

CCC HIGHLIGHTS

BOLD COMMITMENTS TO 2030

SUMMARY

The EU Mission Label has been awarded to 33 cities as of September 2024 — with 10 cities receiving the Label in October 2023 and another 23 in March 2024. The Label recognises each city's commitment to achieving climate neutrality by 2030, as outlined in their respective Climate City Contracts (CCCs). This factsheet, part of a broader series titled “CCC Highlights”, examines how the 100 Climate Neutral Cities Mission strengthens and connects existing efforts across different levels of governance, accelerating cities' planned climate neutrality journeys.

Main takeaways:

- **Building on existing frameworks at multiple levels of government:** CCCs are not created from scratch. The 33 approved CCCs build on existing planning and implementation efforts, as is illustrated by the **666 total documents, including action plans, regulations, and policies across multiple government levels**, that the cities have mapped. Over **50% of cities referenced their existing (Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP)/Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP) or SUMP** as foundational elements of their CCCs. The analysis reveals a notable **gap in cross-sectoral integration at the action planning level**.
- **Leveraging City Diplomacy and International Networks:** All 33 CCCs emphasise the role of city diplomacy and international climate governance in accelerating climate action. Cities highlighted their involvement in **networks** (e.g., Eurocities, ICLEI), **international commitments** (e.g., Covenant of Mayors), and **programmes or projects** (e.g., Horizon Programme) as critical for strengthening resources, capacity, and leadership in the fight against climate change. The analysis underscores how crucial it is for cities to **test innovative solutions, share experiences with peers, and collaborate on collective actions**.
- **All 33 cities have committed to ambitious climate neutrality targets by 2030.** Aggregated data demonstrates that the targets set in the CCCs both amplify and anticipate cities' prior climate goals.





First Cohort of Mission Label Cities (Label awarded in October 2023)	Second Cohort of Mission Label Cities (Label awarded in March 2024)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sønderborg• Cluj-Napoca• Klagenfurt• Mannheim• Valladolid• Vitoria-Gasteiz• Madrid• Stockholm• Valencia• Zaragoza	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ioannina• Kalamata• Kozani• Thessaloniki• Heidelberg• Leuven• Espoo• Lahti• Lappeenranta• Tampere• Turku• Barcelona• Seville• Pecs• Malmö• Guimaraes• Lisbon• Florence• Parma• Marseille• Lyon• Limassol• Izmir

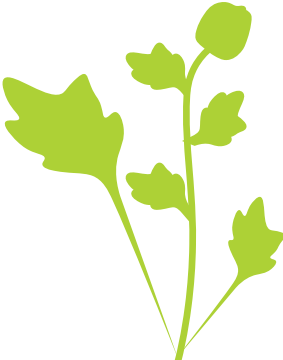
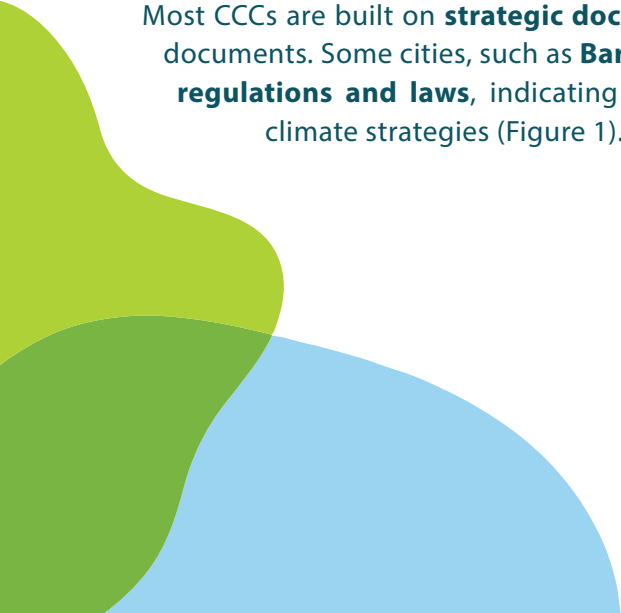
WHAT IS THE MISSION LABEL?

The Mission Label is the European Commission's recognition of cities' successful development of their CCCs, which outline the overall vision for climate neutrality and contain an action plan and investment strategy.

BUILDING ON EXISTING STRATEGIES, ACTION PLANS, AND REGULATIONS

As a preliminary step to developing their CCCs and setting clear climate targets for 2030, cities comprehensively mapped **relevant strategic documents, action plans, regulations, and policies** at multiple governance levels. An analysis of the mapping exercise reveals how cities build on existing efforts to shape their path toward climate neutrality. A total of **666 documents** were mapped across 33 cities. The number of referenced documents varies widely, from **72 in Barcelona** to just **one in Mannheim**, reflecting diverse levels of integration with existing frameworks.

Most CCCs are built on **strategic documents and action plans**, representing over 70% of the mapped documents. Some cities, such as **Barcelona, Leuven, and Tampere**, went further by mapping detailed **regulations and laws**, indicating a deeper incorporation of the regulatory framework into their climate strategies (Figure 1).



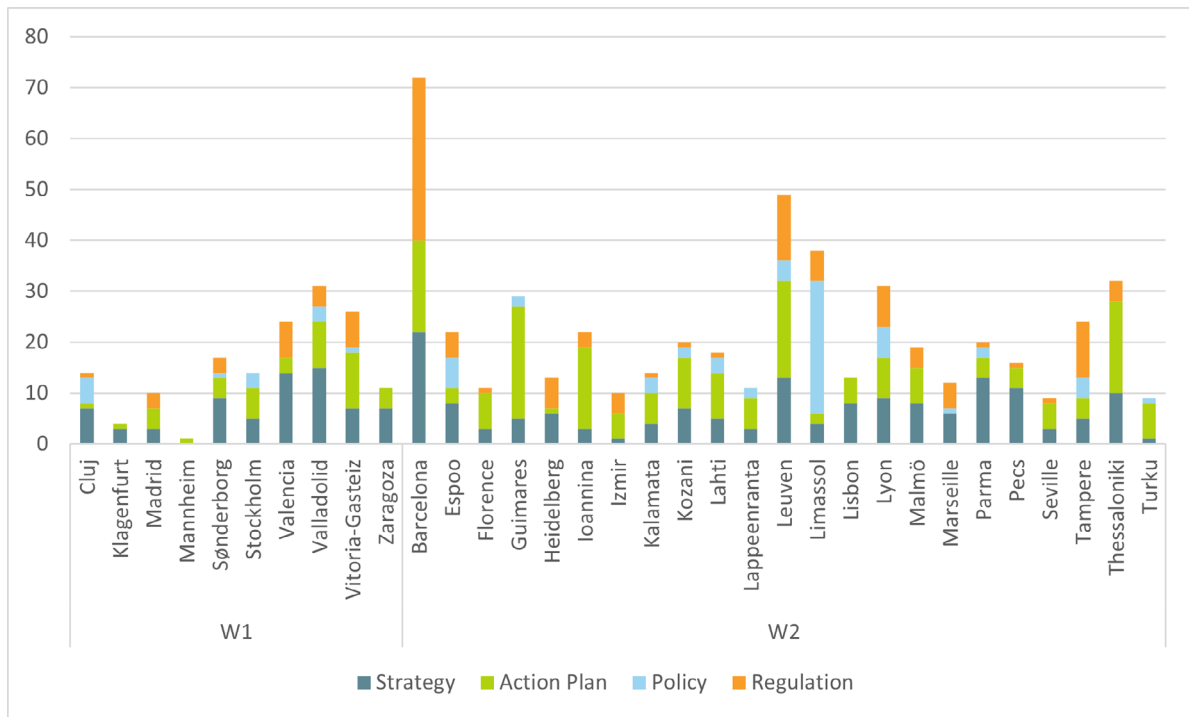


Figure 1. Type of mapped documents by city

An assessment of climate –mitigation-relevant documents demonstrates the need for a **multi-level governance** approach that cities must adopt when planning their climate neutrality journey. While **municipalities or local administrative offices produce 46%** of the documents, the remaining 54% come from other levels of government, highlighting the interplay between city-level initiatives and broader national and European frameworks (Figure 2). This is further emphasised by cities’ references to planning frameworks proposed at the European level. For instance, more than 50% of cities refer to their existing **Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP)/Social Economy Action Plan (SEAP) or to their Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP)** as a building block for their CCC. Looking at the types of documents by the level of government, **57%** of the referenced **strategies** and **action plans** are **local**, emphasising the key role of city-led planning, whereas **regulations and policies** are primarily shaped by **national and European** governance, underscoring the importance of higher-level policy frameworks.

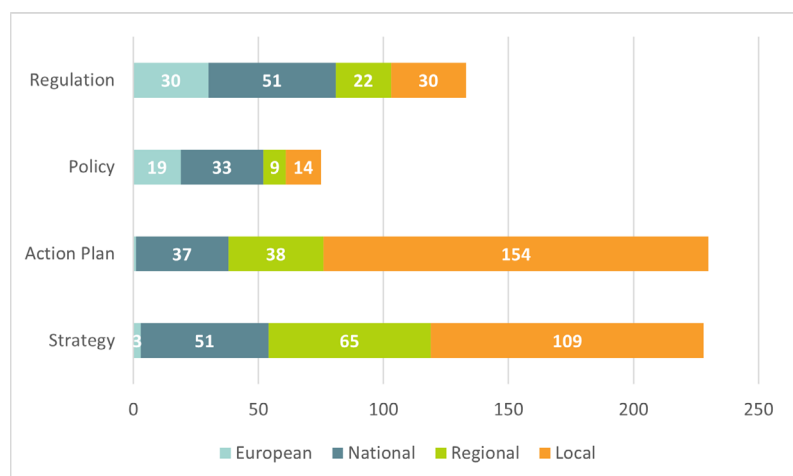


Figure 2. Mapped documents by type and level of government



Looking at the mapped documents by sector, the **energy-focused documents** dominate, accounting for **22%** of the mapped documents (Figure 3). This highlights a traditional focus on energy in climate mitigation efforts. It is important to note that 20% of the documents span multiple sectors, reflecting an increasing recognition of the need for **systemic change** and cross-sectoral approaches. This cross-sectoral trend is clear at the strategic level, with **51% of strategies** addressing more than one sector. However, in more specific documents like action plans and regulations, the focus remains on key sectors such as **energy, mobility, and urban planning**.

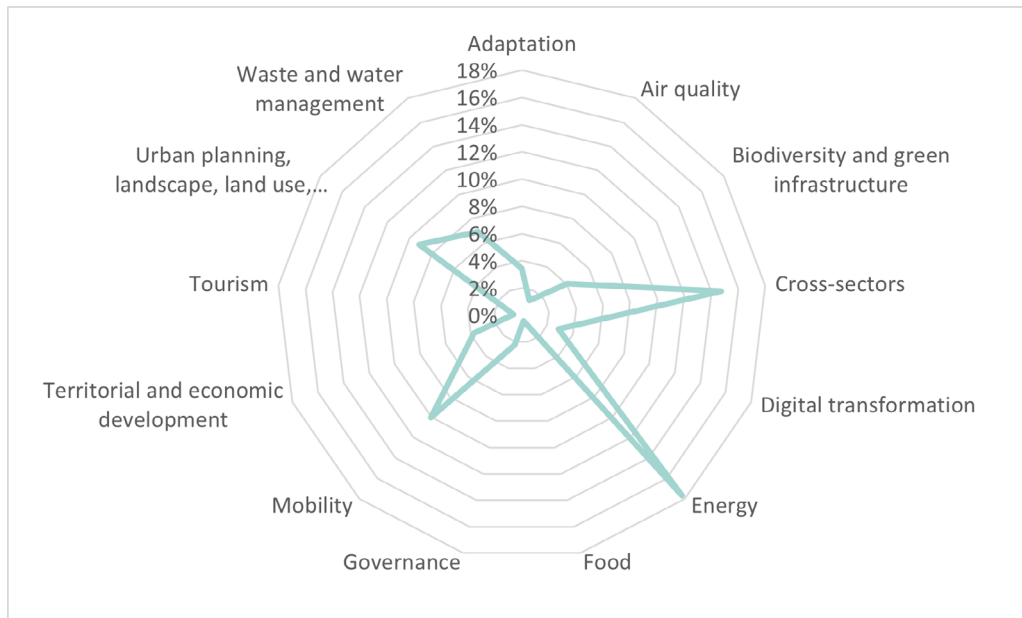


Figure 3. Mapped documents by sector

The analysis highlights how cities are already aligning their climate strategies with broader frameworks and recognising the need for integrated, multi-sectoral approaches. While local leadership is critical, the support from **national and European** policies remains essential in driving comprehensive and sustained climate action. On the one hand, the focus on cross-sectoral strategies signals a growing understanding of the systemic nature of climate challenges. On the other hand, however, the lack of cross-sectoral integration in action plans highlights the **need for tools, like the CCCs**, which merge the **strategic vision** with the **operational level**. An in-depth analysis of the cross-sectoral approach in the CCCs' portfolio of actions could provide valuable insights into their effectiveness in bridging this gap and driving integrated climate solutions.





Sectors	Strategy	Action Plan	Regulation	Policy	Total (%)
Adaptation	13	10	4		4%
Air quality	4	7	3	1	2%
Biodiversity and green infrastructure	11	22	1	1	5%
Cross-sectors	51	30	31	19	20%
Digital transformation	15	6	1	4	4%
Energy	29	46	44	26	22%
Food	6	2		1	1%
Governance	2	9	5	2	3%
Mobility	36	29	12	8	13%
Territorial and economic development	22	10	1	5	6%
Tourism	3		1	1	1%
Urban planning, landscape, land use, housing	21	25	20	5	11%
Waste/water	15	34	10	2	10%
Grand Total	34%	35%	20%	11%	100%

Table 1. Mapped documents by type and sector



LEVERAGING TRANSNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES: MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

In addition to building on existing planning documents and regulations from various levels of government, CCCs depict how cities are accelerating their transition to climate neutrality by actively engaging in **city diplomacy** and leveraging their participation in international climate governance. City diplomacy and international relations strengthen cities' climate action efforts and position them as key actors in the fight against climate change. All 33 labelled CCCs refer to the cities' involvement in **international commitments, networks, awards, or programmes**, showcasing the significance of external partnerships in achieving climate neutrality.

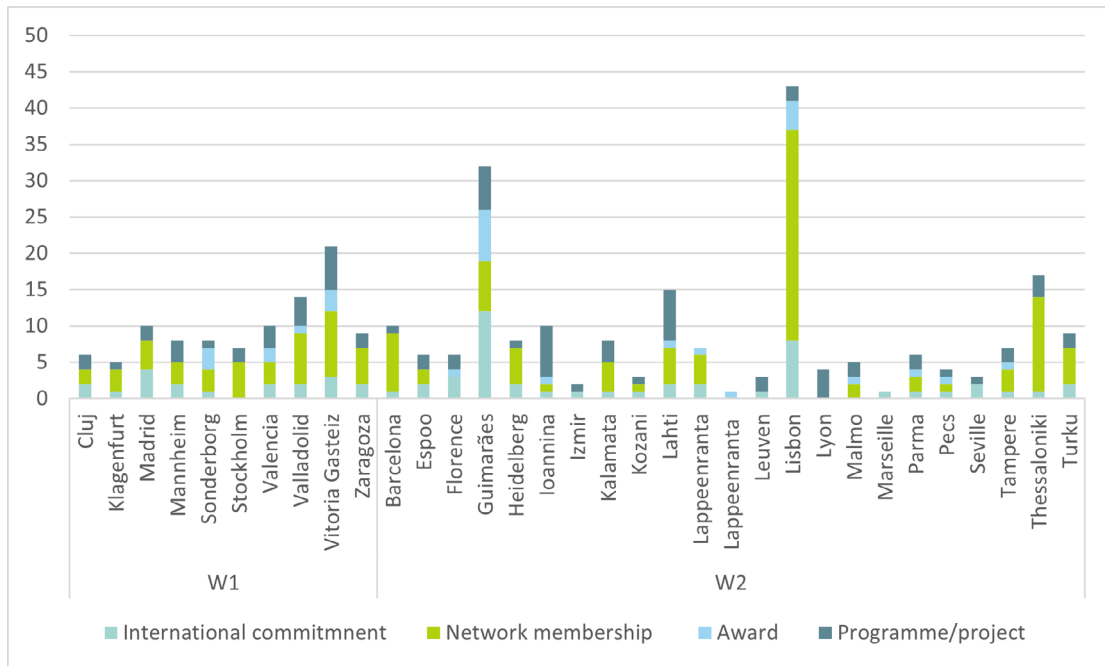


Figure 4. Type of initiative by city

Among the initiatives mentioned by the cities, participation in **city networks** stands out as a major enabler of their climate neutrality journey. Nearly every city (88%) emphasised their active membership in networks, with **86 different networks** cited overall. The most frequently mentioned networks include **Eurocities (13 cities)**, **ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (12 cities)**, and **C40 (6 cities)**. National networks like **FEMP** (Spain), **ClimaNet** (Greece), and **FISU** (Finland) also play significant roles for numerous cities, demonstrating how cities benefit from connecting with peers at the national, European and global level (Figure 5).

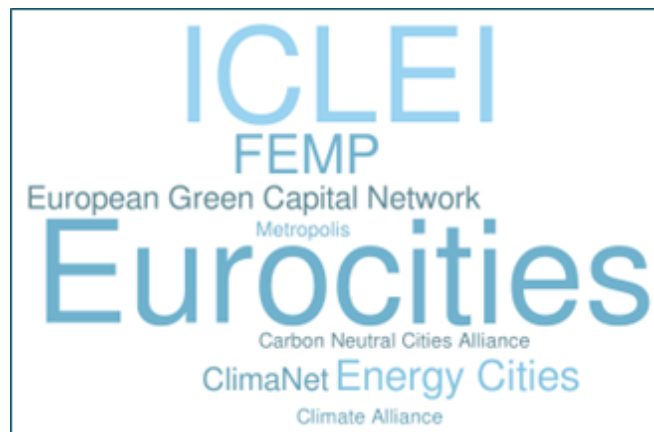


Figure 5. Word cloud - networks mentioned by more than one city, sized by frequency



In parallel, cities are heavily involved in **European and international climate-related programmes and initiatives**, which offer financial and technical support. The European Research and Innovation **Horizon programme** (both H2020 and Horizon Europe) was the most cited, with **85% of cities** referring to climate-related tools or strategies tested on the ground in collaboration with research partners. This demonstrates that cities take an experimental and innovative approach to address climate change, using programmes like the one mentioned above to test new solutions, pilot cutting-edge technologies, and scale up successful models for broader implementation. Other initiatives, such as **CIVITAS** and the **Intelligent Cities Challenge**, were noted less frequently, indicating a wider reliance on shared European policies.

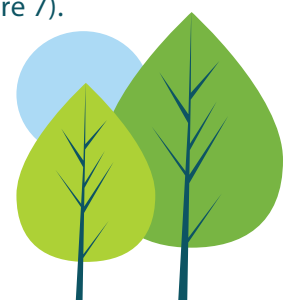
Cities are also aligning their strategies with **international climate commitments**, reinforcing the multi-level nature of their climate action. A total of 24 different multilateral agreements or commitments were mentioned by cities. In line with what was already revealed by the data in relation to the existing documents that have been mapped by the cities, the **Covenant of Mayors** was by far the most cited (85% of the 33 cities), underscoring their importance in providing a common framework and goal for climate action. Other commitments, such as the **Green City Accord** or the **Aalborg Charter** (the Charter of European Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability), were mentioned by various cities too (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Word cloud - international commitments mentioned by more than one city, sized by frequency

ACCELERATING THE TRANSITION: CLIMATE NEUTRALITY TARGETS OF THE LABELLED CITIES

In their CCCs, cities have committed to ambitious climate targets that align with the overarching goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2030 (Table 2). As mentioned before, by building on existing strategic documents, in which many cities had already established climate goals for 2030, 2040, or beyond, and leveraging cities' active engagement in international climate diplomacy—such as through the Covenant of Mayors, where they previously committed to various climate targets—**the Mission has unified and amplified these ambitions**. The Mission framework pushes cities to **accelerate their timelines and expand their commitments**. Aggregated data visualised in the [NetZeroCities Barometer](#) on the Mission Portal demonstrates that the targets set in the CCCs amplify and anticipate cities' prior climate goals, reflecting their strengthened dedication to rapid climate action (Figure 7).





City	Climate neutrality target by 2030 set by cities in their CCC	Baseline year of the target
Barcelona	-80%	BAU2030
Cluj-Napoca	-80%	2021
Espoo	-80%	1990
Florence	-80,1%	BAU2030
Guimarães	-80%	BAU2030
Heidelberg	-80%	BAU2030
Ioannina	-90,6%	2019
Izmir	-86,4%	2018
Kalamata	-94%	2019
Klagenfurt	-83%	2011
Kozani	-80%	2020
Lahti	-80%	1990
Lappeenranta	-80%	/
Leuven	-80%	2019
Limassol	-80,31%	BAU2030

Table 2. Climate target set by city



Lisbon	-80%	2002
Lyon	-73%	BAU2030
Madrid	-65.3% -75% (extended scenario)	1990
Malmo	-70%	1990
Mannheim	-80% -93%	2020
Marseilles	-75%	2019
Parma	-85,3%	2019
Pecs	-80,2%	BAU2030
Seville	-80%	BAU2030
Sonderborg	-83%	2007
Stockholm	-80%	1990
Tampere	-80%	1990
Thessaloniki	-80%	BAU2030
Turku	-86% (by 2029)	1990
Valencia	-84%	BAU 2030

Table 2. Climate target set by city



Valladolid	-85%	BAU 2030
Vitoria-Gasteiz	-82%	BAU 2030
Zaragoza	-80%	BAU 2030

Table 2. Climate target set by city

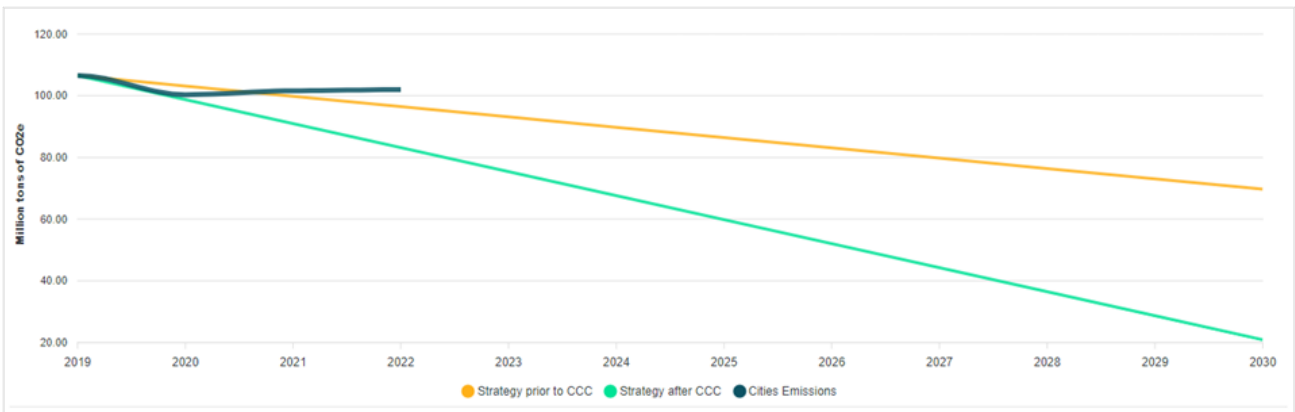
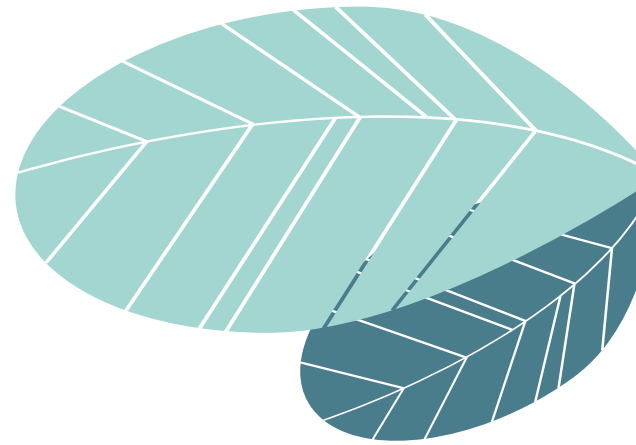


Figure 7. Climate neutrality trajectory of Mission Cities prior and after the CCC¹



¹ It should be noted that the NetZeroCities Barometer takes into account all 58 cities that have submitted their CCC to the Mission Platform, unlike previous data in this factsheet, which only refers to the 33 labelled cities.

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