



**NET
ZERO
CITIES
SGA-NZC**

Pilot Cities Programme calls and in-take analysis

Deliverable D3.5

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Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
NZC	NetZeroCities
ECT	Enabling City Transformation
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties
GARAC	Grant and Resource Allocation Committee
PCP	Pilot Cities Programme
SC	Selection Committee

Keywords

Call for proposals, proposals, Mission cities, Pilot cities programme, Enabling city transformation, in-take analysis, statistic, levers for change, emission domains, assessment criteria, selection, Countries, city size.

Executive Summary

This deliverable contains information related to the two NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme Calls for proposals (Cohorts 2 and 3) and the Enabling City Transformation Call for proposals, opened for Mission Cities between September 2023 and October 2024 under the EU funded Project 101121530 — SGA-NZC.

These three Calls were designed and delivered through collaboration between NetZeroCities Pilot Cities and Enabling City Transformation Programme Team, City Advisors, and NZC consortium expert partners.

For each Call, the main principles and criteria guiding Call eligibility, assessment, and selection methodologies are described; applications received are listed and analysed according to geographical and the distribution of grant amount requested, and the levers for change and emission domains addressed.

This deliverable describes the process undertaken in designing and implementing the Calls, including Call launch, promotion and communication, process management, and subsequent proposal evaluation and portfolio selection. It describes in detail the processes undertaken for: proposal assessment (the review scoring conducted by external independent experts on the three main grouped assessment criteria: Mandate to Act, Capacity to Act, and Impact); and concludes with the strategic selection process aiming at selecting a portfolio based on: geographic diversity; city (size) diversity; diversity of approach (emissions domains and levers); and quality of applications (review score).

For each call an in-take analysis was performed analysing the number of received proposals, the geographic distribution and city size of applicants and main levers for change and emission domains addressed in the proposals.

1 Calls for Proposals

Cities are the centres of economic activity, knowledge generation, innovation, and new technologies, and they influence the quality of life of citizens who live or work in them, contributing substantially to the well-being of European communities. They play a pivotal role in achieving the European Green Deal (EGD) target of reducing emissions by 55% by 2030 and attaining climate neutrality by 2050.

Climate mitigation is therefore heavily dependent on urban action through green and digital transformation. Mission cities are expected to lead this transformation by achieving climate neutrality before 2030, as well as to offer cleaner air, safer transport, and less congestion and noise to their citizens. The objectives of the EU Mission on Climate-neutral and Smart Cities ('Cities Mission') are to achieve 100 climate-neutral and smart European cities by 2030 and to ensure that these cities act as experimentation and innovation hubs to enable all European cities to follow suit by 2050.

1.1 NZC Pilot Cities Programme

The **NZC Pilot Cities Programme** aims to identify and support eligible cities from the 'Cities Mission' in testing and implementing innovative approaches to rapid decarbonisation over multiple cohorts of a two-year pilot programme.

The programme works across thematic areas and functional silos to support systemic transformation. The selection of pilots seeks to address all urban systems contributing to climate-neutrality. These systems include mobility, energy systems and the built environment, material and resource flows, natural areas, cultural/social/financial/institutional systems, and accessible public spaces. Depending on their context and the scale of the proposed pilot, each pilot may target all or a combination of these urban systems.

The Pilot Cities are expected to test and implement innovative solutions, or groups of solutions, at the city or district level throughout the duration of the pilot project including deployment of innovative (new or improved) technology, product, process, service, solution, policy, or governance model at city level, explored in a cross-sectoral and systemic manner. This process will reveal explicit lessons learnt from the innovative trajectories, resulting in the development of knowledge, capacity and capabilities at city level. By the end of the project, a clear set of innovative solutions ready to be implemented, scaled and/or replicated should be identified. This could include new business models, policy initiatives, governance innovation, funding or financing models, and replication or scaling strategies.

Selected Pilot Cities receive funding and hands-on support from City Advisors and NZC Consortium partners to refine their pilot activities before beginning project implementation. This support aims to address compliance and feedback from the selection process. As cities and/or local communities participating in Pilots work to leverage additional resources, the Mission Platform assists them in securing funding and financing for full implementation and subsequent replication and scaling efforts.

Finally, numerous activities are organised to advance learning among Pilot Cities, which is a key component for building capabilities, replicating successful innovations, and deepening relationships. The Twinning Learning Programme links Pilot Cities with twin cities from across EU member states and eligible H2020 or HE Associated Countries. The twinning effort aims to foster inclusive participation in effective climate action, nurture just transitions, and promote social cohesion.

The coordination of and across selected Pilots is a necessity, both at the city scale and the EU scale, in order to build a diversity of proof-points showing pathways for further and far-reaching transformation in European cities and across the European Union. The Pilot selection process therefore aims to construct a strategic portfolio where each pilot has the potential to test and demonstrate the viability of a pathway to change in a particular context. Together, Pilot Cities are complementary in painting the picture of what systemic change could look like.

As such, the NZC Pilot Cities Programme and its subgrant-funded activities are an opportunity for Mission Cities to put into practise elements of their developing and/or finalised Climate City Contracts and the plans contained in them and learn by doing so in the process.

Each Mission City was encouraged to participate to the Pilot Cities Programme. Enough funding was made available for all Mission Cities to become Pilots, with the requirement that each Mission City could be selected only once.

1.2 Enabling City Transformation (ECT) Programme

Unlike the Pilot Cities Programme, which aimed at identifying and overcoming barriers to climate action in cities, the **Enabling City Transformation (ECT) programme** is aimed at exploring and implementing enabling innovations for whole-city transformation, and that lead to practical, replicable learning at scale, and that can support many other European cities. Cities and city groups were invited to focus their proposals on building enabling factors and conditions for transformation in ways that other cities can practically use, and that will be replicable across the Mission.

In this way, the ECT programme builds upon and progresses beyond the Pilot Cities Programme by inviting Mission Cities to propose innovation actions to overcome systemic implementation challenges, the results/outcomes of which will support them (and other European cities) to shift from testing and experimentation (Pilot Cities) to enabling whole-city implementation, i.e. implementation at scale towards Mission goals, before stepping into catalysing and embedding the transformational change required for sustaining city climate neutrality, further down the line. As such, applicant Mission Cities were invited to think about enabling conditions within and beyond their own context, targeting shared challenges and opportunities for impact.

Furthermore, applicants were actively encouraged and supported to seek potential collaboration opportunities with other applicants, towards enhancing impact at the portfolio level. Selected proposals will be organised in clusters of complementary interventions at the portfolio level; therefore, applicants were invited to state their openness and willingness to collaborate and identify specific opportunities with other applicants in the submission process. The intent was to advance learning among portfolio of interventions and beneficiaries (cities and their consortia) as a key component for building capabilities, replicating successful enabling approaches and innovations, and deepening relationships.

Proposals were selected to create a meaningful portfolio of interventions that will address major Mission implementation challenges commonly emerging across Mission Cities. In this way, the portfolio is strategically oriented towards enabling and supporting the implementation phase of the Cities Mission.

Eligibility for applying to the ECT programme was open to all Mission Cities regardless of their inclusion or not in one of the Pilot Cohorts.

1.3 Deployment of Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP)

Under task T3.2, three Calls and associated FSTP grant financing and management were foreseen for Mission Cities to apply to:

- Pilot Cities Programme Cohort 2 (2023)
- Pilot Cities Programme Cohort 3 (2024)
- Enabling City Transformation ECT*

Cities already part of a cohort of Pilot Cities Programme were not allowed to apply again to a Pilot Cities Programme Call, while all Mission Cities could apply to the ECT Call.

** The exact scope, focus, and therefore name of this programme was defined following retrospective analysis of the three cohorts of Pilot Cities and emergent learning/identified needs and opportunities to date. In the figure below, this call is referred to as the "Deepen" programme.*

- ~12M for the first call (~20 cities selected)
- ~26M for the second call (~44 cities selected)
- ~14M for the third call (~23 cities selected)

More details on Call budgets can be found in D 3.1 SGA-NZC PCP Deployment Plan.

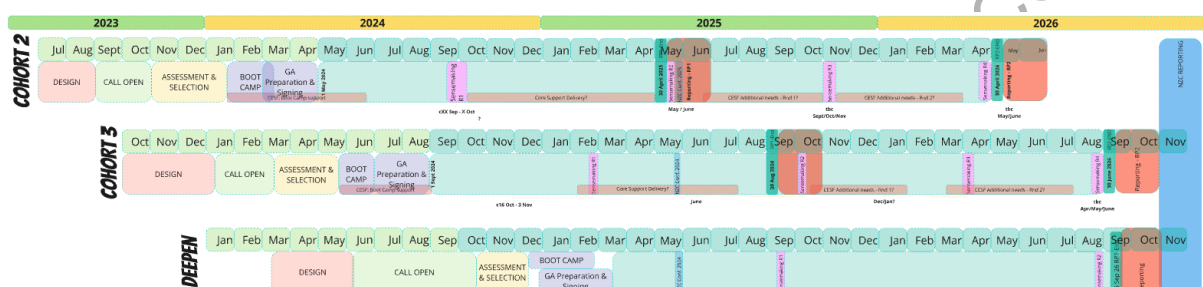


Figure 1: timeline with the three Calls together

1.4 References to connected deliverables

The following submitted deliverables are referenced throughout this document:

- D3.1 SGA-NZC PCP Deployment Plan: This deliverable outlines the deployment plan of 52M EUR of FSTP through the Pilot Cities Programme. It covers: i) total grant budgets for the three intended Calls, dedicated to Mission Cities; ii) grant envelopes that can be applied for in the two designated Calls for Pilot Cities (Cohorts 2 and 3) and ECT; and iii) the grant disbursement schedule based on proposed financing tranches and reporting schedule.

Also included are the Call and programme timelines for each of the Calls under SGA-NZC, mapped against the current SGA grant period.

- D3.2 Pilot Cities Programme Call 1 Guidelines: this deliverable contains the Call Guidelines as published on the [NZC website](#) and EU portal
- D3.3 Pilot Cities Programme Call 2 Guidelines: this deliverable contains the Call Guidelines as published on the [NZC website](#) and EU portal
- D3.4 Enabling City Transformation Call 3 Guidelines: this deliverable contains the Call Guidelines as published on the [NZC website](#) and EU portal

2 Pilot Cities Programme, Cohort 2

2.1 Call overview

The [NetZeroCities \(NZC\) Pilot Cities Programme – Cohort 2 \(PCP2\)](#) has picked up from the foundations of NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme – Cohort 1, though some key differences were introduced for the SGA-NZC Calls for Pilot Cities, reflecting the move from Horizon 2020 to Horizon Europe (i.e. from NZC to SGA-NZC) and an ambition and intention to maximise the opportunity for all Mission Cities to participate in – and receive funding from - the Pilot Cities Programme cohorts under SGA-NZC. These key differences are captured in D3.1 PCP Deployment Plan.

The Call for Cohort 2 was designed to support Mission Cities in accelerating their transition to climate neutrality through systemic innovation and to complement the first cohort, whilst also increasing the number of EU Cities Mission making use of Horizon Europe funding to test innovative approaches to rapid decarbonisation, emphasizing cross-sectoral transformation. The programme focuses exclusively on Mission Cities that have not taken part to a previous Pilot Cohort, providing financial and technical support to help them overcome barriers to decarbonisation, foster collaboration, and scale successful approaches across the EU. Through subgrants ranging from €500,000-600,000 to €1.5 million, cities are supported to pilot innovative solutions that integrate multiple urban systems and test pathways to climate neutrality.

PCP2 places a strong emphasis on governance, financial sustainability, and collaborative learning, ensuring that participating cities develop scalable solutions with lasting impact. The programme is designed not only to implement innovative projects but also to generate insights that can be replicated across European cities. By supporting Mission Cities in piloting innovative solutions, PCP Cohort 2 aims to generate valuable insights that contribute to large-scale replication and long-term urban transformation. The programme ultimately seeks to equip cities with the tools, partnerships, and governance models necessary to drive systemic change and achieve climate neutrality by 2030.

The Call identification information is:

- Call name: Pilot Cities Programme: Call for Pilot Cities, Cohort 2 (2023)
- Call ID: NZC-SGA-HE-202309
- Budget: between 12 and 20 million euro.

2.1.1 Principles

The key principles driving this Call include:

- building capabilities within the cities
- promote peer learning among cities
- inspire system transformation and accelerate change
- promote scaling out via replication

The key principles for the selection of proposals include transparency, fairness and impartiality.

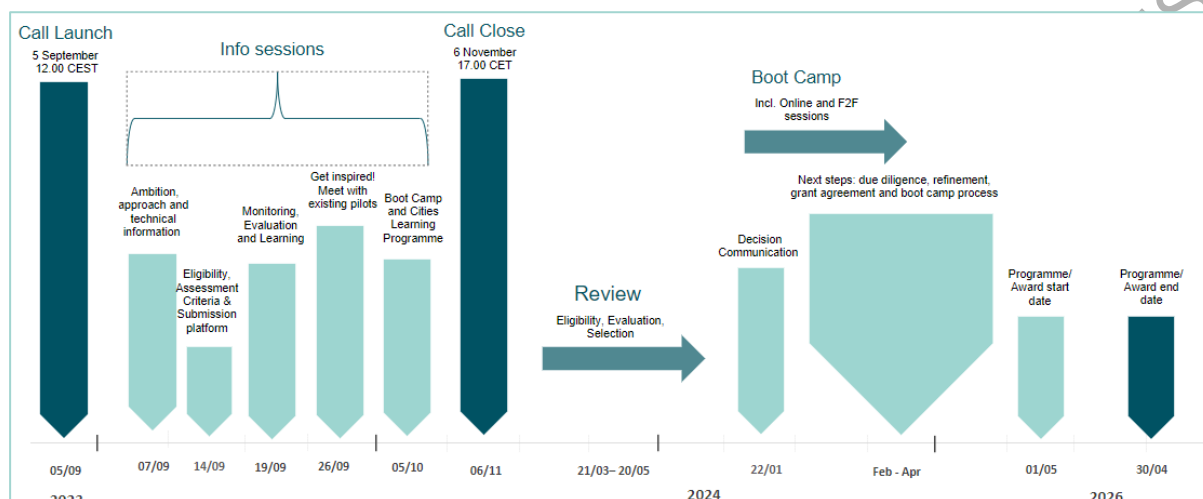
The expected results of the NZC Pilot Cities Programme Cohort 2 are:

- innovative solutions or groups of solutions tested and implemented at city or district level over the duration of the Pilot Cities Programme,
- explicit lessons learnt from the innovative trajectories, with knowledge, capacity and capabilities developed at city level; and

- a clear set of innovative solutions identified and ready to be implemented by the end of the Programme, which could include a new business model, policy initiative, governance innovation, funding or financing model, and EU-level replication or scaling strategy.

2.1.2 Timeline

The first Call for proposals was announced and then launched on 5 September 2023 (M4), for submissions on 6 November 2023 (M6). The programme, as with Cohort 1, has fixed start and end dates: 1 May 2024 start, and 30 April 2026 end (24 months).



2.2 Announcement, launch and support to applicants

2.2.1 Announcement and Guidelines

Early announcements for the Cohort 2 Pilot Cities Programme Call were made on the NZC website in August 2023.

On September 5, 2023 the Call was officially launched with the publishing of the official [Call Guidelines](#) - including eligibility, assessment, and selection criteria - on the NZC website, Mission Portal, and EU Funding and Tenders Opportunities Portal (under the type of subgrants “Cascade Funding Calls.”) From this date, cities were able to register on the submission platform and create a proposal. Cities could save and return to their proposals at any time up until the submission deadline.

Along with the publication of the Call Guidelines, the following supporting documents were also created and published:

- Call Form Template
- Budget Template
- Impact Framework and Indicator Template
- Indicator Set
- Letter of Support Template

In addition to these supporting documents, financial guidelines, cost reporting guidelines, and a guidebook were also provided.

All supporting materials were available to cities through the system and on the NZC website throughout the Call process.

2.2.2 Planned information sessions

To support cities throughout the application process, information sessions were scheduled during the Call period. Details about these sessions were provided within the Call Guidelines and published on the

NZC website and Mission Portal. Each information session covered various aspects of the Call process and expectations.



The info sessions, according to the above schedule, were offered to potential applicants, as advertised on the NZC webpage and through the Mission Portal as well as direct communication to city officers through HubSpot (CRM system).

The sessions were delivered through Zoom.

INFORMATION SESSIONS

NetZeroCities organised a series of information sessions to support and guide cities:

- Ambition, approach and technical information – call launch – 7 September 2023, 15:00 – 16:30 CEST
[Watch the recording >>](#) | [Download the presentation slides >>](#)
- Eligibility, Assessment Criteria & Submission platform – 14 September 2023, 15:00 – 16:30 CEST
[Watch the recording >>](#) | [Download the presentation slides >>](#)
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning & Sensemaking – 19 September 2023, 15:00 – 16:30 CEST
[Watch the recording >>](#) | [Download the presentation slides >>](#)
- Inspirational session with existing Pilot Cities – 26 September 2023, 15:00 – 16:30 CEST
[Watch the recording >>](#) | [Download the presentation slides >>](#) | [Download Bristol's presentation >>](#) | [Download Guimarães' presentation >>](#) | [Download Nantes Métropole's presentation >>](#)
- Boot Camp and Twinning Learning Programme – 5 October 2023, 15:00 – 16:00 CEST
[Watch the recording >>](#) | [Download the presentation slides >>](#)

Each info session allowed participants to interact using the Q&A functionality. While presenters explained the details of the Call, a live Q&A session occurred in the background, enabling participants to ask questions. The most relevant questions were answered live during several Q&A moments, and each question also received a written response.

Finally, recordings of the info sessions, along with the presentation slides and a link to the updated FAQ section were published on the website.

Participation was open to everyone, and was bound to registration, so it was possible to monitor attendance on each session.

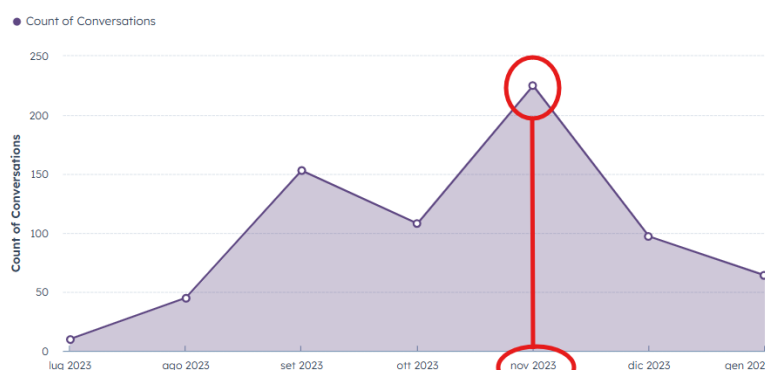
Ambition, approach, and Impact / Tech info.	Eligibility, assessment criteria and submission	Monitoring, evaluation, learning and Sensemaking	Inspiration session with existing Pilots	Boot Camp and Twinning Learning Programme
46 participants	46 participants	49 participants	38 participants	42 participants

2.2.3 Management of support requests from applicants

In addition to the information sessions, the Pilot Cities Programme Team managed communication with interested stakeholders through a dedicated programme mailbox: pilotcities@netzerocities.eu. This mailbox, hosted on HubSpot, was accessible to all members of the team, ensuring that no question went unanswered.

Though there is a common email address dedicated to queries coming from all cohorts of Pilots, a peak of email conversations can be seen happening around the Call deadline in November.

Furthermore, a separate channel was available to address any system submission platform related queries.



2.3 Applications review and selection

2.3.1 Review methodology: three-stage evaluation and selection

The Call's evaluation and selection process proceeded through three stages, as described in the Call Guidelines (see DEL 3.2). EIT Climate-KIC was committed to ensure no conflicts of interest in the assessment and selection process.

- Stage 1: Eligibility check

The eligibility check stage evaluates pass/fail requirements assessed by the NZC Pilot Cities Programme team. Proposals complying to the full set of eligibility criteria could proceed to Stage 2, while proposals failing on any one of the criteria were not considered further in the process.

In this stage, EIT Climate-KIC evaluated that the following criteria (published in the Call Guidelines) were all met by proposals:

- The Lead applicant was a Mission City;
- A consortium of partners was presented with at least two entities;
- The proposal was led by the/a City Administration (verified through appointment in the proposal but also confirming the City is leading and coordinating in the workplan and in the budget.)
- A Letter of Support from Mayor or authorised delegate was attached.
- A list of stakeholders in the proposal was clearly identified

In addition to these formal criteria, applicant Mission City/ies were compared across the intake *and* with the existing NZC Cohort 1 of Pilot Cities, to ensure none were present in another proposal or were already selected in the previous cohort.

Further items that were reviewed without being formally assessed as pass/fail criteria at this stage:

- A budget was presented in line with the budget envelopes prescribed in the Call guidelines and conditions related to these (i.e. minimum number of Mission Cities in the proposal).
- The proposal consortium does not contain organisations from the SGA-NZC consortium.

Proposals passing the first group of criteria but failing the second were moved along to the following stage and were given the opportunity during the preparation of the grant award agreement, specifically during the refinement process, to correct the proposal and address deviations from Call Guidelines. To ensure transparency during the selection process, and monitor any such deviations, disclosures of this type were made to the Selection Committee and Grant and Resource Allocation Committee.

- Stage 2: Evaluation and scoring of eligible proposals

This is the stage where numerical scores were assigned against individual assessment criteria by at least two independent external experts, on a scale from 0 (criterion failed) to 5 (excellent). The experts, appointed from the pool of experts identified through an open Call for experts and contracted by the coordinator as part of the NetZeroCities project, were chosen ensuring confidentiality of review and freedom from conflicts of interest.

This evaluation was made using sub-criteria grouped into the three main categories elaborated below:

Mandate to Act: aimed at assessing the political mandate and support of the proposed pilot activities; the relevance and understanding of the city/district's emissions domains (in focus under the proposed pilot activities) and the identified barriers to change that will be addressed; and the city/district's orientation to prospective solutions and/or approaches to overcoming these.

Capacity to Act: aimed at assessing mostly the city/district's existing and/or proposed approach to engaging with key stakeholders, as well as plans for how citizens will be involved in the proposed activities as relevant; the proposed organisational and cross-department/functional capacity and leadership of the city/district in implementing the pilot activities; the planning for and integration of considerations relating to diversity, inclusion, gender, and justice/just transition throughout the pilot activities; and the coherence of the proposed work plan and budget as they relate to the proposed activities.

Impact: aimed at assessing mostly the anticipated direct impacts and indicators proposed by the city/district for measuring change/impact; anticipated indirect impact(s) and co-benefits; the proposed approach to governance and learning, and prospects for transfer, replication, and scaling; plans for risk management and continuous learning; and the change anticipated to be seen in the city following the implementation of pilot activities.

To proceed to Stage 3 – Strategic Selection, proposals needed to meet minimum threshold scores in each of the three grouped criteria and any specified individual criteria.

Criteria grouping	Points available / number of criteria	Threshold required (as published on call guidelines)	Threshold required (as communicated to stage 2 evaluators on 08/12/23*)
Mandate to Act	35pts / 7 criteria	21 (including at least 6 pts score against “Understanding the problem” and at least 6 pts score against “Orienting to solutions”)	20 (including at least 5 pts score against “Understanding the problem” and at least 5 pts score against “Orienting to solutions”)
Capacity to Act	35pts / 7 criteria	21 (including at least 3 pts score against “Cross-cutting considerations”)	20 (including at least 2 pts score against “Cross-cutting considerations”)
Impact	45pts / 9 criteria	27	26

* To reflects the relatively low number of proposals received (and therefore the range of quality) in relation to both the aims and objectives of the Call and Pilot Cities Programme, and subsequent portfolio selection procedure, a decision was taken to lower certain thresholds while reviewing proposals in stage 2. The decision maximised the potential to satisfy the need for diversity of the selected portfolio across the relevant selection criteria.

- Stage 3: Strategic Selection

The Selection Committee selected a portfolio of Cohort 2 proposals aiming at complementing the existing cohort of Pilot Cities (i.e. inter-cohort portfolio), based on the given selection criteria. The

selection of the Pilot Cities to be supported through the subgrants built on the review by independent external experts and the scores given in Stage 2.

Strategic selection criteria included (in order):

- Geographic diversity and the “EU Dimension”
- Diversity of city size
- Diversity of emissions domains/barriers and of identified levers of/for change
- Score in quality assessment

All submissions have been assessed fairly and transparently in the scope of the eligibility criteria, assessment of quality criteria, and selection criteria, reflecting the programme’s overall strategic aims and objectives, as aligned to Mission objectives.

2.4 Decision Communication

2.4.1 Communications

On December 8 2023, applicants received the Decision Communication letter regarding the outcome of stages 1 and 2. Cities not meeting the minimum threshold were informed they would not progress to stage 3.

On January 22 2024, the remaining cities/applicants were informed via email of the outcome of this Call for proposals. In this email, cities were provided with consolidated scoring and feedback/recommendations from experts, and informed that a communication embargo should be adhered to until 12:00 CEST on Tuesday January 23rd. In addition, cities were given a Pilot Cities Programme Communications Toolkit to help them communicate the outcome once the embargo is lifted.

The Pilot Cities Programme team worked closely with the communications team to prepare materials for the announcement:

- Social media posts + visuals
- Create a page with the list of selected cities
- Update the PCP Cohort 2 page linking to the press release and the page listing selected cities
- Communication toolkit for cities
- Communication toolkit for partners/multipliers
- External newsletter item



On January 23rd 2024, the NZC Communications team made the official announcement of the Call outcome including the publication of selected cities on the NZC website.

Within our communication to cities, we included information on the forthcoming Boot Camp (both in person and online), as well as details on what to expect regarding the upcoming Due Diligence process that each city would need to complete.

These efforts ensure a coordinated and effective communication strategy for the announcement.

2.4.2 Appeals & Complaints

An Appeals & Complaints procedure was developed specifically for Pilot Cities Programme Cohort 2. The procedure was summarised in the Call Guidelines and also made available through the FAQ on the [NZC webpage](#).

The procedure outlines the basis upon which appeals and complaints could be made, including:

- factual errors, or
- procedural shortcomings in the eligibility check results or evaluation reviews.

The procedure provides a description of the process to submit and manage appeals and complaints with a timeline by which each step should be completed.

On December 13 2023, the city of Dublin sent an appeal regarding their stage 2 assessment, based on the conviction that the evaluation of their proposal hadn't been performed by the external experts in a thorough and considerate way.

On December 15 2023, the appeal process was activated per the procedure and the city was informed.

On the 5 January 2024, the City of Dublin received the outcome of the appeal process. The appeal was considered "out of scope" as it reflected a disagreement with the evaluation of their proposal rather than a factual error or procedural shortcoming in the assessment process.

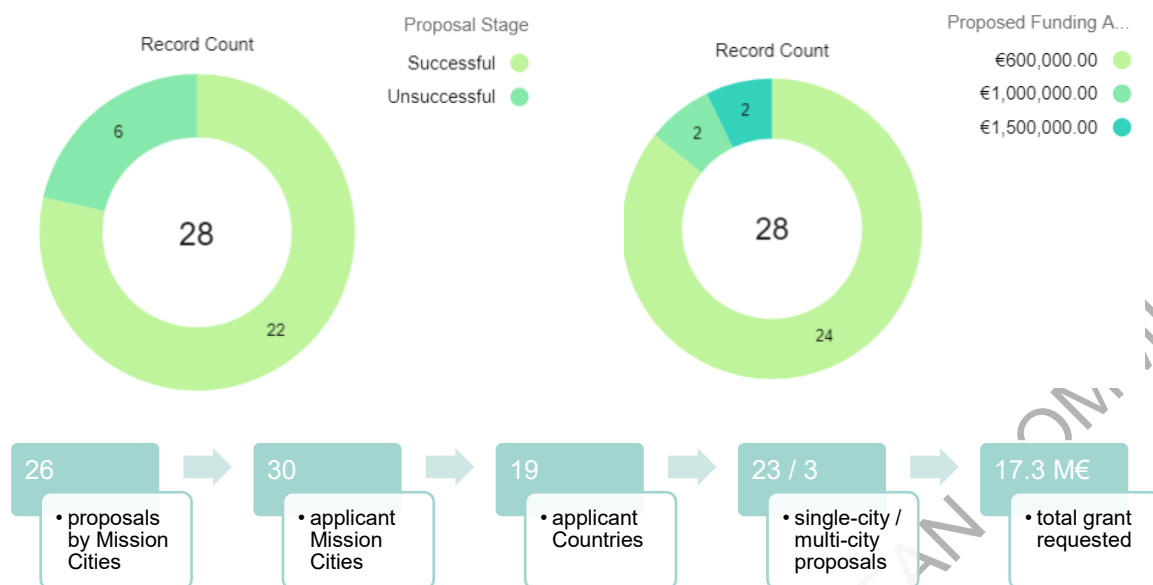
Dublin's proposal, with a stage 2 score of 59, was not admitted to Cohort 2; however, a new proposal for Cohort 3 was submitted, where it passed with a stage 2 with a assessment score of 90, and was summarily included in the Cohort 3 portfolio of funded projects.

2.5 Call in-take analysis

2.5.1 Submitted proposals overview (statistics)

Proposal statistics were extracted directly from the Call submission platform, concerning the number of proposals, the total number of Mission cities applying either as lead or as consortium partner, the Countries where most cities have submitted proposals from and the distribution of requested granting envelopes (depending on the number of Mission Cities applying to the same proposal).

These statistics are presented graphically below.



The following cities submitted proposals in the Pilot Cities Programme Cohort 2 Call:

Region	Country	Applicant Cities
Associated Country	Albania	Elbasan
	Israel	Eilat
	Norway	Oslo, Trondheim
Central and Eastern Europe	Bulgaria	Gabrovo
	Croatia	Zagreb
	Hungary	Miskolc, Pécs
	Latvia	Riga
	Lithuania	Vilnius
	Romania	Bucharest
	Slovakia	Bratislava, Košice
	Denmark	Aarhus, Copenhagen
Northern Europe	Ireland	Dublin
	Finland	Espoo, Lappeenranta
	Sweden	Gävle, Helsingborg, Lund, Stockholm
	Greece	Ioannina, Trikala
Southern Europe	Malta	Gozo
	Portugal	Lisbon, Porto
Western Europe	Austria	Klagenfurt am Wörthersee
	France	Lyon, Marseille

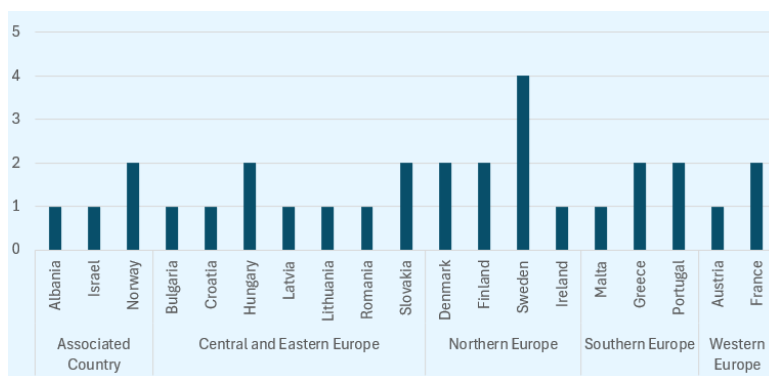


Figure 2: number of Mission Cities in submitted cohort 2 proposals grouped per Country and region

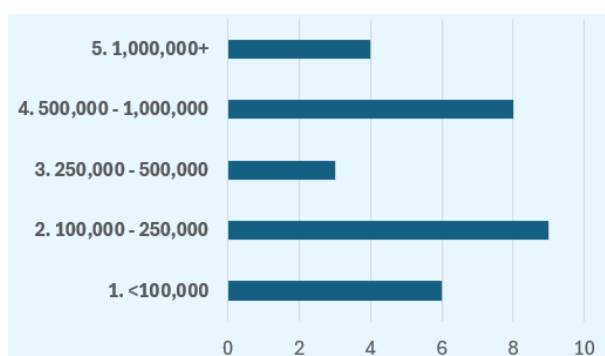


Figure 3: number of Mission Cities in submitted cohort 2 proposals grouped per city size

The smallest city in the in-take was Gozo, with over 34.000 inhabitants and the largest city in the in-take was Bucharest with over 2 million inhabitants.

Taking all proposals together, the average population size per proposed Pilot was just over 540.000 inhabitants, while the total number of inhabitants covered by the in-take of proposals was nearly 12 million.

It was also possible to extract from the submission platform which levers for change and emission domains were more included in PCP Cohort 2 proposals.

Most of the proposals submitted had broad ranging and multi-lever activities, across several emissions domains and/or focussed heavily on multiple levers of change.

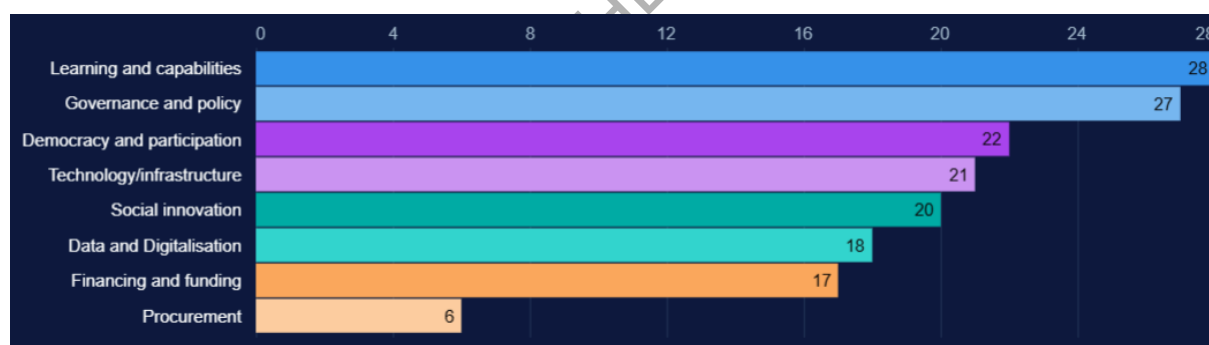


Figure 4: levers addressed in Cohort 2 proposals

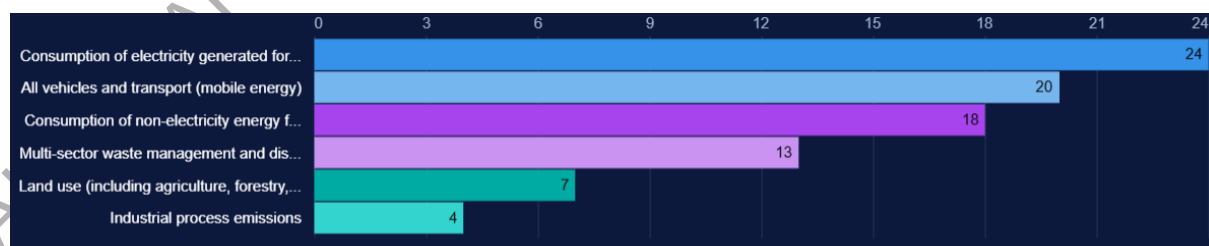


Figure 5: domains addressed in Cohort 2 proposals

2.5.2 Stage 1 Eligibility: analysis

Stage 1 review was performed independently by two Climate KIC representatives: one from the Pilot Cities Programme team and one from the Grant Management team. In case they would not agree on the fulfilment of specific criteria a third representative would be included to help reach an agreement.

A file was created to track the outcome of each criterion in each proposal.

				REQUIREMENTS			Eligibility Criteria Pass/Fail					
https://ec.europa.eu/climate/kic_sharepoint.com/#!/_:/s/EuropeandGreenDealconsortium-The3-PilotsPrivateandAuditche				GROUP B			GROUP A					
Proposal	Proposal title	Grant request	Lead applicant	ES	Mission City	Funding	Only one per Mission City	Consortium	City-led	LoS with conditions	Stakeholders	Outcome
240018	Climate Funding 4 Cities - Turbocharging	€ 1,500,000.00	Municipal authorities of the province	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240020	CoPilot Lund	€ 600,000.00	City of Lund	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240022	Integrated Digital Solutions for District Hea	€ 600,000.00	City of Lappeenranta	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	M (Second partn	YES	YES	YES	YES
240023	Mobilising Gavle Climate City Contract Tre	€ 600,000.00	Municipality of Gavle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240024	Espoo Climate Community	€ 600,000.00	City of Espoo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240026	Cities as a Test Bed for Climate Neutrality:	€ 600,000.00	Municipality of Trondheim	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240028	Power Up a Renewable society	€ 600,000.00	City of Oslo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240029	Energy for All: Fueling Sustainable Develo	€ 600,000.00	Municipality Of Trikala	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	M (missing call	YES	YES
240033	Marseille 2030 Objectif Climat: a just pact	€ 600,000.00	City of Marseille	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240034	Lx Climate Lab	€ 1,500,000.00	Câmara Municipal De Lisboa	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240035	The Climate Hall Lyon 2030	€ 600,000.00	City of Lyon	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	M (missing full	YES	M
240037	Stockholm Pilot City for Climate & Health:	€ 600,000.00	City of Stockholm	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240039	Accelerated decarbonisation in the tourism	€ 600,000.00	City of Eilat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	M (missing dat	YES	M
240041	Citizens' Climate Assembly for Gabrovo	€ 600,000.00	Municipality of Gabrovo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	M (missing call	YES	M
240042	Flexumers4Future	€ 600,000.00	City of Copenhagen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	M (Second partn	YES	YES	YES	YES
240046	Building Power: Reducing Building Emissi	€ 1,000,000.00	City of Kosice	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240047	Activating Green Courtyards for Carbon Ni	€ 600,000.00	City of Zagreb	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240048	Wider Approach to Keep Engaged citizens	€ 600,000.00	Municipality Of Porto	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240049	CO-Shaping Areas in Peri-urban Environn	€ 600,000.00	Municipality of Aarhus	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	M (missing call	YES	M
240051	Pilot City Helsingborg Innovation District	€ 600,000.00	City of Helsingborg	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	M (not stated a	YES	M
240053	Creating and monitoring of Climate Neutra	€ 600,000.00	MUNICIPALITY OF IOANNINA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	M (missing call	YES	M
240054	Modelling energy transition pathways in P	€ 1,000,000.00	Municipality of Pécs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240056	Urban Regeneration and Administrative C	€ 600,000.00	2nd District of Bucharest Municipali	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240057	Doughnut Economics Approach for Sustain	€ 600,000.00	Riga Municipal Agency "Riga Energ	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	Cannot open ti	YES	M
240058	Climate Neutral Dublin	€ 1,500,000.00	Dublin City Council	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
240060	Shared Mobility Integrated Solutions	€ 1,500,000.00	City Municipality of Novo mesto	no	No	No	No			we don't need to do this one		Not eligible
240061	Building Strategy for Charging Stations	€ 600,000.00	Municipality of Ebisan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

Figure 6: tracker showing the results for Cohort 2 Stage 1 evaluation of all proposals

Of the 28 total submitted proposals, two from the Municipality of Novo Mesto and from Egaleo were identified as not coming from a Mission City, while all other 26 proposals were admitted to stage 2.

Cohort 2 Stage 1 outcome	Number of proposals
Eligible	26
Ineligible	2
Total	28

2.5.3 Stage 2 Assessment: analysis

The objective of stage 2 is to produce scores and feedback for each group of criteria identified in the Call guidelines as described in 2.3.1 (please refer to the Call guidelines for details on every specific criterion and sub-groups of criteria).

This phase of the assessment was conducted externally involving independent experts.

Each proposal was reviewed by two experts that were chosen by Climate KIC, selecting from a pool of over 200 experts identified and selected through a dedicated Call for experts opened on the occasion of the NZC Pilot Cities Programme, Cohort 1 Call.

Before the identifying and assigning external experts to undertake the evaluation, all proposals were analysed to identify the main levers for change end emission domains addressed, and the proposed innovative approaches that would be taken, and challenges/barriers in focus. This exercise was undertaken by members of the Pilot Cities Programme team (Climate KIC) and a group of NZC Consortium partners drawn from Dark Matter Laboratories, Metabolic, and Democratic Society ('clustering team').

Proposal with similar levers and domains, approaches and challenges/barriers, were grouped together to create specific thematic clusters with four to five proposals in each cluster.

A MIRO board was used by the clustering team to categorise proposals according to the above analysis/focus, and to group them according to similar themes. Once the groups were formed the clusters were named.

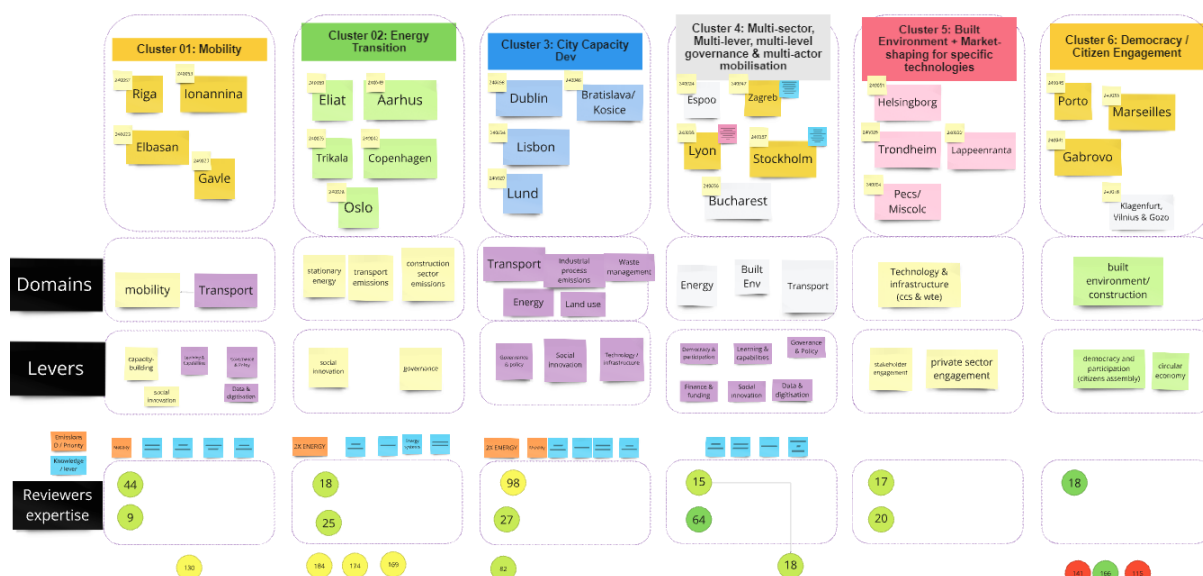


Figure 7: Cohort 2 proposal clustering for assessment

Each cluster was then assigned to two experts matching their knowledge areas, expertise and experience, with careful attention being paid to ensuring the key levers and emissions domains were covered by the two experts' combined knowledge/expertise/experience.

The following clusters were identified for Pilot Cities Programme Cohort 2.

It is important to highlight that these clusters were created solely for assessment purposes, were not communicated to cities nor were they used for further cities classification.

Cluster 1: Mobility

Cluster 1 was made of proposals addressing transport and mobility with a focus on capacity building, social innovation, learning & capabilities, governance & policy and data & digitisation

Cluster 2: Energy transition

Cluster 2 has addressed emissions from transport and construction with a focus on social innovation and governance

Cluster 3: City capacity development

Cluster 3 has addressed many emission domains such as transport, energy, waste management, industrial processes and land use with a focus on governance & policy, social innovation and technology/infrastructure.

Cluster 4: Multi-sector, multi-lever, multi-governance & multi-actor mobilisation

Cluster 4 has addressed multi-sector (built environment, transport and energy) with a focus on democracy & participation, learning & capabilities, governance & policy, finance & funding, social innovation and data & digitisation.

Cluster 5: Built environment market shaping for new technologies

Cluster 5 has addressed emissions from technology & infrastructure with a focus on stakeholder and private sector engagement.

Cluster 6: Democracy & Citizen engagement

Cluster 6 has addressed the built environment with a focus on circular economy and democracy & participation.

The working board also shows how, starting from emissions domains and levers for change, proposals were clustered and later combined to the expertise needed by reviewers to evaluate them.

Experts were requested to provide written feedback and improvement recommendations, alongside their scores, to help applicants enhance their proposals and future work in their climate journey.

After evaluating independently all proposals, experts were called to a consolidation meeting, facilitated by Climate-KIC, where they would discuss each proposal and agree on common scores and feedback (thereby combining their knowledge/experience/expertise and complementing each other's perspective through discussion and consensus building). Score averages were retained where experts could not agree on a common score.

Cities would receive the feedback and recommendations suggested by experts and were asked to reflect on it while performing the refinement of the proposal prior the issue of the award agreement, which would contain the proposal in annex.

Proposals that did not pass the thresholds for specific criteria would not be admitted to stage 3, regardless of the overall score.

The outcomes of stage 2 were recorded in an excel file to keep all the scores for each proposal in the same place and visualise trends and averages.

Code	Cluster	Proposal title	# reviews	Pass/Fail	Consolidation outcome	Score comment	Substrate	Mandate	Understanding the problem	Orienting to solution	CAPACITY	Collaboration and co-creation	Cross cutting	Capacity and capability	Resilience of work	NET	Timing & relevance	Ref. Address outcome	Quality replication	TOTAL	FINAL Outcome given adjustment thresholds (Pass/Fail)
240048	4	Wider Approach to Keep Engaged citizens on sustainable Urban Policy	2	Pass	Pass	Average	32.5	14.0	10.0	8.5	31.0	9.0	4.0	8.0	10.0	41.5	9.0	19.0	13.5	105.0	Pass
240042	3	Flexumers4Future	2	Pass	Pass	Average	29.0	14.5	8.5	6.0	31.0	9.0	4.0	9.0	9.0	36.5	9.0	17.5	10.0	96.5	Pass
240039	3	Accelerated decarbonisation in the tourism industry via the nexus of g	2	Pass	Pass	Average	28.5	11.5	9.0	8.0	28.0	9.0	4.0	6.5	8.5	38.0	8.5	19.0	10.5	94.5	Pass
240023	6	Mobilising Gavi Climate City Contract Transport Portfolio	2	Fail	Pass	Revised	30.0	12.5	9.0	8.5	28.0	7.5	3.5	8.0	9.0	36.0	7.5	16.5	12.0	94.0	Pass
240049	3	CO-Shaping Areas In Peri-urban Environments	2	Pass	Pass	Average	26.5	12.0	7.5	7.0	31.0	8.5	4.5	8.0	10.0	34.0	8.0	15.5	10.5	91.5	Pass
240053	6	Creating and monitoring of Climate Neutral Zones in Ioannina City Dis	2	Pass	Pass	Average	27.0	11.5	7.5	8.0	29.0	7.5	4.5	9.0	8.0	35.0	6.5	16.5	12.0	91.0	Pass
240018	4	Climate Funding 4 Cities - Turbocharging citizen engagement and clir	2	Pass	Pass	Average	28.0	12.0	8.0	8.0	29.0	8.0	4.5	8.0	8.5	34.0	7.5	16.0	10.5	91.0	Pass
240028	3	Power Up a Renewable society	2	Pass	Pass	Average	30.5	13.0	10.0	7.5	27.5	6.0	3.0	9.5	9.0	33.0	6.5	15.5	11.0	91.0	Pass
240054	5	Modelling energy transition pathways in Pécs and Miskolc	2	Pass	Pass	Revised	30.5	12.5	10.0	8.0	27.5	6.5	4.0	8.5	8.5	33.0	8.0	16.5	8.5	91.0	Pass
240026	5	Cities as a Test Bed for Climate Neutrality: Implementing CCS in Waste	2	Pass	Pass	Revised	30.0	14.0	9.0	7.0	25.5	6.0	3.5	7.5	8.5	35.0	7.0	17.0	11.0	90.5	Pass
240051	5	Pilot City Helsingborg Innovation District: Co-creating for Climate Neu	2	Fail	Fail	Revised	30.5	14.5	9.0	7.0	25.5	6.5	2.0	8.0	9.0	32.0	9.5	13.0	9.5	88.0	Pass
240057	6	Doughnut Economics Approach for Sustainable Decarbonization and C	2	Pass	Pass	Revised	26.0	12.0	7.0	7.0	26.0	8.0	3.0	10.0	5.0	34.5	7.5	16.0	11.0	86.5	Pass
240033	4	Marseille 2030 Objectif Climat : a just pact to now act	2	Pass	Pass	Average	26.5	11.5	8.0	7.0	28.5	6.0	4.0	9.5	9.0	31.0	8.5	14.5	8.0	86.0	Pass
240056	2	Urban Regeneration and Administrative Capacity Building for Sustaine	2	Pass	Pass	Revised (m	26.0	10.0	8.0	8.0	27.0	7.0	3.0	8.0	9.0	32.0	7.0	14.5	10.5	85.0	Pass
240020	1	Colpiot Lund	2	Fail	Pass	Revised	29.5	13.5	8.5	7.5	21.0	5.5	3.0	6.0	6.5	33.5	8.0	15.0	10.5	84.0	Pass
240047	2	Activating Green Courtyards for Carbon Neutrality	2	Fail	Fail	Average	23.0	10.0	5.5	7.5	26.5	7.5	3.0	8.5	7.5	32.5	8.0	14.0	10.5	82.0	Pass
240046	1	Building Power: Reducing Building Emissions and Energy Use in Brats	2	Pass	Pass	Average	26.0	11.0	7.0	8.0	24.5	6.0	3.0	8.0	7.5	31.5	7.0	13.5	11.0	82.0	Pass
240034	1	Lx Climate Lab	2	Pass	Pass	Average	29.0	14.5	7.0	7.5	21.0	5.5	3.0	6.5	6.0	30.5	7.5	14.5	8.5	80.5	Pass
240024	2	Espoo Climate Community	2	Pass	Pass	Revised (m	26.0	12.0	7.5	6.5	23.0	6.5	3.5	8.0	5.0	30.5	6.5	12.0	12.0	79.5	Pass
240022	5	Integrated Digital Solutions for District Heating Optimization & Empow	2	Fail	Fail	Revised	26.5	13.0	8.0	5.5	22.0	6.5	2.0	5.5	8.0	28.0	6.0	13.5	8.5	76.5	Pass
240037	2	Stockholm Pilot City for Climate & Health: Building Capacity to Scale	2	Pass	Pass	Average	24.5	11.0	7.0	6.5	23.5	8.0	4.0	7.0	4.5	27.5	6.0	12.5	9.0	75.5	Pass
240035	2	The Climate Hall Lyon 2030	2	Fail	Fail	Average	22.0	11.0	5.0	6.0	23.0	7.5	3.5	5.5	6.5	29.5	6.5	13.5	9.5	74.5	Pass
240029	3	Energy for All: Fuelling Sustainable Development	2	Fail	Fail	Revised	25.5	13.0	7.5	5.0	16.5	4.0	4.0	5.5	3.0	31.5	7.0	13.0	11.5	73.5	Fail
240041	4	Citizens' Climate Assembly for Gabrovo	2	Fail	Fail	Revised	24.0	14.0	5.5	4.5	26.0	8.5	5.0	7.5	5.0	11.0	7.0	0.0	4.0	61.0	Fail
240058	1	Climate Neutral Dublin	2	Fail	Fail	Average	21.5	11.5	5.0	5.0	16.5	4.5	3.0	4.5	4.5	21.0	5.5	9.0	6.5	59.0	Fail
240061	6	Building Strategy for Charging Stations	2	Fail	Fail	Average	14.0	7.5	3.5	3.0	12.0	4.0	3.5	2.5	2.0	10.5	3.0	4.0	3.5	36.5	Fail

Figure 8: tracker showing the results for Cohort 2 Stage 2 evaluation of all proposals

22 Proposals were admitted to the next stage while 4 were not:

1. Elbasan's "Building Strategy for changing stations" fell short of the score threshold of the "Understanding the problem" and "Orienting the solution" criteria, and not reaching the minimum score for Capacity and Mandate to Act;
2. Trikala's "Energy for All: fuelling sustainable development" did not reach the minimum score for Capacity to Act;
3. Dublin's "Climate neutral building" did not reach the minimum score for Capacity to Act;
4. Gabrovo's "Citizens' Climate assembly for Gabrovo" fell short of the threshold of the "Orienting the solution" criterion.

Cohort 2 Stage 2 outcome	Number of proposals
Passed	22
Not passed	4
Total	26

The average overall score for the full in-take was 83.3, with an average score of 87.5 for those proposals that passed to the following stage.

The highest score was achieved by Porto with the proposal “WAKE UP: Wider Approach to Keep Engaged citizens on sustainable Urban Policies” (105).

Decreasing the threshold for some criteria as described in 2.3.1 allowed the inclusion of 4 proposals that would have otherwise have failed at this stage.

2.5.4 Stage 3 Strategic Selection: overview

The NZC Grant and Resource Allocation Committee (GARAC) was requested to appoint a Selection Committee for the three calls under SGA-NZC. The Selection Committee was composed of the Coordinator of NetZeroCities and the Work Package Leads for WP2 and WP3, and was tasked with taking a portfolio approach to selecting proposals received in each of the Calls, taking into consideration the strategic selection criteria to maximise learning and breakthrough-pathway opportunities across a diverse portfolio of emissions domains and levers/R&I solutions, for EU-wide scaling and replication.

External observers, representing the Cities Mission team at DG RTD and CINEA, were invited on each occasion to attend the Strategic Selection process and meetings.

For Cohort 2, the selection meeting was held on 11 January 2024, where:

- The portfolio and proposals were reviewed against the selection criteria;
- Consensus was reached on the final composition of the portfolio; and
- Synergies and learning opportunities were identified within the cohort and across cohorts.

Given the small application pool, funding constraints (i.e. overall Call budget) were not applicable to this selection process: hence, all proposals making it through to stage 3 could be, if approved, added to the portfolio. However, the indicative portfolio of projects were analysed and evaluated against the selection criteria in order to ensure due process and to identify opportunities to strengthen the portfolio and ensure maximum learning and impact opportunities.

The proposals were evaluated against the selection criteria:

- Criteria 1: Geographic diversity

It was noted that the geographic diversity of cities in Cohort 2 complements Cohort 1 well and fills in the gaps. Cohort 1 had more representation from Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Poland because they were multi-city pilots. Cohort 2 has more representation from Central Europe. There is a good balancing of the entire PCP portfolio and satisfying the EU-wide dimension.

Criteria 1 outcome: All Selection Committee members agreed that the geographic diversity was optimal, particularly in relation to Cohort 1, and that no proposal should be removed on the basis of this criteria.

- Criteria 2: Diversity of city size

It was noted that city size is not reflective of where the activities are deployed, and the effective area of impact is. It was noted that, overall, there was a good distribution of city sizes in this portfolio.

Criteria 2 outcome: All Selection Committee members agreed that the diversity of city sizes of the 22 proposals are optimal for this portfolio.

- Criteria 3: Diversity of emission domains/barriers and of identified levers of/for change

It was highlighted that there is a polarisation of focus areas. Nordic cities have more of a transportation focus, while south-eastern Europe and Balkan cities have more of a built environment focus. However, it was noted that we need more of these projects. Proposals targeting innovation in transportation must be included.

As it stands, transportation is a difficult area which requires a lot of investment and policy/regulatory interventions. Built environment projects are also important as many cities face challenges regarding energy efficiency and the overall Built Environment. Therefore, these proposals were not discarded based on having similar domain/focus areas.

Criteria 3 outcome: All Selection Committee members agreed that the portfolio of 22 proposals was optimal and no changes (removals of proposals) would enhance it at the portfolio level.

- Criteria 4: Score in quality assessment

Since there was no excess of proposals compared to what the project can afford, this criterion did not need to be assessed. The quality assessment (mandate, impacts and cross-cutting considerations) were therefore fine by virtue of the 22 proposals being in stage 3 and that there being no reason to make trade-offs between proposals.

Citizen engagement came across more directly in this cohort compared to the previous one. Multi-level governance as also well represented: city levels are diverse (sub-local, new neighbourhood developments).

The portfolio proposed by the Selection Committee was approved by GARAC and the SGA-NZC Executive Committee (ExComm) was informed of the approval.

Cohort 2 Stage 3 outcome	Number of proposals
<i>Selected</i>	22
<i>Not selected</i>	0
Total	22

2.5.4.1 Final portfolio

Selected Proposal	Allocated Funding	Lead City	Consortium City/ies
Activating Green Courtyards for Carbon Neutrality	€ 600,000	City of Zagreb	
BeyondEE	€ 600,000	City of Lappeenranta	
Building Power	€ 1,000,000	City of Kosice	City of Bratislava
CCWaSte4NetZero	€ 600,000	Municipality of Trondheim	
CF4Cities	€ 1,500,000	Municipal authorities of the provincial capital Klagenfurt	Vilnius City Municipality; Gozo Regional Development Authority
COBUILD NETZERO	€ 600,000	City of Helsingborg	
CoPilot Lund	€ 600,000	City of Lund	
CO-SHaping Areas in Peri-urban Environments	€ 600,000	Municipality of Aarhus	
CRISP	€ 600,000	MUNICIPALITY OF IOANNINA	
Espoo Climate Community	€ 600,000	City of Espoo	
Flexumers4Future	€ 600,000	City of Copenhagen	
Lx Climate Lab	€ 600,000	Câmara Municipal De Lisboa	
Marseille 2030 Objectif Climat: a just pact to now act	€ 600,000	City of Marseille	
Mobilising Gavle Climate City Contract Transport Portfolio	€ 600,000	Municipality of Gavle	
Modelling energy transition pathways in Pécs and Miskolc	€ 1,000,000	Municipality of Pécs	Municipality of Miskolc
Power Up a REnewable society	€ 600,000	City of Oslo	
SCALE Stockholm	€ 600,000	City of Stockholm	
SEED	€ 600,000	Riga (Riga Municipal Agency)	
The Climate Hall Lyon 2030	€ 600,000	City of Lyon	
TourZero	€ 600,000	City of Eilat	
URBANWISE	€ 600,000	2nd District of Bucharest Municipality	
WAKE UP!	€ 600,000	Municipality Of Porto	
Total	€ 14,900,000	22	4
		26 cities	

Table 1: Portfolio of selected proposals – Cohort 2 (2023)

3 Pilot Cities Programme, Cohort 3

3.1 Call overview

The [NetZeroCities \(NZC\) Pilot Cities Programme – Cohort 3 \(PCP3\)](#) was designed to support Mission Cities in accelerating their transition to climate neutrality through systemic innovation and to complement the existing portfolio composed of the first two cohorts of pilot cities (PCP Cohort 1 and PCP Cohort 2), whilst also increasing the number of EU Cities Mission that can make use of Horizon Europe funding to test innovative approaches for rapid decarbonisation, emphasising cross-sectoral transformation. The programme focuses exclusively on Mission Cities that have not taken part to a previous Pilot Cohort, providing financial and technical support to help them overcome barriers to decarbonisation, foster collaboration, and scale successful approaches across the EU. Through subgrants ranging from €500,000-600,000 to €1.5 million, cities are supported to pilot innovative solutions that integrate multiple urban systems and test pathways to climate neutrality.

Between the launch of the first and second Call, additional analysis was undertaken to capture areas for improvement or clarification, in terms of both the technical details of the Call and its content. For consistency and parity between the three Cohorts, the content and focus of the first two calls was unchanged, thereby programming Pilot Cities in the same way across all cohorts, with the major changes being between the NZC (Cohort 1) and SGA-NZC Cohorts being the eligibility requirement for Mission-City only, and budget envelope compliance related to minimum number of cities per budget envelope.

PCP3 places a strong emphasis on governance, financial sustainability, and collaborative learning, ensuring that participating cities develop scalable solutions with lasting impact. The programme is designed not only to implement innovative projects but also to generate insights that can be replicated across European cities. By supporting Mission Cities in piloting innovative solutions, PCP3 aims to generate valuable insights that contribute to large-scale replication and long-term urban transformation. The programme ultimately seeks to equip cities with the tools, partnerships, and governance models necessary to drive systemic change and achieve climate neutrality by 2030.

The call identification information is:

- Call name: Pilot Cities Programme: Call for Pilot Cities, Cohort 3 (2024)
- Call ID: NZC-SGA-HE-202401
- Budget: between 18 and 20 million euro.

3.1.1 Principles

The key principles driving this Open Call include:

- building capabilities within the cities
- promote peer learning among cities
- inspire system transformation and accelerate change
- promote scaling out via replication

The key principles for the selection of the proposal include transparency, fairness and impartiality.

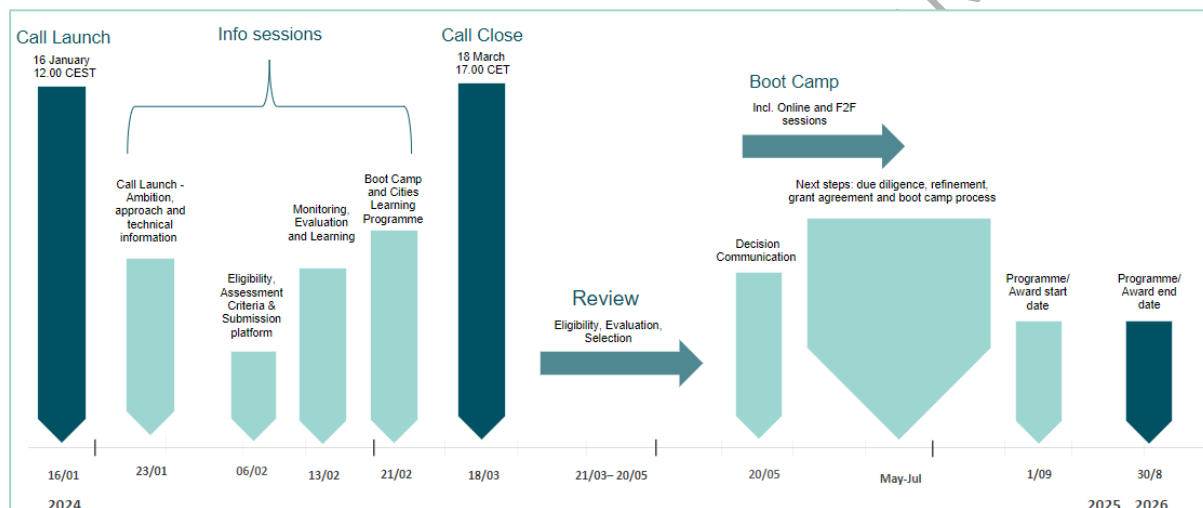
The expected results of the NZC Pilot Cities Programme Cohort 3 are:

- innovative solutions or groups of solutions tested and implemented at city or district level over the duration of the Pilot Cities Programme,

- explicit lessons learnt from the innovative trajectories, with knowledge, capacity and capabilities developed at city level; and
- a clear set of innovative solutions identified and ready to be implemented by the end of the Programme, which could include a new business model, policy initiative, governance innovation, funding or financing model, and EU-level replication or scaling strategy.

3.1.2 Timeline

The second Call for proposals was announced and launched on 16 January 2024 (M8) and closed on 18 March 2024 (M10), with the budget range for allocation in this Call being a minimum of 18M and a maximum of 26M EUR. Supporting documentation were, again, iterated and developed to be aligned with the system application process, to ensure applicants had templates for preparing their proposals in collaboration with partners, offline. The programme, as with Cohorts 1 and 2, had fixed start and end dates: 1 September 2024 start, and 31 August 2026 end (24 months).



3.2 Announcement, launch and support to applicants

3.2.1 Announcement and Guidelines

At 12.00 CEST hrs on 16 January 2024, the finalised [Call Guidelines](#) were published, and the Call and application process was formally launched. Cities were able to register themselves with the submission platform and create a proposal. Cities could save and return to this proposal at any time up until the submission deadline as stated below. Along with the publication of the call guidelines, the following supporting documents were also created and published:

- Call Form Template
- Budget Template
- Impact Framework and Indicator Template
- Indicator Set
- Letter of Support Template

To support cities throughout the application process, information sessions were scheduled during the Call period. Details about these sessions were provided within the Call Guidelines and published on the NZC website and Mission Portal. Each information session covered various aspects of the call process and expectations. The sessions were scheduled and conducted online.

The call was published on the same day also on the [EC Funding & Tenders Portal](#).

3.2.2 Planned information sessions

The following info sessions were offered to potential applicants:

- **23 January 2024, 11:00 – 12:30 CET:** Ambition, Approach & System and technical information
- **6 February 2024, 11:00 – 12:30 CET:** Eligibility and Assessment Criteria
- **13 February 2024, 11:00 – 12:00 CET:** Pilot City Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning & Sensemaking
- **21 February 2024, 11:00 – 12:00 CET:** Pilot Cities Programme Boot Camp & Twinning Learning Programme

All info sessions were advertised on the NZC webpage and through the Mission Portal, as well as through direct communication to city officers through HubSpot. The sessions were delivered through Zoom allowing participants to interact through the Q&A section.

In each session participation was quantified.

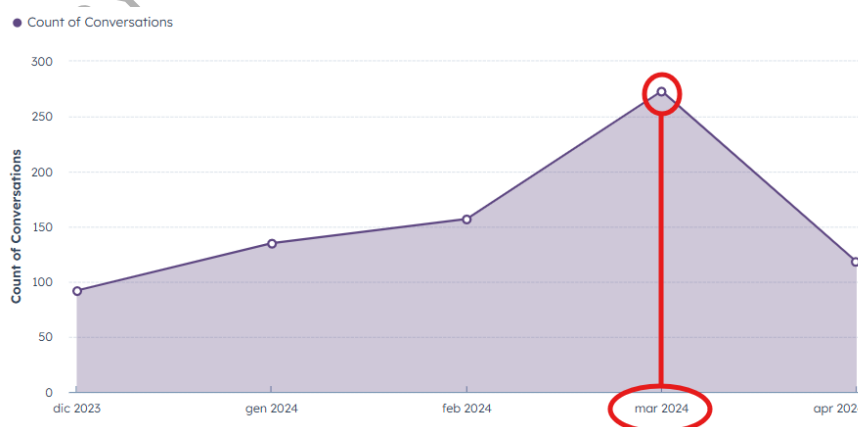
Ambition, approach, and Impact, and Tech Info.	Eligibility and assessment criteria	Monitoring, evaluation, learning and Sensemaking	Boot Camp and Twinning Learning Programme
32 participants	44 participants	39 participants	31 participants

3.2.3 Management of support requests from applicants

In addition to the info sessions, the Pilot Cities Programme Team managed communication with interested stakeholders through a dedicated programme mailbox: pilotcities@netzerocities.eu. This mailbox, hosted on HubSpot, was accessible to all members of the team, ensuring that no question went unanswered.

Though there is a common email address dedicated to queries coming from all cohorts of pilots, a peak of email conversations can be seen happening around Call deadline in March.

Furthermore, a separate channel was available to address any system submission platform related queries.



3.3 Applications review and selection

3.3.1 Review methodology: three-stage evaluation and selection

The Call's evaluation and selection process proceeded through three stages, as described in the Call Guidelines (see DEL 3.3). EIT Climate-KIC was committed to ensure no conflicts of interest in the assessment and selection process.

- Stage 1: Eligibility check

The eligibility check stage evaluates pass/fail requirements assessed by the NZC Pilot Cities Programme team. Proposals complying to the full set of eligibility criteria could proceed to Stage 2, while proposals failing on any one of the criteria were not considered further in the process.

Eligibility criteria for Pilot Cities Programme Cohort 3 were the same as those under the first Call (Cohort 2), for consistency (see section 2.3.1 of this Deliverable).

- Stage 2: Evaluation and scoring of eligible proposals

This is a stage where numerical scores are assigned against individual assessment criteria by at least two independent external experts, on a scale from 0 (criterion failed) to 5 (excellent). The experts, appointed from the pool of experts identified through an open Call for experts and contracted by the coordinator as part of the NetZeroCities project, were chosen ensuring confidentiality of review and freedom from conflicts of interest.

This evaluation is made using sub-criteria grouped into the three main categories elaborated below:

Mandate to Act: aimed at assessing the political mandate and support of the proposed pilot activities; the relevance and understanding of the city/district's emissions domains (in focus under the proposed pilot activities) and the identified barriers to change that will be addressed; and the city/district's orientation to prospective solutions and/or approaches to overcoming these.

Capacity to Act: aimed at assessing mostly the city/district's existing and/or proposed approach to engaging with key stakeholders, as well as plans for how citizens will be involved in the proposed activities as relevant; the proposed organisational and cross-department/functional capacity and leadership of the city/district in implementing the pilot activities; the planning for and integration of considerations relating to diversity, inclusion, gender, and justice/just transition throughout the pilot activities; and the coherence of the proposed work plan and budget as they relate to the proposed activities.

Impact: aimed at assessing mostly the anticipated direct impacts and indicators proposed by the city/district for measuring change/impact; anticipated indirect impact(s) and co-benefits; the proposed approach to governance and learning, and prospects for transfer, replication, and scaling; plans for risk management and continuous learning; and the change anticipated to be seen in the city following the implementation of pilot activities.

To proceed to Stage 3 – Strategic Selection, proposals needed to meet minimum threshold scores in each of the three grouped criteria and any specified individual criteria.

In order to proceed to Stage 3 – Strategic Selection, proposals will need to meet minimum threshold score in each of the following three groupings of criteria, as follows:

Criteria grouping	Points available / number of criteria	Threshold required*
Mandate to Act	35pts / 7 criteria	21 (including at least 6 pts score against “Understanding the problem” and at least 6 pts score against “Orienting to solutions”)
Capacity to Act	35pts / 7 criteria	21 (including at least 3 pts score against “Cross-cutting considerations”)
Impact	45pts / 9 criteria	27

- Stage 3: Strategic Selection

The Selection Committee selected a portfolio of Cohort 3 proposals aiming at complementing the existing cohorts of Pilot Cities (i.e. inter-cohort portfolio), based on the given selection criteria. The selection of the Pilot Cities to be supported through the subgrants built on the review by independent external experts and the scores given in Stage 2.

Strategic selection takes consideration of (in order):

- Geographic diversity and the “EU Dimension”
- Diversity of city size
- Diversity of emissions domains/barriers and of identified levers of/for change
- Score in quality assessment

All submissions were been assessed fairly and transparently in the scope of the eligibility criteria, assessment of quality criteria, and strategic programme considerations.

3.4 Decision Communication

3.4.1.1 Communications

The portfolio of projects/cities for Cohort was selected on Tuesday, April 30. Once the list was confirmed, the Pilot Cities Programme team shared it with the Communications team, along with the number of grants allocated and any other relevant information.

Before the final selection outcome, cities were informed of the results of the stage 1, Eligibility, through a communication sent on March 21, 2024. Due to the close timing of evaluations, the outcome of stage 2, Assessment, was included in the same message sent to cities informing them of the outcome of stage 3, Strategic Selection, i.e. at the same time as the final Call outcome.

On May 3, 2024, cities were informed via email of the outcome of the Call. In this email, we provided cities with feedback and recommendations from experts and informed them that a communication embargo should be adhered to until 12:00 CEST on Monday, May 6. Additionally, cities were given a Pilot Cities Programme Communications Toolkit to help them communicate the outcome once the embargo is lifted.

The Pilot Cities Programme team worked closely with the communications team to prepare materials for official announcement:

- Social media posts + visuals
- Create a page with the list of selected cities
- Update the PCP Cohort 3 page linking to the press release and the page listing selected cities
- Communication toolkit for cities
- Communication toolkit for partners/multipliers
- External newsletter item

On May 6, the Communications team made the official announcement of the Call outcome, including the publication of selected cities on the NZC website.



Within our communication to cities, we included information on the forthcoming Boot Camp (both in person and online), as well as details on what to expect regarding the upcoming Due Diligence process that each city will need to complete.

These efforts ensure a coordinated and effective communication strategy for the announcement.

3.4.1.2 Appeals & Complaints

An Appeals & Complaints procedure was developed specifically for Pilot Cities Programme Cohort 3. The procedure was summarised in the Call guidelines and also made available through the FAQ on the NZC [webpage](#).

The procedure outlines the basis upon which appeals and complaints could be made, including:

- factual errors or
- procedural shortcomings in the eligibility check results or evaluation reviews.

The procedure provides a description of the process to submit and manage appeals and complaints with a timeline by which each step should be completed.

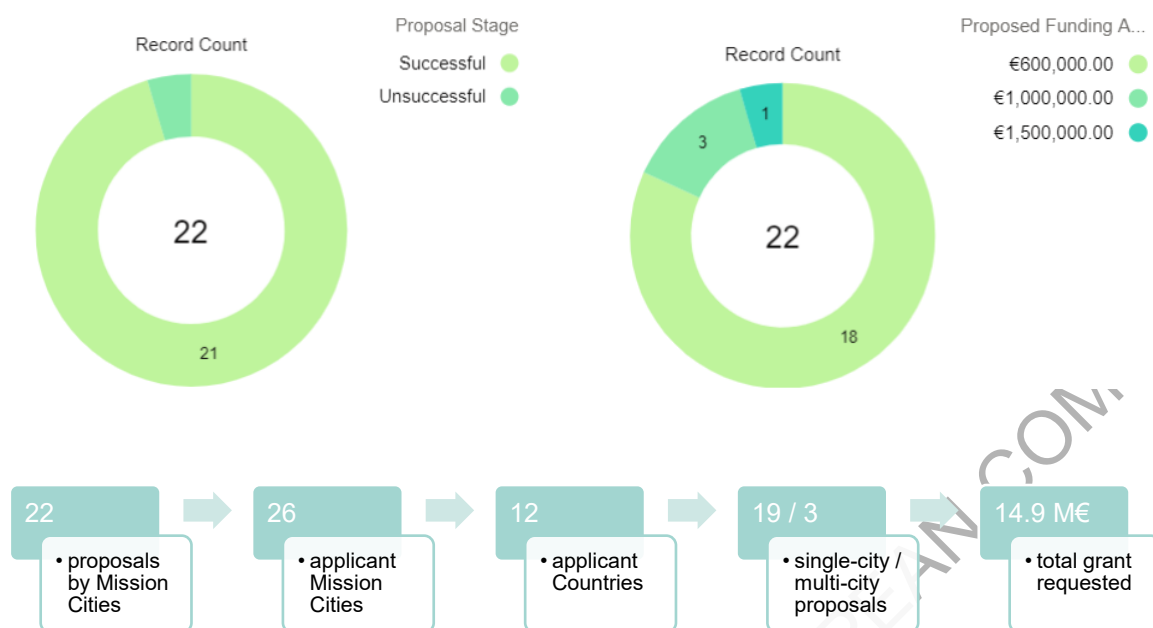
No complaints were received regarding the assessment and/or selection of Cohort 3 proposals.

3.5 Call in-take analysis

3.5.1 Submitted proposals overview (statistics)

Proposals statistics were extracted directly from the Call submission platform, concerning the number of proposals, the total number of Mission cities applying either as lead or as consortium partner, the Countries where most cities have submitted proposals from and the distribution of requested granting envelopes (depending on the number of Mission Cities applying to the same proposal).

These statistics are presented graphically below.



The following cities submitted proposals in the Pilot Cities Programme cohort 3 Call

Region	Country	Applicant Cities
Associated Countries	Albania	Elbasan
	Iceland	Reykjavík
	Turkey	Izmir
Central and Eastern Europe	Bulgaria	Gabrovo, Sofia
	Denmark	Sønderborg
Northern Europe	Finland	Helsinki, Tampere
	Ireland	Cork, Dublin
	Sweden	Gothenburg
	Greece	Athens, Kalamata, Thessaloniki, Trikala
Southern Europe	Belgium	Antwerp, Brussels
	France	Anger, Bordeaux, Dunkirk, Paris
	Germany	Dortmund, Dresden, Heidelberg, Leipzig, Munich

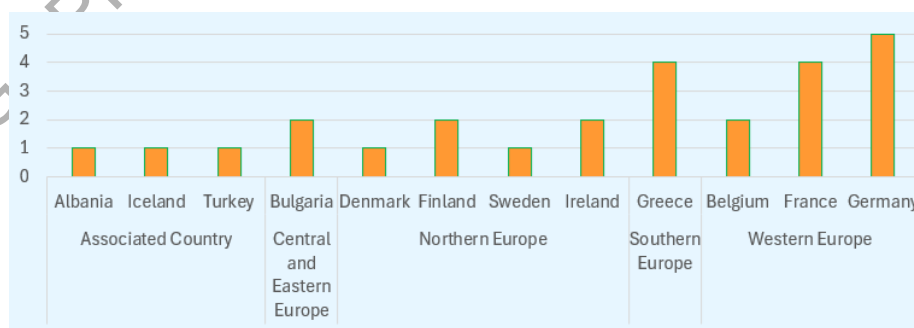


Figure 9: number of Mission Cities in submitted cohort 3 proposals grouped per Country and region

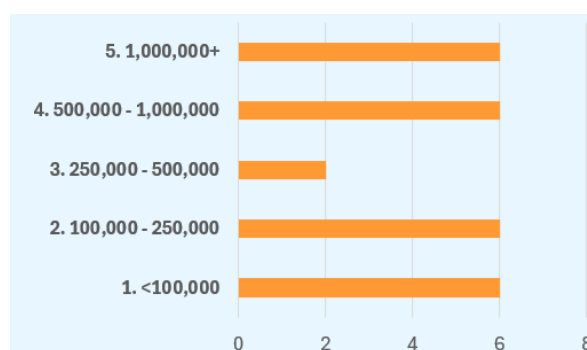


Figure 10: number of Mission Cities in submitted cohort 3 proposals grouped per city size

The smallest city in the in-take of proposals was Gabrovo with over 54.000 inhabitants, and the largest was Izmir with over 4.4 million inhabitants.

Taking all of the proposals together, the average population size per proposed Pilot was just over 760.000 inhabitants, while the total number of inhabitants covered by the in-take of proposals was just over 16 million.

It was also possible to extract from the submission platform which levers for change and emission domains were more included in PCP Cohort 3 proposals.

Most of the proposals submitted had broad ranging and multi-lever activities, across several emissions domains and/or focussed heavily on multiple levers of change.



Figure 11: levers addressed in Cohort 3 proposals

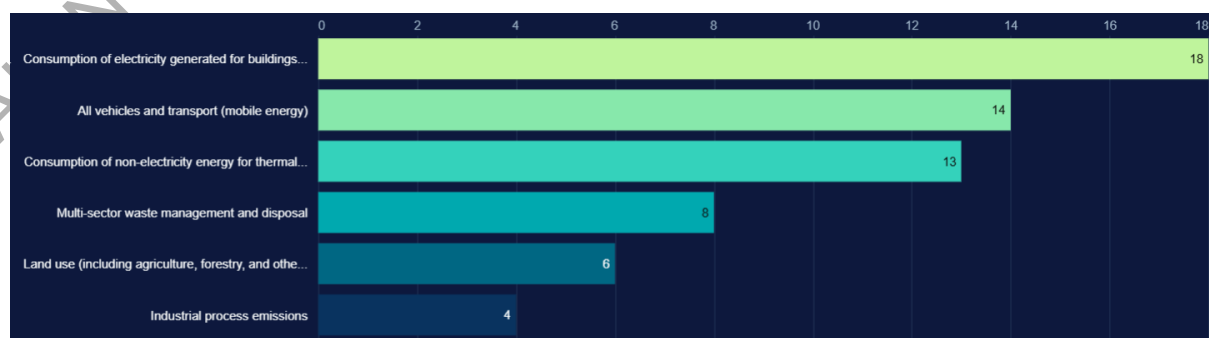


Figure 12: domains addressed in Cohort 3 proposals

3.5.2 Stage 1 Eligibility: analysis

Stage 1 review was performed independently by two Climate KIC representatives: one from the Pilot Cities Programme team and one from the Grant Management team. In case they would not agree on the fulfilment of specific criteria a third representative would be included to help reach an agreement. A file was created to track the outcome of each criterion in each proposal.

			CHECK 1									
			REQUIREMENTS			Eligibility Criteria Pass/Fail						
			GROUP B		GROUP A							
Proposal title	Grant request	Lead applicant	Mission City	Funding	Only one p Mission City	Consortium	City-led	LoS with conditions	Stakeholders	Outcome	First checker complete and comments	
Acting By Collaborating Differently (ABCD)	€ 600,000.00	Bordeaux Métropole	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Pass	UBX and Bordeaux metropole	
AMBITION	€ 600,000.00	Angers Loire Métropole	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Pass		
ASCEND - Athens Superblock	€ 508,125.00	City of Athens	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Pass		
BUILD CAPA-CITIES	€ 1,000,000.00	Dublin City Council	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Pass		
Climate City Dash 2.0	€ 149,988,188.00	Landeshauptstadt München	Yes	YES	yes	yes	yes	Yes	Yes	Pass		
Digital Solutions for Electricity Decarbonization	€ 598,062.50	Izmir Metropolitan Municipality	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes	yes	Yes	Pass		
EMPOWER	€ 500.00	City of Brussels	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Pass		
EnAct4CleanCities	€ 947,625.00	City of Leipzig	Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Pass		
Fast Forward Green City Zone	€ 600,000.00	City of Gothenburg	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No/maybe	yes	Yes	Pass	Need to double check budget	
Green and Sustainable Energy in Elbasan Buildir	€ 599,792.50	Municipality of Elbasan	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Yes	Pass		
LINK	€ 592,164.68	City of Antwerp	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Pass		
Mobility Mindshift - Co-designing a Mindshift for	€ 600,000.00	City of Tampere	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Pass		
NEAR-Neighbourhoods' Engagement for Accelerat	€ 600,000.00	Ville de Paris	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Pass		
NET-ZERO SOFIA- platform and campaign	€ 1,000,000.00	Sofia municipality	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Pass	high amount, no budget attached	
Net-zero Urban-industrial Growth (NZUG)	€ 600,000.00	Greater Dunkirk (CUD)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Pass		
NetZeroHero	€ 567,312.50	Municipality of Gabrovo	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Pass		
Piercing through the Gridlocks	€ 600,000.00	Reykjavik Municipality	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Pass		
ReGenWest - Thessaloniki west center Green District	€ 600,000.00	Municipality of Thessaloniki	YES	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Pass		
SchoolHeroZ: A Holistic Roadmap to Net Zero Street	€ 600,000.00	MUNICIPALITY OF KALAMATA	Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Yes	Yes	Pass		
Systemic Heat Shift (SHS)	€ 600,000.00	City of Helsinki	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Pass		
Trikala's City Climate Neutrality Hub with Intelligent	€ 600,000.00	Municipality Of Trikala	Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Yes	yes	Pass		
ZERO Industry	€ 600,000.00	Sonderborg Municipality	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	Pass		

Figure 13: tracker showing the results for Cohort 3 Stage 1 evaluation of all proposals

All 22 proposals received were eligible and were admitted to stage 2.

Cohort 3 Stage 1 outcome	Number of proposals
Eligible	22
Ineligible	0
Total	22

3.5.3 Stage 2 Assessment: analysis

This phase of the assessment was conducted externally involving independent experts.

Each proposal was reviewed by two experts that were chosen by Climate KIC, selecting from a pool of over 200 experts identified and selected through a dedicated Call for experts opened on the occasion of the NZC Pilot Cities Programme, Cohort 1 Call.

Before the identifying and assigning external experts to undertake the evaluation, all proposals were analysed to identify the main levers for change end emission domains addressed, and the proposed innovative approaches that would be taken, and challenges/barriers in focus. This exercise was undertaken by members of the Pilot Cities Programme team (Climate KIC) and a group of NZC Consortium partners drawn from Dark Matter Laboratories, Metabolic, and Democratic Society ('clustering team').

Proposal with similar levers and domains, approaches and challenges/barriers, were grouped together to create specific thematic clusters with four to five proposals in each cluster.

A MIRO board was used by the clustering team to categorise proposals according to emission domains and levers for change and to group them according to similar themes. Once the groups were formed the clusters were named.

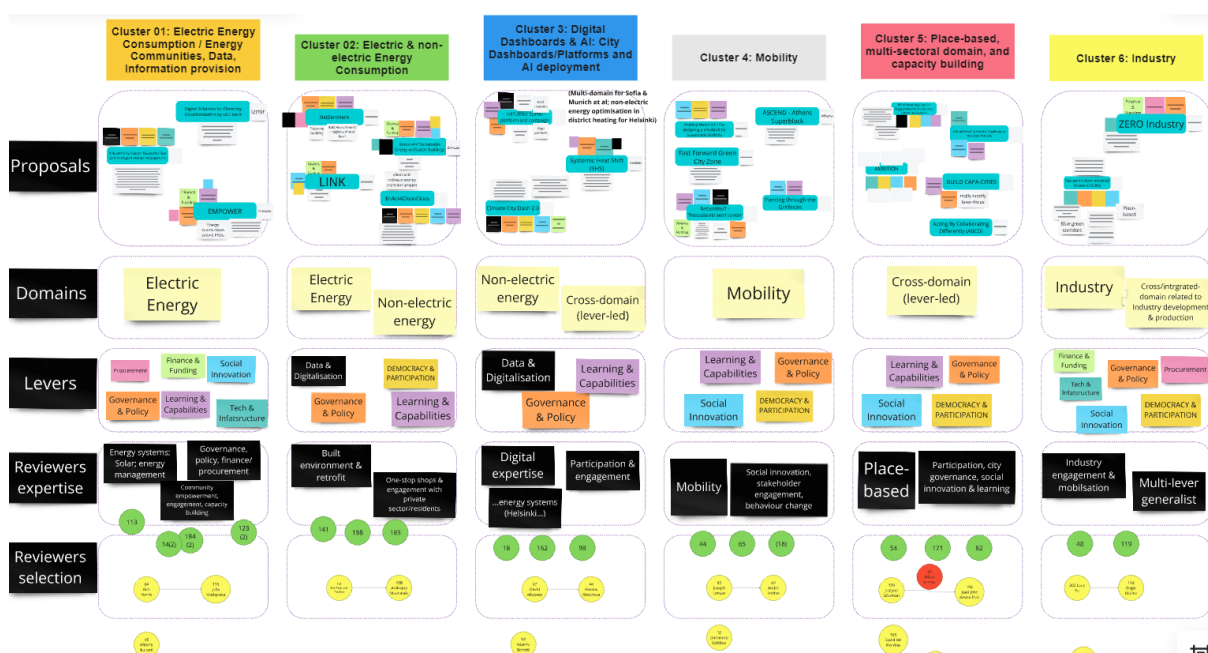


Figure 14: Cohort 3 proposal clustering for assessment

Each cluster was then assigned to two experts matching their knowledge areas, expertise and experience, with careful attention being paid to ensuring the key levers and emissions domains were covered by the two experts' combined knowledge/expertise/experience.

The following clusters were identified for Pilot Cities Programme Cohort 3.

It is important to highlight that these clusters were created solely for assessment purposes, were not communicated to cities nor were they used for further cities classification.

Cluster 1: Electric Energy Consumption / Energy Communities, Data, Information provision

Cluster 1 was made of proposals addressing electric energy with a focus on finance & funding, governance & policy, procurement, social innovation, learning & capabilities and tech & infrastructure.

Cluster 2: Electric & non-electric Energy Consumption

Cluster 2 has addressed emissions from electric and not electric energy with a focus on data & digitalisation, democracy & participation, learning & capabilities and governance & policy.

Cluster 3: Digital Dashboards & AI: City Dashboards/ Platforms and AI deployment

Cluster 3 has addressed emissions from non-electric energy and cross-domain with a focus on data & digitalisation, learning & capabilities and governance & policy.

Cluster 4: Mobility

Cluster 4 has addressed emissions from transport with a focus on social innovation, democracy & participation, learning & capabilities and governance policy.

Cluster 5: Place-based, multi-sectoral domain and capacity building

Cluster 5 has addressed cross-domain emissions with a focus on democracy & participation, social innovation, learning & capabilities and governance & policy.

Cluster 6: Industry

Cluster 6 has addressed industry emissions with a focus on finance & funding, democracy & participation, social innovation, procurement, tech & infrastructure, and governance & policy.

The working board also shows how, starting from emissions domains and levers for change, proposals were clustered and later combined to the expertise needed by reviewers to evaluate them.

Experts were requested to provide also written feedback and improvement recommendations other than scores to help applicants enhance their proposals and future work in their climate journey.

After evaluating independently all proposals experts were called to a consolidation meeting, facilitated by Climate KIC where they would discuss each proposal and agree on common scores and feedback. (thereby combining their knowledge/experience/expertise and complementing each other's perspective through discussion and consensus building). Score averages were retained where experts could not agree on a common score.

Cities would receive the feedback and recommendations suggested by experts and were asked to reflect on it while performing the refinement of the proposal prior the issue of the award agreement, which would contain the proposal in annex.

Proposals that would not pass the thresholds for specific criteria would not be admitted to stage 3, regardless of the overall score.

The outcomes of stage 2 were recorded in an excel file to keep all the scores for each proposal in the same place and visualise trends and averages.

										Consolidation Meeting aggregation data															
Code	Review Cluster	Proposal title	# reviews	Consolidation meeting outcome (Pass/Fail)	Scores comment (Average kept or used)	MANDATE	MANDATE	Understanding the problem	Orienting to solution	CAPACITY	Collaboration and engagement	Cross cutting	Capacity and capability	Soundness of work	IMPACT	Learning & reflection	Direct / indirect outcomes	Scalability, replication	TOTAL	FINAL Outcome given adjustment to thresholds (Pass /Fail)					
a1WP4000001	3	Systemic Heat Shift (SHS)	2	Pass		30,0	12,5	8,5	9,0	30,5	9,5	4,0	8,5	8,5	40,0	8,5	18,5	13,0	100,5	Pass					
a1WP4000001	3	Climate City Dash 2.0	2	Pass		33,5	15,0	9,5	9,0	30,5	8,0	4,0	9,0	9,5	36,0	9,0	16,5	10,5	100,0	Pass					
a1WP4000001	1	EMPOWER	2	Pass		32,0	13,0	10,0	9,0	29,0	8,0	4,0	8,0	8,0	38,5	9,0	17,5	12,0	99,5	Pass					
a1WP4000001	2	NetZeroHero	2	Pass		31,0	13,5	9,0	8,5	31,0	8,5	4,5	8,0	10,0	36,0	9,0	15,0	12,0	98,0	Pass					
a1WP4000001	4	Mobility Mindshift - Co-designing a Mindshift for Sustainable Mobility	2	Pass		32,5	15,0	8,5	9,0	28,5	8,0	3,0	7,5	10,0	35,5	8,0	16,5	11,0	96,5	Pass					
a1WP4000001	4	ASCEND - Athens Superblock	2	Pass		32,0	25,0	9,5	7,5	26,5	9,0	4,0	8,5	5,0	38,0	9,0	18,0	11,0	96,5	Pass					
a1WP4000001	4	Piercing through the Gridlocks	2	Pass		31,5	14,5	8,5	8,5	30,0	8,0	4,5	8,5	9,0	34,5	8,5	15,0	11,0	96,0	Pass					
a1WP4000001	4	ReGenWest - Thessaloniki west center Green Deal	2	Pass		32,0	15,0	8,0	9,0	26,5	9,0	5,0	8,0	4,5	37,0	9,0	14,0	14,0	95,5	Pass					
a1WP4000001	6	ZERO Industry	2	Pass		31,5	12,0	9,5	10,0	28,0	7,0	3,0	9,0	9,0	34,5	6,5	18,5	9,5	94,0	Pass					
a1WP4000001	5	AMBITION	2	Pass		28,0	12,5	8,0	7,5	28,0	8,0	3,5	7,5	9,0	37,0	7,5	18,5	12,0	93,0	Pass					
a1WP4000001	2	EnAct4CleanCities	2	Pass		32,5	12,5	10,0	10,0	27,0	8,5	3,0	7,5	8,0	31,0	9,0	13,5	8,5	90,5	Pass					
a1WP4000001	5	BUILD CAPA-CITIES	2	Pass		30,0	14,0	8,0	8,0	26,0	7,0	3,5	8,0	7,0	34,0	7,0	16,0	11,0	90,0	Pass					
a1WP4000001	6	Net-zero Urban-industrial Growth (NZUIG)	2	Pass		29,0	14,5	8,0	6,5	26,5	7,0	4,0	8,0	7,5	33,5	9,0	14,5	10,0	89,0	Pass					
a1WP4000001	5	NEAR-Neighbourhoods' Engagement for Accelerated carbon Reduction	2	Pass		27,0	12,0	7,5	7,5	24,5	7,0	3,5	6,5	7,5	36,0	7,5	16,0	12,5	87,5	Pass					
a1WP4000001	1	Trikala's City Climate Neutrality Hub with intelligent energy management	2	Pass		29,5	13,5	7,5	8,5	24,0	7,5	3,0	7,5	6,0	33,5	7,5	14,5	11,5	87,0	Pass					
a1WP4000001	5	SchoolHeroZ: A Holistic Roadmap to Net Zero Schools	2	Pass		28,0	12,0	8,0	8,0	28,0	8,5	3,5	8,5	7,5	31,0	7,5	13,0	10,5	87,0	Pass					
a1WP4000001	2	LINK	2	Pass		28,5	12,5	9,0	7,0	22,5	7,0	3,0	8,0	4,5	30,5	8,0	14,0	8,0	81,5	Pass					
a1WP4000001	1	Digital Solutions for Electricity Decarbonization by GCC 12mir	2	Pass		27,0	13,5	7,5	6,0	21,5	6,5	3,0	7,5	4,5	31,5	9,5	11,0	11,0	80,0	Pass					
a1WP4000001	2	Green and Sustainable Energy in Elbasan Buildings	2	Pass		28,0	12,0	7,5	8,5	21,0	6,0	4,0	8,0	3,0	28,0	8,0	10,0	10,0	77,0	Pass					
a1WP4000001	5	Acting By collaborating Differently (ABCD)	2	Pass		24,0	11,5	6,0	6,5	25,0	7,0	3,0	7,5	7,5	28,0	7,0	11,0	10,0	77,0	Pass					
a1WP4000001	4	Fast Forward Green City Zone	2	Fail		27,0	14,0	8,0	5,0	15,0	5,0	2,0	4,0	4,0	18,0	4,0	8,0	6,0	60,0	Conditional Pass					
a1WP4000001	3	NET-ZERO SOFIA- platform and campaign	2	Fail		14,5	6,5	4,5	3,5	16,0	6,5	2,0	5,5	2,0	11,0	2,0	8,0	1,0	41,5	Fail					

Figure 15: tracker showing the results for Cohort 3 Stage 2 evaluation of all proposals

The average overall score considering all proposals was 87.2, while 87.3 considering only proposals that were passed to the following stage.

The highest score was achieved by Helsinki with the proposal "Systemic Heat Shift (SHS)": 100,5.

Sofia's proposal was not admitted to stage 3 as it fell short of the score threshold in all grouped criteria areas, and in many places was an incomplete application. Gothenborg's proposal did not reach the minimum threshold in "impact" and "capacity to act" according to the external reviewers, however it was still moved to stage 3(*).

Cohort 3 Stage 2 outcome	Number of proposals
Passed	20
Not passed	1
Conditionally passed	1*
Total	22

*In Stage 2 – Assessment, the Independent Experts evaluating the application agreed a score across the assessment criteria that did not pass all the requisite thresholds required to continue to Stage 3,

mainly due to lack of detail of the proposed action plan. However, the NetZeroCities Grant and Resource Allocation Committee (NZC's internal decision-making Committee) exceptionally approved the application to be included in Stage 3, for the strong alignment of the proposed activities' with the goals of the Pilot Cities Programme and the Mission. This exceptional approval to pass to Stage 3 came with the condition that, if selected for the portfolio in Cohort 3, the **selection would likewise be conditional**, and the applicant would be required to respond to the Independent Expert feedback as a set of improvement conditions resulting in the update and resubmission of the proposal during the Award Agreement Process preceding the signature of the Award Agreement. These conditions would be subject to an internal NZC evaluation of the resubmitted application, following the award agreement process and NZC Pilot Cities 'Boot Camp', and with the support of NZC expert partners to chaperone the process.

Sofia's Proposal instead was seen from the evaluation and programme team as irretrievable due to incompleteness of some sections and lack of alignment with the Mission goals.

3.5.4 Stage 3 Strategic Selection: overview

The NZC Grant and Resource Allocation Committee was requested to appoint a Selection Committee for the three calls under SGA-NZC. The Selection Committee was composed of the Coordinator of NetZeroCities and the Work Package Leads for WP2 and WP3, and was tasked with taking a portfolio approach to selecting proposals received in each of the Calls, taking into consideration the strategic selection criteria to maximise learning and breakthrough-pathway opportunities across a diverse portfolio of emissions domains and levers/R&I solutions, for EU-wide scaling and replication.

External observers, representing the Cities Mission team at DG RTD and CINEA, were invited on each occasion to attend the Strategic Selection process and meetings.

For Cohort 3, the selection meeting was held on 30 April 2024, where:

- The portfolio and proposals passing stage 2 were reviewed against the selection criteria;
- Consensus was reached on the final composition of the portfolio; and
- Synergies and learning opportunities were identified within the cohort and across cohorts.

Given the small application pool, funding constraints (i.e. overall Call budget) were not applicable to this selection process: hence, all proposals making it through to stage 3 could be, if approved, added to the portfolio. However, the indicative portfolio of projects were analysed and evaluated against the selection criteria in order to ensure due process and to identify opportunities to strengthen the portfolio and ensure maximum learning and impact opportunities.

Overall, a general improvement in the quality of the proposals, with a lower number of proposals falling out at Stage 2, was observed compared to the previous Calls.

The proposals were evaluated against the selection criteria:

- Criteria 1: Geographic diversity

The distribution of the proposals from Cohort 3 was overlayed on the distribution of the previous cohorts to visualise the diversity of the portfolio.

It was noted that the geographic diversity of cities in Cohort 3 complements Cohorts 1 and 2 well but there are still some gaps as there are 13 Mission Cities (inc. Sofia) that are not part of any Cohort, leaving Bosnia, Estonia, Luxembourg and Montenegro not represented in any Cohort. The rest of the countries are represented in different percentages across the 3 Cohorts. Overall, there is a good balancing of the entire Pilot Cities Programme (all-Cohorts) portfolio, satisfying the EU-wide dimension.

Criteria 1 outcome: All Selection Committee members agreed that the geographic diversity was optimal, particularly in relation to Cohorts 1 and 2, and that no proposal should be removed on the basis of this criteria.

- Criteria 2: Diversity of city size

It was noted that, overall, there was a good distribution of city sizes in this portfolio.

Criteria 2 outcome: All Selection Committee members agreed that the diversity of city sizes of the 21 proposals are optimal for this portfolio.

- Criteria 3: Diversity of emission domains/barriers and of identified levers of/for change

According to the distribution for this Cohort, it was highlighted that some proposals have a more emission domain focus, for example on energy or mobility, and others have more of a lever approach, for example, governance and policy. Overall, all domains and levers are represented across the cohort.

Criteria 3 outcome: All Selection Committee members agreed that the portfolio of 21 proposals was optimal and no changes would enhance it at the portfolio level.

- Criteria 4: Score in quality assessment

Score distribution was presented.

Criteria 4 outcome: All Selection Committee members agree that the portfolio of 21 proposals is optimal and no changes would enhance it at the portfolio level, and that Gothenburg should move to be conditionally selected, and respond to the robust feedback through resubmission and evaluation.

Cohort 3 Stage 3 outcome	Number of proposals
<i>Selected</i>	21
<i>Not selected</i>	0
Total	21

3.5.4.1 Final portfolio

Selected Proposal	Allocated Funding	Lead City	Consortium City/ies
Acting By Collaborating Differently (ABCD)	€ 600,000	Bordeaux Métropole	
AMBITION	€ 600,000	Angers Loire Métropole	
ASCEND - Athens Superblock	€ 600,000	City of Athens	
BUILD CAPA-CITIES	€ 1,000,000	Dublin City Council	Cork City Council
Climate City Dash 2.0	€ 1,500,000	Landeshauptstadt München	Stadt Heidelberg; Stadt Dortmund
Digital Solutions for Electricity Decarbonization by GCCİzmir	€ 600,000	İZMİR METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY	
EMPOWER	€ 600,000	City of Brussels	
EnAct4CleanCities	€ 1,000,000	City of Leipzig	City of Dresden
ENERGY4ALL	€ 600,000	Municipality Of Trikala	
Fast Forward Green City Zone	€ 600,000	City of Gothenburg	
Green and Sustainable Energy in Elbasan Buildings	€ 600,000	Municipality of Elbasan	
LINK	€ 600,000	City of Antwerp	
Mobility Mindshift – Co-designing a Mindshift for Sustainable Mobility	€ 600,000	City of Tampere	
NEAR-Neighbourhoods' Engagement for Accelerated carbon Reductions	€ 600,000	City of Paris (VDP)	
NetZeroHero	€ 600,000	Municipality of Gabrovo	
Net-zero Urban-industrial Growth (NZUIG)	€ 600,000	Greater Dunkirk (CUD)	
Piercing through the Gridlocks	€ 600,000	Reykjavik Municipality	
ReGenWesT - Thessaloniki west center Green Deal	€ 600,000	Municipality of Thessaloniki	
SchoolHeroZ: A Holistic Roadmap to Net Zero Schools	€ 600,000	MUNICIPALITY OF KALAMATA	
Systemic Heat Shift (SHS)	€ 600,000	City of Helsinki	
ZERO Industry	€ 600,000	Sonderborg Municipality	
Total	€ 14,300,000	21	4
		25 cities	

Table 2: Portfolio of selected proposals – Cohort 3 (2024)

4 Enabling City Transformation

4.1 Call overview

The third Call for proposals was designed separately to Calls one and two (NZC Pilot Cities Programme, Cohorts 2 and 3), in order to address a bespoke focus for the Call based on emerging trends and needs in the work of implementing the Mission to date, complementing and/or building upon the early learning of the pilot activities through the engage, test, and learn approach. To do this, the Pilot Cities Programme convened a wide internal (SGA-NZC Consortium) stakeholder group covering City Advisors, city support specialists, expert partners and representatives working closely on the preparation and completeness-checks of Climate City Contracts, to co-create the aims, objectives, and intended outcomes/impact of this new programme.

Aligned to the wider pivot in NetZeroCities and the Cities Mission from the planning to the implementation phase, this collective of stakeholders agreed a focus on overcoming implementation challenges by exploring and nurturing enabling conditions for city-wide transformation, and the deployment of Action Plans/Investment Plans. Hence, the Enabling City Transformation programme was devised, with the key objectives to support enabling innovation interventions (at city-wide scale) supporting implementation for transformation, and with replicability and transferability (for a wider Mission/EU city-level impact) at its core.

The Enabling City Transformation programme aims to support interventions in cities with the goal of enabling the deployment and scaling of solutions. Drawing on insights from previous Mission activities, it seeks to leverage research and innovation outcomes. The programme combines multiple levers of change, including social, cultural, technological, nature-based, regulatory, and financial innovation, as well as new business and governance models, to drive the climate transition.

Through the combination of interventions supported in this programme, cities will collectively aim to achieve breakthroughs in enabling whole-city innovation and subsequent implementation at scale (direct Outcomes), that will ultimately lead to the reduction of GHG emissions and maximising Co-benefits, by unlocking the deployment of solutions at whole-city level (long-term targeted impacts).

Unlike the Pilot Cities Programme, which aimed at identifying and overcoming barriers to climate action in cities, the Enabling City Transformation (ECT) programme is aimed at exploring and implementing enabling innovations for whole-city transformation, and that lead to practical, replicable learning at scale, and that can support many other European cities.

Cities and city groups should therefore focus their proposals on building enabling factors and conditions for transformation in ways that other cities can practically use, and that will be replicable across the Mission.

The selection of proposals aims to result in multiple implementation-enabling innovations focussing on resolving key implementation barriers. Interventions will work individually and in combinations/clusters to generate resolutions for shared challenges.

The call identification information is:

- Call name: NetZeroCities Enabling City Transformation Programme Call
- Call ID: NZC-SGA-HE-202406
- Budget: up to 22.8 million euro.

4.1.1 Principles

The key principles driving this Open Call include:

- building capabilities within the cities
- promote peer learning among cities
- inspire system transformation and accelerate change
- promote scaling out via replication

The key principles for the selection of the proposal include transparency, fairness and impartiality.

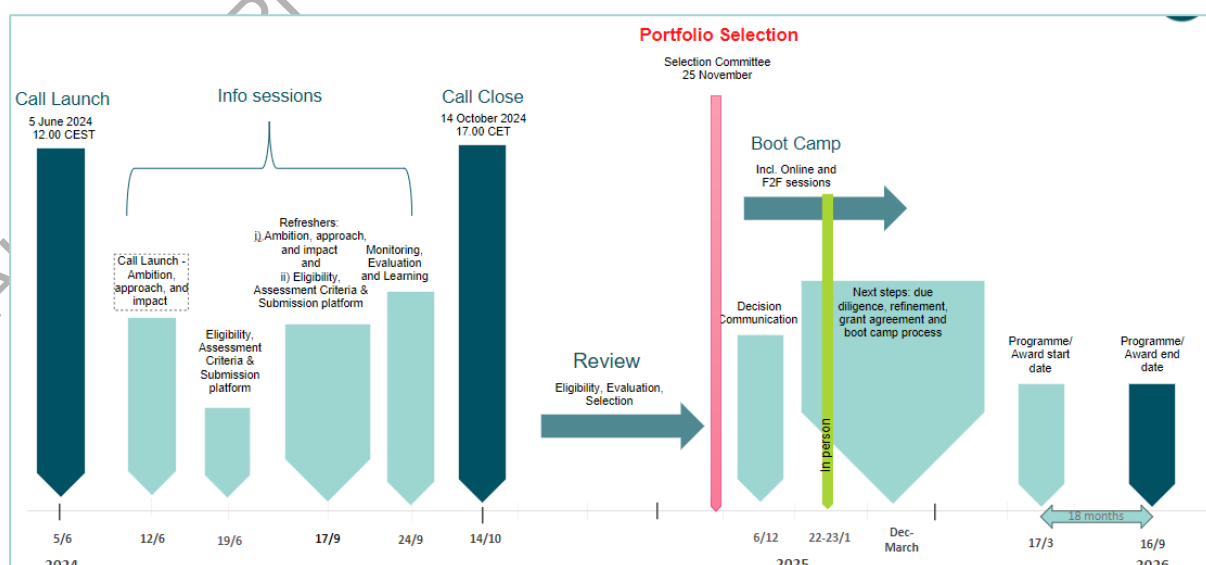
Programmatically, the results of the Enabling City Transformation portfolio will be:

- innovative and/or enabling solutions or groups of solutions tested and implemented at city level over the duration of the Programme,
- explicit lessons learnt from the innovative trajectories, with knowledge, capacity and capabilities developed at city level; and
- clear learning and outcomes of enabling approaches/measures to support the implementation of innovative solutions, at scale, by the end of the Programme, which could include a new business model, policy initiative, governance innovation, funding or financing model, and EU-level replication or scaling strategy.

In this programme, applicants were highly encouraged to seek potential collaboration opportunities with other applicants, towards enhancing impact at the portfolio level. Selected proposals will be organised in clusters of complementary interventions at the portfolio level; therefore, applicants were invited to state their openness and willingness to collaborate and identify specific opportunities with other applicants in the submission process. The intent is to advance learning among portfolio of interventions and beneficiaries (cities and their consortia) as a key component for building capabilities, replicating successful enabling approaches and innovations, and deepening relationships.

4.1.2 Timeline

The third Call for proposals (Enabling City Transformation Programme) was announced and launched on 5 June 2024 (M13) and closed on 14 October 2024 (M16). Combining the ring-fenced budget, as described in Deliverable 3.1, with the budget not allocated through Calls one and two (PCP2/3), the budget range for allocation in this call was a maximum of 22.8M EUR. Support documentation were developed to be aligned with the system application process and new application form (as a programme distinct from the Pilot Cities Programme), to ensure applicants had templates for preparing their proposals in collaboration with partners, offline. As with the Pilot Cities Programme, the start and end dates for the programme were fixed: 17 March 2025 start, and 16 September 2026 end (18 months).



4.2 Announcement, launch and support to applicants

4.2.1 Announcement and Guidelines

At 12.00 CEST hrs on Wednesday, 5 June, the Call guidelines were published both on the NetZeroCities [website](#) and Portal and the [EU Funding and Tenders Portal](#), under the type of subgrants “Cascade Funding Calls.” At the same time, the application process was formally launched. Cities were able to register themselves with the submission platform and create a proposal. Cities could save and return to this proposal at any time up until the submission deadline. Along with the publication of the call guidelines, the following supporting documents were also created and published:

- Call Form Template
- Budget Template
- Impact Framework and Indicator Template
- Indicator Set
- Letter of Support Template

4.2.2 Planned information sessions

To support cities throughout the application process, information sessions were scheduled during the open call period. Details about these sessions were provided within the call guidelines and published on the NZC website and Mission Portal. Each information session covered various aspects of the call process and expectations.



The info sessions, according to the above schedule, were offered to potential applicants, as advertised on the NZC webpage and through the Mission Portal as well as direct communication to cities officers through HubSpot.

The sessions were delivered through Zoom.

Each info session allowed participants to interact using the Q&A functionality. While presenters explained the details of the call, a live Q&A session occurred in the background, enabling participants to ask questions. The most relevant questions were answered live during several Q&A moments, and each question also received a written response.

Finally, recordings of the info sessions, along with the presentation slides and a link to the updated FAQ section were published on the website.

Participation was open to everyone, but it was bound to registration, so it was possible to monitor attendance on each session.

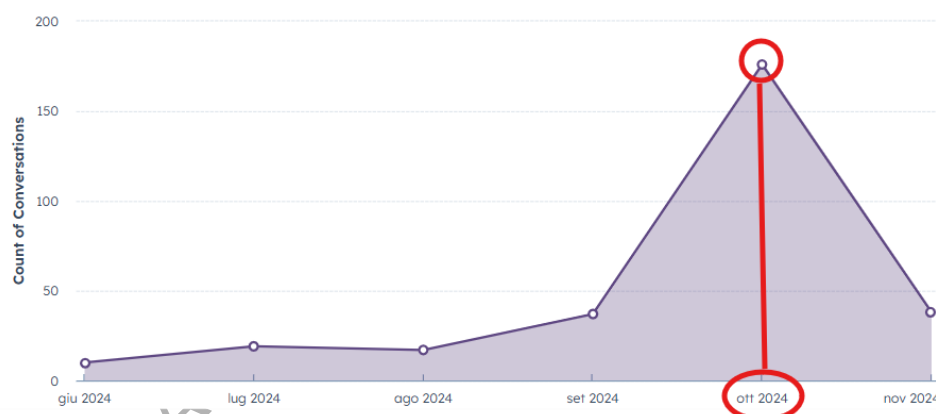
INFORMATION WEBINARS

- 12 June 2024, 14:00-15:30 CEST – Ambition, Approach & System and technical information, [watch the recording >>](#) / [download the presentation slides >>](#)
- 19 June 2024, 11:30 – 13:00 CEST – Eligibility and Assessment Criteria, [watch the recording >>](#) / [download the presentation slides >>](#)
- 17 September 2024, 10:30-12:00 CEST – Refresher on Ambition, Eligibility and Assessment Criteria. [Watch the recording >>](#) / [download the presentation slides >>](#)
- 24 September 2024, 10:30-12:00 CEST – Impact Framework and Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning. [Watch the recording >>](#) / [download the presentation slides >>](#)

Ambition, approach & system and technical info...	Eligibility and assessment criteria	Refresher: Ambition, Eligibility and Assessment Criteria	Impact Framework and Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning
67 participants	47 participants	37 participants	30 participants

4.2.3 Management of support requests from applicants

In addition to the info sessions, the team managed communication with interested stakeholders through the ECT mailbox: ect@netzerocities.eu. This mailbox, hosted on HubSpot, was accessible to all members of the team, ensuring that no question went unanswered.



Unlike the Pilot Cities individual Calls/cohorts, ECT has a dedicated inbox where only queries around ECT are answered. Even for this inbox the peak was reached in October 2024, the month of the Call deadline, with over 150 emails exchanged.

Furthermore, a separate channel was available for submitting Grant Management Support Requests to address any system-related queries.

In addition to the support described above, following the requests raised by potential applicants, the ECT team organised *ECT Summer Sandbox Sessions*, which provided an open, co-created space designed to help cities engage in mission-led partnerships and leverage the ongoing Enabling City Transformation call. Sessions offered guided conversations to explore shared visions, comparable challenges, and complementary experiences. The agenda was completed with non-facilitated spaces for participants to explore joint or synergistic application opportunities with shared objectives and cross-city impact.

Three sessions were scheduled:

- **Friday, July 26**, 10.00 - 12.00 CEST (44 registered participants, 34 joined)
- **Friday, August 30**, 10.00 - 12.00 CEST (75 registered participants, 40 joined)
- **Wednesday, September 18**, 10.00-12.00 CEST (51 registered participants, 42 joined)

After the conclusion of the ECT Summer Sandbox Sessions, additional support was offered, this time aimed at fostering connections among potential applicants. The *ECT Matchmaking Sessions* were a series of open, self-facilitated Zoom meetings designed to encourage regular exchanges between different cities. These sessions aimed to promote collaboration and strengthen relationships related to their developing ideas and proposals. Multiple breakout rooms were provided for focused discussions on specific proposals. Additionally, the sessions served as a valuable space for participants to ask technical questions regarding the call's objectives and the application process.

Overall, 3 sessions were organised:

- **ECT MATCHMAKING 1:** September 26, 10:00–11:30 CEST (7 participants registered, 5 joined)
- **ECT MATCHMAKING 2:** October 3, 10:00–11:30 CEST (12 participants registered, 5 joined)
- **ECT MATCHMAKING 3:** October 10, 10:00–11:30 CEST (9 participants registered, 8 joined)

4.3 Applications review and selection

4.3.1 Review methodology: three-stage evaluation and selection

The Call followed a three-stage evaluation and selection process, as described in the Call Guidelines of DEL 3.4. Climate-KIC was committed to ensure no conflicts of interest in the assessment and selection process.

- Stage 1: Eligibility check

The eligibility check stage evaluates pass/fail requirements assessed by the Enabling City Transformation programme team (Climate KIC). Proposals complying to the full set of eligibility criteria could proceed to Stage 2, while proposals failing on any one criterion were not considered further in the process.

Eligibility criteria for ECT were the same that for Cohort 2 of the Pilot Cities Programme (please refer to section 2.3.1 of this document).

- Stage 2: Evaluation and scoring of eligible proposals

This is a stage where numerical scores are assigned against individual assessment criteria by at least two independent external experts, on a scale from 0 (criterion failed) to 5 (excellent). These experts were appointed from the pool of experts identified through an open call and contracted by the coordinator as part of the NetZeroCities project. The experts from this pool are deployed against all Calls for Pilot Cities and the call for Enabling City Transformation interventions. This evaluation is made using sub-criteria grouped into the three main categories of: Mandate to Act, Capacity to Act, and Impact.

Unlike the Pilot Cities calls, no thresholds on criteria were placed.

Criteria grouping	Points available / number of criteria	Criteria
Mandate to Act	25pts / 3 criteria	Articulating the challenge (up to 15 pts) Mandate to act (up to 5 pts) Consortium and stakeholders (up to 5 pts)
Capacity to Act	25pts/ 4 criteria	Capacity and capability (5 pts) Soundness of work plan (10 pts) Cross-cutting considerations (5 pts) Citizen engagement and participation (5 pts)
Impact	45pts/ 3 criteria	Innovativeness: Enabling whole-city innovation (15 pts) Impact (20 pts) Enabling innovation interventions' replication and transferability (10 pts)

- Stage 3: Strategic Portfolio Selection

The Selection Committee selects a portfolio of interventions through a dedicated selection process. The portfolio is selected with the intention to support Mission Cities to overcome challenges to, experimenting with, and learning about, the implementation phase of the Cities Mission: i.e. enabling (Cities) Mission innovation implementation. It also aims at complementing the existing cohorts of Pilot Cities (i.e. inter-cohort portfolio) selected through previous calls, creating opportunities to exploit learning and outcomes of these diverse interventions over the course of the programme.

Strategic selection takes consideration of (in order):

- Geographic diversity - based on data gathered at application stage (highest possible representation of EU MS & HE AC)
- Diversity of city size & typology - based on data gathered at application stage (best possible representation of cities' size and typology)
- Diversity of focus on emissions domains/barriers and of intended levers of/for change to be tested* - based on data gathered at application (highest representation of combined emissions domains and levers of change)
- Score in Stage 2. During the portfolio selection, in the event of proposals with similar characteristics with equal scoring in Stage 2, the following parameters will be used to define the final ranking: Priority will be given to those scoring highest in the grouped Impact criteria. When the scores are still equal, priority will be given to those scoring highest in the grouped Capacity to Act criteria. When the scores are still equal, priority will be given to those scoring highest in the grouped Mandate to Act criteria. When the scores are still equal, priority will be given to those scoring highest on cross-cutting considerations (sub-criterion under Implementation).
- Budget availability

*In line with the specific focus of this call, the selection criterion referring to diversity of focus (i.e. the third bullet point in the above list) was of particular relevance and consideration for the Selection Committee, meaning the Selection Committee would look at/for diversity of focus on implementation challenges across emission domains, and of enabling innovation approaches deploying intended levers of/for change to be tested.

All submissions were assessed fairly and transparently in the scope of the eligibility criteria, assessment of quality criteria, and strategic programme considerations.

4.4 Decision Communication

4.4.1 Communications

The selection of cities was approved on Friday, November 29 2024, by the GARAC. Once the list was confirmed, the ECT team shared it with the communications team, along with the amount of grants allocated and any other relevant information.

For the ECT Call, no criteria thresholds were set so all applicants passing stage 1 Eligibility received a communication on 22 November 2024 that their proposal would progress to stage 3 Strategic Selection, via quality evaluation in stage 2 (serving as input to the selection process, according to the selection criteria).

On December 6, 2024, cities were informed via email of the outcome of the ECT Call. In this email, we provided cities with feedback and recommendations from experts and informed them that a communication embargo should be adhered to until 12:00 CEST on Thursday, December 11. Additionally, cities were given an Enabling Cities Transformation Communications Toolkit to help them communicate the outcome once the embargo is lifted.

The ECT team worked closely with the communications team to prepare materials for the December 11 announcement:

- Social media posts + visuals
- Create a page with the list of selected cities
- Update the ECT page linking to the press release and the page listing selected cities
- Communication toolkit for cities
- Communication toolkit for partners/multipliers
- External newsletter item



Within our communication to cities, we included information on the forthcoming Boot Camp (both in person and online), as well as details on what to expect regarding the upcoming Due Diligence process that each city will need to complete.

These efforts ensure a coordinated and effective communication strategy for the announcement.

4.4.2 Appeals & Complaints

An Appeals & Complaints procedure was developed specifically for the Enabling City Transformation Programme. The procedure was summarised in the Call guidelines and also made available through the FAQ on the [NZC webpage](#).

The procedure outlines the basis upon which appeals and complaints could be made, including:

- factual errors or, and
- procedural shortcomings in the eligibility check results or evaluation reviews.

The procedure provides a description of the process to submit and manage appeals and complaints with a timeline by which each step should be completed.

The first step includes lodging a complaint and according to the procedure the applicant has 5 days since receiving the outcome letter (that were sent out on December 6th 2024) to send a complaint.

Nevertheless, on 13th December 2024 the lead of Eindhoven's proposal sent an email to complain the Call had ended and they had not been informed that their proposal hadn't been selected, reporting that they had only found out about the selected proposals by reading the press release with the names of the successful cities.

The complaint was not sent to the indicated ECT inbox nor was sent within the timeline described in the procedure, however, an unofficial reply was sent to the proposal lead contact on 17th December attaching all proofs of delivery for all selection stages outcome communications (i.e. on 17 October for stage 1 outcome, on 22 November for stage 2 outcome and on 6 December for the final selection outcome).

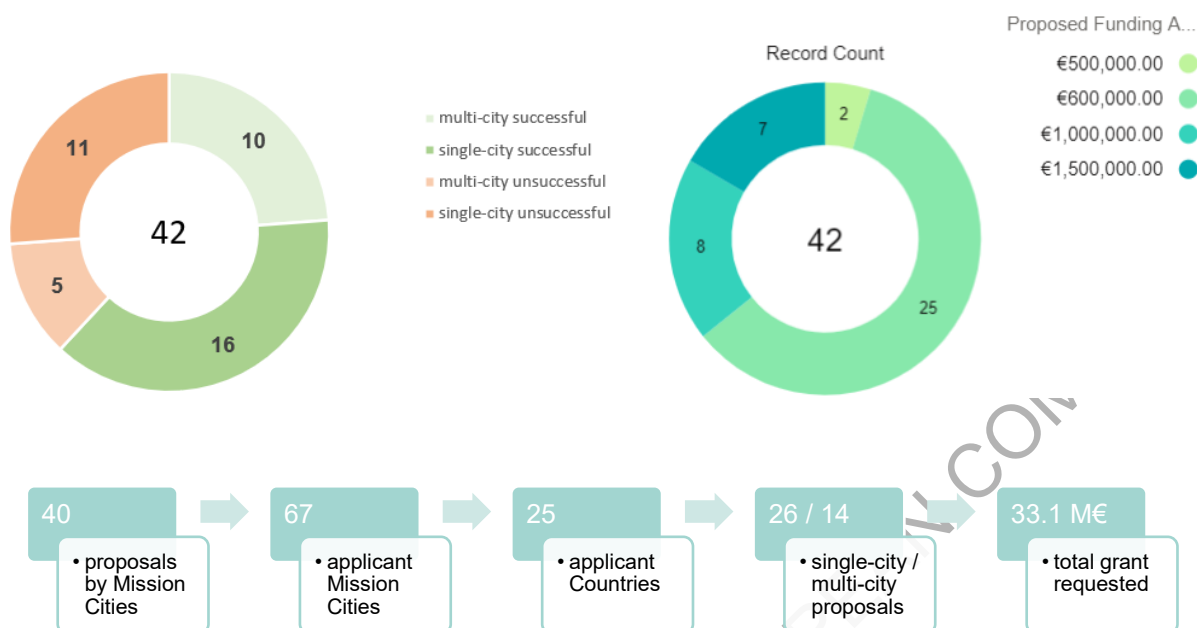
On 16th December 2024 the city of Trikala sent a complaint expressing dissatisfaction for not being included among the successful proposals. On 20th December the complaints reply was sent confirming the strict adherence to the Call guidelines followed during the selection process and that both experts assigned to the evaluation of the proposal had agreed on the score and feedback shared with the city, and that the selection committee hadn't chosen the proposal because there wasn't budget for all proposals and other proposals had more potential to maximise synergies and to align to the Mission goals than the one submitted by Trikala (with Athens).

4.5 Call in-take analysis

4.5.1 Submitted proposals overview (statistics)

Proposals statistics were extracted directly from the Call submission platform, concerning the number of proposals, the total number of Mission cities applying either as lead or as consortium partner, the Countries where most cities have submitted proposals from and the distribution of requested granting envelopes (depending on the number of Mission Cities applying to the same proposal).

These statistics are presented graphically below.



The following cities have submitted proposals in the Enabling City Transformation Call

Region	Country	Applicant Cities
Associated Country	Albania	Elbasan
	Iceland	Reykjavík
	Israel	Eilat
	Norway	Oslo, Stavanger, Trondheim
	Turkey	Istanbul, Izmir
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Sarajevo
Central and Eastern Europe	Croatia	Zagreb
	Czech Republic	Liberec
	Hungary	Budapest, Miskolc, Pécs
	Romania	Cluj-Napoca
	Slovakia	Košice
	Slovenia	Kranj, Ljubljana, Velenje
Northern Europe	Finland	Espoo, Helsinki, Lahti, Lappeenranta, Turku
	Sweden	Helsingborg, Lund, Malmö, Stockholm, Umeå
Southern Europe	Cyprus	Limassol
	Greece	Athens, Ioannina, Kalamata, Kozani, Thessaloniki, Trikala
	Italy	Bergamo, Milano, Parma, Prato, Rome, Turin
	Portugal	Guimarães, Lisbon, Porto
	Spain	Barcelona, Madrid, Seville, Valencia, Valladolid, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Zaragoza
Western Europe	Austria	Klagenfurt am Wörthersee
	Belgium	Leuven
	France	Grenoble, Lyon, Marseille, Dijon, Nantes, Paris
	Germany	Aachen, Dresden, Leipzig, Mannheim
	Netherlands	Eindhoven, Utrecht, The Hague



Figure 16: number of Mission Cities in submitted ECT proposals grouped per Country and region

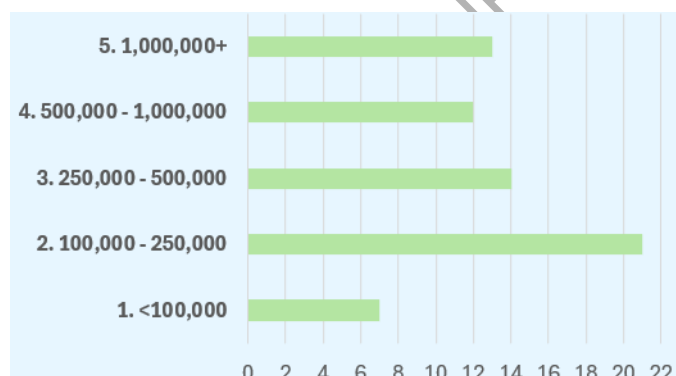


Figure 17: number of Mission Cities in submitted ECT proposals grouped per city size

It was also possible to extract from the submission platform which levers for change and emission domains were more included in ECT proposals.

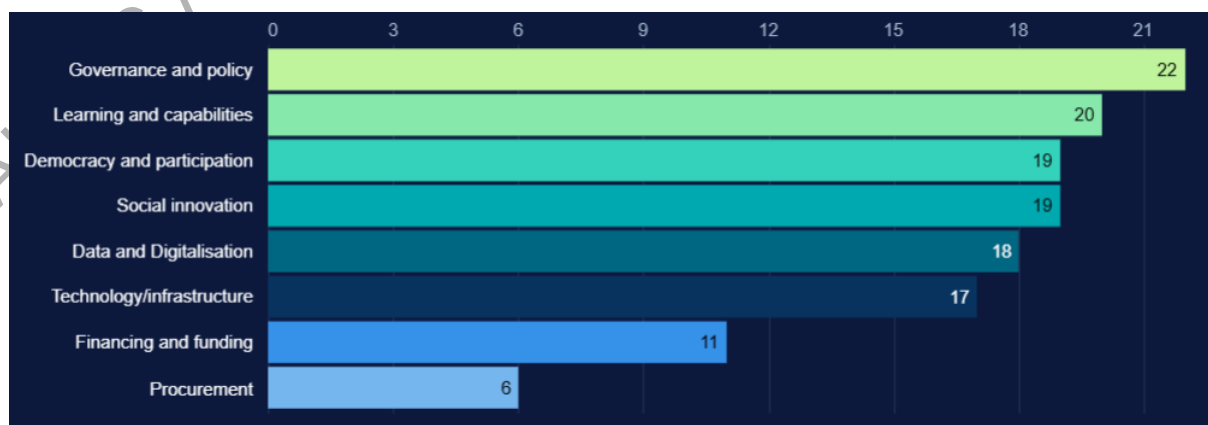


Figure 18: levers addressed in ECT proposals

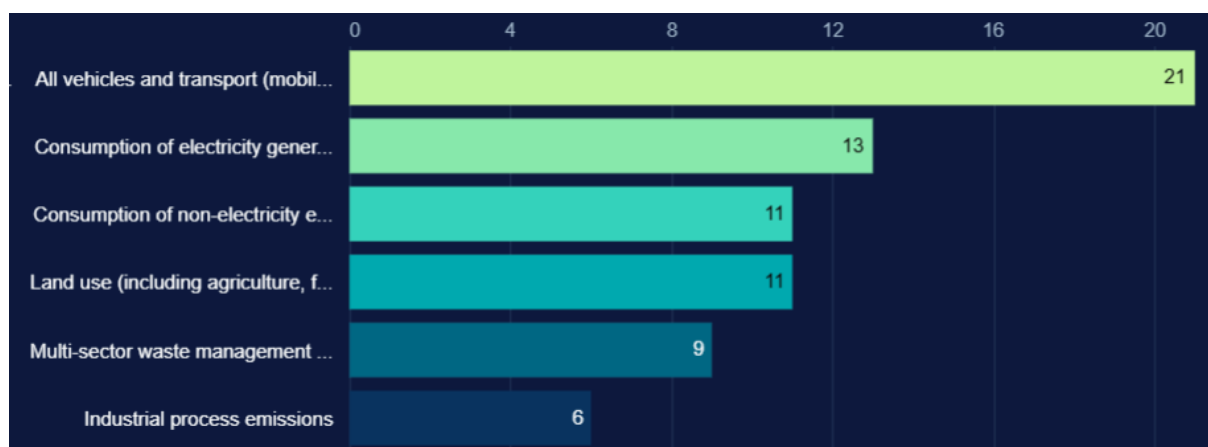


Figure 19: domains addressed in ECT proposals

4.5.2 Stage 1 Eligibility: analysis

Stage 1 review was performed independently by two Climate-KIC representatives: one from the Pilot Cities Programme team and one from the Grant Management team. In case they would not agree on the fulfilment of specific criteria a third representative would be included to help reach an agreement. A file was created to track the outcome of each criterion in each proposal.

Proposal title	Lead applicant	OVERALL OUTCOME	Mission City	Funding	Only one per Mission City	Consortium City-led	LoS with conditions	Stakeholders	Partners check: SGA partners + (Russian, Ukrainian, etc.)	Outcome	First checker complete and/or comments
A+CLASS - Alliance for Climate Leadership	Câmara Municipal de Guimarães	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
Achieving Climate Resilience through Environment	Miskolc Megyei Jogú Város	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
Art for Zero: Engaging Communities in Climate-Neu	Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
BioACE Urban Connected Farms in Athens Gozo & Europe	Develop Athens SA	Withdrawn	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	This is a YES, but we will need to mark it
Building participatory governance model and caps	Statutory City of Liberec	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
Cap4ClimB - Capacity for Climate Transition Budap	Municipality of Budapest	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
CLICC Open	Municipality of Turin	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
Climate Art City	City of Klagenfurt on Wörther	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
CLIMB	Municipality of Milan	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	Stakeholders are list as types, this will be evaluated by
CoGovernance	City of Lund	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	This is relevant at a portfolio
COLLECT - Collectively Enabling Effective Climate	City of Mannheim	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
Collaborative Innovation for City Transformation	Miskolc Megyei Jogú Város	Ineligible	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Ineligible	They did not comply with m
Comm21 transform	City of Leipzig	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	Proposal will need amendm
Culture4Future - Making the Sector a Vector	Landeshauptstadt Dresden	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	L. Annekatrin Klepsch, here
Data Lead	City of Espoo	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
Developing the future of a climate neutral city	Reykjavik Municipality	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
Ebasan Climate-Neutral Innovation in Mobility (eCI)	Municipality of Ebasan	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	Proposal will need amendm
Empowered Governance	City of Stavanger	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
Empowering Citizens for Barcelona's Climate Neut	Barcelona City Council	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
Enabling Climate Transition Malmö	City of Malmö	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Ineligible	RISE part of the consortium
Enabling Massive Change for Climate-neutral Citi	Vitoria-Gasteiz City Council	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
FACT - Financing Accelerated City Transformation	Stad Leuven	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
FUSION	Municipality of Kalamata	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
GRIP (Green Responsible Innovative Procurement	City of Oslo	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
HALT	City of Lappeenranta	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
HK-ACT (Haags KlimaatAkkoord: Collaborative Tr	Municipality of The Hague	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	The budget is referring to 4
HYDRQS/M-2030	City of Helsinki	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
Intact (From the triangle of Nation To the wheel of	Nantes Métropole	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
I-reserve	Eindhoven	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
JET Cities- Boosting Green Workforce in Cities	City of Marseille	Eligible	Yes	Maybe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Budget over the limit with 1.1
KReATIVE	Municipality of Kranj (MOK)	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
MADLESS	City of Helsinki	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
Metronome: Design, M&E, City-Transformative Intell	Municipality of Ioannina	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
N2D: sustainable districts in climate change scena	Municipality of Prato	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
One City	Municipality of Trkale	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Athens as a collaborator in
REVIVE-U: Regenerating Leftover Spaces into Vib	Izmir Metropolitan Municipality	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	The same municipality is pa
SHIFT - Shaping Habits for Innovative Future Trans	Municipality of Ljubljana (M)	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
SMARTIP	City of Elat	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
Towards zero-emission urban transport and logist	City of Lahti	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
U-NEAP	City of Utrecht	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	
WATERS	Port of Stockholm	Eligible	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Ineligible	The application is from a cit
ZERO-MOVE - Zero Emission Mobility Initiatives	Municipality of Pärna	Eligible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eligible	

Figure 20: tracker showing the results for ECT Stage 1 evaluation of all proposals

42 proposals were submitted of which one was submitted by a non-Mission city and Athens was present in two proposals, and therefore proceeded to withdraw the proposal presented by the tourism development agency.

40 proposals were passed to stage 2.

ECT Stage 1 outcome	Number of proposals
<i>Eligible</i>	40
<i>Ineligible</i>	2
Total	42

4.5.3 Stage 2 Assessment: analysis

The objective of stage 2 is to produce scores and feedback for each group of criteria identified in the Call guidelines as described in 2.3.1 (please refer to the Call guidelines for details on every specific criterion and sub-groups of criteria). This phase of the assessment was conducted externally involving independent experts.

Each proposal was reviewed by two experts that were chosen by Climate KIC, selecting from a pool of over 200 experts identified and selected through a dedicated Call for experts opened on the occasion of the NZC Pilot Cities Programme, Cohort 1 Call. Before the identifying and assigning external experts to undertake the evaluation, all proposals were analysed to identify the main levers for change and emission domains addressed, and the proposed innovative approaches to enabling innovation that would be taken. This exercise was undertaken by members of the Pilot Cities Programme team (Climate KIC) and a group of NZC Consortium partners drawn from Dark Matter Laboratories, ICLEI, and Democratic Society ('clustering team').

Proposal with similar enabling innovation challenges and proposed interventions (identified through levers for change and aligned to emissions domains) were grouped together to create specific thematic clusters with three to five proposals in each. A MIRO board was used by the clustering team to categorise proposals according to the above logic.

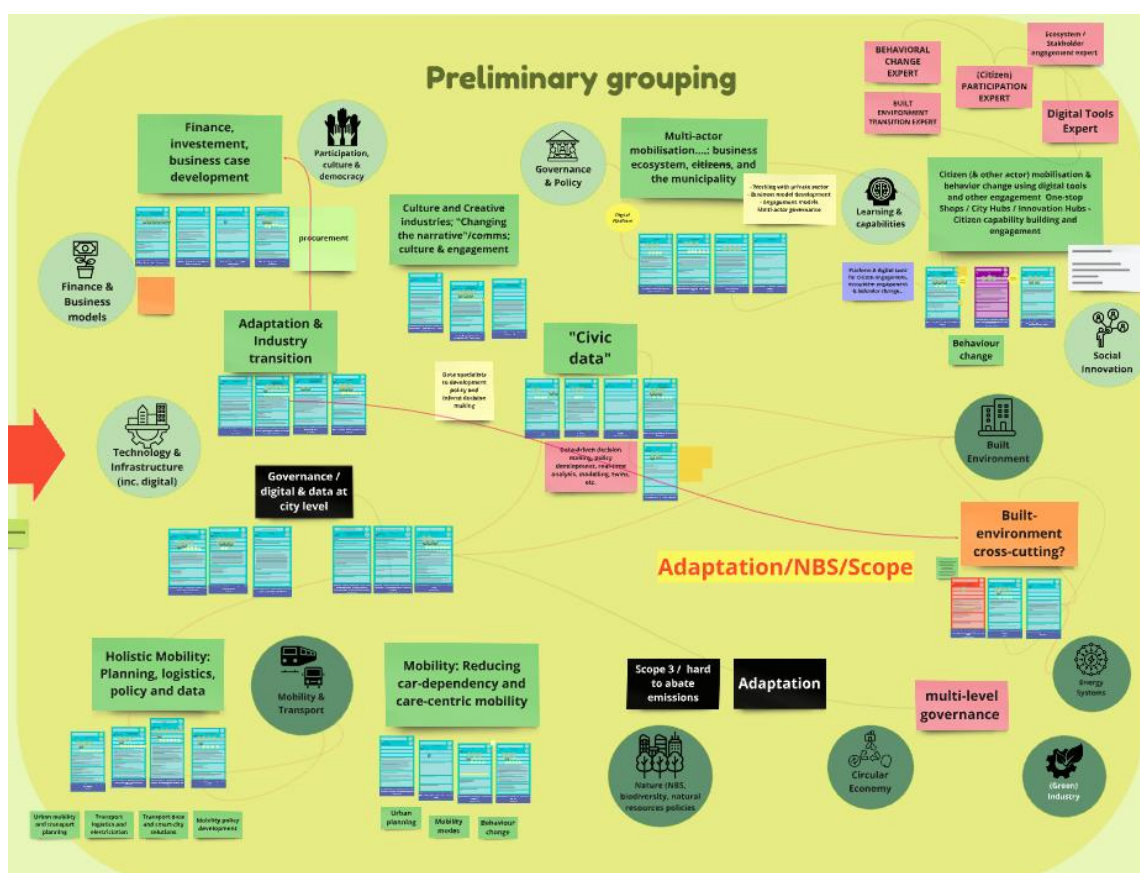


Figure 21: ECT proposal clustering for assessment

Each cluster was then assigned to a couple of experts matching the knowledge areas of experts as per their CVs to the main areas of the cluster of proposals.

The following clusters were identified for ECT proposals.

It is important to highlight that these clusters were created solely for assessment purposes, were not communicated to cities nor were they used for further cities classification.

Cluster 1: Finance, investment, business case development

Cluster 2: Culture and Creative industries, "Changing the narrative" comms, engagement

Cluster 3: Multi-actor mobilisation: business ecosystem, and the municipality

Cluster 4: Citizen (et al.) mobilisation & behaviour change using digital tools (Innovation Hubs)

Cluster 5: Civic data

Cluster 6: Governance, Digital & data at city level

Cluster 7: Holistic Mobility: Planning, logistics, policy and data

Cluster 8: Mobility: reducing car-dependency and care-centric mobility

Cluster 9: Built-environment cross-cutting

Cluster 10: Adaptation & Industry transition

Cluster 1 focussing on the development of financial business cases, municipal capacity and capability with finance, innovative approaches to procurement and (national) economic/workforce/market-making.

Cluster 2 focussing on cultural and creative sector innovation and change; social innovation and behaviour change; narrative building and exploiting cultural institutional place-based communications.

Cluster 3 focussed on the convening, incentivising, mobilising, and setting foundations for business-and-city ecosystems working together,.

Cluster 4 focusing on behaviour change, social innovation and learning & capabilities using digital tools for citizen mobilisation.

Cluster 5 focusing on participation & policy, making use of data for modelling, development of policy and inform decision-making.

Cluster 6 focussing on city-wide governance and digital platforms, data for decision making, and participation.

Cluster 7 , focussing on holistic approaches to mobility systems, including policy instruments, use of data, logistics planning etc.

Cluster 8 , focussing on approaches to reducing (private) car dependency and car-centric mobility.

Cluster 9, focussing on built environment and building retrofit but including cross-cutting topics such as infrastructure and governance & policy.

Cluster 10, focussing on green industry, citizen participation and NBS.

Experts were requested to provide also written feedback and improvement recommendations other than scores to help applicants enhance their proposals and future work in their climate journey.

After evaluating independently all proposals experts were called to a consolidation meeting, facilitated by Climate-KIC where they would discuss each proposal and agree on common scores and feedback. Score averages were calculated where experts could not agree on a common score.

Cities would receive the feedback and recommendations suggested by experts and were asked to reflect on it while performing the refinement of the proposal prior the issue of the award agreement containing the proposal as annex I.

Proposals that would not pass the thresholds for specific criteria would not be admitted to stage 3, regardless of the overall score.

As for stage 1, also the outcomes of stage 2 were recorded in an excel file to keep all the scores for each proposal in the same place and visualise trends and averages.

Lead city	Consortia Cities	Proposal title	MANDATE	Articulating the challenge(s)	Mandate to Act	Consortium and stakeholders	CAPACITY	Capacity and capability	Soundness of work plan	Cross-cutting considerations	Citizen engagement and participation	IMPACT	Innovativeness: leading whole city	Impact	Enabling innovation	TOTAL
City of Eilat		SMARTRIP	25,00	15,00	5,00	5,00	24,50	5,00	9,50	5,00	5,00	41,50	14,50	19,00	8,00	91,00
Vitoria-Gasteiz City Council	Valladolid, Madrid, Z	Enabling Massive Change for Climate-neutral C	23,00	14,00	5,00	4,00	22,00	5,00	9,00	4,00	4,00	42,00	14,00	19,00	9,00	87,00
City of Espoo		Data Lead	24,00	14,00	5,00	5,00	23,00	5,00	9,00	4,00	5,00	39,00	12,50	17,50	9,00	86,00
Municipality of Ioannina	Kozani	Metronome:Design, M&E,City-Transformative In	24,00	14,50	4,50	5,00	21,00	4,00	8,50	4,00	4,50	40,00	12,00	18,00	10,00	85,00
City of Mannheim		COLLECT - Collectively Enabling Effective Climate	23,00	13,00	5,00	5,00	23,50	4,50	9,50	4,50	5,00	38,00	13,00	17,00	8,00	84,50
City of Utrecht		U-NEAP	24,00	14,50	5,00	4,50	20,50	4,50	9,00	4,00	3,00	40,00	13,50	17,00	9,50	84,50
Ports of Stockholm		WATERS	22,50	13,00	5,00	4,50	23,50	4,50	9,00	5,00	5,00	38,50	14,00	16,00	8,50	84,50
Municipality of Kranj (MOK)		KReACTIVE	21,50	12,50	4,50	4,50	22,00	4,50	8,50	4,50	4,50	38,50	12,00	17,50	9,00	84,00
City of Lahti		Towards zero-emission urban transport and log	24,00	14,00	5,00	5,00	21,00	5,00	8,00	4,00	4,00	38,00	13,5	16,50	8,00	83,00
Municipality of Turin		CLICC Open	24,00	14,50	4,50	5,00	22,50	3,50	9,00	5,00	5,00	36,00	11,00	17,00	8,00	82,50
Municipality of Ljubljana (MOL)		SHIFT - Shaping Habits for Innovative Future Tra	24,00	15,00	5,00	4,00	23,00	5,00	9,00	4,00	5,00	35,00	13,00	15,00	7,00	82,00
Barcelona City Council		Empowering Citizens for Barcelona's Climate Ne	25,00	15,00	5,00	5,00	22,00	5,00	8,00	4,00	5,00	34,00	12,00	15,00	7,00	81,00
Municipality of Elbasan		Elbasan Climate-Neutral Innovation in Mobility	21,50	12,50	4,50	4,50	21,50	4,50	8,00	4,50	4,50	37,50	12,50	16,00	9,00	80,50
Statutory City of Liberec		Building participatory governance model and ca	23,00	14,00	5,00	4,00	21,00	4,00	8,00	4,00	5,00	36,00	14,00	15,00	7,00	80,00
City of Klagenfurt on Wörthersee		Climate Art City	22,00	13,50	4,00	4,50	22,00	5,00	8,00	4,50	4,50	36,00	12,50	14,50	9,00	80,00
City of Helsingborg	Umea	HYDROSYM-2030	21,00	12,50	4,50	4,00	19,50	4,00	7,50	4,00	4,00	38,00	13,00	17,00	8,00	78,50
Istanbul Metropolitan	Sarajevo, Bosnia and	Art for Zero: Engaging Communities in Climate-f	22,00	13,00	4,50	4,50	21,00	4,50	8,50	4,00	4,00	35,00	12,50	15,50	7,00	78,00
Municipality of Pécs	Cluj-Napoca, Velenje	ZERO-MOVE – Zero Emission Mobility Initiatives	21,00	11,50	5,00	4,50	19,00	3,50	7,50	4,00	4,00	38,00	12,00	18,50	7,50	78,00
Stad Leuven		FACT - Financing Accelerated City Transformatio	23,50	14,00	5,00	4,50	20,50	4,00	8,50	3,50	4,50	32,50	11,50	14,00	7,00	76,50
Miskolc Megyei Jogú V. Zagreb		Achieving Climate Resilience through Environm	21,00	12,00	5,00	4,00	20,00	4,00	9,00	3,00	4,00	35,00	12,00	16,00	7,00	76,00
Municipality of Prato	Rome, Parma, Bergamo	NZD: sustainable districts in climate change sc	20,50	12,00	4,00	4,50	18,50	4,50	7,00	3,50	3,50	37,00	12,50	17,50	7,00	76,00
Municipality of Budapest		Cap4ClimB – Capacity for Climate Transition Buc	23,00	14,00	5,00	4,00	17,00	4,00	6,00	3,00	4,00	35,00	10,00	16,00	9,00	75,00
City of Lund		CoGovernance	22,00	13,00	5,00	4,00	20,00	5,00	8,00	3,00	3,50	35,00	12,00	13,00	8,00	75,00
City of Stavanger	Trondheim	Empowered Governance	20,50	12,50	4,00	4,00	17,00	4,00	7,00	3,50	2,50	37,50	13,00	15,50	9,00	75,00
City of Marseille	Paris, Lyon, Dijon, Gre	JET Cities- Boosting Green Workforce in Cities	23,00	13,50	5,00	4,50	17,50	3,50	7,50	4,00	2,50	34,00	12,00	14,00	8,00	74,50
Landeshauptstadt Dresden		Culture4Future – Making the Sector a Vector	22,00	12,00	5,00	5,00	17,50	3,50	5,00	5,00	4,00	34,50	9,50	18,00	7,00	74,00
Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, Porto		A-CLASS -Alliance for Climate Leadership	21,50	12,50	4,50	4,50	18,50	4,00	7,50	3,00	4,00	33,00	12,50	13,50	7,00	73,00
Municipality Of Trikala Athens		One City	23,50	14,00	5,00	4,50	19,50	3,50	9,00	3,50	3,50	30,00	8,50	16,50	5,00	73,00
City of Oslo	Aachen, Kosice	GRIP (Green Responsible Innovative Procurement)	20,50	12,00	5,00	3,50	19,50	4,00	8,00	4,00	3,50	32,50	11,50	13,50	7,50	72,50
Eindhoven & Helmond		I-reserve	24,00	14,00	5,00	5,00	18,00	4,00	7,00	4,00	3,00	30,00	8,00	14,00	8,00	72,00
Izmir Metropolitan Municipality		REVIVE-U: Regenerating Leftover Spaces into Vil	20,50	12,00	4,50	4,00	20,50	4,00	8,50	3,50	4,50	31,00	11,00	13,50	6,50	72,00
Reykjavik Municipality		Developing the future of a climate neutral city	21,00	12,00	4,50	4,50	21,50	4,50	9,00	4,50	3,50	27,50	8,00	13,50	6,00	70,00
City of Malmö		Enabling Climate Transition Malmö	20,00	11,50	4,50	4,00	15,50	3,50	6,00	3,00	3,00	34,00	12,50	14,50	7,00	69,50
Municipality of Milan		CLIMB	20,00	12,00	5,00	3,00	17,00	4,00	6,00	4,00	3,00	32,00	12,00	13,00	7,00	69,00
City of Leipzig		Commit2Transform	21,50	12,00	5,00	4,50	17,50	3,00	7,50	4,00	3,00	27,00	9,00	12,00	6,00	66,00
City of Lappeenranta		HALT	20,50	12,00	4,50	4,00	15,00	3,00	6,50	2,50	3,00	30,50	9,00	13,50	8,00	66,00
Municipality of The Hague		HK-ACT (Haags KlimaatAkkoord: Collaborative T	21,00	11,50	5,00	4,50	16,00	3,00	6,50	3,50	3,00	25,00	6,00	13,00	6,00	62,00
Nantes Métropole	Turku	Intact (From the triangle of INaction To the whe	18,00	10,00	4,50	3,50	18,00	4,00	8,00	3,00	3,00	24,50	8,00	12,00	4,50	60,50
City of Helsinki		MADLESS	18,00	10,00	5,00	3,00	14,50	3,00	6,00	2,50	3,00	26,50	7,50	14,50	4,50	59,00
Municipality of Kalamí Thessaloniki, Limassol	FUSION		15,50	7,50	4,50	3,50	12,00	2,00	6,00	1,50	2,50	20,50	6,00	10,00	4,50	48,00

Figure 22: tracker showing the results for ECT Stage 2 evaluation of all proposals

ECT Stage 2 outcome	Number of proposals
Passed	40
Not passed	0
Total	40

The average overall score considering all proposals was 75,4, and all of them were passed to the following stage as there were no criteria thresholds in this Call.

The highest score was achieved by Eilat with the proposal “Smartrip”: 91.

4.5.4 Stage 3 Strategic Selection: overview

The NZC Grant and Resource Allocation Committee was requested to appoint a Selection Committee for the three calls under SGA-NZC. The Selection Committee was composed of the Coordinator of NetZeroCities and the Work Package Leads for WP2 and WP3, and was tasked with taking a portfolio approach to selecting proposals received in each of the Calls, taking into consideration the strategic selection criteria to maximise learning and breakthrough-pathway opportunities across a diverse portfolio of emissions domains and levers/R&I solutions, for EU-wide scaling and replication.

External observers, representing the Cities Mission team at DG RTD and CINEA, were invited on each occasion to attend the Strategic Selection process and meetings.

For ECT the selection meeting was held on 25 November 2024 as the conclusive event of the selection process for:

- Review and reflection on proposal evaluations
- Consensus based discussion and decision making for ECT portfolio composition
- Identification of potential in-cohort and cross-cohort synergies and learning opportunities
- Evaluation of the final proposed portfolio against selection criteria

Unlike the two previous Pilot Calls the funding available for this Call was insufficient to cover all valid proposals so the Selection Committee didn't only have to confirm that submitted proposals were satisfying the Call criteria but had to actually decide which proposals to award the grant with and which to not select

Criteria for selection being this time:

- geographic diversity,
- city size,
- enabling challenges
- innovation opportunities.

when two proposals are very similar, the decision should be guided by the Stage 2 scores and budget availability. Diversity criteria will be taken into consideration in hierarchy order but it is not an absolute, as enabling challenges and innovation opportunities should also be taken into consideration due to the call's scope.

The selection methodology is explained. Given the big number of proposals, the selection was done as an iterative process based on Selection Committee (SC) members preferred portfolios submitted before the meeting and categorised with a traffic light method. Before the meeting each member had given a colour code to each proposal:

- Green: chosen
- Amber: uncertain
- Red: excluded

Miro was used for consensus-building, discussing the proposals in the following order:

- Agree: same colour green or red given by all members
- Nearly agree: combination of green/ambers or red/ambers between members
- No decision: all ambers or all SC marks are different
- The rest of applications

An emphasis on alignment with the ECT's transformative goals over just high scores is made by SC members.

Per each proposal the innovative approach was discussed.

After discussion and consensus-making the portfolio was finalised:

- 26 proposals selected
- Representation across Europe, balancing geographic and city size diversity.
- 10 multi-city and 16 single-city applications selected.

The total budget allocated to the selected proposals is €22.6 million.

ECT Stage 3 outcome	Number of proposals
<i>Selected</i>	26
<i>Not selected</i>	14
Total	40

AWAITING APPROVAL BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

4.5.4.1 Final portfolio

Selected Proposal	Allocated Funding	Lead City	Consortium City/ies
Cap4ClimB – Capacity for Climate Transition Budapest	€ 600,000	Budapest	
Elbasan Climate-Neutral Innovation in Mobility (eCIM)	€ 600,000	Elbasan	
A+CLASS -Alliance for Climate Leadership	€ 1,500,000	Guimarães	Lisbon, Porto
HYDROSYM-2030	€ 1,000,000	Helsingborg	Umea
MADLESS	€ 600,000	Helsinki	
Metronome:Design, M&E,City-Transformative Intelligence	€ 1,000,000	Ioannina	Kozani
Climate Art City	€ 600,000	Klagenfurt on Wörthersee	
KReACTIVE	€ 600,000	Kranj	
Towards zero-emission urban transport and logistics	€ 600,000	Lahti	
HALT	€ 600,000	Lappeenranta	
FACT - Financing Accelerated City Transformation	€ 600,000	Leuven	
Building participatory governance model and capacity for climate action	€ 600,000	Liberec	
SHIFT - Shaping Habits for Innovative Future Transformations	€ 600,000	Ljubljana (MOL)	
CoGovernance	€ 600,000	Lund	
Enabling Climate Transition Malmö	€ 600,000	Malmö	
COLLECT - Collectively Enabling Effective Climate Investments	€ 600,000	Mannheim	
JET Cities- Boosting green Workforce in Cities	€ 1,500,000	Marseille	Paris, Lyon, Dijon, Grenoble-Alpes
CLIMB	€ 600,000	Milan	
Intact (From the triangle of INaction To the wheel of ACTION)	€ 1,000,000	Nantes Métropole	Turku
GRIP (greenResponsible Innovative Procurement)	€ 1,500,000	Oslo	Aachen, Kosice
ZERO-MOVE – Zero Emission Mobility Initiatives	€ 1,500,000	Pécs	Cluj-Napoca, Velenje
NZD: sustainable districts in climate change scenario	€ 1,500,000	Prato	Rome, Parma, Bergamo
Developing the future of a climate neutral city	€ 600,000	Reykjavik Municipality	
Empowerot green Governance	€ 1,000,000	Stavanger	Trondheim
HK-ACT (Haags KlimaatAkkoord: Collaborative Transformation)	€ 600,000	The Hague	
Enabling Massive Change for Climate-neutral Cities	€ 1,500,000	Vitoria-Gasteiz	Valladolid, Madrid, Zaragoza, Valencia, Seville
Total	€ 22,600,000	26	22
48 cities			

Table 3: Portfolio of selected proposals – ECT (2024)

5 Comparison in-take analysis of the three calls

In previous paragraphs each Call was presented separately, whilst this section aims at analysing together the in-take of all the calls, showing trends.

For example, call after call cities have increased their interest towards multi-city proposals.

Number of cities applying in single or multi-city proposals	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	ECT
single city proposals	23 (77%)	19 (73%)	26 (39%)
multi-city proposals	7 (23%)	7 (27%)	41 (61%)
Grand Total	30	26	67

It can be noted that ECT is the Call that has seen the greatest collaboration between cities to present common projects. This reflects both the maturity of the Mission fostering collaboration and also the acceptance of the ECT Call guidelines intent to promote synergies.

5.1 Comparison in-take analysis of selected proposals

This section specifically focusses only on selected proposals in the three calls.

Region	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	ECT	Grand Total
Associated Countries	1.800.000€	1.800.000€	2.700.000€	6.300.000€
Central and Eastern Europe	4.300.000€	600.000€	4.400.000€	9.300.000€
Northern Europe	4.800.000€	3.400.000€	4.500.000€	12.700.000€
Southern Europe	2.300.000€	2.400.000€	6.100.000€	10.800.000€
Western Europe	1.700.000€	6.100.000€	4.900.000€	12.700.000€
Grand Total	14.900.000€	14.300.000€	22.600.000€	51.800.000€

Table 4: Regional grant distribution of selected proposals per each Call

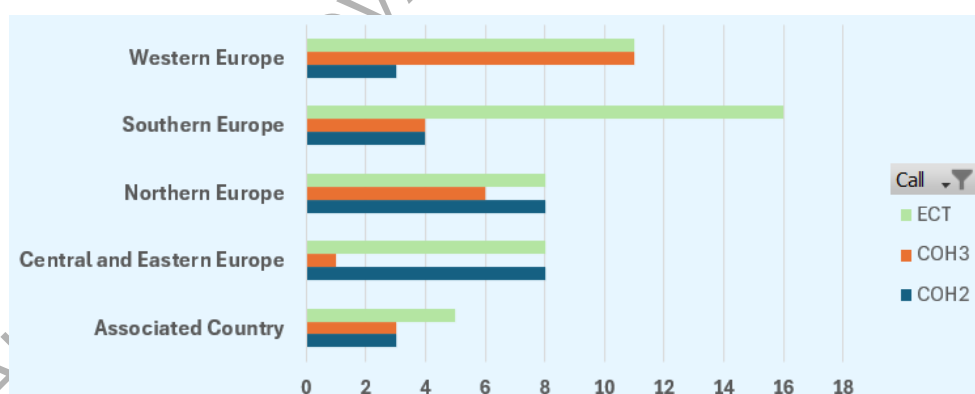


Figure 23: geographic distribution of Mission cities selected under the three SGA-NZC calls

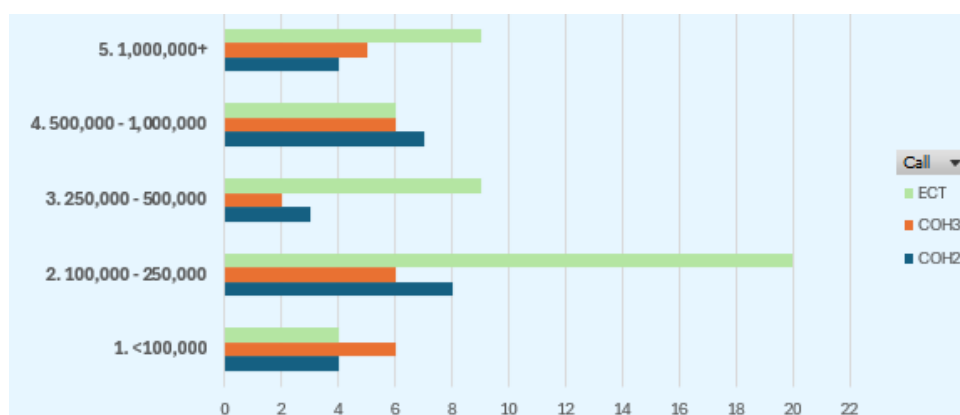


Figure 24: city size distribution of Mission cities selected under the three SGA-NZC calls

5.2 Pilot Cities Programme: 3 Cohorts

This document has extensively described which cities from the EU Mission for climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030 (Mission Cities) have applied and have been selected for Cohort 2 and Cohort 3. Also statistic on regions have been provided.

However, as both programmes were intended to complement the Cohort 1 Call opened for the NetZeroCities agreement at the end of 2022, also the overall outreach of all Cohorts together can provide an interesting insight.

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohorts 1 + 2 + 3
Countries	21	16	12	31 (89%*)
Mission Cities	48	26	25	99 (88%*)
Projects	25	22	21	68

* % are expressed on the total number of Mission Cities and Countries where Mission cities are present

Below is a map showing in different colours the participation of Mission Cities to the Pilot Cities Programme according to the Country where the cities are based.



Countries that have no Pilot Cities but have cities part of the Mission are: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Luxembourg and Montenegro.

6 Learning and reflections

After managing four Calls under the NetZeroCities framework the process has been consolidated and whilst there is always margin for improvement, established procedures for designing the Call guidelines, opening the Call and completing the selection ensure all phases are thoroughly designed and monitored.

At each call, selection criteria descriptions in the call guidelines were improved for clarity. Also the evaluation process has been improved, specifically in stage 2 where experts have been more and more steered to comment proposals in a way that both selected and non selected cities could benefit from, providing clear and actionable feedback on the proposed action plan rather than just a qualitative comment on how understandable the proposal is.

Together with the refinement process, the receipt of independent experts feedback represents a clear opportunity for learning and to increase the potential impact of the proposal.

The three SGA-NZC Calls create a trend in proposals that was initiated with the first Pilot Cities Programme cohort 1 call launched under the NetZeroCities grant agreement.

Cities demonstrate the interest in participating together to Calls, submitting a joint proposal. Over the Three Calls cities have more and more decided to work on the same project, and since the first Pilots cohort where multi-city projects were characterised only by Cities from the same Country applying together, The Pilot Cities Programme cohort 2 has seen the first multi-Country proposal being selected and the ECT Call has seen 3 multi-Country proposals demonstrating the willingness to address common challenges rather than common regulatory set and the mentality that change across Europe can be

driven by cities directly and doesn't need to wait for dissemination results from the funded programmes to be shared.

The ECT summer sandbox sessions have proven to be very appreciated by Mission Cities and effective in investigating possible synergies and initiating collaborations that culminate in joint proposal submission.

7 Conclusion

Under SGA-NZC three open calls for Mission cities were launched.

The first two to complement the Pilot Cities Programme cohort 1, selected under NetZeroCities, with the aim of identifying and overcoming barriers to decarbonising at the city level and to test innovative solutions to deliver knowledge and build capabilities. Expected outcomes are business models, policy initiatives, finding models and replicability and scaling strategies at EU level.

The Enabling City Transformation builds from the Pilots but aims at enabling whole-city implementation of decarbonising activities and to focus on challenges and opportunities that can be shared by cities in EU.

- The Pilot Cities Programme cohort 2 Call was launched on 05/09/2023 and stayed open till 06/11/2023. 26 eligible proposals were received of which 22 were selected and communicated to cities on the 08/12/2023. This cohort includes 26 cities that will receive funding for 14.900.000 EUR.
- The Pilot Cities Programme cohort 3 Call was launched on 16/01/2024 and stayed open till 18/03/2024. 22 eligible proposals were received of which 21 were selected and communicated to cities on the 03/05/2024. This cohort includes 25 cities that will receive funding for 14.300.000 EUR.
- The Enabling City Transformation Programme Call was launched on 05/06/2024 and stayed open till 14/10/2024. 40 eligible proposals were received of which 26 were selected and communicated to cities on the 06/12/2024. This cohort includes 48 cities that will receive funding for 22.600.000 EUR.

The Pilot Cities portfolio has reached 88% coverage of Mission Cities, the ECT portfolio instead includes only 43% of Mission Cities. This percentage could be increased with a further Call dedicated at expanding the portfolio.