

«93% of GHG emissions are beyond the local government's direct control. While municipalities are on the front lines of the fight against climate change, they cannot succeed alone.»

The Climate City Contract (CCC) is a strategic tool to help cities tackle climate change. Here's what it is and why it matters for our future.

What is the CCC?

Economic analyses show 93% of GHG emissions are beyond local government control. Cities thus need collaborative efforts to achieve climate-neutrality. The CCC aims to foster such collaboration among local governments, citizens, businesses, universities, and public organisations. It includes mutual agreements on climate commitments, action and finance, enabling collective action to make cities climate-neutral.

Key Components of the CCC:

2030 Climate-Neutrality Commitment:

Cities officially declare their goal to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. Though not legally binding, this agreement carries political weight and requires commitment from key stakeholders, promoting shared responsibility.

2030 Climate-Neutrality Action Plan:

This plan outlines specific portfolios of actions and interventions needed for climate neutrality. It assesses current efforts, details paths for transition, and includes measures to enhance governance and drive social innovation.

2030 Climate-Neutral Investment Plan:

To realise these plans, cities need significant funding. This plan mobilises public, private, and civic capital to support the Action Plan's projects, identifying costs and investment opportunities.

Why is the CCC Important?

Collaborative Effort: The CCC unites diverse groups in comprehensive climate action, ensuring shared accountability and action.

Political Commitment: Cities demonstrate strong dedication to reducing GHG emissions, holding leaders accountable and encouraging continuous efforts.

Support and Recognition: Successful CCCs earn the EU Mission Label, validating efforts and providing access to support and funding from the Climate City Capital Hub.

Ongoing Improvement: The CCC is a living document, regularly reviewed and updated to address new challenges and opportunities, ensuring goals remain relevant and achievable.

In summary, the CCC fosters collaboration, secures political commitment, provides an action framework, and ensures continuous progress toward climate neutrality by 2030.

Source: Climate City Contract Progress Report, NetZeroCities



«Participating in
this Mission helped
cities to connect
the dots in the
system, accelerating
ongoing activities
and **attracting more
stakeholders.**»

As shared by a city representative
interviewed for the CCC Progress Report

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As mayors and elected officials, your leadership is crucial in the global fight against climate change. The Climate City Contract (CCC) is an essential tool that can significantly enhance your city's climate action efforts. Here's why the CCC matters for accelerating climate action in your city.

Strategic and systemic instrument: The CCC provides a strategic framework to achieve climate neutrality, encouraging cities to look beyond isolated projects and adopt a holistic approach. By identifying interconnected challenges and solutions across sectors of emissions, the CCC helps you create a comprehensive plan that addresses the root causes of emissions.

Connecting the dots: One of the CCC's key strengths is the opportunity it offers to integrate various ongoing activities, projects, and networks into a cohesive trajectory. This integrated approach not only accelerates existing initiatives but also attracts new stakeholders, creating a multiplier effect for your climate action efforts.

A narrative device: The CCC is designed to be adaptable, allowing your city to assess its unique strengths and tailor its climate action narrative to advance its key priorities, be they social justice, industrial transformation, attractiveness renewal... This customisability means a CCC is a political and strategic document with a strong local identity.

It highlights the significance of your city's efforts, making your climate action plan the force driving your city towards a better future.

Benefits of the CCC:

- Strategic Planning: Facilitates a comprehensive, interconnected approach to climate action.
- Momentum Building: Integrates and accelerates ongoing activities, attracting more stakeholders.
- Local Adaptability: Tailors strategies to your city's unique conditions, highlighting its strengths and innovations.
- Political Accountability: Demonstrates a firm commitment to climate neutrality, enhancing your city's reputation and credibility.
- Access to Funding: Earning the EU Mission Label through the CCC can open doors to crucial funding, ensuring your plans are financially supported.

In summary, the CCC is not just a document but a strategic, systemic instrument that can transform your city's climate action efforts. It connects various initiatives, adapts to local conditions, and builds a compelling narrative for your city's journey towards climate neutrality. Embracing the CCC means leading your city with vision and commitment towards a sustainable future.

Source: Climate City Contract Progress Report, NetZeroCities



«This Mission label is like getting a medal for an ironman [triathlon]. I mean, does it really matter, the medal? The work you have to do to be able to do that is so immense. [...] even if they don't get the Mission Label, they've done transformation work inside. [...] you're fit at the end right after you've run the Ironman. You're fit and healthy, and you're super strong.»

As shared by a city representative
interviewed for the CCC Progress Report

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As mayors and elected officials, your leadership is crucial in the ongoing journey towards climate neutrality. The Climate City Contract (CCC) is not a one-time initiative but a dynamic, evolving process that requires continuous political support and adaptability. Here's why your commitment is essential and why the work is only starting.

The CCC is designed as a living document, meaning it is subject to regular review and updates. This flexibility allows your city to adapt its climate strategies in response to new challenges and opportunities, ensuring ongoing relevance and effectiveness. Achieving the EU Mission label is a significant milestone, notably to build credibility, momentum and unlock funding opportunities, but it is merely a step in a much larger journey. Continuous citizen and stakeholder engagement, monitoring, and evaluation are critical to keeping the CCC aligned with evolving circumstances and long-term sustainability goals.

While the EU Mission Label is a prestigious recognition, **the true value of the CCC process lies in the transformative change it drives within your city.** The rigorous process of developing and implementing the CCC fosters significant internal improvements and strengthens the capacity of local governments and stakeholders. The ultimate goal is not just to earn a label but to create a robust, resilient framework that propels your city towards climate neutrality.



This transformation equips your city to handle future climate challenges with greater agility and strength.

For the CCC to succeed, unwavering political support and leadership are crucial. Regular interaction with both administrative and political leaders ensures that the CCC remains a priority. However, understanding and ownership of the mission among political leaders must be deepened. It is vital for elected officials to fully grasp the scope and importance of the CCC and to champion it at every stage. Your role in fostering this understanding and commitment cannot be overstated.

Climate action is inherently uncertain and requires a willingness to experiment and learn iteratively. Cities must embrace flexibility and adaptation, recognizing that plans may need to change in response to new information or shifting circumstances. This approach encourages innovation and resilience, allowing cities to navigate the complex transition to climate neutrality effectively.

In short, the CCC represents a strategic, long-term commitment to climate action. Your continued support and leadership are essential to maintaining momentum and ensuring the CCC evolves in line with new challenges and opportunities. By embracing the iterative nature of the CCC and fostering a culture of flexibility and adaptation, you can lead your city towards a sustainable, climate-neutral future. Remember, obtaining the Mission Label is just the beginning—the real work is in the continuous, transformative journey that lies ahead.

Source: Climate City Contract Progress Report, NetZeroCities

«The Climate City Contract facilitates a sort of thinking which makes you question some of the things that you might otherwise lose sense of. **It allows for a broader thinking, global climate action.**»

As shared by a city representative
interviewed for the CCC Progress Report

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The dedication and hard work of Mission Cities on the Climate City Contract (CCC) have yielded remarkable results, driving meaningful change and laying a strong foundation for climate neutrality. Let's reflect on the positive impacts and progress made.

Internal Transformation for Climate Neutrality: The CCC process has prompted municipalities to reevaluate and restructure their governance practices. This has led to the formation of dedicated transition teams, increased cross-departmental collaboration, and the hiring of climate transition staff, embedding climate action as an organizational priority.

Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration: Your efforts have significantly enhanced stakeholder engagement. By establishing structured collaboration mechanisms, cities have mobilised existing networks and formed new partnerships, ensuring diverse perspectives are incorporated into climate strategies, leading to more robust and inclusive solutions.

Changes in Climate Governance: The Mission Cities has encouraged innovative governance approaches, such as living labs, policy experiments, and co-creation methods. This has fostered a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability, equipping cities to navigate the complexities of climate action more effectively.

Inter-City Collaboration: Enhanced collaboration between cities is a standout achievement of the CCC. Through formal platforms like twinning programs and informal peer exchanges, cities have engaged in valuable knowledge sharing and joint problem-solving efforts, driving collective learning and implementing best practices.

Driving Capacity Building: The CCC has catalysed governance learning within municipal climate governance. Structural changes, expanded stakeholder involvement, and inter-city collaboration have shifted cities towards networked, transition-oriented governance. Innovative practices, such as living labs and policy experiments, have further empowered cities.

Embracing Reflexivity and Learning: While progress has been significant, the journey is ongoing. Continuous support and tailored assistance in areas like data management and flexibility are essential to anchoring reflexivity and iterative learning across municipal organisations.

Mission cities' efforts have made a profound impact, but the work is far from over. As CCCs continue to be iterated and refined, local governments teams remain crucial. Embrace the uncertainty, remain flexible, and keep pushing the boundaries of innovation. Together, we are building a sustainable, climate-neutral future for our cities.

Source: Climate City Contract Progress Report, NetZeroCities



**«Before the Climate
City Contract,
climate action was
a project structure
and now it is an
institutionalised
structure»**

As shared by a city representative
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As teams working on climate action and the Climate City Contract (CCC) in cities, your role is pivotal in driving the transition towards climate neutrality. Implementing a CCC requires a strategic and multifaceted approach, emphasising coordination, co-creation, anchoring, and continuous governance learning.

Transition teams are central to the CCC process, guiding and facilitating the transition within municipalities. Your role involves mobilising diverse stakeholders and aligning their efforts toward the common goal of climate neutrality. Effective **coordination** ensures all parties work in harmony, maximizing collective action impact.

Identifying and engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders is vital. By representing diverse perspectives and expertise, transition teams can develop more robust and inclusive strategies. **Engaging** stakeholders from various sectors enriches the CCC process and strengthens the collective effort toward climate neutrality.

Fostering **trust** and collaboration among stakeholders is fundamental. Transition teams must create a supportive environment for collective action and transformative change. Promoting open communication, consensus-building, and shared ownership of the CCC process builds the foundation for sustained and impactful climate action.

Facilitating stakeholder **collaboration and co-creation** is crucial. Transition teams need to create an inclusive environment where innovative solutions and holistic strategies can emerge. By bringing together businesses, academia, civil society, and public organizations, you foster a collaborative atmosphere that drives the development of comprehensive transition plans.

Empowering stakeholders to integrate transition plans within their organisations is essential. Transition teams **promote internal commitment** and ensure climate considerations are embedded into decision-making processes, facilitating systemic changes necessary for climate action.

Promoting **reflexivity and adaptability** within municipalities is critical. Transition teams must foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement, facilitating knowledge exchange and providing learning opportunities to stay agile and responsive to evolving challenges.

Supporting the **implementation** of transition plans is where strategic vision becomes reality. Transition teams initiate experiments, monitor progress, and ensure actions align with climate goals, adapting and refining strategies as needed.

Implementing a CCC is a complex process that requires dedication, strategic thinking, and collaboration. By focusing on coordination, co-creation, anchoring, and learning, you can lead your city toward a climate-neutral future, creating a resilient and vibrant local ecosystem.

Source: Climate City Contract Progress Report, NetZeroCities



«There's no transition without a just transition»

As shared by a city representative interviewed for the CCC Progress Report

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A key component of the Climate City Contract (CCC) journey is integrating citizens and urban stakeholders. Engaging stakeholders and citizens presents significant challenges, but this inclusive approach is crucial. Here's why your work is vital and how to navigate obstacles to foster a collaborative ecosystem for change.

Engaging a diverse range of stakeholders — including citizens, businesses, and various government levels — is essential for CCC success. Inclusivity ensures multiple perspectives and expertise contribute to robust climate strategies. However, mistrust, weak civil society, and cultural differences can pose challenges. Overcoming these barriers and fostering deeper citizen involvement is crucial for strong climate action.

The extent of stakeholder involvement varies. Some stakeholders are merely informed about the CCC process, while others actively participate in co-creation and decision-making. Often, non-profits and civil society groups are excluded from these processes, highlighting a gap in engagement. Bridging this gap ensures all voices are heard and contribute to climate neutrality. Building long-term collaborative relationships with external stakeholders is another challenge. Limited time and the need to establish trust and a shared vision can impede collaboration. Effective engagement requires persistent efforts to cultivate trust, align goals, and demonstrate the CCC's tangible benefits.

Cities often struggle to convey these benefits, making it difficult to motivate private sector participation. Clear communication about the CCC's value and outcomes is essential for broad support and active involvement.

Despite these challenges, your work in fostering an inclusive ecosystem for change is impactful. Here are actionable steps to enhance stakeholder integration in the CCC process:

Build Trust and Transparency:

Foster open communication and transparency with stakeholders. Regular updates and inclusive dialogue can mitigate mistrust and cultural barriers.

Expand Engagement Efforts: Actively include non-profits and civil society groups in the CCC process. Their involvement enriches the CCC with diverse perspectives and enhances community buy-in.

Communicate Benefits Clearly:

Highlight the CCC's benefits to different stakeholders, especially the private sector. Demonstrating their participation's tangible outcomes can motivate engagement.

Facilitate Collaborative Platforms:

Create mechanisms for long-term collaboration, such as working groups and public forums. These platforms enable ongoing interaction, trust-building, and problem-solving.

Leverage Success Stories: Share success stories from other cities to illustrate the CCC's positive impacts. Real-world examples can inspire confidence and commitment among stakeholders.



Source: Climate City Contract Progress Report, NetZeroCities

«17 ingredients to start a Climate City Contract!»»

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Creating a Climate City Contract (CCC) may seem daunting, but it's crucial for achieving a climate-neutral future. Here's a guide to ensure your efforts are strategic, inclusive, and effective.

Using the CCC for Transformative Governance

Clarify Objectives: Understand the primary goals—achieving climate neutrality and sustainable development. Ensure everyone is aligned.

Establish Governance Structures: Create a dedicated transition team to manage the CCC process.

Tailor the CCC Template: Adapt the framework to your city's unique context, capabilities, and priorities.

From Planning to Implementation

Engage Stakeholders: Involve diverse sectors—businesses, academia, civil society, and government to enhance effectiveness.

Develop a Narrative: Craft a story that communicates your city's vision for climate neutrality.

Secure Political Support: Ensure commitment at all government levels.

Internal Anchoring

Create an Implementation Plan: Outline steps, timelines, responsibilities, and required resources.

Invest in Capacity Building: Enhance the skills and knowledge of city staff and stakeholders.

Foster a Collaborative Culture: Promote shared ownership and collaboration within the organisation.

Changing Governance Approaches

Embrace Experimentation: Innovate with new governance structures and processes.

Foster Cross-Sector Partnerships: Encourage collaboration across departments and sectors.

Ensure Inclusivity: Make the process participatory, considering diverse perspectives.

Anchoring Beyond Engagement

Engage Broad Stakeholders: Involve the private sector and citizens with clear expectations and incentives.

Integrate Social Justice: Ensure fair and just outcomes for all communities.

Building Capacities

Use the CCC for Learning: Build expertise in climate governance.

Foster Inter-City Collaboration: Engage in knowledge exchange with other cities.

Embrace Reflexivity and Iterative Learning: Continuously adapt and refine the CCC.

Starting a CCC is a significant step. With strategic planning, inclusive engagement, and continuous learning, your city can lead in climate action, contributing to a climate-neutral future.

Source: Climate City Contract Progress Report, NetZeroCities



«[Having prior experience as a politician myself,] I never thought that politicians are so important until I saw what happens when they're not there. Then it's a technocratic mission but it needs to have a heart and soul. **It needs to have a spokesperson who has ownership of the mission and who is willing to stick their neck out for the project. If this is not there, it will not accelerate**»

As shared by a city representative
interviewed for the CCC Progress Report

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The Climate City Contract (CCC) is essential for achieving climate neutrality in European cities. However, these local initiatives require strong support from national and regional policymakers.

Political commitment and leadership are vital for the CCC's success. While mayors and local leaders drive the transition to climate neutrality, their efforts must be backed by national and regional leaders. Regular **collaboration** between all government levels is crucial to maintain momentum and align objectives. National policies should support mayors, providing necessary tools and resources.

Despite cities' ambitious efforts, national support is often lacking, and sometimes policies even counteract local climate actions. This gap between local ambitions and national policies hinders progress. National governments must **align their policies** with local climate goals, providing consistent support to empower cities. Collaboration and tailored support from national governments will enable cities to implement their CCCs more effectively.

Engaging stakeholders from various sectors, including the private sector, academia, and civil society, is vital for the CCC's success. National governments can foster this engagement by **creating incentives and removing barriers to participation**, leading to more comprehensive and sustainable climate solutions.

Cities face significant challenges in navigating multilevel governance. Aligning mandates and coordinating efforts between local, regional, and federal governments is often difficult due to overlapping policies and bureaucratic hurdles. Simplifying **governance structures** and ensuring **clear, streamlined mandates** would greatly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of local climate actions.

In conclusion, cities are on the front lines of the fight against climate change, but they cannot succeed alone. Support and active involvement at national and regional levels are crucial to overcome the challenges of multilevel governance and ensure local climate actions are effective and sustainable.

Source: Climate City Contract Progress Report, NetZeroCities

