

BRIEFING ON CITIES RACE TO ZERO

Read me first

There are 454 cities already in the Cities Race to Zero, which includes **all C40 cities with a [Deadline 2020](#) commitment** (the full list of cities can be consulted [here](#)). All C40 cities are invited to play a role in inspiring and recruiting their peers to join Cities Race to Zero.

Cities wishing to join please go to Cities Race to Zero: www.citiesracetozero.org

For further information please contact info@citiesracetozero.org

What is Cities Race to Zero

The **Cities Race to Zero** is organised by C40 Cities, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM), ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), CDP, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the World Resources Institute (WRI) to mobilise cities in the Race to Zero.

The **Race to Zero** is a global COP26 campaign - [led by the UN High-Level Climate Champions for Climate Action – Nigel Topping and Gonzalo Muñoz](#) - to rally leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions, investors for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon recovery that prevents future threats, creates decent jobs, and unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth. The objective is to build momentum around the shift to a decarbonized economy ahead of COP26 and send a resounding signal to governments who are expected to strengthen their contributions to the Paris Agreement. It will show that cities, regions, businesses and investors are united in meeting the Paris goals and creating a more inclusive and resilient world.

To be a part of the Race, businesses, cities, regions and investors must take robust climate commitments and actions that are [aligned with the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement](#).

The way in for cities is through the **Cities Race to Zero** portal at www.citiesracetozero.org¹, where they will access the best available tools and expertise to set robust science-based targets and plan the most impactful inclusive climate actions.

Cities Race to Zero was [launched](#) on November 9th 2020 by C40 Chair Mayor Garcetti with the objective to recruit **1000 cities by COP26**.

¹ It is not possible to join the Race to Zero directly via the UNFCCC or COP26 website.

How to join Cities Race to Zero

To join Cities Race to Zero, mayors and local leaders must sign the Cities Race to Zero pledge on the online platform: www.citiesracetozero.org. In line with the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement and the Race's [minimum criteria](#) for participation, the pledge asks that you:

1. Publicly endorse the following principles:
 - We recognise the global climate emergency.
 - We are committed to keeping global heating below the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement.
 - We are committed to putting inclusive climate action at the center of all urban decision-making, to create thriving and equitable communities for everyone.
 - We invite our partners – political leaders, CEOs, trade unions, investors, and civil society – to join us in recognising the global climate emergency and help us deliver on science-based action to overcome it.
2. Pledge to reach (net)-zero in the 2040s or sooner, or by mid-century at the latest, in line with global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°Celsius.
3. In advance of COP26, explain what steps will be taken toward achieving net zero, especially in the short- to medium-term. Set an interim target to achieve in the next decade, which reflects a fair share of the 50% global reduction in CO₂ by 2030 identified in the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°Celsius.
4. Immediately proceed to planning at least one inclusive and equitable climate action as listed on www.citiesracetozero.org, that will help to place your city on a resilient pathway consistent with the 1.5°C objective of the Paris Agreement and begin implementation no later than 2022.
5. Report progress annually beginning no later than 2022 to your usual or the recommended reporting platforms.

Benefits of participating

Joining the Cities Race to Zero campaign will give your city or subnational government the following benefits:

- **Access to the COP26 Race to Zero** and formal recognition for your efforts by the COP26 Presidency and High-Level Climate Champions².
- **Leadership and visibility** as part of a global movement capable of changing the world.
- **Endorsements by partners** and access to their initiatives.
- **Access to a range of tools and resources** to quickly identify the type, scale and pace of action needed.

² This will also give you access to the Race for Resilience (to be confirmed)

Support for cities

A **guide to develop science-based climate targets**, developed by the Cities Race to Zero partners is available to all cities with guidance on different target setting methodologies.

A **catalogue of actions** has been compiled by the Cities Race to Zero partners to help cities choose the most relevant action to commit to as part of their pledge. Deriving from the science-based C40 Declarations and built on a framework of equity and inclusion. Research shows that they can deliver 90%-100% of the emission reductions required by 2030 on the pathway to neutrality. They have been put together for Cities Race to Zero - per sector - ranging across different levels of ambition so that cities can commit to at least one action based on where they are in their particular climate action journey. Should a city find no action they can commit to, there is room to propose additional ones. These actions are consistent with the principles of the Global Green New Deal and are appropriate for both Global South and Global North cities alike.

Knowledge Hub resources: technical information, implementation guides, policy briefs and case studies for the actions in the catalogue are available on the C40 Knowledge Hub along with resources from partners too.

A **helpdesk** is available at info@citiesracetozero.org to answer basic questions about the Cities Race to Zero and direct cities with more technical questions to the right partner.

The Cities Race to Zero partners are actively exploring further support to be provided to cities to help them set and deliver their targets, implement actions and over time scale those actions to accelerate emissions cuts and improve the lives, livelihoods and resilience of people significantly.

Next steps

To join Cities Race to Zero: go to www.citiesracetozero.org and sign the pledge electronically (only mayors, council leaders or equivalent individuals at the head of their city or local government should sign the pledge. Staff members may fill the online form on their behalf with their authorisation). After signing the pledge you will be shown relevant guidance to take action on your pledge:

- Start developing climate targets consistent with a 1.5C trajectory, including a 2030 target representing your city's fair share of the global 50% emissions reduction needed and consistent with reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest.
- Commit to at least one action before COP26.
- No later than 2022 report your target and thereafter report progress annually on your usual reporting platform or the recommended one. If you have not reported before, you will be contacted by partners for support.

For cities already in the Race: every city has a crucial role to play in inspiring their peers and recruiting them to join Cities Race to Zero.