

## NetZeroCities Keywords Glossary



## Introduction

Welcome to our NetZeroCities Glossary, a concise guide aimed at empowering European cities in their pursuit of climate neutrality. This document is crafted to clarify essential sustainability terms and acronyms, facilitating effective planning and implementation of climate action strategies. It serves as a foundation for shared understanding and collaboration among policymakers, urban planners, and stakeholders committed to transforming their cities into sustainable, carbon-neutral environments. Use this glossary to navigate the complexities of climate change initiatives and harness its insights for impactful urban sustainability efforts.

## Glossary

### C:

- **Capability Building Framework:** A capability-building framework outlines a scalable strategy for an organisation to pinpoint, cultivate, and enhance the skills essential for its success. It focuses on shaping training and development programs to boost employee/stakeholder performance in areas that are most impactful for the organisation or programme.
- **Capability Building Programme:** This is an online learning programme for Mission Cities, providing content such as videos, reading materials & tools, as well as live events & discussion forums. It aims to support cities in building the capabilities necessary to accelerate the climate-neutrality transition and lead a City Climate Contract process.
- **Carbon Neutrality:** Balancing the amount of carbon we put into the air with what we take out.
- **City Advisors:** City Advisors guide cities in developing and implementing climate strategies through Climate City Contracts. As the initiative advances, City Advisors will also introduce innovative governance and financing methods, especially for Pilot Cities, to ensure effective and participatory climate action.
- **Circular Economy:** An economy in which the waste of one process is always reused as the resource of another.
- **City Governance Models:** The structures and mechanisms by which cities are managed and make decisions, adaptable to support climate initiatives.
- **Cities Mission Capital Hub (CMCH):** an innovative initiative aimed at advancing Europe's transition to Net Zero by facilitating public and private finance for sustainable urban development. The CMCH is intended to comprise of two integrated programs, Technical Assistance and Capital Facilitation, through these programmes the CMCH empowers cities to achieve their climate goals and drive impactful projects. [More.](#)
- **City Support Groups:** City Support Groups are the second circle of support around City Advisors, directly assisting cities through customised support, focusing on creative solutions and strategic guidance. Composed of City Advisors, Specialists, and Officers. Each city support group consists of three specialists: a participation expert, a policy expert and a finance expert.
- **Climate City Contract (CCC):** The Cities Mission Climate City Contract (CCC) is a governance innovation tool to help cities collaboratively address their barriers to reaching climate neutrality by 2030. [More.](#)
- **Climate experts:** Specialists with knowledge and expertise in climate-related matters, such as climate change mitigation and adaptation.



- **Climate Action Plan (CAP):** A comprehensive roadmap developed by cities detailing strategies and actions to mitigate climate change, typically including emission reduction targets and adaptation measures.
- **Climate Neutrality Action Plan (CNAP):** A targeted plan that outlines specific steps a city will take to eliminate net greenhouse gas emissions and achieve climate neutrality.
- **Climate Neutrality:** Climate neutrality surpasses carbon neutrality by encompassing all greenhouse gases (GHGs), not just carbon dioxide, and includes broader climate impacts. It aims for a comprehensive balance, neutralising the total emissions of all GHGs through equivalent reductions or offsets to address the full spectrum of climate change contributors.
- **Climate Transition Map:** A strategic framework and visual representation that outlines the phases cities undergo in transitioning towards climate neutrality. It emphasises building a strong mandate, understanding the system through data and stakeholder engagement, co-designing a portfolio of systemic interventions, and developing the local ecosystem to support climate neutrality efforts.
- **Community of Practice (CoP):** is currently a NZC portal group where cities, citizens, and experts share ideas and solutions to reduce carbon emissions to zero. It's a place for learning and helping each other to make cities more sustainable and fight climate change.
- **Consumption-Base Accounting (CBA):** This approach calculates the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the consumption of goods and services by a country's residents, including emissions throughout the global supply chain. It highlights the impact of a country's consumption patterns on global emissions, informing sustainable consumption and production policies.
- **Covenant of Mayors (CoM):** The EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, endorsed by the European Commission, unites numerous local governments striving to ensure a sustainable future for their residents, wherein participants pledge to adhere to EU climate and energy goals upon enrolment.

## D:

- **Deep Demonstrations:** Real-world experiments to show how new ideas can help define our carbon-neutral strategies of the future.

## E:

- **Emission Factor:** A coefficient that quantifies the emissions or removals of a gas per unit of activity or economic output, facilitating the estimation of emissions associated with various urban processes like energy production or transportation.
- **EU Mission:** is a new way to bring concrete solutions to some of our greatest challenges. They have ambitious goals and will deliver concrete results by 2030.

### The 5 EU Missions:

- **Adaptation to Climate Change:** support at least 150 European regions and communities to become climate resilient by 2030
- **Cancer:** working with Europe's Beating Cancer Plan to improve the lives of more than 3 million people by 2030 through prevention, cure and solutions to live longer and better
- **Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030**



- 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030
- A Soil Deal for Europe: 100 living labs and lighthouses to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030

They put research and innovation into a new role, combined with new forms of governance and collaboration, as well as by engaging citizens.

---

## G:

- **Green City Action Plan (GCAP):** A strategic plan that cities develop to enhance environmental sustainability, focusing on actions like greening urban areas, improving waste management, and fostering eco-friendly transportation and energy systems.
  - **Greenhouse Gases (GHG):** Gases in Earth's atmosphere that trap heat, contributing to the greenhouse effect and global warming. Key GHGs include carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), and fluorinated gases, with various sources including energy production, agriculture, industrial processes, and waste management.
- 

## I:

- **Investment Plan:** Part of the Climate City Contract that identifies potential costs and investments required to reach climate neutrality, organising public and private resources strategically to support the city's pathway to climate neutrality.
  - **Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU):** This term encompasses emissions from industrial activities and the consumption of manufactured products in urban settings, excluding fuel combustion. It reflects the impact of industrial activities on a city's overall sustainability efforts.
- 

## J:

- **Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC):** The European Commission's science and knowledge service which provides independent scientific advice and support to EU policy. The JRC works on a wide range of topics to promote a healthy and safe environment, secure energy supplies, sustainable mobility, and more.
- 

## K:

- **Knowledge Repository:** an openly accessible shared database and file storage system on the NetZeroCities Portal for Cities, citizens and experts to learn from and share knowledge on everything relating to the cities mission objectives. Access the Knowledge Repository at <https://netzerocities.app/knowledge>
- 

## L:



- **Local Platform:** A collaborative space where various city sectors and stakeholders work together to achieve climate objectives.
  - **Long-Termism:** a business's, organisation's or government's commitment to conducting its operations in a way that ensures future generations can also fulfil their needs. This approach prioritises making choices that uphold social, economic, and environmental stewardship, rather than focusing solely on immediate financial gains.
- 

## M:

- **Mandate:** An official or informal position empowering certain people or teams to take the lead on a certain topic.
  - **Mission-based approach:** An approach guided by a specific mission or vision that goes beyond the current day-to-day practices. In literature, it is also referred to as cathedral- or upstream thinking.
  - **Mission Platform:** The Mission Platform provides the necessary hands-on technical, regulatory and financial assistance to cities to support them in their journey towards climate neutrality. Currently managed by NetZeroCities.
  - **Mobility:** The movement of people and goods within a city, often a focus for reducing emissions and promoting sustainability.
  - **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL):** a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework designed to help cities track their progress towards sustainability goals, enhance their capacity in areas of limited expertise, and foster continuous improvement through systematic assessment and knowledge acquisition.
  - **Multi-level governance:** A system where different levels of government—local, regional, national, and sometimes international—work together with non-governmental organisations, businesses, and communities to address complex issues. This approach aims to improve efficiency, inclusiveness, and responsiveness by involving various stakeholders in decision-making processes.
- 

## N:

- **NetZeroCities (NZC):** NetZeroCities is the current Cities Mission Platform manager and helps Europe in its ambition to achieve climate neutrality. The project comes in support of the EU's Mission "100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030" and provides cities with world-class expertise and services tailored to their needs.
  - **New European Bauhaus (NEB):** An initiative integrating sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusivity into the European Green Deal's vision. The NEB aims to bridge the science of building environmentally friendly structures with the art of designing spaces that improve quality of life. It fosters collaboration across disciplines to reimagine future living spaces that are beautiful, green, and accessible to all.
- 

## O:



- **Ownership:** A sense of responsibility and accountability among individuals or departments for driving climate action.

## P:

- **Participation:** The active involvement of residents, businesses, and organisations in climate initiatives and decision-making processes in cities.
- **Pilot Cities Programme:** a two-year, grant-funded programme supporting piloting activities to implement systems-innovation-led approaches to decarbonising and transforming specified city emissions domains. More.
- **Political commitment:** The dedication and support shown by political leaders to prioritise and implement climate-related actions.
- **Production-Based Accounting:** This method measures greenhouse gas emissions generated within a country's borders, focusing on emissions from domestic production activities. It's used for national GHG inventories and helps inform policies to reduce emissions from local industries and sectors.

## R:

- **Regulation:** Government policies and laws that establish rules and standards for emissions reduction and sustainability.
- **Resilience:** Urban resilience refers to a city's ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from the impacts of climate change. This includes preparing for natural disasters, managing water scarcity, and addressing rising temperatures to protect infrastructure, ecosystems, and communities.
- **Replicability assessment:** This involves evaluating the adaptability of a strategy or project development approach initially implemented in a Pilot City to potentially be used in a different setting. This assessment considers the possibility that the contextual conditions in the new setting may differ significantly from those in the Pilot City.

## S:

- **Scarcity:** Not having enough of something, like clean water or clean air.
- **Sense of urgency:** The feeling of immediate importance and necessity to address climate issues promptly.
- **Sense-Making:** The process of interpreting and piecing together complex information to understand how various aspects of a system are interconnected. It entails creating shared narratives that guide collective decision-making and action in the face of uncertainty.
- **Social Innovation:** the development and implementation of novel solutions to social challenges that aim to improve community well-being. For example, a city might introduce a bike-sharing program to address urban congestion and improve public health, which is innovative in its approach and socially beneficial in its impact.
- **Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP):** An action plan that focuses on increasing energy efficiency, promoting renewable energy use, and implementing climate adaptation measures in urban areas.
- **Systemic Change:** Systemic change is about changing the parts of a system and how these parts work together, leading to the creation of a completely new system that operates



differently. This process simplifies complex interactions to make the system function in a new way.

- **Systems Innovation:** An approach to climate action that moves from incremental to systemic change, innovating across existing systems in a coordinated way to unlock pathways towards climate neutrality and associated co-benefits.

---

**T:**

- **Theory of Change (TOC):** A comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It outlines the pathway from actions to outcomes and ultimately to the impact, highlighting the assumptions and causal links. In the context of climate action and sustainability, TOC helps in planning, implementing, and evaluating strategies and interventions for achieving climate neutrality and other environmental goals.
- **Transition:** The process of moving from one way of doing things to a better way. This includes the shift from fossil fuel-dependent systems to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources and technologies. The process of shifting from traditional practices to sustainable and climate-neutral approaches in cities.
- **Transition Team:** the team comprising multiple actors from across the city-wide ecosystem all working in 'orchestration' to deliver climate neutrality for their city, region or constituency.
- **Twinned Cities:** Pilot and Twin City/ies which have been matched to actively work together on the path to climate neutrality through knowledge exchange and collaborative problem-solving. Cities can be twinned in different ways.
- **Twinning Learning Journey:** Within the framework of the Twinning Learning Programme, a comprehensive 20-month itinerary has been curated to facilitate knowledge transfer and capacity-building among the Pilot Cities and Twin Cities participating in the program. It includes a diverse range of activities, including workshops, virtual meetings and on-site visits.

---

**U:**

- **Urban Development:** The planning and growth of cities, often guided by sustainable and climate-friendly principles.
- **Urban Planning:** Designing and organising cities and communities to achieve environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

---

**Z:**

- **Zero Emissions:** Referring to the complete absence of greenhouse gas emissions, a key objective for climate-neutral cities.

