NET ZERO CITIES

Updated Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Plan (1)

Authors : Mrs. Carine VALETTE (LGI), Carine Valette (LGI), Clea Prieto (LGI), Katherine Peinhardt (ICLEI)

NetZeroCities - Contract Number: 101036519

Project officer: Mirjam WITSCHKE

Document title	Updated Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Plan (1)
Author(s)	Mrs. Carine VALETTE, Carine Valette (LGI), Clea Prieto (LGI), Katherine Peinhardt (ICLEI)
Number of pages	53
Document type	Deliverable
Work Package	WP12
Document number	D12.2
Issued by	LGI
Date of completion	2022-10-03 19:05:57
Dissemination level	Public

Summary

This updated version of the Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Plan reviews the actions carried out during the first year of the project based on the monitoring of results collected and outlines the strategy and actions that will be implemented to promote NetZeroCities and the concept of climate neutrality in cities during the following 12 months of the project. This plan will be updated again in M24 and M47.

Approval

Date	By
2022-10-03 19:06:32	Mrs. Carine VALETTE (LGI)
2022-10-11 20:30:49	Mr. Thomas OSDOBA (CKIC)

Disclaimer

The content of this deliverable reflects only the author's view. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

NET ZERO CITIES

Document Information

Grant Agreement Number	101036519
Project Title	NetZeroCities
Project Acronym	NZC
Project Start Date	01 October 2021
Related Work Package	WP12
Related Task(s)	Tasks 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5 & 12.6
Lead Organisation	LGI
Submission Date	3/October/2022
Dissemination Level	Public

History

Date	Submitted by	Reviewed by	Version (Notes)
23/09/2022	Clea Prieto	Carine Valette, Katherine Peinhardt	1

Table of contents

List of figures

List of tables

NET ZERO CITIES

Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
WP	Work Package
NZC	NetZeroCities

Summary

This updated version of the Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Plan reviews the actions carried out during the first year of the project based on the monitoring of results collected and outlines the strategy and actions that will be implemented to promote NetZeroCities and the concept of climate neutrality in cities during the following 12 months of the project. This plan will be updated again in M24 and M47.

Keywords

NetZeroCities, communication, dissemination, awareness raising, exploitation.

Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope

Communication, dissemination and exploitation activities are a top priority in European collaborative research projects funded under the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme.

The purpose of this deliverable is to describe the updated communication, dissemination and exploitation strategy of NetZeroCities after the first 12 months of the project. This document reviews and updates, when necessary, the communication objectives, target groups and key messages, gives an overview of the tools and channels that have been used to communicate with the audience and to disseminate project outcomes, and the results obtained. It also includes a revised list of key performance indicators (KPIs) based on the results achieved to date.

The scope includes all project actions taken internally and externally in terms of knowledge dissemination and public communication regarding NetZeroCities and its results.

Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation actions will be continuously monitored and kept up to date in versions of the "Updated Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Plan" n° 3 and 4, corresponding to deliverables 12.3 (M24) and 12.4 (M47).

1.2 Partner contributions

LGI leads on communication and dissemination activities for NetZeroCities. More specifically, LGI focuses on the global communication of the project and its results, as well as the dissemination of results and progress to key stakeholders (cities' elected officials and cities' staff, regional authorities and national governments, researchers, urban stakeholders, etc.).

LGI organises regular WP12 meetings to involve all contributing partners in the communication, dissemination and exploitation activities and agree on the strategy and actions to be implemented.

A summary of partner contributions to this strategy can be found in the table below.

Partner	Contribution
LGI	**Task 12.1 – Project Communication** • Set up of the Communication and Dissemination Plan, regular updates of the plan • Communication toolkit including project branding • Setup of NZC website, regular updates and monitoring • Setup and animation of social media accounts (Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube) • Electronic newsletters • Monitoring of communication KPIs **Task 12.2 – Content production and media relations** • Oversight and participation to editorial process **Task 12.3 – City communication support** • Contribution to the design of a visual kit that cities will be able to use in their local communication actions • Coordinatate the creation of a Communication Playbook for cities

	Task 12.4 – Building and engaging a broad Community of Practice (CoP) • Define the scope, ambition, functioning and tools of the CoP • Animation of the CoP • Organise practitioners' participation in feedback sessions for platform services **Task 12.5 – Awareness campaigns** • Overall monitoring • Contribution to campaign promoting 'urban climate champions', using an Instagram wall **Task 12.6 – Events** • Coordination of the participation at relevant events and liaison with the HE Mission on Climate-neutral and smart cities **Communication to Cities** • Plan communications to cities together with the coordination team and partners • Regular emailings to Cities selected to be part of the Mission on the resources, events and activities provided NetZeroCities to support them on the journey towards climate-neutrality.
ICLEI	**Task 12.1 – Project Communication** • Contribute to communication and dissemination plan (initial and updated versions) • Create an event and publication plan • Monitoring and update of KPIs related to publications **Task 12.2 – Content production and media relations** • Oversight and contribution to the editorial process • Lead content production and layout • Coordinate the production of a spotlight series to valorise the project outcomes and coordinate the translation of key project materials into all EU languages • Collect and moderate 10+ stories and interviews from pilots and twins • Coordinate and monitor scientific publications and non-scientific publications in specialised media **Task 12.3 – City communication support** • Relay communications to cities in

	its networks **Task 12.5 – Awareness campaigns** • Contribute to an awareness campaign highlighting the calls for cities and selected pilots with three 2-3 minutes videos presenting the overall project (ICLEI) **Task 12.6 – Events** • Organisation of the 1-day final conference: project conclusions & future vision + 1-day workshop (M48) • Promote the participation of NetZeroCities sessions in its own annual events and communications to its network
Climate-KIC	**Task 12.1 – Project Communication** • Contribute to communication and dissemination plan (initial and updated versions) • Monitoring and update of KPIs related to relations with related projects and networks, as coordinator • Dissemination of communication materials and messages **Task 12.2 – Content production and media relations** • Participation in the editorial process **Task 12.3 – City communication support** • Contribution to strategy and monitoring **Task 12.4 – Building and engaging a broad Community of Practice (CoP)** • Contribution to CoP strategy and monitoring, outreach to practitioners **Task 12.5 – Awareness campaigns** • Contribution to awareness campaigns strategies and monitoring **Task 12.6 – Events** • Coordinate the organisation of three open conferences possibly connected to existing events. • Organisation of the first open conference in M8: 0.5-day conference + 1.5-day workshops including feedback sessions **Communication to Cities**

	• Plan communications to cities together with LGI and partners • Contribution to regular emailings to Cities selected to be part of the Mission on the resources, events and activities provided NetZeroCities to support them on the journey towards climate-neutrality.
Climate Alliance	**Task 12.4 – City communication support** • Contribution to the CoP strategy • Contribution to the animation of a community of interested practitioners **Task 12.5 – Awareness campaigns** • Contribute to the awareness campaign on platform go-live and call announcement
DML	**Task 12.2 – Content production and media relations** • Contribution to the editorial process • Support content production by designing infographics and 10lath10ization of concepts of the consortium's approach, ambition level and flow of the 10lath **Task 12.3 – City communication support** • Leading the design of a visual kit that cities will be able to use in their local communication actions • Contribution to the Communication Playbook
Eurocities	**Task 12.3 – City communication support** • Support cities in their local campaigns about NetZeroCities and their local actions (CCC, pilots, etc.) by coordinating with communication/PR offices and providing brand material. • Coordinate interactions with communication offices in cities **Task 12.5 – Awareness campaigns** • Contribute to an awareness campaign on the platform go-live and call announcement **Task 12.6 – Events** • Organisation of 1-day mid-term conference, to present the platform and pilots + celebration ceremony for CCC signatories + 1-day networking between pilots and twin cities (M24) • Promote the participation of NetZeroCities sessions in its own

	annual events and communications to its network
Energy Cities	**Task 12.3 – City communication support** • Relay communications to cities in its networks **Task 12.5 – Awareness campaigns** • Coordination of awareness campaigns • Contribute to the awareness campaign on platform go-live and call announcement • Contribute to the awareness campaign highlighting the calls for cities and selected pilots with social media-tailored 30 seconds videos **Task 12.6 – Events** • Promote the participation of NetZeroCities sessions in its own annual events and communications to its network
UITP	**Task 12.4 – City communication support** • Contribution to the CoP strategy • Contribution to the animation of a community of interested practitioners **Task 12.6 – Events** • Promote the participation of NetZeroCities sessions in its own annual events and communications to its network
Demos	**Task 12.2 – Content production and media relations** • Contribution to the editorial process • Contribution to the production of a spotlight to valorise the project outcomes and coordinate the translation of key project materials into all EU languages
OASC	**Task 12.3 – City communication support** • Relay communications to cities in its networks **Task 12.6 – Events** • Promote the participation of NetZeroCities sessions in its own annual events and communications to its network
ERRIN	**Task 12.3 – City communication support** • Relay communications to cities in its networks **Task 12.6 – Events** • Promote the participation of

	NetZeroCities sessions in its own annual events and communications to its network
RCN	**Task 12.3 – City communication support** • Relay communications to cities in its networks **Task 12.6 – Events** • Promote the participation of NetZeroCities sessions in its own annual events and communications to its network
VTT	**Task 12.6 – Events** • Promote the participation of NetZeroCities sessions in its own annual events and communications to its network
All partners	**All tasks** • All partners will contribute to WP12, by relaying communication and announcements from other tasks (including on open calls), authoring publications, contributing to translations and press coverage • Dissemination of communication materials and messages • Reporting on their participation to events, publications, and communication activities

Table 1: Partner contributions

1.3 Relation to other activities

The success of the overall communication and dissemination strategy depends on, and is linked to, the work undertaken in other WPs. Communication and dissemination activities rely on the work of all partners and their collaboration in providing WP12 with information on their activities and achievements and in sharing relevant information about the project to their own contacts and networks.

The work of WP12 is particularly interrelated with the work of the following WPs:

- [WP1] WP12 to provide visual identity support for CCC resources package, WP1 to provide information on city contract advancement, signatory process. WP1 to provide WP12 with the inputs to be shared with Mission Cities for distribution.

- [WP2] Liaison to define communication & outreach indicators, and to communicate on figures originating from monitoring KPIs in the project communication.

- [WP3] WP12 to provide visual identity support for the online portal and to provide inputs on portal development, in particular with regards to Task 12.4 Building the Community of Practice. WP3 to provide WP12 with the inputs to be shared with Mission Cities (and beyond) for distribution.

- [WP4] WP12 and WP4 to work together for the development of a specific communication campaign to ensure that the call for Pilots reaches an extensive and diverse audience and to

publish the call results. Development of several cross- fertilization activities with the city pilots, such as, mini-reports of cities' testimonies. WP4 to provide the inputs to be shared with cities to WP12 for distribution to Mission Cities and non Mission Cities.

- [WP5] WP12 to provide communication support for the call for Twins (Task 5.2) – visual identity, development of a communication campaign. WP5 to provide WP12 with the inputs to be shared with a wide audience of cities in Europe for distribution.

- [WP6-10] WPs 6 to 10 to provide WP12 with the inputs to be shared with Mission Cities (and beyond when relevant) for distribution.

- [WP8 and WP10] may be consulted for inputs during the building of the project community of practice (stakeholders mapping and identification).

- [WP11] Coordination between Task 11.3 on the annual satisfaction surveys towards cities and Task 12.3 "City communication support"

- [WP13] Coordination between WP12 and WP13 on the publication and communication around the calls for City Panels and Focus Groups, coordination on visual elements (infographic on city interaction). City Panel meeting on communication.

- [WP14] WP12 to contribute to D14.6 policy framework media package

Regular liaison takes place with all WPs to collect information and inputs to fuel content into the communication channels of the project. This liaison is also the way for WP12 to be aware of key achievements and milestones in other WPs to be able to communicate efficiently about them.

2 Objectives

Based on the needs of the project, NetZeroCities main communication and dissemination objectives include the following:

- **To ensure Mission Cities are fully informed on NetZeroCities and the services, tools and resources it provides and are engaged with in an efficient way:**
  o Contributing to embarking Mission Cities in the climate-neutrality journey and CCC process
  o Contributing to making sure Mission Cities have a clear picture of the key concepts in NZC, of the work ahead of them and of the ways of working with NZC
  o Communicating information in a way that provides clarity and creates buy-in from Mission Cities contact points as well as all municipality stakeholders
  o Ensuring Mission Cities are aware of the tools and resources produced by consortium members to support their journey towards climate-neutrality by 2030.
  o Ensuring Mission Cities are aware of how to access the services and resources at their disposal, in particular the NetZeroCities Portal
  o Ensuring Mission Cities receive information shared by the European Commission Cities Mission team whenever there is a need

- **To ensure that all cities – including both Mission Cities and non-Mission Cities – are aware of the opportunities at their disposal:**
  o Maximising the traction of the project, for cities to massively engage in the EU Mission and CCC processes, the Platform, and applying for the pilot and twin calls
  o Mobilising cities for climate action
  o Communicating clearly on NZC's offer to cities

- o Creating the conditions to embark cities that are not yet at the forefront of climate action

- **To support Mission Cities wishing to communicate to their citizens** on the Mission and the NZC action:

  - o Cities themselves will lead on direct outreach to citizens

  - o NZC focuses on building capabilities and supporting cities in their engagement efforts and providing communication materials and support as part of Task 12.3.

- **To raise awareness of NetZeroCities** with EU, national and regional policymakers; practitioners, researchers and innovators; NGOs and civil society organisations; and to some extent the general public

- **To demonstrate a clear value for practitioners to engage in a new, ambitious roadmap**, to build capacities and capabilities on innovative forms of practice, and to get access to a wide community of cities

- **To position NetZeroCities as a thought leader** in the climate neutrality and sustainable and smart cities space

  - o Building a strong image to be able to influence the conversation

  - o Supporting better-informed policies at city, regional, national and EU levels

- **To create visibility and acceptance around critical concepts** such as:

  - o Climate-Neutrality

  - o Systemic Innovation

  - o The Climate City Contract

- **To establish NetZeroCities as the reference platform**

  - o Having a clear narrative on the added value of NZC in a crowded environment of platforms and initiatives

  - o Ensuring that the project stands out as a One-Stop-Shop for cities

- **To support the exploitation of the NZC platform**, services, pilots and solutions

Other objectives include the following:

- To promote project findings to the professional and general public across the EU

- To disseminate knowledge and findings widely and efficiently to all stakeholder groups

- To raise awareness on the critical role of cities to achieve climate neutrality

- To build a community of practitioners

- Form synergies with other related EU initiatives

3 Communication and dissemination strategy

The overall NetZeroCities communication and dissemination strategy is based on a series of key messages tailored for specific audiences and comprehensive and consistent project description. Both will be implemented throughout the different channels and tools described in a dedicated section in this deliverable.

NET ZERO CITIES

3.1 Target audiences

The NetZeroCities project aims to reach key target groups through its communication and dissemination strategy including cities, public and private stakeholders, civil society, practitioners, citizens and the media. Each communication action is targeted at different levels: local, nationwide, European and global. The relevance and importance of communicating/disseminating to each stakeholder group is summarised in the table below.

One year after the start of NetZeroCities, cities remain the main target audience. With 112 cities selected in April 2022, specific communications needs have arisen to address this Mission Cities audience and ensure proper buy-in and information of key cities stakeholders.

Target audience		Relevance
Mission Cities	Elected officials (mayors, city council members and city representatives)	• The continuous support and buy-in of elected officials are critical for the success of the Mission in all Mission Cities. • They need to have a clear picture of the added value of being part of the Mission and receiving support from NZC
	Staff working on the Mission	• Climate officers / Mission officers within municipalities need to have a clear picture of the key concepts and work to be undertaken. • They need to be embarked with a clear, focused and positive narrative. • Continuous buy-in, ownership is critical for success.
	Technical staff within cities and municipalities	• The technical staff within cities and municipalities is comprised of experts in many different areas relevant to the NZC project: energy, housing, mobility, climate strategy, etc. • Buy-in from this audience is very important for the success of the implementation of the Mission.
	Local public bodies	• The involvement of bodies such as local development agencies, mobility agencies, public housing agencies and city transport companies is important to implement climate strategy policies and achieve climate-neutrality objectives.
Cities beyond of the Mission	Elected officials (mayors, city council members and city representatives)	• Elected officials have the leadership required to engage their city in climate action. • We need cities to widely use the Platform, beyond Mission Cities • We need to have them apply for the pilot and twin calls. • This audience can be part of the City Strategic Panel.
	Technical staff within cities and municipalities	• The technical staff within cities and municipalities is comprised of experts in many different areas relevant to the NZC project: energy, housing, mobility, climate strategy, etc.

		• This audience is targeted for the Practitioner Panel.
	Local public bodies	• The involvement of bodies such as local development agencies, mobility agencies, public housing agencies and city transport companies is important to implement climate strategy policies and achieve climate-neutrality objectives.
Public stakeholders (EU, national and regional and local decision-makers)		• NZC efforts will need to be replicated to achieve the EU's climate neutrality target by 2050. In this sense, other forms of local governments, regions, national governments and European institutions should be targeted to ensure that replication really takes place. • National Platforms supporting the EU Cities Mission and Mission Cities at national or regional level are particularly targeted.
Private stakeholders		• Private stakeholders working with cities are key partners for cities to reach their climate targets • Private finance will be necessary to fund cities' transformative action and help them reach the net zero target by 2030.
Practitioners (researchers, corporates, startups, civil society representative)		• Practitioners in the field of urban sustainability and climate action will be involved in NZC's Community of Practice (CoP) to support cities and share feedback on the services provided by the project.
Civil society		• NZC will need to mobilise civil society actors to encourage the development of climate action and city policies and programmes consistent with urgent climate action.
Citizens		• Decarbonisation of our cities requires deep citizen engagement to guarantee ongoing support and participation and not just acceptance.
Media		• Media are key to raise awareness on climate issues and urban sustainability matters, as well as to increase the EU Mission for 100 climate-neutral and mart cities and NZC's visibility among key stakeholders.
Consortium members		• Internal communication within the consortium is key to ensure a common level of information and good coordination towards the implementation of the NetZeroCities activities.

Table 2: Relevance of each target audience

3.2 Key messages

The set of tailored messages for NetZeroCities developed at the beginning of the project has been updated. Based on the results and continuous analysis made throughout the project, the messages will be further refined if necessary.

Target audience		Key messages
Mission Cities	Elected officials (mayors, city council members and city representatives)	- NetZeroCities supports your city in its journey towards climate neutrality - NetZeroCities provides your city with the tools, resources, and expertise needed to become climate-neutral by 2030. - As part of the EU's Mission "100 Climate Neutral and Smart City" your city is receiving tailored support and engaging in a Climate City Contract process - By being part of the Mission, your city is paving the way for an inclusive, thriving, climate resilient and sustainable future, and for other European cities to reach climate neutrality by 2050. - Apply to our calls to experiment new solutions to climate issues and to position your city as a leader in climate neutrality
	Mission Cities Officers & Technical Staff	- NetZeroCities is providing the tools, resources and services to support your city in its journey towards climate neutrality - NetZeroCities is supporting you every step of the way to set up a Climate City Contract at your city level to enable a systemic transformation to achieve climate-neutrality. - The Pilot Cities programme will enable you to receive additional expertise and support to test and experiment innovative solutions - Being part of the EU Cities Mission allows you to exchange with peers, promote your work and learn from theirs. - NetZeroCities gives you access to a vast body of relevant knowledge, research, innovation and useful tools, and puts you in contact with your counterparts in other cities, as well as other key actors.
	Local public bodies	- NetZeroCities is supporting your city in its journey towards climate neutrality - You will be able to capitalise on an exhaustive base of innovative solutions to reach climate neutrality. - NetZeroCities gives you access to a vast body of relevant knowledge, research, innovation and useful tools,

		and puts you in contact with your counterparts in other cities, as well as other key actors.
Cities beyond Mission Cities	Elected officials (mayors, city council members and city representatives)	• Apply to our Pilot Cities and Twin Cities calls to experiment new solutions to climate issues and to position your city as a leader in climate neutrality • The NetZeroCities Platform provides tools and services to help your city achieve climate-neutrality • Engage in climate action and pave the way for an inclusive, thriving, climate resilient and sustainable future. • Join our Strategic Panel and advise and observe the Climate City Contract process
	Technical staff within municipalities	• The NetZeroCities platform provides all cities with online resources to help them achieve climate neutrality. Check out our online Portal! • NZC will give you access to a vast body of relevant knowledge, research, innovation and useful tools, and will put you in contact with your counterparts in other cities, as well as other key actors. • The Pilot Cities and Twin Cities Programmes led by NetZeroCities will enable your city to receive expertise and support to test and experiment innovative solutions • Join our Practitioner Panel to give feedback on the design of the one-stop-shop platform
	Local public bodies	• The NetZeroCities platform provides all cities with online resources to help them achieve climate neutrality. Check out out online Portal! • NZC will give you access to a vast body of relevant knowledge, research, innovation and useful tools, and will put you in contact with your counterparts in other cities, as well as other key actors.
Public stakeholders (EU, national and regional and local decision-makers)		• Reaching the EU's net zero emissions goal by 2050 will require a collective effort at local, national, and European level. Cities are key to reach climate neutrality targets and will need global policy support to get there. • Climate neutrality by 2030 requires rapid replication and scale-up of good practices and technologies that will be developed within NZC.

Private stakeholders	• Joining the climate transition will create new business possibilities for your company • Take an active role in addressing climate change by partnering with and / or providing finance to frontrunner cities
Practitioners	• Getting involved in the NZC community of practice will enable you to build capacities and capabilities on innovative forms of practice and connect you with a wide community
Civil society	• We will provide real solutions, tools and support for cities to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. • Actions at city level are crucial to reach the EU's climate neutrality target by 2050.
Citizens	• Cities are key to achieving zero carbon faster and ensuring our decarbonisation efforts are equitable and contribute to the well-being of European communities. • Citizen action will be needed to get everyone on board and reach climate neutrality at city level • You can act in your city!
Media	• We provide the tools, resources, and expertise needed for cities to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2030. • We conduct a Pilot Cities Programme to enable cities to experiment innovation solutions to address climate change; and a Twin Cities programme to share and replicate learnings from Pilot Cities • We will enable European cities and citizens to show the way forward towards an inclusive, thriving, climate resilient and sustainable future.

Table 3: Key messages for each target audience

3.3 Timeline

An updated timeline gathering all key communication and dissemination activities throughout the project is available below with deliverables indicated in green colour. This timeline will be continuously updated to reflect key activities during the 48 months of the project.

NET ZERO CITIES

M12
Call for Pilots opens
Launch of platform to support cities
Press release 2
D12.2 Updated C&D&E plan

M14
Closing of the Call for Pilots

M16
Announcement of the Call for Pilots results

M18
D12.6 Report on content production
D12.7 Report on the Community of Practice

M21
Announcement of the Call for Twin Cities

M22
Closing of the Call for Twin Cities

M24
Announcement of Call for Twin Cities results
NZC Conference 2
D12.3 Updated C&D&E plan

M26
D12.10 Proceedings of NetZeroCities conference n°2

M36
D12.8 Report on three awareness campaigns

M47
D12.4 Updated C&D&E plan

M48
NZC Final Conference
D12.11 Proceedings of NetZeroCities conference n°3

Figure 1: Timeline

4 Management

4.1 Content flow

To facilitate the flow of information, a process has been established to allow all partners to collaborate on content creation and relay the information shared through NZC communication channels. Regular meetings with the Cities Mission Secretariat have been set up to coordinate on key communication and dissemination activities and have different communication materials reviewed and approved by the Mission.

Figure 2: Content information flow

WP12 is also involved in reviewing outputs from other WPs for distribution to Mission Cities and other audiences. This can include both an editorial review and a graphic review. Examples include reports, portal content, etc.

NZC has been using Microsoft Teams to share information across partners. Each WP has a dedicated MS Teams channel to interact and communicate with all WP members. WP12 has created a folder for project partners containing communication and style guidelines, the NZC logo, partners logos, presentations, press releases, roll up, virtual backgrounds, visual resources, etc.

WP12 team has also created an editorial calendar to keep track of the project key milestones and the communication activities planned to promote them. Project partners are encouraged to add key outputs of their WPs to the calendar so that WP12 can plan the necessary communication actions.

4.2 Role and responsibility of partners in monitoring outcomes

For monitoring and reporting purposes, as well as to ease the flow of information and simplify the communication process between partners, an online form was created. This is crucial to tracking communication and dissemination efforts for the purpose of internal strategic decisions as well as reporting to the European Commission and is dependent on the participation of partners. WP12 releases frequent reminders that partners can fill out the form when they participate in an event, attend a conference related to the NetZeroCities project or publish an article about the project, among other activities.

Partners from all Work Packages are strongly encouraged to use this form frequently not only for the aforementioned monitoring and reporting purposes, but also in order to provide communication and dissemination content to include in the project newsletters, website newsroom and social media channels.

5 Communication and dissemination handbook

This section presents the NetZeroCities project's visual identity and the main communication and dissemination channels and tools.

5.1 Visual identity and communication materials

The visual identity of the project has been aligned with that of the Cities Mission to enable a better understanding of NZC's role as the Mission Platform. The visual alignment has been implemented following the Visual Identity Guidelines for Horizon Europe Missions.

All the communication and dissemination tools described in this deliverable are consistent with the NetZeroCities project's brand identity, which aligns with the image that the project wishes to convey. A Communication and Dissemination Handbook has been developed to provide partners guidelines on how to use the visual identity of the project, how to present the project, how to use social media, etc.

5.1.1 EU emblem and acknowledgement

In addition, all materials, including scientific papers and publications produced by the project, will contain the mandatory EU emblem, acknowledgement and required disclaimer with the sentences below (Article 29.4). Moreover, it is important to note that "when displayed with another logo, the EU emblem must have appropriate prominence" (Article 29.4).

Figure 3: EU emblem and acknowledgement

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101036519. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Figure 4: EU disclaimer

Due to space constraints, the following simplified version of the EU funding acknowledgement will be used in social media visuals:

Funded by the European Union

5.1.2 Logo

One of the first communications actions (Task 12.1) was to develop the project's visual identity. To build its brand recognition from the very beginning, a logo was designed on time for the kick-off meeting of the project. It is, and will be, associated and included in all paper and electronic documentation as well as promotional materials.

To ensure a strong project identity, several logo versions were designed, analysed and altered to best represent NZC in the simplest and clearest way possible.

The logo is bold, classic and colourful, and aligned with the Cities Mission's visual identity. Emphasis is placed on the 'ZERO' with the 'O' that serves as both the letter and the logo mark. The logo mark was designed to resemble the SDG wheel and to represent all the different aspects and complexities associated with achieving carbon neutrality in cities: Green is from SDG 13 Climate Action, the yellow from SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy, orange from SDG11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, dark orange from SDG 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure, fuchsia SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities and blue SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

To highlight NZC's role as the Cities Mission's Platform, the following tagline was added to the logo:

EU Mission Platform
Climate Neutral and Smart Cities

The logo will be included in all documentation and promotional materials and will guarantee the visual identity of the project.

Figure 5: Official logo

Several other logo options were designed to offer versatility.

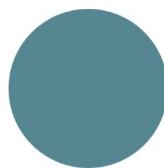**Figure 6: Logo variations**

In text, the project should be referred to as NetZeroCities (or in short NZC).

5.1.3 Colours

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

HEX#558692
RGB(85, 134, 146)
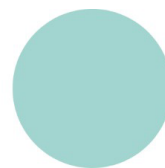
HEX#a2d5d0
RGB(162, 213, 208)
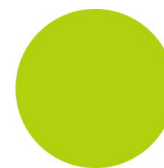
HEX#b0d10e
RGB(176, 209, 14)

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

Figure 7: NZC colour scheme

In addition to the colours of the logo, different shades of blue and green will be used as primary colours to match the Mission's visual identity. The above gradient will be used as background in visual materials such as social media posts. Single colour backgrounds using #0d5364 and #a2d5d0 will also be used to keep the visual materials varied and attractive.

5.1.4 Font

The fonts selected for NZC are the following:

- Logo font: Myriad Pro

- PPT fonts: Arial

- Body Text in word documents: Arial

5.1.5 Project presentation template

A PowerPoint presentation template was designed and distributed to all partners shortly after the start of the project. Easy to use and versatile, the template adds value to the NetZeroCities brand and ensures the project's visibility when presented at events or conferences.

An updated version of the PowerPoint presentation will be developed in the following months to reflect changes in the visual identity and respond to evolving partners' needs, while remaining consistent and in continuity with the present version. This version will include more design options that can be used when creating PPT presentations, as well as to design ad hoc documents.

Figure 8: PowerPoint template

5.1.6 Deliverable template

The Word document template was updated to keep it consistent with the NetZeroCities revised visual identity. The template makes it easy for partners to collaborate on deliverables.
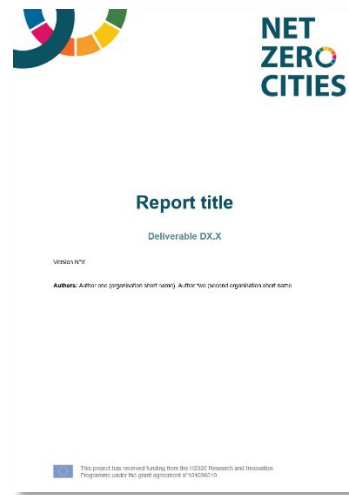
Figure 9: Deliverable template cover

All templates are available on the internal collaboration platform that will be used for the project (https://app.flexx.camp/nzc-ecm), as well as on the Teams platform that is being used as one of the main communication channels among partners. A specific folder called Templates is available on the general channel. On this channel partners can also access the Communication Toolkit folder which contains several communication materials such as the NZC's logo, partners' logos, and the press releases.

5.1.7 Social media visuals

In cooperation with the Cities Mission Secretariat and the RTD Graphic Team, several templates for social media visuals have been created. These templates are aligned with the European Missions Visual Identity Guidelines and include a reference to the EU Cities Mission and the EU Cities Mission icon, the Mission branded gradient or colours, the funding acknowledgement and a copyright sentence related to the use of the EU Cities Mission icon.

Figure 10: Examples of social media visuals

NetZeroCities will create visuals based on these templates to guarantee visual consistency across communication materials.

5.1.8 Other materials

Standard presentation: a standard presentation was developed in English and updated to align it visually with the Cities Mission branding. In addition, WP12 is currently adding more design features to respond to partners' needs. Partners will be able to use this standard presentation at conferences, events, workshops and meetings with stakeholders, and will be free to adapt and translate it based on their needs.

Flyer: a flyer has been designed to be distributed at workshops and events organised by NetZeroCities, as well as at external events. It includes key messages, objectives, expected impacts and consortium members and contact information. The flyer will be printed on demand to avoid waste.

Roll-up: a roll-up was designed for display at various events and conferences attended by project partners. It includes visual elements that represent the project, a brief summary, consortium members and contact information. The roll-up was printed for the kickoff event and is available for future events NZC participates in.

Figure 11: NZC roll up

Illustrations and diagrams for presentations: A series of illustrations and diagrams have been created by Dark Matter Labs to represent some of the key elements of NZC, such as the Climate City Contract, the Climate Transition Map, the concept of System Innovation, the Monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework, etc. All illustrations are available in the shared Teams for partners to easily access them and use them in their presentations and documents.
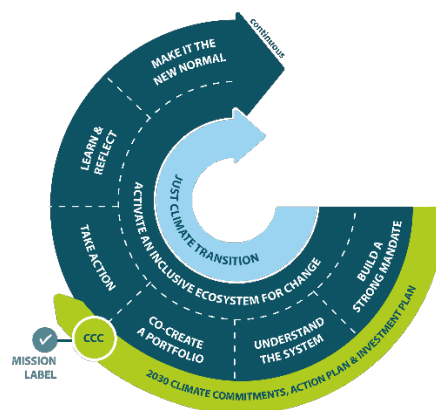
Figure 12: Climate Transition Map diagram

Other promotional materials: visuals will be created to promote project events, publications and project news across the NetZeroCities communication channels including social media as needed.

5.2 Project description

A text describing NetZeroCities has been drafted in two versions (short and long) **to ensure a comprehensive and consistent message about the project**. The project descriptions can be used by all partners in materials dedicated to promoting, communicating and disseminating the results of NetZeroCities —such as flyers, PowerPoint presentations, and articles published by the partners—and to present the project at events or conferences.

Short version:

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

Long version:

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

NetZeroCities 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. The project recognises the need for cities to develop specific strategies that are tailored to suit local and regional contexts and supports them by developing and promoting new and existing tools, resources, and expertise into a one-stop shop platform that is accessible to all cities through an online portal. In addition, the project will support a series of pilot cities to help drive rapid learning about how to achieve climate neutrality at the city scale. Cities will benefit from hands-on assistance and dedicated services to achieve their net-zero goals.

NetZeroCities is part of the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme in support of the [European Union's Green Deal](#) and the EU Mission 100 Climate- Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030 launched as part of the Horizon Europe programme, by seeking to scale the activities of this project across 100 cities, and to tackle the unprecedented capital investments needed to make such a transformation possible.

5.3 Online resources

5.3.1 Website

The NetZeroCities project website was launched in January 2022: www.netzerocities.eu.

The website is the main primary information source for the project and is where most stakeholders come to find out more about its activities. The design is intentionally tailored to be accessible and appealing, and aligned with the project's communication objectives to engage stakeholders. During this first year of the project, the website has been continuously updated with news, events, communication items, deliverables and results to keep frequent visitors and target audiences engaged.
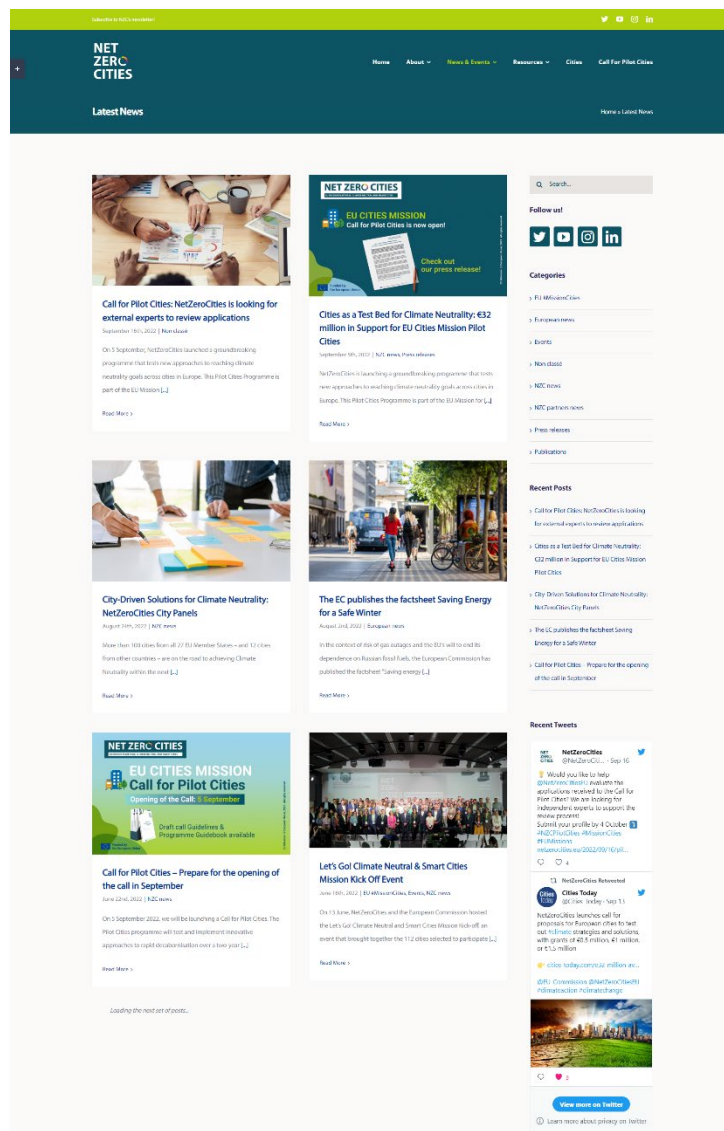
Figure 13: News section on the NZC website

The NetZeroCities website has been structured in the following way:

- Homepage: provides information on

    o the project, its context and ambition

    o the expected impacts and objectives

    o key definitions such as climate neutrality

    o how to get involved in the project

    o the latest news and upcoming events

    o the resources available

    o the engage section of the website with specific information for cities and practitioners

    o the link to the partners' page

    o access to the restricted internal platform (allows partners to share documents and work in a collaborative way)

- About: contains information about the project, the partners, and the community of practice

- News & Events:

  o News: activities, milestones, results and news related to the project will be featured in articles and posts

  o Events: past and upcoming events internal and external to the project will be updated regularly

- Resources:

  o Media: gathers promotional materials, press releases and newsletters

  o Results & Publications: public deliverables and reports, and publications

- Cities: page explaining what NZC can offer to cities as the Cities Mission Platform

An additional page was created to announce the Call for Pilot Cities. This page provides information on the call, with download links for all the relevant documents, registration links to the information sessions, a call timeline and a Q&A. The page will be updated on a need basis.

In the footer, accessible on all pages, users can find the EU funding emblem and acknowledgement, name of the coordinator, project email, subscription link to the newsletter, recent posts, links to the project social media accounts and access to the partner area.

Browser compatibility: the website is compatible with web browsers on all common operating systems. These include various versions of Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, Opera and Chrome. The layout of the website is responsive and adjusts based on the screen size of the device it is viewed on, regardless of whether the device used is a desktop, tablet or mobile phone.

Monitoring: to understand how the website is used by visitors, the Ionos analytics tool has been employed.

Since its launch until 19 September 2022 the NZC website has had over 60 000 visitors, over 70 000 sessions and more than 150 000 page views, exceeding by far the set KPI in the first version of the Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Plan (20 000 page views and 6000 visitors). The most visited pages are the homepage, the call for pilot cities, a news article promoting the call, and the media page. The majority of visitors are located in Europe, followed by North America and Asia.

5.4 Social media

Different social media channels, including Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube, are used to communicate on the project and disseminate its results in an effective and impactful way.

The following audiences are targeted and engaged with across all platforms:

- Cities
- Public stakeholders
- Private stakeholders
- Civil society
- Practitioners
- Citizens
- Media

NET ZERO CITIES

A revised list of hashtags related to NetZeroCities has been developed and will be used to maximise the project's visibility on all channels. Other specific hashtags will be created for specific communication campaigns around key milestones such as the launch of the Call for Twin Cities.

General	Specific
#Innovation	#MissionCities
#H2020	#EUMissions
#Horizon2020	#NZC
#GreenDeal	#NZCPilotCities
#SustainableCities	#ClimateNeutral
#Cities	#ClimateNeutrality
#ClimateAction	

Table 4: Hashtags

5.4.1 Twitter

A Twitter account was created at the start of the project under the handle **@NetZeroCitiesEU**.

Figure 14: Twitter account

Twitter is used as one of the main channels to build a project's online community and to disseminate the results. The three main objectives set for Twitter are to:

- Build relationships and engage with target audiences

- Disseminate knowledge on climate neutrality and cities actions in that matter

- Bring the NetZeroCities results closer to the general public, journalists, and policymakers

The NetZeroCities Twitter account is managed daily. In order to be as responsive, efficient and proactive on the channel as possible, the following actions will be taken:

- Target at least one tweet/retweet on a bi-weekly basis

- Reply to users who tweet or mention @NetZeroCitiesEU

- Follow and engage users who tweet content related to NetZeroCities activities

- Track specific words, mentions and trending hashtags

Twitter serves as a channel for the mass distribution of news published on the website, advertise events that will be attended by NetZeroCities partners and promote content generated by the project. Partners involved in communication activities will closely monitor related content posted by other social media accounts to share it on the NetZeroCities Twitter account.

Monitoring: Twitter Analytics has been used to analyse the results achieved during the first 12 months of the project.

As of 22 September, the NZC Twitter account has **1505** followers. The tweets that generated more impressions were the following:
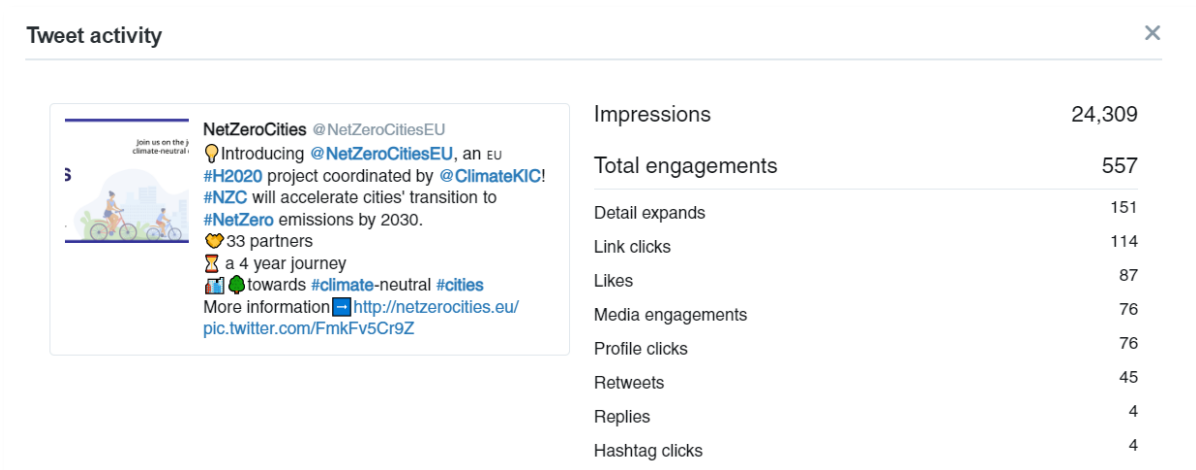
Figure 15: Tweet announcing the NZC project
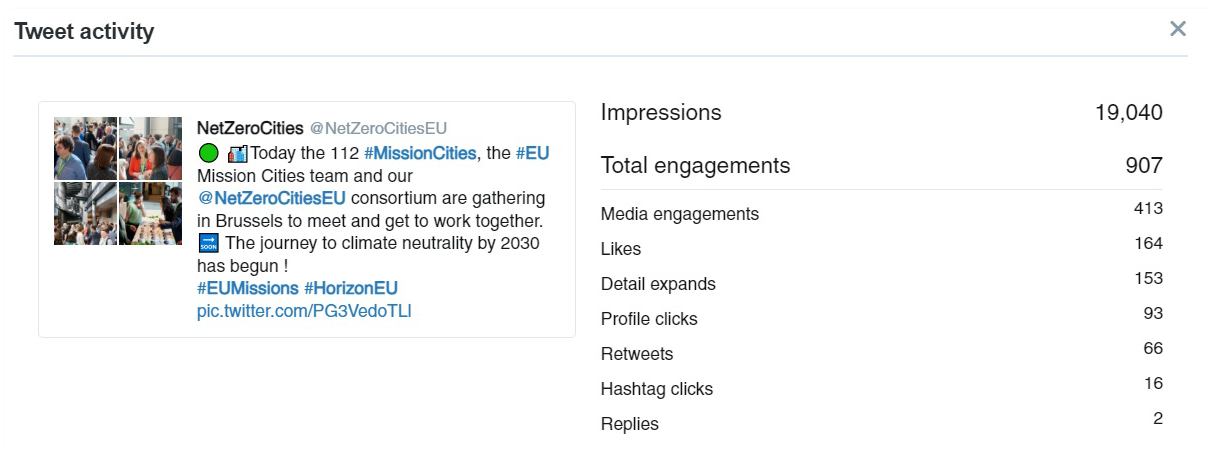
Figure 16: Tweet about the kick-off event with Mission Cities
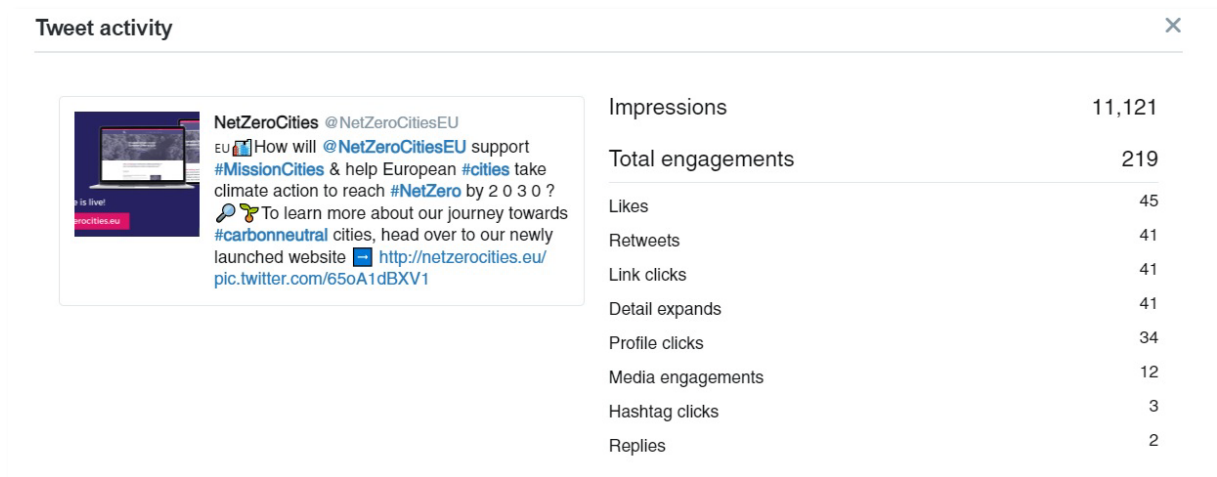
Figure 17: Tweet announcing the launch of the NZC website

These results have been used to provide revised KPIs for the remaining months of the project (see section 9).

5.4.2 LinkedIn

A LinkedIn page was created for NetZeroCities: **@NetZeroCitiesEU**

The NetZeroCities LinkedIn account is managed daily. In terms of audience, a specific focus on city officials; EU, national and regional policymakers; practitioners, researchers and innovators and public/private stakeholders will be operated.
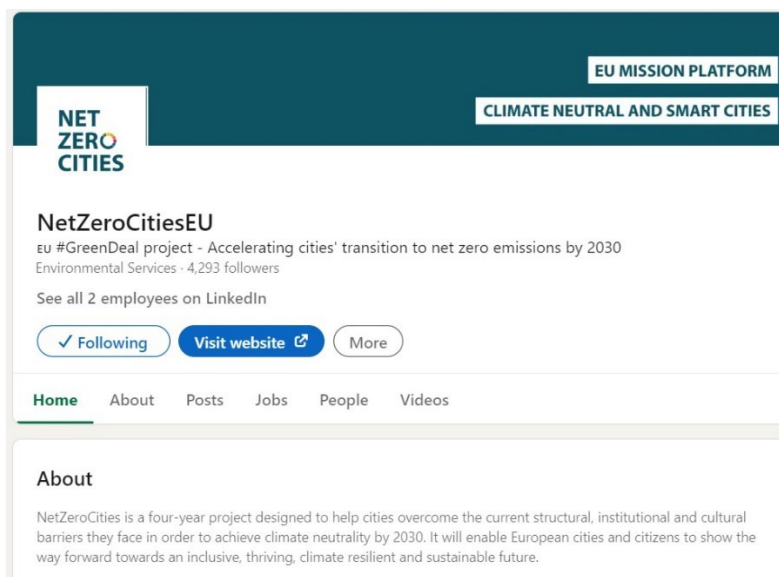
Figure 18: LinkedIn account

In order to be as responsive, efficient and proactive on the channel as possible, the following actions are taken:

- Target at least one post or share on a bi-weekly basis

- Reply to users who mention @NetZeroCitiesEU

- Follow and engage users who post content related to NetZeroCities activities

- Track specific words, mentions and trending hashtags

Monitoring: LinkedIn Analytics has been used to analyse the results achieved during the first 12 months of the project.

As of 22 September, the NZC LinkedIn account has **4322** followers (KPI was 2000 followers by the end of the project). These results have been used to provide revised KPIs for the remaining months of the project (see section 9).

The posts that generated more impressions were the following:

| Update title	Audience	Impressions	Views	Clicks	CTR	Reactions	Comments	Shares	Follows	Engagement rate
🔊 The European Commission has just announced the #cities that will participate… Posted by Clea Prieto Perosanz 4/28/2022 [Boost]	All followers	11,612	-	498	4.29%	445	25	79	-	9.02%
🧡 Congratulations to all #cities that have been selected to join the EU Mission for… Posted by Clea Prieto Perosanz 4/28/2022 [Boost]	All followers	8,971	-	1,477	16.46%	385	5	50	-	21.37%
Discover NetZeroCities, the Climate Neutral and Smart Cities Mission Platform Posted by Clea Prieto Perosanz 6/20/2022 [Boost]	All followers	6,343	1,839	197	3.11%	143	3	23	-	5.77%

Figure 19: LinkedIn posts that generated over 6000 impressions

5.4.3 Instagram

An Instagram account was created for the NetZeroCities project under the handle **@netzerocitieseu**.

Figure 20: Instagram account

In addition to the target audiences listed above, the Instagram account is used to engage with influencers and the younger generation in the climate change space who are often more active on this platform than on Twitter or LinkedIn.

NET ZERO CITIES

Posts made on the NetZeroCities Instagram follow a pattern consistent with the project's visual identity so as to appeal to all visitors and encourage them to follow the account.

Figure 21: Example of Instagram patterns used

The NetZeroCities Instagram account is managed daily. In order to be as responsive, efficient and proactive on the channel as possible, the following actions are taken:

- Share posts on the NetZeroCities story or post original content on a weekly basis

- Reply to users who mention or send direct messages to **@NetZeroCitiesEu**

- Follow and engage with users who post content related to NetZeroCities activities

- Track specific words, mentions and trending hashtags

The Instagram account will specifically be used for online campaigns (Task 12.5).

Monitoring: As of 22 September 2022, NZC Instagram account has **318** followers.

See below the Instagram post that generated the highest number of interactions:

Figure 22: Instagram post about the kick-off event

NET ZERO CITIES

5.5 Newsletters

Quarterly electronic newsletters will be distributed over the course of the project.

The newsletters will inform the NetZeroCities community on the latest achievements of the project, progress, outcomes and relevant events, conferences and workshops. To develop interest in the newsletter, partners are encouraged to share all relevant information related to the project using a form accessible directly on the project's digital workplace as described in section 4.2 of this document.

Newsletters will contain different sections, including:

- An editorial written by the coordinator

- A feature on the results achieved and key project updates

- A recap of the events attended and upcoming events of interest

- An optional media mentions section

A newsletter subscription form compliant with GDPR regulation has been created and a link included on the NetZeroCities website to encourage visitors to subscribe to the newsletter in order to receive the latest project results and achievements.

As of 22 September 2022, NZC has **1727** newsletter subscribers.

The first edition of the newsletter was sent in July 2022. The opening rate of this first newsletter was 34,51% (over 20% is usually considered a very good opening rate) and the click rate was 16,85% (over 5% is usually considered a good click rate).

WP12 will continue monitoring the statistics of the next newsletters to identify possible areas of improvement to optimise future editions.

The next newsletter is planned for October 2022.

5.6 Videos

A series of videos will be produced throughout the NetZeroCities project, in particular a set of 2-3 minutes videos presenting the project, and 30 second videos tailored for social media as part of Task 12.5.

The first video presenting NZC's ambition and expected outcomes was published in June 2022 and is available via this link on YouTube. The video has been viewed 730 times and has received 23 likes.
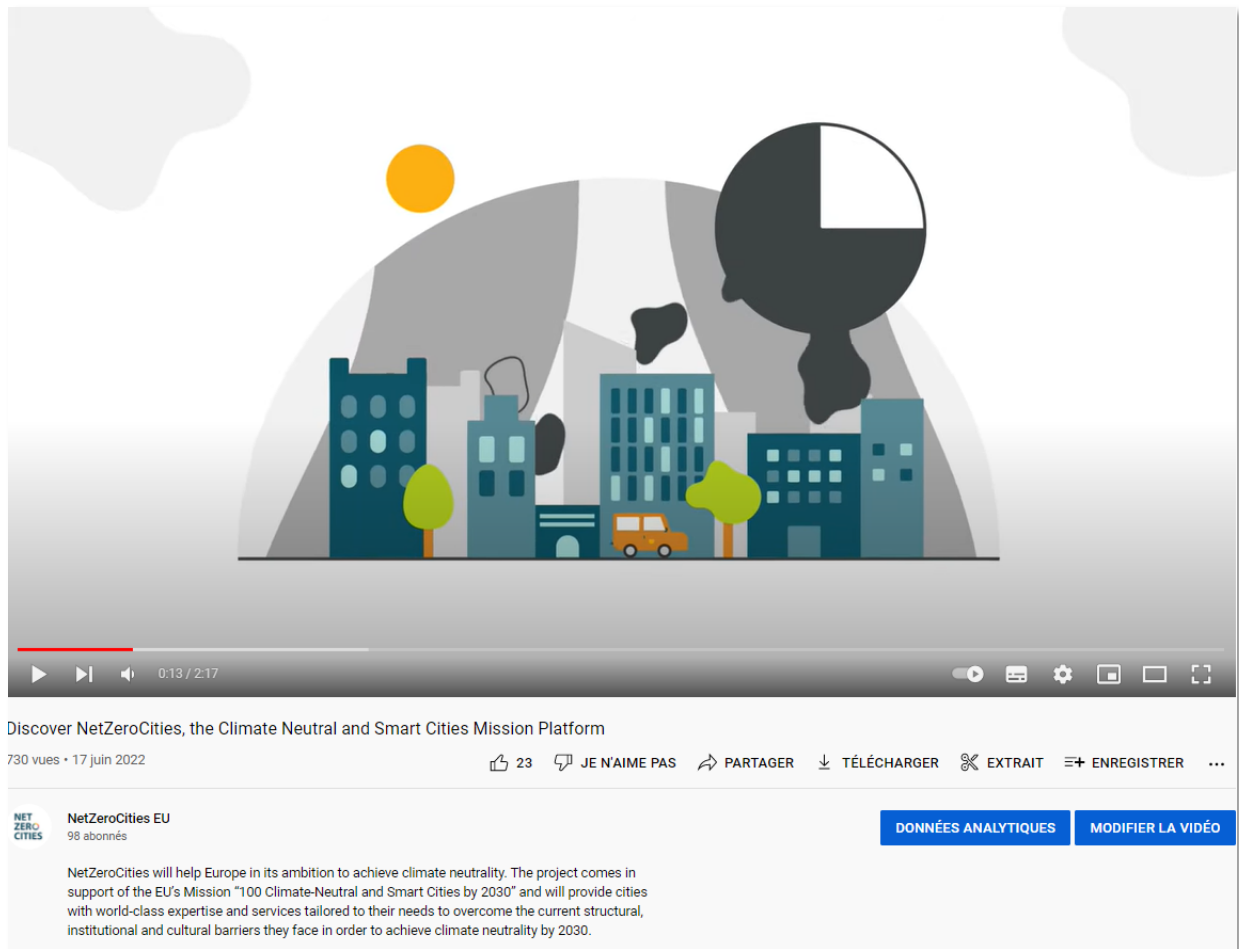
Figure 23: Video introducing NetZeroCities

Upcoming videos

Three videos are currently being prepared to promote some of the key concepts in NetZeroCities: systemic innovation, social innovation, and citizen and stakeholder engagement. The option of creating an additional video on the Climate City Contract process is currently being explored.

A YouTube channel, also referred to as "NZC TV" has been created to disseminate all the videos produced in the project. These videos will also be featured on the project website and widely disseminated on NetZeroCities social media channels (Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn).
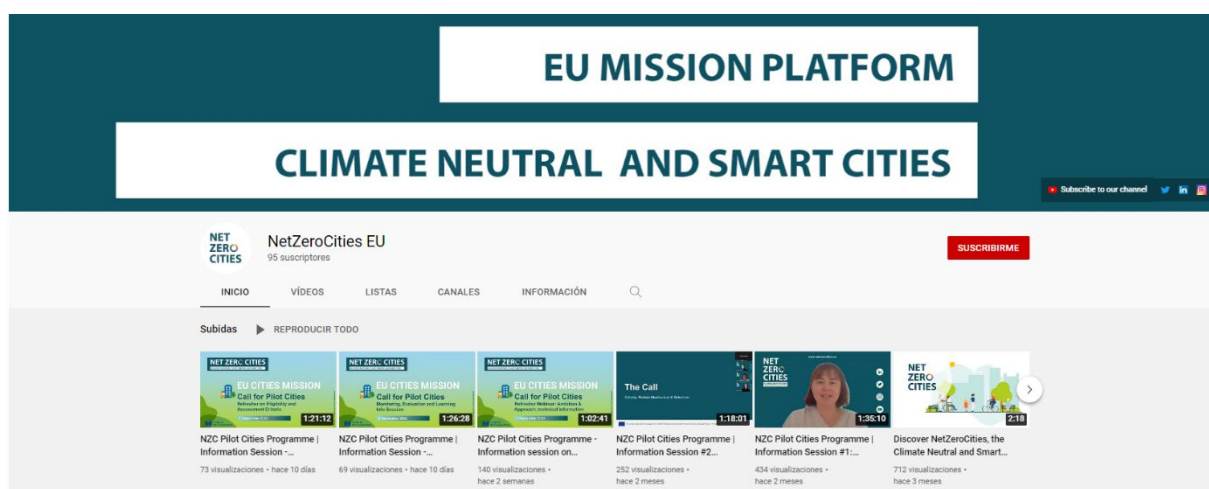
Figure 24: YouTube channel

Public webinar recordings, such as information sessions on the Pilot Cities programme, are publicly made available on the YouTube channel. Other webinars, such as those targeting the Mission Cities, are made available to the selected cities via a private link.

As of 22 September 2022, NZC YouTube channel has **98** subscribers and has received a total of **3100 views**.

5.7 Press releases

To ensure efficient communication and visibility in mainstream and specialised media in the field of climate neutrality and cities, as well as the project itself, press releases are distributed as often as necessary considering project milestones. As of 22 September 2022, NZC has obtained over 150 media mentions in different media across Europe.

The first press release was shared on 1st October 2021 announcing the project's kick-off. In September 2022 a second press release was published to announce the Call for Pilot Cities. Both press releases were sent to a list of media outlets and made publicly available on the project's social media platforms and website landing page.

In order to distribute the press releases, a GDPR compliant list of targeted journalists has been created and curated to reach out to the most relevant media and journalists in both general and specialised press. Partners are also invited to share the press releases with their own media contacts. This is coordinated by WP12 with the purpose to leverage partner's network and obtain a broader media coverage for the project.

Additional press releases will be shared whenever relevant to announce key achievements of the project. Some examples of milestones that could be announced below:

- Results of the Call for Pilot Cities

- Calls for Twins (during launch and for results announcement)

- Launch of the NZC Portal for all cities

- NZC's engagement in climate neutrality and support of the EU Mission on Climate- Neutral and Smart Cities

- Specific initiatives carried out by EU Mission Cities to reach climate neutrality

Figure 25: Press release announcing the launch of the Call for Pilot Cities

5.8 City communication

5.8.1 Communications to cities

Since the announcement of the selected cities to join the 100 Climate-neutral and Smart Cities Mission, regular communication with the selected cities has been maintained.

In May 2022, a welcome email was sent to selected cities introducing NetZeroCities and informing them of the upcoming activities such as the peer learning programme and the webinars. Since then, WP12 has sent several emails per month to cities to inform them of the following activities and materials such as the following:

- Let's Go! Climate Neutral and Smart Cities Mission Kick Off Event: official project launch event gathering the 112 Mission Cities, the Mission Secretariat and the NetZeroCities consortium.
- The NetZeroCities Online Conference: interactive online sessions to review the NetZeroCities programme and the Mission Platform
- City Mini Webinar Series: an opportunity for cities to present on their ambitions and results achieved so far
- The Welcome Webinar: an introduction to the Cities Mission and NetZeroCities
- NZC Quick Reads to help cities get familiar with key concepts of the transition to climate neutrality
- NZC Pilot Cities Call launch, Information Sessions, Guidebook and Guidelines
- NZC portal, sections available and updates
- The Climate City Contract webinar series
- The Climate Transition Map webinar series
- The Transition Team Playbook: guide to develop a city's ability to orchestrate the transition towards climate neutrality

Cities are alerted when presentations and recordings of the different events organised are made available on the NZC website and YouTube channel. WP12 also informs cities of news and key events related to the transition towards climate neutrality.

NetZeroCities will continue to send emails on a regular basis to keep the cities involved and up to date with the materials and tools available to support them in their journey towards net zero emissions.Special attention will be paid to avoid sending too many communications, to ensuring information is clear, engaging and appropriate to cities needs.

Communication will also increasingly use the NetZeroCities Portal as a key channel to keep cities informed and engaged. The Portal is where cities will be able to find resources, cooperate with peers, cities advisors and experts.

Cooperation with the newly appointed city advisors and alignment on the key messages and information to be disseminated to cities will be sought to ensure focused consistent and efficient communications towards cities. Cooperation with other WPs is also key for efficient communications towards cities to be able to plan effective outreach. To that end, several tools are used, including a Gantt Chart providing an overview of events and outputs to be produced by NZC and a calendar of communications to cities. This calendar is stored on the shared Teams in a dedicated folder of the WP12 folder.

5.8.2 Materials to support cities

NZC will support cities in their local campaigns about the project and the actions they implement by providing brand material (Task 12.3).

A visual kit, including a visual bank and an editable presentation was designed in June 2022 (Deliverable 12.12) to support cities in their local communication actions. The visual bank contains visuals to explain what NZC is about, pictures to communicate on climate neutrality and editable visuals to promote cities being part of the Mission. The editable presentation provides material to explain why a shift in approach is needed in climate action and to present what joining the Cities Mission means for cities.

This visual kit is a key element of the Communication Playbook that is under development to support cities in communicating their participation in NetZeroCities as a Mission City. In addition to the visual kit, the Playbook will contain communication guidelines and tips, an elevator pitch and a series of messages tailored to audience groups.

5.9 Other materials

NZC will develop other materials to highlight its work and that of cities involved:

- 10 stories and interviews from pilots and twin cities

- A spotlight series of 10 materials on significant project results

- Infographics to explain the project's approach, ambition level and flow of the programme

- Multimedia case studies

Selected key material such as spotlights, stories, infographics and videos captions will be translated in all languages covered by partners (DE, EE, EN, ES, FI, FR, HR, IT, NL, SE) and in any other EU languages upon request from cities.

6 Awareness raising campaigns

In order to reach out to the general public, specific awareness raising campaigns will be developed. The purpose will be to inform all target audiences of key project milestones. Each awareness campaign will develop messages that are clear, straightforward and close to cities and other stakeholders' concerns. The campaigns will be launched in coordination with the HE Mission on Climate-neutral and smart cities and coordinated by small groups. All project partners will share the campaigns to increase their visibility and reach.

The communication channels previously described in this document will be heavily mobilised to make the series of awareness campaigns a success:

- **Social media**: the social media channels of the project (Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube) will be used to connect with the key stakeholders and with the general public and create a two-way dialogue. Messages will be targeted according to audience profiles. As social media will be the main communication channel for the awareness campaigns, dedicated hashtags will be created.

  o Membership of relevant LinkedIn groups and the dedicated NZC LinkedIn page, will enable the project to contribute to discussions on NZC topics, highlighting articles and events happening. This will enable the establishment of the NZC project as a credible, reliable voice in this area.

  o Twitter will be used to create a follower base firstly by following similar projects, organisations and thought leaders in the field and then by sharing relevant information from the NZC project and beyond to establish it as an interesting, thought-provoking commentary on this topic.

  o Instagram will be used to reach out to stakeholders and citizens interested in net zero and climate neutrality topics in order for them to share the campaigns' key awareness raising messages and for them to take action. Instagram will in particular be used to reach out to young people, people interested in the fight against climate change.

- **Online media and influencers**: Social media influencers will be contacted to share the campaign messages with their online communities. Online general/science/technical magazines and relevant blogs with a general audience will be contacted and targeted to act as relays to promote the campaigns and the key messages of the project. NGOs will also be contacted to act as communication relays.

- **Partners' networks**: NZC partners will be contacted for each campaign to disseminate key messages and materials to their own audiences, thus amplifying outreach. Communication toolkits will be used to help partners share the campaigns with their own networks.

Success metrics will be followed to adjust the campaigns, if necessary, to deliver traction, make the biggest impact and encourage audiences to get involved in NZC and join the journey towards climate neutrality.

According to the grant agreement, the campaigns planned are the following:

- A campaign to promote the launch of the NZC Platform and announce the Calls

- A campaign dedicated to cities and selected pilots. Social media-tailored 30 second videos will be created by EnergyCities for this campaign.

- A campaign promoting "urban climate champions" using an Instagram wall

Campaigns conducted to date:

Two awareness raising campaign have been launched to promote the Cities selected to join the Mission and the launch of the Call for Pilot Cities. For these campaigns a list of target audiences and key messages was identified, and a detailed content calendar was developed to include a list of topics to be covered, the tweets and LinkedIn posts to be published, the visuals to be used, etc.

Campaign on the 112 Mission Cities

A campaign to promote the cities selected to join the EU Climate Neutral and Smart Cities Mission was launched on NZC social media.

Target audiences included cities around the world interested in climate action, elected officials and staff working on implementing the Mission in cities, public & private stakeholders working on climate neutrality, practitioners and the civil society, among others.

WP12 created different types of social media publications to keep the audience engaged throughout the campaign. A combination of posts focused on providing facts about the cities (population, greenhouse gas emissions statistics, renewables energies used, etc.), and posts sharing media mentions of the Cities Mission in different countries was developed and shared across NZC social media accounts.

The main hashtag used for this campaign was #MissionCities.
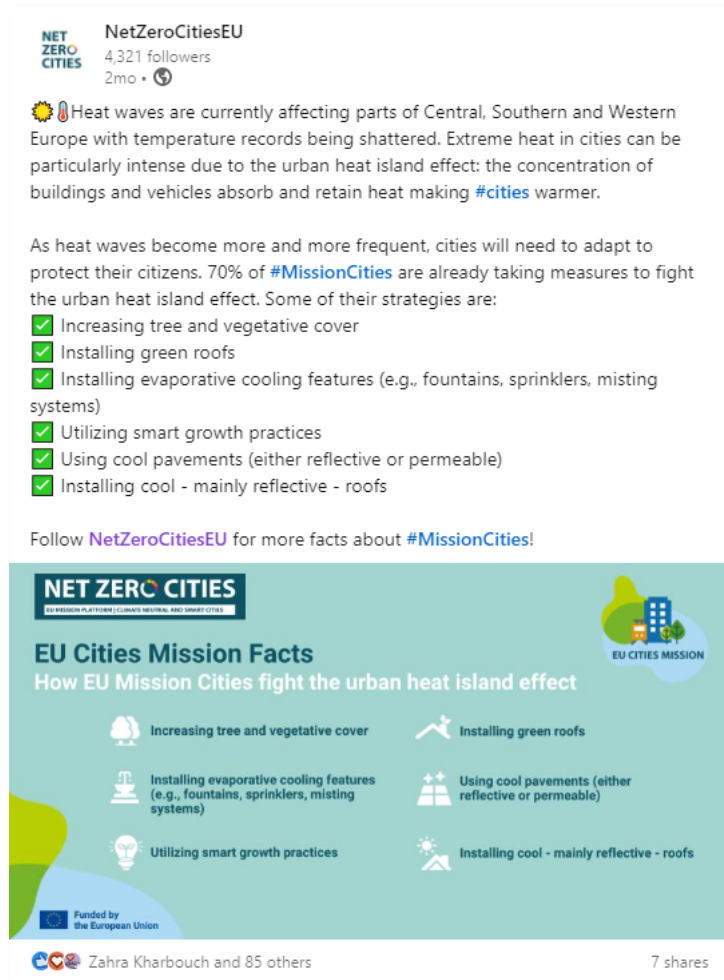
Figure 26: Example of an EU Cities Mission campaign post

Campaign on the Call for Pilot Cities

This campaign targeted all cities, including Mission Cities. Other target audiences that were identified were City Panel members, members of networks involved in NZC and individuals interested in joining NZC Community Practice, among others.

A series of social media publications were drafted to cover different aspects of the Call for Pilot Cities, such as:

- Objectives of the Call for Pilot Cities
- Advantages of becoming a Pilot City
- Registration call to action for the information sessions organised by NZC
- Useful documents to prepare the call: Guidebook, Guidelines, etc.
- Information on how to apply
- Press release on the Call for Pilot Cities

- Deadline reminder

The hashtags that have been used for this campaign are #NZCPilotCities #MissionCities and #EUMissions.

Figure 27: Example of a Call for Pilot Cities campaign post

Social media publications for both campaigns were shared with the Cities Mission and the feedback received was implemented.

Future campaigns

- A campaign dedicated to selected Pilot Cities: this campaign will include social media tailored videos
- A campaign promoting "urban climate champions" using an Instagram wall

Several campaigns will also be planned on a ad hoc basis to promote cities and their work (either Mission cities, Pilot Cites, Twin Cities), as well as the main NZC outcomes.

The outcome of this task will be reported in Deliverable 12.8 "Report on three awareness campaigns" (M36).

7 Dissemination channels and content

7.1 Interactions and exchange with other related projects

NetZeroCities will aim to foster a close collaboration with relevant networks, clusters, and initiatives at European and national/regional levels to share information and exploit synergies and additional dissemination channels.

Networks within the project, such as Climate-KIC, ICLEI, Eurocities, Energy Cities, Viable Cities, OASC, Climate Alliance, ERRIN, Resilient Cities Network and Viable Cities will be used to disseminate the project messages, contents and results.

NET ZERO CITIES

Several networks, clusters, initiatives, and platforms at the European and national/regional level have been identified to establish close collaboration with NetZeroCities:

Initiative/Stakeholder	Short description	Interest for NetZeroCities	Relationship status
Deep Demonstrations of Healthy, Clean Cities	15 European Cities pioneering **strategic innovation** for systemic change to reach carbon neutrality by 2030	Direct link with NZC's systemic innovation approach	Programme of CKIC
Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (CoM)	Brings together thousands of local and regional authorities voluntarily committed to implementing **EU climate and energy objectives** on their territory. The initiative has three main pillars: mitigation, adaptation and energy poverty	Engage local politicians in commitment to ambitious climate and energy goals, large EEU coverage of smaller and bigger cities; SECAP development helpdesk, tools (SECAP development, funding & financing), peer learning	Energy Cities has been leading the Covenant of Mayors Office – EU since its creation, in a consortium with Eurocities, ICLEI and Climate Alliance
EC Joint Research Centre	The EC's science and knowledge service to provide **independent scientific advice** and support to EU policy	Interactions with JRC will be sought during the project design phase, particularly on metrics	Climate Alliance has been closely working with the JRC in the CoM since 2008
Horizon 2020 and other EU projects	**Running projects** and upcoming Green Deal and H. Europe projects. A non-exhaustive list of relevant EU projects where some NZC partners participate includes: • MAKING-CITY • ATELIER • CLEARING HOUSE, • SPARCS, • POCITYF, • RESPONSE, • SHARING CITIES, • FUSILLI, • PACE, • UNALAB, • SISCODE, • Nature4cities, • CLEVER cities, • SmartEnCity	Synergies need to be sought and learnings shared	Partners participate and can establish contacts with a large number of other projects
ELENA (European Local Energy Assistance)	Provides **technical assistance** for energy efficiency and renewable energy investments targeting buildings and innovative urban transport	Synergies can be established, and learnings shared on the best practices regarding the set-up and implementation	**The EIB supports the project** (letter); EuC, CA and EnC have strong

		of the support mechanisms	relationships with the EIB and ELENA unit, REGEA supported investments in 62 municipalities
SEIF (Sustainable Energy Investment Forums)	Engages national interests for large-scale sustainable energy **investment and financing**	Learn about analysis of the needs and financing instruments. It reaches a larger territorial coverage across Europe	Climate Alliance
EUCF (European City Facility)	Assist municipalities with fast and simplified **financial support** for developing investment concepts for local sustainable energy projects	The proposal can learn from the investment concepts developed by the EUCF. The proposal can benefit from the investors network mobilised by the EUCF	Energy Cities lead consortium delivering EUCF and are supported by Climate Alliance as a consortium member. REGEA is a National Expert
CIVITAS	City Network on cleaner, better **transport** in Europe and beyond, 800+ innovative transport measures and solutions tested in 80 Living Lab cities in Europe since 2002	Lessons learned on building and maintaining an ever-growing community of sustainable urban mobility practices (e. g. peer-learning and online training)	Rupprecht and ICLEI have managed CIVITAS projects and Eurocities was responsible for the capacity learning activities among local authorities
Green Digital Charter	Currently supported by the GuiDanCe project, it provides a practical framework to deliver on climate objectives through **digital technologies**	Feedback on linking ambitious carbon footprint reduction objectives with the deployment of large-scale pilot projects within cities or districts	Initiated by Eurocities in 2009
Smart Cities Marketplace (combining Smart Cities Information System (SCIS) and EIP on Smart Cities and Communities)	Initiatives demonstrating and replicating **smart city solutions**: technologies and approaches, co- design with citizens and local ecosystem for scaling up	Knowledge development: systemic approach to tackling challenges, citizen engagement and co-design, governance, finance, funding and business models, data and digitalisation	Eurocities has been part of the consortium delivering SCIS and EIP-SCC. Energy Cities is part of SCALE, which coordinates collaboration between the SCC01 projects
JPI Urban Europe	**Knowledge** hub for urban transitions	JPI UE addresses relevant vectors of urban transitions (digital, energy,	JPI UE welcomes collaboration with NZC (support

		mobility…)	letter)
Positive Energy Districts project (SCC projects, IEA Annex 83 on PEDs, JPI Urban Europe, EERA)	Demonstrate**s** concepts and **technologies** to achieve a positive energy balance contributing to climate neutrality in cities.	Learn how PEDs can contribute to climate neutrality in cities and what are the most common technologies (input to WP10) and strategies to engage citizens (input to WP6- WP9)	CARTIF, VTT, AIT, TEC, LGI are involved in PEDs SCC projects. VTT leads the IEA Annex on PEDs where CARTIF, TEC and AIT contribute
Green City Accord	EC initiative to mobilise European mayors committed to **safeguarding natural environment** (quality of life, implementation of EU environmental laws locally). Accord cities commit to step up efforts in water, air, nature and biodiversity, circular economy and waste, noise by 2030	Green City Accord is developing indicators across 5 urban environment themes which will be relevant for the development of indicators in WP2. It is also providing a helpdesk and online resources for cities, which will be signposted to by the platform	Eurocities is lead partner, managing communication, dissemination of best practices, knowledge transfer, skills exchange; ICLEI is partner for monitoring framework, support structures, helpdesk, and conceptualising knowledge- based strategies
European Green Capital and Green Leaf Awards	Awards programme for **best practice performance** cities (small and large) on a range of indicators, including climate mitigation and adaptation. Peer-learning and knowledge exchange	Best practices and lessons learned from winners and finalists of these awards will be showcased via the portal. Important network of leading cities, valuable in the co-design and implementation of NZC	ICLEI and Eurocities delivered the 2-year pilot of the secretariat for European Green Capital Network
Network Nature	EU platform for **Nature-based solutions**	NBS are an integral part of the solutions portfolio in NZC	ICLEI is co-lead of Network Nature
Sustainable urban mobility indicators (SUMI)	Technical assistance to urban areas for pilot application of sustainable **urban mobility** indicators endorsed by the EC	Integrate SUMI indicators into WP2, starting from those SUMI indicators mentioned in the Mission Report	Rupprecht coordinated the project, Eurocities and UITP were partners
SOLUTIONSplus	The project drafts roadmaps and joint global **urban e-mobility** programme	Build upon the global platform for e-mobility solutions developed in SOLUTIONSplus	UITP coordinates the demonstrations, VTT and Rupprecht are partners.
EU ETV (Environmental Technology Verification)	Supports **circularity** and clean production by	ETV as a driver for adopting innovative	LGI leads the EU ETV Secretariat

	promoting the uptake of new technologies through a verification system of environmental performance	solutions for climate neutrality and could play a role in policy trade-offs for cities	since 2020
EU Platform on Sustainable Finance	Advisory body to the EC on the EU sustainable **finance** taxonomy	Multi-sector collaboration to advise Commission on sustainable finance policies	CKIC is part of Technical Working Group
Climate Impact Forecast tool	**Life cycle assessment** for companies.	Calculate the CO2eq. reduction potential of innovation, evaluate and select innovation.	CKIC uses it to evaluate impact of its start-ups

Table 5: Related projects/initiatives NZC will interact with

Interactions will be sought with others: ELTIS, New European Bauhaus, CRAFT, Impact Hub, InvestEU, Intelligent Cities Challenge, City Finance Lab, etc.

7.2 Conferences and events

Presenting the NetZeroCities results at conferences and/or having a booth to disseminate the knowledge gained is key to maximising the project's impact. Attending conferences and events also creates the opportunity to engage closely with stakeholders.

The project consortium will attend events that are relevant to the topic and through which target groups can be reached. The interest and readiness of the consortium will be evaluated when determining whether to present at key international events as well as how best to present (public intervention and/or hosting a booth). The most relevant events taking place over a 12- month cycle will be identified and event organisers will be contacted to ensure the project is properly represented.

An online form (described in section 4.2) was created to track and monitor partner participation in international and national conferences. A master document with a list of all the events identified is used by the ExCom to decide on NZC's participation.

During the first year of the project, NZC was present at several events and conferences, including:

Event	Date
EU Green Week side-event on Greener, Smarter, More Resilient Cities	1 June 2022
Smart Cities Marketplace Forum 2022	26-27 April 2022
High-level Conference on Civic Engagement in the EU Missions (French Presidency of the European Union)	21 March 2022
COP 26	November 2021

NZC has confirmed its participation in the upcoming events:

Event	Date
Urban Mobility Days	20-22 September 2022
EUSEW European Sustainable Energy Week	26-30 September 2022
EU R&I Days	28-29 September 2022
DUT Urban Europe Meeting	4-5 October 2022

Workshop related to Smart Cities	4 October 2022
ENVE External Conference – local Green Deal	6-7 October 2022
EUWRC European Week of Regions and Cities	10-13 October 2022
Covenant of Mayors Investment Forum	18 October 2022
Public Participation and Deliberative Democracy Festival	20-21 October 2022
UBC Webinar Series	25 October 2022
COP27	8 November 2022
Transport Research Arena	14-17 November 2022
SmartCity Expo World Congress Barcelona	15-17 November

Table 6: Conferences and events NZC plans to attend in the following months

In addition to this list, NZC is currently considering participating in the following events:

Event	Date
Peer to peer workshop on localising the European Green Deal	12-13 October 2022
Cities Mission Baltic Conference	17 October 2022
6th Just Transition Platform Conference	25 October 2022
Economic Conference Montenegro	27 October 2022
POLIS Annual Conference	30 November – 1 December 2022

Figure 28: Events in which the project is considering participating

NetZeroCities will hold at least 3 events as part of communication and dissemination activities, possibly connected to existing events. The events are foreseen to be hybrid events and each of them will aim to attract a minimum of 150 participants. The events will target a wide range of stakeholder groups in order to ensure dissemination of the project findings, including local, regional and national public authorities; EU institutions; policy makers; research and academia; businesses including SMEs; industry; civil society and finance:

The format and logistics of the NetZeroCities events will depend on the situation surrounding COVID-19. The events are envisioned to be held in a hybrid setting but the partners will be ready to transform them into online-only versions to ensure the safety and security of attendees.

On 13 June 2022 the European Commission and NZC hosted the Let's Go! Climate Neutral & Smart Cities Mission Kick Off Event that brought together the 112 cities selected to participate in the Mission for 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030. An article with the main takeaways was published on the NZC website. Proceedings of this first event were drafted and submitted to the European Commission (Deliverable 12.9). Below is a snapshot of the conference objectives and programme:

Figure 29: Invitation to the Kick Off Event

NZC will organize a mid-term conference to present the platform and pilots and a celebration ceremony for CCC signatories and 1 day networking between pilot and twin cities by M24. In addition, a final conference and a 1-day workshop will be held by NZC by M48 to present the project conclusions and lay the foundation for future strategy.

7.3 European dissemination channels

All official channels established by EU institutions will be used to disseminate the project's results. The following official EU dissemination channels will be targeted:

Magazines	Research*eu results magazine	www.cordis.europa.eu/research-eu/home_fr.html
	Horizon – The EU Research and Innovation Magazine	https://horizon-magazine.eu/
Portals	CORDIS	www.cordis.europa.eu/home_fr.html
	Horizon 2020 newsroom	www.ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/newsroo m

Table 7: EU dissemination channels

7.4 Scientific publications

Several scientific publications will be prepared by lead academic partners involved in the project. These publications will include the main findings of the project's deliverables and may be presented in some of the conferences listed in section 7.2 of this document.

NetZeroCities will follow the Horizon 2020 open access policy by providing online access to scientific information that is free of charge to the end-user and that is reusable. The Open Research Europe platform will be favoured, and platforms such as Zenodo, Open Science Repository may also be used. Partners' own repositories may also be used, noting that all information generated in NetZeroCities will adhere to open access policies and all partners will refrain from holding any such information proprietary or trade-related

In the context of this project, scientific information refers to peer-reviewed scientific research articles, articles, conference papers and research data. The NetZeroCities project will combine different measures to foster open access to knowledge as much as possible. Scientific publications produced in NetZeroCities will target the scientific community, and the community of urban practitioners and innovators, for example:

Journal	Interest for NZC
Sustainable Cities and Society (SCS)	Smart cities governance; resilient environments; energy efficient, low/zero carbon, green buildings/communities; climate change mitigation and adaptation in urban environments
disP – The Planning Review	Scientific journal addressing the topics in the areas of urban development, city and town planning, environmental planning, environmental economics and transportation planning.
Urban Planning	International journal covering sustainable solutions for landscape planning and design.
European Public & Social Innovation Review	A fully peer reviewed and interdisciplinary biannual journal on theoretical and empirical articles, case studies and provocative papers to disseminate new knowledge, practices and experiences in the social innovation field.
European Planning Studies	Spatial development processes and problems, and policy implementation in Europe (urban planning, service design and cities development).
Sustainability	International, cross-disciplinary, scholarly, peer-reviewed journal of environmental, cultural, economic, and social sustainability of human beings.
Journal of Cleaner Production	International, transdisciplinary journal focusing on cleaner production, environmental, and sustainability research and practices.

Table 8: Scientific publications

Project partners will be encouraged to regularly share information about their scientific publications when related to NetZeroCities and urban climate issues via the online form described in section 4.2. Summaries of these publications will be disseminated on the project website, through the annual newsletter and on all social media channels.

8 Exploitation

The exploitation strategy of NetZeroCities builds on two pillars:

Exploitation through open source and open ecosystems.

NetZeroCities embraces an open approach. All results and deliverables, unless explicitly stated otherwise, are made fully public and openly available on the project website. This includes the services, methodologies and capacity-building material, the web portal and its source code (and placed on a Github repository), the platform design, and recommendations from the project and its advisory boards.

All public deliverables submitted during the first year of the project are now available on NZC website under the resources section. They all include a watermark and a disclaimer stating that they have not been validated by the European Commission and therefore cannot be considered as the final version.

The Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 license will be used: it allows to distribute, remix, adapt, and enhance the original work, as long as a credit is provided for it. This will foster collaboration and accelerate the transformation to socially innovative and carbon neutral cities by bringing actors to the platform, making available the project's Key Exploitable Results (KERs), and enabling practitioners and innovators to reuse and co-improve. No Foreground Intellectual Property is expected to be patented or subject to other protection measures. The use of Background IP or existing know-how shall be made available free of charge to the Partners within the consortium for the achievement of the objectives.

Exploitation of and through the one-stop-shop Platform.

The consortium, notably the service delivery partners are committed to, together, sustain and scale up the Platform beyond the project period in their normal operations, both in the private business as well as public research work. The exact governance model and joint business model, and the related organisational and contractual considerations, will be co-designed (WP3) with cities, and the HLAB will be consulted. Several scenarios for the governance, ownership and business model scenarios are envisaged at this stage:

- restricted joint entity

- joint entity with open membership

- model for distributed operations and related contractual agreements

- transfer to the EC or another EU institution; etc.

The Platform is expected to continue to support cities at least till 2030. Towards this aim, the partners are committed to engage in a constructive and open manner in the planning of a sustainable business model; to license the required background IP for further use of the possible platform entity with the same conditions that are present in the grant and consortium agreement; and to transfer ownership of all project results to the platform entity. Initial governance considerations and potential business model scenarios are explored early in the project as the ambition is for most services provided by the one-stop-shop platform to sustain beyond the end of the Project.

The strategy for exploitation will be further outlined in the next version of this deliverable: "Updated Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Plan" n°1, 2 and 3, corresponding to deliverables 12.2 (M12), 12.3 (M24) and 12.4 (M47). This will come in coordination with Task 3.4 "One Stop Shop Platform Business Plan and Sustainability" and the associated deliverable 3.7 "Exploitation and Business plan/model for the future of the Platform and of the project results".

9   Revised key performance indicators

Some of the key performance indicators listed in the Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Plan that was submitted at the beginning of the project have been achieved or are close to being achieved. Therefore, WP12 has revised some of the proposed key performance indicators below (see column revised target for changes).

NET ZERO CITIES

Activity	Description	Initial Target	Numbers achieved	Revised target
Visual Identity	Design visual identity (logo, graphic charter)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Flyer / Roll-up	Design and print project flyer and roll-up for events	Used in 8+ events	Used in 2 events so far	Used in 8+ events
Public website	Central communication hub for promoting NZC	At least 20.000 page views & 6000 visitors	This KPI has been reached. As of 22 September, the website has obtained over 150 000 views and received over 60 000 visitors (statistics from IONOS analytics tool).	150 000 views and 60 000 visitors a year minimum.
Twitter	Build online community to support engagement	At least 1.5k followers	This KPI has been reached. As *of 22 September 2022, NZC has 1505 followers on Twitter)*	5000 followers on Twitter by M48
LinkedIn	Build online community to support engagement	At least 2k followers	*This KPI has already been reached. As of 22 September 2022, NZC has 4321 followers on LinkedIn*	10000 followers on LinkedIn by M48
Instagram	Build online community to support engagement / Broadcast the campaign promoting "Urban Climate Champions"	At least 1k followers	*As of 22 September 2022, NZC has 318 followers on Instagram*	At least 1k followers
"NZC TV"	Streaming channel on website and YouTube channel, for project and other relevant videos (including three 2-3min videos and several 30 second videos from Task 12.5)	At least 3k views	*As of 22 September 2022, NZC YouTube channel has 96 subscribers and 3100 views*	At least 10000 views by M48
Community of Practice	LinkedIn Group or other tools / Build online community to support animation of the Community of Practice	At least 1k practitioners interested to join		At least 1k practitioners interested to join

Spotlights & stories and interviews	A series of at least 10 spotlights and 10 stories and interviews from the pilots	Portfolio of spotlights and stories in several languages		Portfolio of spotlights and stories in several languages
Press releases	Shared with target media and journalists	50 media mentions	*As of 22 September 2022, NZC has had over 150 media mentions*	At least 400 media mentions by M48
E-newsletters	E-newsletters	At least 3k Subscribers	*As of 22 September 2022, NZC has 1727 newsletter subscribers*	At least 4000 subscribers by M48
NZC conferences	Three conferences (M8, M24, M48) with specific objectives for each (WP12)	At least 150 participants per conference	350 people attended the kick-off event physically in Brussels and around 698 people participated online	At least 150 participants per conference
External events	Policy/ practice Conferences: Present in conferences and events to disseminate the project's objectives and results.	At least 20 events	15+ events attended online & live	At least 40 events
Publications	Publications Scientific and non-scientific publications Research	At least 10 publications		At least 10 publications

Table 9: Key performance indicators

Conclusion

The updated version of the Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Plan outlined in this document provides a detailed overview of the strategy and actions that will be implemented to promote NetZeroCities and its results in an efficient yet impactful way. The plan will be updated and improved based on the monitoring results collected: updated versions of the plan will be submitted in M24 and M47 (corresponding to deliverables 12.3 and 12.4).