

# Green City Accord - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

## 1. Why is the Green City Accord being launched?

EU environmental policies have significantly improved the state of the environment and have raised environmental standards across EU countries. However, many challenges remain.

Some of these challenges include air pollution (which is the biggest environmental health risk in Europe), the quality of Europe's water bodies, noise pollution, the decline of biodiversity and ecosystems and inefficient waste management practices.

The [majority of Europeans](#) consider that protection of the environment is important, and more than 70% of the Europeans live in urban areas. Cities therefore remain critical to meeting the EU's environmental objectives and in helping the EU to become a more sustainable region.

This is why the European Commission calls upon cities to take further action and why it has created this new initiative, the Green City Accord.

## 2. Who should sign the political commitment?

Mayors – or equivalent representatives of the respective councils - should sign the political commitment. They should be committed to making their city cleaner and healthier, and interested in giving their environmental efforts visibility.

## 3. How does the monitoring and reporting work?

After signing the Accord, the city has two years to submit a first report. This report should contain:

- Information on the baseline situation (e.g. levels of relevant pollutants at the time of joining the Accord) in each of the five areas, including data on the common GCA indicators (see below)
- The targets which the city has set for itself to meet by 2030 (these targets may be qualitative or quantitative)
- An overview of the next steps (measures and actions) the city intends to take in order to achieve the targets

The city is required to report on progress every three years through an easy-to-use online tool. This tool is currently being prepared.



Cities will be allowed to use existing data and other reporting requirements that they are already engaged in. For instance, a city that reports regularly on air pollution, in the framework of the Ambient Air Quality Directives, or alternatively in the framework of another city action plan or a national government programme, could re-use such information or data to fulfill these reporting requirements.

The timeframe for achieving the locally defined targets is 2030.

To monitor progress towards the Green City Accord's objectives and allow for comparability across cities, a small set of key indicators has been established. All signatories will use these indicators for reporting purposes.

#### **4. How often does a signatory city have to report?**

Every three years after the submission of the baseline report.

#### **5. What type of support does the Green City Accord offer to signatories?**

The helpdesk provides technical support. This includes answering queries related to planning, implementation and monitoring of a city's actions.

The helpdesk will also provide access to materials such as best practices for inspiration, links to existing tools, guidance documents and advice on appropriate EU funding support.

#### **6. Is the Green City Accord linked to the European Green Capital and Green Leaf Awards?**

The [European Green Capital \(EGCA\)](#) and [European Green Leaf \(EGLA\)](#) Awards are given each year to cities leading the way in environmentally friendly urban living. Given that Green City Accord cities will take stringent action to enhance the protection of the environment, signatories will have a 'competitive advantage' when applying for these awards.

EGCA and EGLA winners receive a financial prize, which has recently been increased (the EGCA 2023 winning city will receive €600 000, while up to two EGLA 2022 winning towns or cities will receive €200 000 each). Winners and shortlisted cities also gain access to the European Green Capital Network, providing them with additional support and a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices.

#### **7. Is a signatory obliged to take action in all five areas of the Green City Accord?**

Yes. By signing the Accord, a city commits to addressing all five areas: air, water, nature and biodiversity, circular economy and waste, and noise. Cities can prioritise certain areas. For example, a city that has already taken steps to improve air quality beyond the minimum standards set by EU laws can prioritise addressing water quality and efficiency, by identifying further actions or measures to achieve this goal.



The prioritisation of areas will need to be identified in the early stages (post signature). Cities will still need to set targets for all areas and report accordingly, including on a small set of prescribed common indicators.

### **8. What if a signatory fails to submit the required information?**

If a signatory fails to submit the required information, the city's membership will be suspended.

The city will be informed of the suspension in advance, and given time to provide the necessary information. The required information includes the baseline report, the 2030 targets, and delivery of the regular progress reports within the indicated deadlines.

The suspension will be lifted, once the requested documents are provided. This procedure ensures transparency and fairness with regard to other signatories.

### **9. Is there a fee associated with the Green City Accord?**

There is no fee associated with joining the Green City Accord.

### **10. Are other organisations, apart from cities, also eligible to join the Green City Accord?**

Only local governments are eligible to join. Other organisations, such as associations and networks of cities and regions, regional and national authorities, universities, private companies or NGOs, are encouraged to support the initiative. If your organisation is interested in becoming a Green City Accord supporter, please contact us at [contact@greencityaccord.eu](mailto:contact@greencityaccord.eu)

### **11. Who is behind this initiative?**

The Green City Accord is a European Commission initiative. The secretariat is currently run by a consortium consisting of: EUROCITIES, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).

### **12. Where can I find more information about the Green City Accord?**

For more specific information about the initiative, we invite you to read our brochure and/or write an email to: [contact@greencityaccord.eu](mailto:contact@greencityaccord.eu)

