NetZeroCities
Pilot Cities Programme Handbook

Version N°0.1

Authors: NZC Consortium coordinated by EIT Climate-KIC

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.

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History of reviews

Version	Date	Item
A1.0	11 September 2023	First version published

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

Table of Contents

1 NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme Handbook

1.1 The Pilot Cities Programme Team

We are excited to introduce our dedicated team that will provide support to you throughout your journey in the Pilot Cities Programme. Our team is committed to support at every step, offering guidance, addressing your inquiries, and listening to your feedback and insights. Together, we will assist you in implementing your innovative approaches to rapid decarbonization during the two-year program.

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

As we all feel equally responsible for your projects, 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 pilotcities@netzerocities.eu.

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Lead Orchestrator - Cities Mission / NZC Pilot Cities Programme Lead

WILL WADE
NZC Pilot Cities Programme Orchestrator

Calls - Programme Orchestration

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NZC Pilot Cities Programme Programme Manager

Grant Management – Calls – CESF

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MEL, Learning & Sensemaking lead

Mateusz Hoffmann
NZC Project Officer for Pilot Cities Programme

Grant Management – Bootcamp – Calls -– Portal

Claire Oblinger
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Grant management – Calls - Twinning
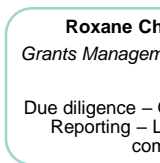
Roxane Choiseau-Gabory
Grants Management Business Partner

Due diligence – Grant Management – Reporting – Legal and financial compliance

Ilenia Piergallini
NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme – Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Officer

MEL & Learning & Sensemaking programme operations

Elisa Abrantes
Communications Lead

PCP Communications and Storytelling

Meline Gonzalez-Piloyan
Project Coordinator - Twinning Programme Lead

Twinning Learning Programme

1.2 NZC PCP Grant Q&A Forum – Cohort 1

All matters connected to the Pilot Cities Programme (PCP) should be addressed to a single email address: pilotcities@netzerocities.eu. However, the Pilot Cities Programme Team acknowledges that sometimes a live conversation is far more efficient and convenient for presenting a case or asking a question. Therefore, the Pilot Cities Programme Team will organize a recurring call open to all beneficiaries of the Pilot Cities Programme.

The aim of this call is to answer any doubts and questions connected to the grant management of the Pilot Activities, including periodic reports, cost eligibility, employment, consortium management, and so on. Please be aware that this call will not host thematic experts.

The meeting takes place **every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at 3 PM CEST/CET** using the following link:

https://climate-kic-org.zoom.us/j/81249392901?pwd=RGk4ZHpyUUQzYkErS0JzWnpGZkxWUT09

The series starts on the **3rd October 202023.**

All the occurrences of the meeting will be announced in the events module of the Pilot Cities Programme Group on Mission Portal.

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

The answers to the questions, if relevant, will contribute to the PCP FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions).

2 The 53 Pioneering Pilot Cities

2.1 Selected Pilot Cities

This first cohort of 53 cities from across twenty-one European Union and Horizon 2020 Associated Countries has been selected to embark upon unprecedented climate action, through 1st Pilot Cities Programme Call under the NetZeroCities Project. Working individually or as clusters, these Pilot Cities implement systemic and locally designed innovative actions that span multiple areas, from buildings to waste, and levers of change, including governance, finance and policy. The 53 cities are part of 25 applications selected from a wide array of 103 applications involving 159 cities from 33 countries across the European Union and Horizon 2020 Associated Countries.

The contacts from each city will have the opportunity to engage and exchange with each other in the Portal Group to which everyone will be invited to join.

List of selected Pilot City Projects		
Individual Pilot Cities Activities		
No.	Name of the Pilot	City	Country
1	1.5-Degree City	Turku	Finland
2	Blueprint for Net-Zero Apartment-block Neighborhoods	Cluj-Napoca	Romania
3	Budapest CARES - Climate Agency for Renovation of homES	Budapest	Hungary
4	Creating NetZero vision for Rivne	Rivne	Ukraine
5	District C: a zero-carbon commitment	Guimaraes	Portugal
6	Drammen City - Zero emission 2030	Drammen	Norway
7	FAASST-NZ : Facilitate trAnsition Actions maSSification Towards Net Zero	Dijon	France
8	Galway City Net zero pilot city.	Galway	Ireland
9	Istanbul - Green and Carbon Neutral Building Transition Guide- Istanbul Model	Istanbul	Turkey
10	Lemesos City Cooling Challenge: LC³	Limassol	Cyprus
11	Leuven	Leuven	Belgium

NET ZERO CITIES

12	Net Zero Investment Co-Innovation Lab	Bristol	United Kingdom
13	Net Zero Malmö Pilot	Malmo	Sweden
14	NEUTRON	Kozani	Greece
15	Systemic change towards sustainable commuting in Lahti	Lahti	Finland
16	The Initiation of Sustainable Energy Community for the City of Liberec	Liberec	Czechia
17	The North Star	Umea	Sweden
18	Together Towards Climate Neutrality	Nantes	France
19	Uppsala Municipalities proposal	Uppsala	Sweden
Multi-City Pilot Activities			
No.	**Name of the Pilot**	**Cities**	**Country**
20	CoLAB – Committed to Local Climate Action Building	**Mannheim (lead)** Aachen Muenster	Germany
21	Dutch 100CNSC cities pilot	**The Hague (lead)** Amsterdam Eindhoven Groningen Helmond Rotterdam The Hague Utrecht	Netherlands
22	Let'sGOv - GOverning the Transition through Pilot Actions	**Bologna (lead)** Bergamo Florence Milan Padova Parma Prato Rome Turin	Italy
23	Multi-stakeholder innovative & systemic solutions for urban regeneration: Spain	**Vitoria-Gasteiz (lead)** Barcelona Madrid Seville Valencia Valladolid Zaragoza	Spain
24	NEEST - NetZero Emission and Environmentally Sustainable Territories	**Krakow (lead)** Łódź Rzeszów Warsaw Wrocław	Poland
25	UP-SCALE-Urban Pioneers - Systemic Change Amid Livable Environments	**Kranj (lead) Ljubljana Valenje**	Slovenia

2.2 Pilot Cities Programme and Climate City Contracts

Most of the cities selected under the 1st Pilot Cities Programme Call (49 out of 53) are **Mission Cities**. These cities, as part of the Cities Mission, receive tailor-made advice and support from the Mission Platform, managed by NetZeroCities, to reach climate neutrality by 2030, and inspire other cities to follow suit by 2050. One of the steps Mission Cities take is to develop Climate City Contracts, which will include an overall plan for climate neutrality across sectors like energy, buildings, waste management and transport, together with related investment plans.

The Pilot Cities Programme provides its beneficiaries with opportunity to create a synergy between their pilot activities and Climate City Contract, offering time, resources, and expertise to experiment with and test their approaches and identified actions necessary to achieve 2030 climate neutrality. Moreover, Pilot Cities shall aim to ensure the financial sustainability and potential scalability of the work that will be implemented through their pilot activities, and through this Programme they will receive support in different areas such as MEL, Governance and Financing and Funding.

However, it is important to underline that, although the Pilot Cities Programme runs alongside the Climate City Contracts and will report to the Cities Mission on its results, the scope of activities foreseen and implemented within it can be separate from the obligations taken or foreseen under the Climate City Contracts – though we do of course encourage synergies and opportunities to implement against related action plans.

## 2.3 Pilot Cities Programme and Twinning Learning Programme

Numerous activities will be organized as part of the Pilot Cities Programme to enhance learning **among** Pilot Cities (see section *4. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (& Sensemaking)*, a core part of the PCP). This is a crucial aspect for building capabilities, replicating successful innovations, and strengthening relationships. The Pilot Cities Programme **also** integrates close cooperation with the cities selected under the Twinning Learning Programme.

The Twinning Learning Programme is a 20-month initiative designed for knowledge sharing and the transfer of good practices between selected Twin Cities and the cities that joined the NetZeroCities' Pilot Cities Programme in March 2023. The programme adopts a practical knowledge-sharing approach from Pilot Cities to Twin Cities, while also facilitating a peer learning framework that allows Pilot Cities to learn from the experiences of Twin Cities.

The matching of Pilot Cities and Twin Cities is based on identifying similar challenges and shared interests in various emissions domains and levers of change. This approach enables innovative actions through systemic transformation. Activities such as tailored online meetings, workshops, and inspiring site visits are planned to promote learning, experience sharing, and co-creation of solutions on the path to climate neutrality.

The Twinning Learning Programme covers travel expenses for selected Twin Cities to visit their paired Pilot Cities, providing an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the pilot activities through site visits, while also facilitating the completion of the Replication Plan.

Official list of Twinning Cities and their matched Pilot Activities will be announced by the end of September 2023.
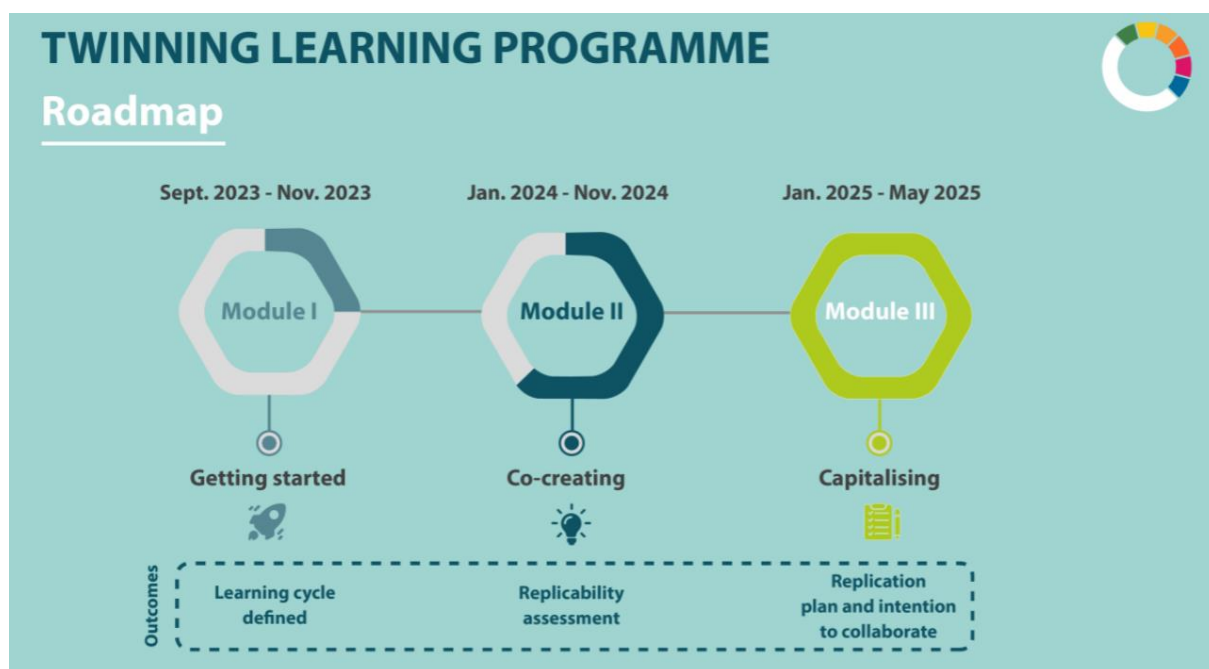
The table above illustrates a broad timeline of the Twinning Learning Programme. If one is seeking more detailed information, for example about the details of each of the three modules, it is advisable to visit the provided info pack for the participants of Twinning Learning Programme.

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

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. Pilot Cities 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
- Working with their Twin Cities and developing the Twinning Relationships
- 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

2.5 Pilot Cities Programme 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.

Pilot Cities Programme Group is a public space on Portal dedicated to the Pilot Cities Programme. It provides 3 main spaces with different content:

- **Group feed**, a public space where Pilot Cities Programme Team publishes relevant public information about the calls, opportunities or interesting events
- **PCP & Twin Cities Forum Channel,** a closed space where Pilot Cities and Twinning Cities from all the calls can engage, exchange, share opportunities and invites and look for partners.
- **Cohort 1 - Call 1/2022 Channel**, a private channel is available exclusively to Pilot Cities Call contact persons. The Pilot Cities Programme Team utilizes this channel to publish relevant information specific to the particular call. This includes reminders about upcoming deadlines, communication regarding the learning and sensemaking process, handbooks, reporting templates, videos from info-sessions and group learning sessions, presentations, and more. Only general documents will be hosted in this channel, and city-specific information such as reports or agreements will not be published here. Unless otherwise communicated, any relevant information will also be shared through emails simultaneously.

Access to the Pilot Cities Programme Group is open and available via the following link:

https://netzerocities.app/group-pilotcitiesprogrammegroup

The group welcomes specifically:

- Community of Practice interested in the Pilot Cities Programme
- Representatives of Twin Cities interested in engagement with the Pilot Cities Programme
- Representatives of the Pilot Cities chosen in the 1st and following Pilot Cities Programme Calls.

Access to the *Cohort 1 - Call 1/2022 Channel* and *PCP & Twin Cities Forum Channel* is granted by invitation only. Invitations to these channels will be sent to every reported "Contact" of the Pilot City by the Pilot Cities Programme Team.

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 pilotcities@netzerocities.eu and provide the names of their colleagues who are registered on the Portal.

Pilot Cities Programme Group

Awareness raising | Circular economy | Citizen participation | Education | Finance | Funding

Governance and policy | Social innovation | Stakeholder engagement | Analytics and modelling | Building

Carbon capture | Energy | Industry | Materials | Sustainable fuel | Technology | Transport and mobility

This group has been created as a public space dedicated to the Pilot Cities Programme. It welcomes primarily:

Representatives of the selected Pilot Cities

Representatives of Twin Cities interested in engagement with the Pilot Cities

Community of Practice interested in the Pilot Cities Programme

Pilot Cities will find their materials relevant for implementing their Pilot Activities.

Twin Cities can use this space as a forum to collaborate and exchange with the Pilot Cities.

The **Community of Practice** will find here general updates about the Programme.

3   Programme Schedule Overview
3.1 Grant Monitoring, Reporting and Transfers
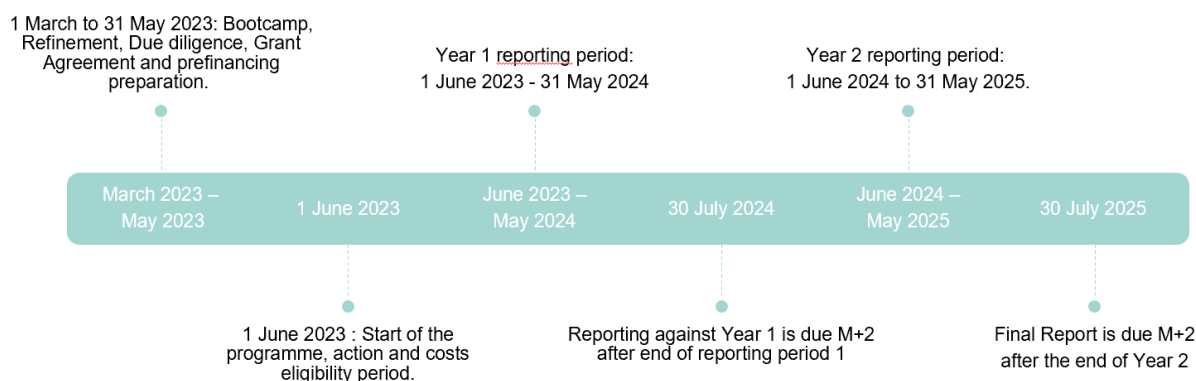
The Pilot City Programme takes place from 1st of June 2023 to 31st of May 2025. For operationalisation and activity implementation to occur, the awarded city, if applicable as the leader of the cities' consortium, has been invited to undertake a due diligence process and join a Bootcamp immediately following the announcement of their selection in the programme.

From March to May 2023, while the due diligence process prepared the practical field of collection of the financial, legal and operational information needed for contract compliance, the bootcamp has offered a refinement period, providing an 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. This agile approach led to contracting the implementation of the pilot cities activities in The Pilot City Award agreement, that is the contract between Climate-KIC Holding B.V and the Selected pilot city recipient of the grant.

The Pilot City Award agreement aligns with the European fund rules for grant management under the H2020 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 EIT Climate-KIC. The contract's signature has triggered a prefinancing payment of

35% of the granted amount (received in June and early July). The grant timeline for engagement and eligible expense payment for activity implementation spans from the 1st of June 2023 to the 31st of May 2025.

In Year 1 of the project, an interim report (1st periodic report) covering activities and costs from the 1st of June 2023 to the 31st of May 2024 is due by the 30th of July. The interim report consists of two parts: Technical Periodic Report and Financial Periodic Report, drafts of which are linked below. Throughout June and July, the Pilot Cities Programme Team is available to support you and address any questions you may have. A second instalment of 35% of the granted amount will be released within the 30 days from the approval of the interim report.

Eventually, a final report encompassing Year 2 of the program, detailing activities and costs during the period from the 1st of June 2024 to the 31st of May 2025, is expected to be submitted by the 30 of July 2025. The final amount of the grant, a balance between the reported costs and already prefinanced amounts, will be transferred to the lead city within 30 days from the approval of the interim report.

The Pilot Cities Programme 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 Pilot Cities Programme Team and the grant manager for any additional advice. All the documents mentioned above are published on the Pilot Cities Programme Group on Mission Portal and are regularly updated.

Reference documents:

- NZC PCP Cohort 1 Call Guidelines
- NZC PCP Cohort 1 Financial Guidelines
- DRAFT: NZC PCP Cohort 1 - 1st Technical Periodic Report Template
- DRAFT: NZC PCP Cohort 1 – 1st Financial Periodic Report Template
- NZC PCP Cohort 1 - Cost Reporting 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 Pilot cities programme 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.

3.2 Project audit

The Lead Beneficiary assumes responsibility for overseeing their Pilot, maintaining this role for a duration of five years following the NetZeroCities project's conclusion as part of its cascade funding and which ends on the 31st of May 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 Pilot 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.

EIT 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 Pilot'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 Pilot, the Lead Beneficiary is mandated to furnish all requisite information and documents. EIT 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. 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 specifically to the Pilot Activity 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 Pilot Cities Programme (reminders about deadlines, general documentation updates, opportunities, etc.).
- **Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and Sensemaking contacts**– The primary contact for the MEL and sensemaking efforts, workshops and other learning insights aspects.

To remove, add new, or learn about the list of contacts assigned to the project, the Lead contact shall send an email titled **PCP Contact update – [NAME OF THE LEAD CITY]** to pilotcities@netzerocities.eu.

Send	∨

To	Pilot Cities Programme Team <pilotcities@netzerocities.eu> ×
Cc	

PCP Contact update - [NAME OF THE LEAD CITY]

Dear Pilot Cities Programme Team,

We want to assign two new contacts to the **secondary contacts** of our pilot activity:
[email 1]
[email 2]

4 Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning & Sensemaking

4.1 What do we mean by it?

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (also known as, "MEL") for NZC Pilot Cities are interlinked activities that support measuring progress towards climate-neutrality through respective pilot activities, as well as build synergies amongst Pilot Cities based on collective learnings 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 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** consists of structured, facilitated, and periodic processes of observation, reflection, stock-taking, and synthesis to generate real-time insights from Pilot activities as they are implements. 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 will be 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 Pilot Cities and Twin Cities cohorts. These sessions will also capture and consolidate evidence and knowledge on the scalability and transferability of NZC interventions across critical emission domains, levers of change, and city or multi-city contexts.

4.2 Process and timeline

During the 2-years' PCP timeline, Pilot Cities representatives will be invited to participate in up to 4 Rounds of online Collective Sense-making sessions (2-3 hours each) within a learning group (hereafter referred to as a 'cluster') of up to 6 other Pilot Cities or multi-city Pilot projects, as well as an equivalent and corresponding number of Twin Cities. The PCP Team with the NZC Consortium shall organise these Collective Sensemaking sessions with a general cadence of one session every 6 months, and closely aligned with the Pilot Cities' MEL and Reporting processes for PCP.

The learning groups will be clustered based on criteria such as – the thematic areas of intervention of respective Pilot Cities, their transversal levers of change, potential direct and indirect impacts/outcomes or co-benefits, qualitative outcomes, scope of actions as city-wide or place-based, impacts pathways identified etc. As Pilot Cities present their implementation progress, insights, and barriers (in their role of 'storytellers'), their Twin Cities (in their role of active observers or listeners) will have the opportunity to learn from the Pilot Cities' presentations, followed by facilitated discussions, Q&A, and feedback rounds. Additionally, the NZC Consortium shall also organise periodic PCP-wide webinars once every 6 months, following each Round of cluster-level Collective Sensemaking sessions, where Pilot Cities can connect with and learn from Cities not a directly part of their own cluster.

The strategic insights, lessons learnt and findings, generated through periodic Collective Sensemaking sessions will be collated and summarised by the NZC Consortium through 'PCP Insights Reports' at the level of the Pilot Cities' Cohort and 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 Pilot project's 'Insights Reports, to be submitted annually to PCP. This Reporting also coincides with the Technical MEL Report based on the Pilot project's selected indicators (both direct impacts and co-benefits), as captured in their respective Impact Framework templates. Reporting Templates will be provided well in advance of the end-of-Year 1 and 2 Reporting periods by PCP Team.

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

- **Formative phase (also known as the "Prepare" phase) between start of the project and December 2022 with Round 1 of Collective Sensemaking sessions.**

   In the 'Formative' stage, these initial peer-to-peer learning workshops are aimed at helping build long-term working relationships, trust, and synergies. The format of these sessions and their facilitation by the NZC Consortium will also aspire to create a safe learning environment, in

which cities feel empowered to exchange insights on not only success-stories, but also their initial barriers to encourage necessary course corrections along their respective pathways to climate-neutrality.

These sessions will focus on Pilot Cities' key learning objectives, as well as their initial progress so far in setting up their baseline assessments, governance and monitoring mechanisms, building stakeholder networks, impact pathways, guidance, and methodological support on indicators selection, refining of learning objectives etc. The meeting invitations, along with exact format, co-creation methods, storytellers, agenda will be shared around three weeks before each of the sessions, along with any preparation that may be expected from presenters representing their Pilot Cities or multi-city Pilot projects.

- **Reflexive Phase (also known as the "Act" Phase) between Jan 2023 – Dec 2023 with Round 2 and Round 3 of Collective Sensemaking sessions.**

  During this 'Reflexive' phase of Collective Sensemaking, Pilot Cities will focus on capturing, sharing, and interpreting their MEL data, as well as their 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. Specifically in Round 2 sessions, Pilot Cities will be expected to highlight their short-term outcomes (also known as 'early changes') achieved, as envisioned in their PCP Impact Frameworks.

  For systemic interventions where there are no predetermined single sector solutions – as in the case of achieving rapid 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 a priori. 'Emergent Learning Loop' implies such an active gathering and continuous application of knowledge/learning. 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 the Round 3 sessions, Pilot Cities will be expected to highlight their medium-term outcomes (also known as 'later changes') achieved through their actions or solutions, as envisioned in their PCP Impact Frameworks.

- **Summative Phase (also known as the "Accelerate" Phase) between Jan 2023 – Dec 2023 with Round 4 of Collective Sensemaking sessions.**

  This concluding 'Summative' phase will enable Pilot Cities to look back at their PCP journeys and extract the most impactful stories from the implementation and deployment of their Pilot activities. The insights and lessons gathered in these sessions will not only help create a robust evidence base for Pilot Cities' reporting, storytelling, and communications to the wider world (see next sub-section), but also support their organisational and governance practices towards scaling up their most effective solutions and interventions.

  The data and evidence collected in this phase will support Pilot Cities in their final reporting at the end of the 2 years based on the indicators/outcomes/learning objectives identified in their PCP Impact Framework. Moreover, this data will also enable the PCP Team to collate and assess the aggregated impacts of the PCP Cohort to report to CINEA and support the communications around it. Additionally, the sessions will also help Twin Cities continue to gather the most replicable and scalable practices and solutions for their own city contexts, as well as follow up on their engagement with Pilot Cities after the in-person site-visits organised under the NZC Twinning Learning Programme.

4.3 Storytelling

The storytelling component of the Pilot Cities Programme will capture the Pilot Cities ambitions and experiences as they go through this process. As a Pilot City in the first cohort, you have embraced the complex challenges of implementing systems-innovation led approaches to decarbonisation in your city. Capturing your experience in this process is invaluable, as it contributes to the NetZeroCities experience, but also to the wider narrative around climate change. Stories around climate change are essential in helping us understand it, the effects it's having, but also in bringing people together to enable real change.

The storytelling process will draw from different parts of the programme and information shared with our team, especially the learning and sensemaking, but will also rely heavily on direct communication with Pilot Cities. The stories will be inclusive – we will not focus on the obvious successes, but on experiences from all cities, so that we can piece together a comprehensive picture of what climate change solutions can look like in different contexts, how they can be implemented, and what cities learn as a result.

Specific details on the process will be communicated to cities in the coming months. If you have any questions or would like to be in touch with us about this, please reach out to elisa.abrantes@climate-kic.org copy to pilotcities@netzerocities.eu.

5 Branding guidelines for Pilot Cities

5.1 Visibility of EU Funding

The Pilot Cities Programme is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. Therefore, any dissemination of results (in any form, including electronic) must display the EU emblem and the reference to EU funding:

The project has received funding through NetZeroCities from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101036519".

The EU emblem can be downloaded in high resolution here.

Please note that when displayed together with another logo, the EU emblem must have appropriate prominence.

Any dissemination of results must indicate that it reflects only the author's view and that the Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains. Please use the following 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.

5.2 NetZeroCities visual identity

NetZeroCities logo shall be included in all documentation and promotional materials related to the Pilot Cities Programme
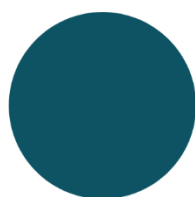

Figure 1: NetZeroCities official logo

Several other logo options are available to offer versatility.

NetZeroCities official logo and variations are available for download in high resolution here.

In text, please always use NetZeroCities.
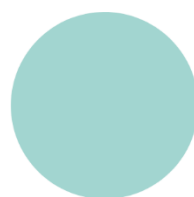
NetZeroCities uses the following colour palette:

HEX#0d5364
RGB(18, 83, 100)

HEX#558692
RGB(85, 134, 146)

HEX#a2d5d0
RGB(162, 213, 208)

HEX#b0d10e
RGB(176, 209, 14)

HEX#a2d5d0 + #b0d10e
RGB(162, 213, 208) + (176, 209, 14)

The different shades of blue, along with the green shade are used as primary colours while the gradient is used as background for specific visual elements.

5.3 Useful resources to promote being a NetZeroCities Pilot City

5.3.1 Pilot City Programme Webpage

NetZeroCities has a dedicated webpage to the Pilot City Programme that contains detailed information on the Programme and a webpage presenting each Pilot City project.

5.3.2 Customisable Visual

You can use the below visual to promote your city being part of the NetZeroCities Pilot Cities 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 pilot activities if desired (two visual options are provided).

Steps:

1. Download editable visual here.
2. Add city name in text field.
3. Optional: Add image in the right-hand "cloud" image frame.
4. Download the final version with your additions as an image file.

5.3.3 Promotion on social media

We encourage you to follow us, tag us when promoting your work as NetZeroCities Pilot City, and share content from the following accounts:

Accounts to tag – EU Cities Mission

- Twitter: @EUScienceInnov

- LinkedIn: @EU Science, Research and Innovation

- YouTube: @EUScienceInnovation

- Instagram: @EU Science

Accounts to tag – NetZeroCities

- Twitter: @NetZeroCitiesEU

- LinkedIn: @NetZeroCitiesEU

- YouTube: @NetZeroCities EU

- Instagram: @NetZeroCities

Hashtags: we recommend you use the following hashtags:
#PilotCities #EUMissions #HorizonEU

5.4 Referring to the Pilot Cities Programme, NetZeroCities and the EU Cities Mission

5.4.1 About the Pilot Cities Programme

o The NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme supports European cities to test and implement innovative approaches to rapid decarbonisation over a two-year pilot programme, working across thematic areas to support of systemic transformation.

o The Pilot Cities Programme helps cities address all urban systems contributing to climate-neutrality, including mobility, energy systems and the built environment, material and resource flows, natural areas, cultural/social/financial/institutional systems, and accessible public spaces. The Pilot Cities receive funding and hands-on support from City Advisors and the NetZeroCities Consortium partners.

o The Pilot Cities will test and implement innovative solutions, or groups of solutions, at city or district level. Innovative solutions form Pilot Cities will have the potential to scaled or replicated. Learning activities will be organised for Pilot Cities to exchange, build capabilities, replicate successful innovations, and deepen relationships A twinning programme will link each Pilot City with two or three twin cities to share learnings with others.

5.4.2 About NetZeroCities

o NetZeroCities is a consortium consisting of 33 partners from 27 European countries, managing the EU Cities Mission "*100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030*" platform. NetZeroCities supports the 112 European cities known as the Mission Cities in drastically reducing their greenhouse gas emissions to achieve climate neutrality. The EU Cities Mission supports the European Green Deal in building a low-carbon, climate-resilient future through research and innovation.

o 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.

5.4.3 About the EU Cities Mission

o 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.

o Since climate mitigation is heavily dependent on urban action, we need to support cities in accelerating their green and digital transformation. 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.

6 Glossary

Term	NZC Pilot Cities Programme 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 CO2 and non-CO2 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 *Climate City Contract* (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 (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, *Thinking in Systems: A Primer,* 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
Theory of Change	(See "Impact Logic")
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.