



Questions & Answers: Selection of 100 Cities for the EU Mission “Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities”

Brussels, 28 April 2022

1. What is the Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities?

The Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities “[Cities Mission](#)” is one of five EU Missions, a novelty of the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme for the years 2021-2027. They are a new way to bring concrete solutions to some of our greatest challenges. Working towards ambitious goals, they are expected to deliver tangible results by 2030.

The Cities Mission will involve local authorities, citizens, businesses, investors as well as regional and national authorities to:

- Deliver 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030;
- Ensure that these cities act as experimentation and innovation hubs to enable all European cities to follow suit by 2050.

2. How were the selected cities chosen?

The Commission launched a Call for Expression of Interest addressed to cities, open between 25 November 2021 and 31 January 2022. This call allowed cities to state their interest in becoming climate-neutral by 2030 as part of the Mission and to submit information on their current situation, ongoing work, and plans on climate neutrality. The Commission applied a rigorous procedure to select cities in an objective and fair manner. 377 cities from all EU Member States as well as nine associated or potentially associated countries submitted an expression of interest. 362 of them were found to be eligible.

Firstly, independent experts evaluated each expression of interest. Secondly, the Commission used additional criteria to ensure geographical balance as well as balance in terms of city characteristics. Various cities were chosen: some “front-running” cities; some larger cities with the potential to have a stronger impact in terms of climate neutrality; some cities with innovative ideas on how to deliver the digital or smart dimension of the mission, etc. This diversity is essential to pave the way for all cities to be climate neutral by 2050.

3. What are the next steps for the selected cities?

The most important elements of this Mission are the Climate City Contracts, which are to be drawn up, signed and implemented by each participating city. They should set out action plans for the city to achieve climate neutrality by 2030 and include an investment plan. While not legally binding, these contracts will constitute a clear and highly visible political commitment to the EU, national and regional authorities and citizens.

Climate City Contracts will be co-created with local partners and citizens, with the help of a Mission Platform run by the project [NetZeroCities](#). The Mission Platform will provide the necessary technical, regulatory and financial assistance to cities.

The selected cities will be contacted by the Mission Platform following the public announcement of the list of cities with practical information about the next steps. A first webinar for participating cities will be organised in the coming days.

4. What is the budget allocated for this?

In total, Horizon Europe will invest €360 million in the Mission Platform and in research and innovation actions linked to the Mission (e.g. in mobility, energy, urban planning) in the period 2021-23. A first [full work programme](#) was published in [December 2021](#). However, this can only be seed funding, and the Commission will work to help mobilise additional funding and financing from public and private sources.

5. Why limit the support of the Mission to 100 cities when so many more applied?

The Mission's approach is based on individual and tailor-made support to cities, based on their specific needs. The budget limits the number of cities at this stage.

However, the Cities Mission and the Mission Platform also plan to ensure that a number of services will be available to a much larger group of cities, including those that have expressed their interest and were not selected, such as twinning and teaming, web-based assistance, webinars. We will also look at what more can be done, including through Horizon Europe projects, based on the needs identified in cities' expressions of interest.

6. What will happen to the cities, which submitted an expression of interest to join the Mission but were not selected?

Cities that were not selected were informed by the Commission. The Commission is still committed to work with them and to help them fulfil their objectives. They have been informed of the possibilities to remain connected and work with the Cities Mission, including:

- **Services from the Mission Platform:** the Mission Platform can already offer services to the group of cities that want to work on climate neutrality with a 2030 timescale, but that were not selected in the call, and the Commission is considering dedicating additional resources for this purpose through forthcoming calls under Horizon Europe.
- **National networks:** in some countries, national networks are already being formed in support of applicant cities. A number of countries have announced or are planning to announce that they are intending to support a wider group of cities, whether or not they are selected, including in several cases with financial assistance.
- **Local/regional efforts:** on top of these national networks, the Commission is going to encourage the development of regional networks and "clusters" or "teams" of cities to be formed to work together on climate neutrality.
- **R&I projects under the Cities Mission Work Programme of Horizon Europe:** calls are open to all cities that commit to the objectives of the Cities Mission and cities may find interesting opportunities to get involved in such projects.

7. Why were additional 12 cities from non-EU countries chosen?

The Call for Expression of Interest was open to EU cities as well as to cities from countries associated to Horizon Europe and to countries with the potential of becoming associated. Given the strength of the interest from the EU side alone, 100 EU cities were invited to join the programme, but an additional 12 cities were chosen based on the same criteria as applied for the selection of EU cities. Cities from Associated Countries will be treated the same as EU cities, but of course will not have the same access to other EU funds such as Cohesion Funds.

8. How will national and regional authorities be involved in the implementation of the Mission?

The role of national and regional authorities will be key in the implementation of the Mission. National networks already exist in some countries, and the Commission is working closely with Member States to develop these networks further and to encourage the establishment of similar networks in countries where they do not exist yet.

We are also urging cities, national and regional authorities to work together in the co-creation process leading to each city's Climate City Contract. National and regional authorities have a key role to play for example in providing financial and regulatory support.

9. What happens if cities do not meet the climate neutrality target?

The Climate City Contracts will not be legally binding. There will be no legal consequences. That said, the contracts will be a very visible commitment that the mayor or political representative of the city will have made towards their national authorities, the Commission and towards the city's inhabitants.

10. What links are there with other EU programmes or other Missions?

The Cities Mission is not seeking to replace any other initiative targeted at cities, but to build on what is already there. If a city already has a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) in line with the methodology of the Covenant of Mayors or a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP), its Climate City Contract should build on that. The Mission will continue to work closely with existing EU programmes such as the Covenant of Mayors and the European Climate Pact.

Synergies with other Missions will be very important, in particular with the [Mission on Climate Adaptation](#) and the [Mission on Oceans](#).

The direct involvement of citizens in the [European Climate Pact](#) as drivers of change and ambassadors for climate neutrality will help the Mission bring citizens closer to the design, implementation and monitoring of mission activities.

The Mission also contributes to the objectives of the new [EU Cohesion Policy](#) and particularly to the policy objective of “a greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility”. The [European Urban Initiative \(EUI\)](#), which is sought to provide coherent support to cities supporting urban innovation, capacity and knowledge building, territorial impact assessments, policy development and communication, offers many possibilities for synergies.

For More Information

[Factsheet 'EU Cities Mission: Meet the Cities'](#)

[Press release on the EU Cities Mission](#)

[Video](#)

[100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030](#)

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