

PRESS RELEASE

Getting to Climate Neutrality: 53 Pilot Cities Offer a Path Toward Transformation

Mar 1, 2023: Fifty-three cities from across twenty-one European Union and Horizon 2020 Associated Countries have been invited to embark upon unprecedented climate action, through the NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme managed by the **Mission Platform** of the EU Mission on Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities ([EU Cities Mission](#)). These **Pilot Cities** are setting the urban climate transition on a new trajectory. They will implement systemic and locally designed innovative actions that span multiple areas, from buildings to waste, and levers of change, including governance, finance and policy.

Pilot Cities will experiment with new ways to rapidly decarbonise over the course of a two-year programme. Selected from a wide array of 103 applications involving 159 cities from 33 countries across the European Union and Horizon 2020 Associated Countries, each of the Pilot Cities will be a proving ground for taking systemic, inclusive, and multi-lever approaches to transforming city systems. Over their two-year journey, cities will reflect and learn as they go, providing opportunities for other cities to follow in their footsteps, replicating and/or scaling approaches and solutions relevant to their context.

Pilot Cities' activities will be supported by €32 million in grants from the NetZeroCities project, which manages the Mission Platform. These grants are funded by Horizon 2020, the EU framework programme for research and innovation preceding the current Horizon Europe programme. The grants will complement the support provided already by the [City Advisors](#) and the Consortium partners of NetZeroCities. The Pilot Cities Programme is a crucial part of accomplishing the objectives of the EU Cities Mission, which aims for 112 cities to be climate neutral by 2030.

In continuing work under the EU Cities Mission, an increasing number of Mission Cities will be supported to enhance their proposed activities and ascertain funding to implement them through the NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme, piloting their own approaches to rapid and systemic decarbonisation. In addition, all the cities that were not selected as Pilot Cities at this stage will have many other ways to engage with the Cities Mission, for example through a twinning and teaming programme that will start shortly.

“Congratulations to the 53 cities selected for the Pilot Cities Programme to contribute to EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities. They will test new strategies to achieve their local climate goals. Their experience will serve as examples to all cities across the European Union and beyond. The Pilot Cities Programme is only one of many building blocks put in place by the EU Cities Mission. I encourage all cities to check out all future initiatives, and to engage now with their citizens and stakeholders and prepare their strategy for becoming climate neutral.” –Commissioner Mariya Gabriel

Pilot Cities represent the start of a longer journey toward climate neutrality: one that will transform cities and bring them together around a shared vision for a just climate transition. [Learn more about the Pilot Cities Programme here.](#)

