Enabling City Transformation Programme run by @NetZeroCitiesEU!

Building on the success of the Pilot Cities Programme, the ECT Programme moves from experimentation to the creation of innovation enabling conditions that will inspire and benefit cities across Europe. As part of a cohort of 48 cities, we will drive systemic, city-wide transformations toward climate-neutrality.

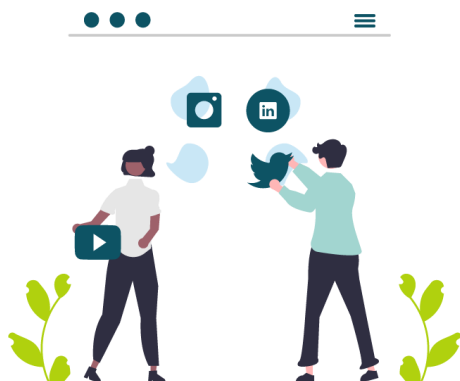
Together with **[tag partners' accounts]** we aim to tackle key implementation barriers and implement a portfolio of actions focused on **[TO BE COMPLETED]**.

This is a unique opportunity for **[Name of you City]** to lead by example, setting the standard for innovation and collaboration while contributing to the EU Cities Mission's goal of climate neutrality by 2030.

More information: <https://netzerocities.eu/enabling-city-transformation/>
#MissionCities #EUMissions #HorizonEU

Accounts to Follow:

We will be promoting the Enabling City Transformation Programme and selected cities on social media. You can follow us, tag us, and share content from the following accounts



Twitter (X)

- [@NetZeroCitiesEU](#)
- [@EUScienceInnov](#)
- [@childp_child](#)
- [@RosalindeEU](#)

LinkedIn

- [@NetZeroCitiesEU](#)
- [@EU Science, Research and Innovation](#)
- [Patrick Child](#)
- [Rosalinde Van der Vlies](#)

Instagram

- [@EU Science](#)
- [@NetZeroCities](#)

Hashtags:

- #EUmissions
- #HorizonEU
- #MissionCities

About the Enabling City Transformation Programme

The [Enabling City Transformation Programme](#) supports Mission Cities in advancing large-scale, city-wide transformations toward climate neutrality. Building on the foundation laid by the Pilot Cities Programme, this 18-month initiative focuses on exploring innovation enabling actions to overcome systemic challenges to climate action and pave the way for comprehensive, sustainable urban transformation.

The goal is to create a strategic portfolio of interventions that can be adapted by other cities, contributing to broader European climate goals. Moving beyond pilot testing, this programme advances toward full-scale implementation, helping Mission Cities achieve their 2030 climate neutrality targets.

About the EU Cities Mission

EU Missions are a new way to bring concrete solutions to some of our greatest challenges. They have ambitious goals and will deliver tangible results by 2030, by putting research and innovation into a new role, combined with new forms of governance and collaboration, as well as by engaging citizens. EU Missions are a novelty of the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme for the years 2021-2027.

Since climate mitigation is heavily dependent on urban action, we need to support cities in accelerating their green and digital transformation. The [Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission](#), in short the EU Cities Mission, involves local authorities, citizens, businesses, investors as well as regional and national authorities to deliver 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030 and ensure that these cities act as experimentation and innovation hubs to enable all European cities to follow suit by 2050. The EU Cities Mission contributes to the [European Green Deal](#) in building a low-carbon, climate-resilient future through research and innovation.

About NetZeroCities

NetZeroCities is a consortium consisting of 34 partners from 27 European countries, managing the EU Cities Mission Platform. NetZeroCities supports the [112 European cities](#) known as the Mission Cities in drastically reducing their greenhouse gas emissions to achieve climate neutrality.

NetZeroCities works as a service-oriented platform supported by world-class practitioners to help cities overcome the current structural, institutional and cultural barriers they face in order to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. NetZeroCities aims to enable European cities and citizens to show the way forward towards an inclusive, thriving, climate resilient and sustainable future. To do so, it tailors advanced capabilities related to systemic change, citizen engagement and democratic governance, capital and financial structuring, and social innovation, to ensure cities have access to the best expertise available anywhere in the world.

Acknowledgment of EU Funding - Requirements

In all subsequent communications, disclosure of EU funding is required. This includes but is not limited to presentations, flyers, social media posts, etc.



**Funded by
the European Union**

Please ensure the prominent display of the EU emblem along with the funding disclaimer as outlined in the provided [EU guidance](#), paying particular attention to the accompanying funding disclaimer notes.

8 Glossary

Term	NZC Enabling City Transformation definition
Breakthrough	Overcoming a deep barrier to change.
(Carbon) Emissions	'Emissions', and 'carbon emissions' are widely used. These are considered to be synonymous with 'GHG emissions' or 'carbon-equivalent emissions', encompassing both CO ₂ and non-CO ₂ GHG emissions.
CINEA	The European Climate Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
Cities Mission	The EU Mission on/for 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030.
Citizen engagement and participation	The wide range of ways in which people, on their own or as part of formal or informal groups, participate in democratic decision making, civic and public life to actively shape and implement, in this case, the transition to net zero.
City systems	Of or pertaining to the systems that make up a city's civic, social, infrastructural, financial, etc. functions.
Climate City Contract (CCC)	The Cities Mission <i>Climate City Contract</i> (CCC) is a governance innovation and tool to help cities collaboratively address their barriers to accelerating transformative action to reach climate neutrality by 2030. The CCC is the documented result of an iterative co-creation and commitment process. Systemic in nature, this process will be led by cities and involve multiple stakeholders at various governance levels, as well as the wider ecosystem of private and civic stakeholders. Together, they will identify key actions to achieve 2030 climate neutrality, and the ways and means to implement them.
Co-benefits	Ancillary impacts or positive side-effects of, and integral to, climate mitigation or adaptation interventions.
Co-production	Ways for different actors to work with and become part of providing services that supports decarbonization directly or indirectly.
Data Controller	The entity that determines the purposes, conditions, and means of the processing of personal data.
Data Processor	The entity that processes data on behalf of the Data Controller
Distributed agency	The recognition that agency - the capacity to act meaningfully - is not only the domain of individuals, but is interdependent, complex and can be collective.
Emergent learning	Learning that is observed, appearing, coming up, rather than summative, retrospective, formally end-of-process learning.
Emissions domains	The main emissions domains for cities include buildings, industry, transport, waste treatment (both solid waste and wastewater), agriculture, and forestry, as well as grid-supplied energy.
Engagement	Active and conscious empowerment, collaboration, and mobilization of a plurality of agents, in this case, to reach net zero.
EU Green Deal	The European Union's response to the climate and environmental-related challenges that are this generation's defining task.
EU Missions	A novelty of the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme for the years 2021-2027. They support the European Commission's priorities such as the European Green Deal, Europe fit for the Digital Age, Beating Cancer, and the New European Bauhaus.
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) is a regulation by which the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission intend to strengthen and unify data protection for all individuals within the European Union (EU). It also addresses the export of personal data outside the EU.
Governance innovation	'Novel rules, regulations and approaches that seek to address a public problem in more efficacious and effective ways, lead to better policy outcomes and enhance legitimacy'.

Horizon Europe	The largest transnational programme ever, supporting research and innovation, implemented by the EU.
Impact Logic, Impact Pathways (or Theory of Change)	Impact Logic (used interchangeably with Theory of Change) refers to co-created, shared, and consensus-based impact narrative(s) as a basis for integrating both qualitative and quantitative evaluations, including the rationale and assumptions for achieving several hard-to-measure or hard-to-define co-benefits of decarbonisation.
Impact Pathways	These are fundamental causal mechanisms by which positive impacts will be produced across a timeline and aligned assumptions and risks outlined by the Impact Logic. These pathways connect proposed interventions to short- and mid-term outcomes that can be observed/measured and are precursors to long-term impacts to shift urban systems.
Learning loops	Processes that generate rapid and tangible insights as well as feed these back into decision-making and policy directions and the planning/implementation of new actions not contemplated a priori.
Levers	Interventions that address distinct but connected elements of a problem, across a range of system characteristics or entry-points, such as (but not limited to): technology; governance and policy; finance and business models; culture, participation, and social innovation; capacity and capability building.
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
Monitoring	Co-development and application of quantitative indicators to track and analyse cities' progress towards direct impacts (like net-zero GHG emissions in critical sectors) and indirect impacts (co-benefits), as well as the setup, management and maintenance of data collection tools and infrastructure.
Evaluation	Analysis and assessment of monitoring information against set goals, targets, and benchmarks, with the aim of determining the degrees to which critical milestones, intermediate outcomes, and final impacts have been achieved.
Learning	Evidence and knowledge which is collected and reported through a structured and continuous process of stock-taking and synthesis. These insights generated in real-time help cities understand which solutions are working, in what contexts, for whom and why, as well as risks and barriers.
Mission Platform	A one-stop platform (accessible to all cities through an online portal) that will: develop, promote, and integrate new and existing tools, resources, and expertise; support in the co-creation of Climate City Contracts with local stakeholders and citizens; and support cities to develop specific strategies that are tailored to suit local and regional contexts.
Pathway	Emerging direction of travel towards a new system with clear and shared goals co-owned by a relevant coalition, well understood barriers to progress and the tools to address them.
Personal data	Any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural, or social identity of that natural person.
Radical collaboration	Collaboration that is built into decision making from the ground up, where stakeholders and citizens are seen as co-deciders and co-producers of outcomes rather than just as consultees. It needs a long-term commitment to building the culture of openness in government and other bodies, and a financial commitment to supporting the social and digital infrastructure that can underpin that long-term engagement.
Sensemaking	(Portfolio) Sensemaking is within a systems innovation approach to systems innovation to support decision making, implementation and scaling. It refers to a structured, facilitated, and continuous process of observation, reflection, synthesis, analysis, pattern finding and insight generation in order to produce intelligence that enables decision making.

Social Innovation	A form of innovation that is social in its ends and its means (Murray et al., 2010): this means developing new ideas, services and models that better address social challenges (EC, 2020). In broad terms, this means that it is innovation that is “social” in its objectives, its process, and its outcomes. As such, it holds opportunities for cities to: (1) provide solutions to local, unmet social needs; (2) engage system actors in the co-design and co-production of the solutions (and by default work to de-risk innovation); (3) create long-term, positive, social impact on multiple scales (geographic, challenge scope); and (4) contribute – by engaging multiple actors in its development process and building capacity – to cultural and behavioural changes that support the development of resilient and responsive innovation ecosystems able to bring actors and resources around missions.
Sustainable EU Investment Plan	The investment pillar of the European Green Deal
System	“A set of elements or parts that is coherently organized and interconnected in a pattern or structure that produces a characteristic set of behaviours, often classified as its “function” or “purpose”. (Meadows, D. H., 2008, <i>Thinking in Systems: A Primer</i> , Chelsea Green Publishing)
Systemic	The characteristic of an approach to a problem or solution that takes account of the interconnected elements or parts of a system in order to influence and transform a system’s behaviours, functions, and/or purposes.
System transformation	The evolving of a system from one operational, functional, and/or behavioural state to another (more desirable) state.
Systems innovation	Systems thinking is an approach to understanding and analysing problems that focuses on how the parts of a system relate to each other. Systems innovation aims to create whole system transformation by using the interdependence between multiple levers - such as technology, market mechanisms, regulations, and social innovations - to address complex problems
Tipping points	Where one change leads to a positive cascade of self- reinforcing further changes.
Transition pathway	A suite of complimentary/synergistic actions (across levers) that enable significant emissions reduction
Urban stakeholders	The wide range of organised interests and groups who form part of a city’s ecosystem.