



30 Best Practice Case Studies

Deliverable D5.7

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Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
WP	Work Package
EU	European Union
NZC	NetZeroCities
MC	Mission City
MMC	Mission-Minded City

Summary

This deliverable presents the 30 multimedia case studies that have been developed under the NZC grant and that present exemplary practices, projects and/or initiatives both in Mission and Mission-Minded Cities that foster the decarbonisation of their urban areas. These briefs are primarily addressed to local authorities to inspire and bring to the table different ways in which cities can move towards a decarbonised society. These case studies can also be a source of knowledge for EU decision-makers to better understand the barriers municipalities must overcome when trying to implement innovative changes within their territories.

Keywords

Case Studies, Mission Cities, Mission-Minded Cities.



1 Introduction

The NetZeroCities consortium members developed 30 multimedia case studies on replication and upscale, between December 2023 and May 2025. The purpose was to showcase examples of projects, initiatives, and strategies created and implemented by European cities, as part of their path towards climate neutrality. The case studies that were developed by 7 different partners (Eurocities, TalTech, Resilient Cities Network, ICLEI, Energy Cities, UITP, EIT Urban Mobility, and Climate Alliance) covered a wide range of topics that can be classified into 5 different clusters, in line with the largest emitting sectors for cities (energy, built environment or mobility) and relevant levers of change to reach climate neutrality (stakeholder engagement and digital solutions):

- Sustainable Energy Solutions
- Built Environment
- Sustainable Mobility Solutions
- Stakeholder engagement (including citizen, private sector, inter-departmental, etc.)
- Digital Solutions

The 30 case studies are based on examples extracted from Mission Cities that have been involved in NetZeroCities through the work done in WP5 and the Seasonal Schools that took place in 2023 and the as well as Mission-Minded-Cities that were involved in WP5 through the Twinning Learning Programme (Task 5.2) or the national collaboration (Task 5.4). In total, 18 case studies were developed on Mission Cities and 13 on Mission-Minded Cities. The original target had been to produce 15 case studies for each group. However, finding case studies to showcase Mission-Minded Cities, as well as gathering their attention and commitment to draft them, proved more challenging than expected, due to lack of capacity from these cities to prioritise this request. As a result, by January 2025, all task partners agreed to replace two of the initially planned Mission-Minded Cities with additional Mission Cities that are actively involved in the EU Cities Mission Platform or were connected to partner organisations of city networks. Task partners exceeded the initial objective of developing 30 case studies, delivering a total of 31.

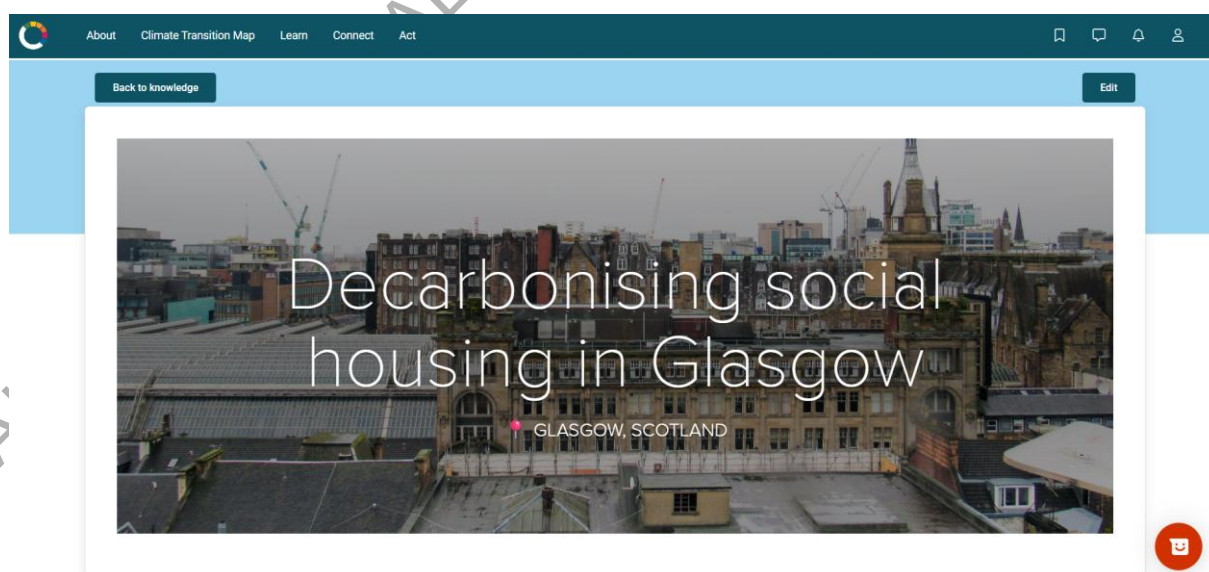


Figure 1. Screenshot of how the case studies are presented in the NetZeroCities Portal

2 Outcomes of the task

The work on NetZeroCities multimedia case studies on replication and upscale was carried out in two main phases. The first batch focused on Mission Cities (MCs) and resulted in 17 case studies, drawing on examples presented during the NetZeroCities Seasonal Schools. The second batch focused on Mission-Minded Cities (MMCs) and delivered 13 case studies, slightly fewer than the 15 originally planned, due to the greater complexity of identifying and collaborating with suitable MMC examples.

Together, these case studies provide a diverse set of examples of best practices implemented by cities, across sectors such as energy efficiency, smart mobility, digital tools, and innovative financing. They also ensure balance across geography, city size, and maturity levels, while highlighting transferable lessons learned and recommendations for other cities working towards climate neutrality.

Here is a comprehensive list of the final case studies:

Mission City Case Studies	Mission-Minded City Case Studies
Glasgow (United Kingdom)	Issy-les-Moulineaux (France)
Taurage (Lithuania)	Viladecans (Spain)
Florence (Italy)	Greater Manchester (UK)
Oslo (Norway)	Alba Iulia (Romania)
Rzeszów (Poland)	Fundao (Portugal)
Lisbon (Portugal)	Oulu (Finland)
Guimaraes (Portugal)	Krizevci (Croatia)
Malmö (Sweden)	Jyväskylä (Finland)
Espoo (Finland)	Kladno (Czech Republic)
Helsinki (Finland)	Konya (Turkey)
Helsingborg (Sweden)	Soria (Spain)
Bordeaux (France)	Karlovac (Croatia)
Grenoble (France)	Wiesbaden (Germany)
Vitoria Gasteiz (Spain)	
Brussels (Belgium)	
Ioannina (Greece)	
Lund (Sweden)	
Pécs (Hungary)	

Figure 2: Overview of Cities Selected for Multimedia Case Studies



3 Methodology

3.1 Identification of case studies and selection process

The identification and selection process for the Mission City (MC) case studies was first outlined at the beginning of 2023. It aimed to identify cities that had participated in European projects and showcase the different activities they had implemented. However, the process proved too complex, and only two case studies were drafted during that first year.

In December 2023, following an analysis of the challenges encountered, partners decided to draw primarily on knowledge shared by cities during the Seasonal Schools. The selection of MC case studies was therefore based on examples presented across the three Seasonal Schools held by that time. This approach was chosen to maximise the value of cities' contributions and to make effective use of existing material, rather than producing new resources from scratch. Once task leaders (Eurocities, TalTech, Resilient Cities) had identified the most relevant examples, they created a preselection of potential case studies.

Moving forward, all task partners then had access to this preselection and were able to choose the cases they would develop according to their interests, expertise, and/or organisational membership.



Figure 3. Screenshot of one of the MMC case studies

In April 2024, while finalising the MC case studies, the selection process for Mission-Minded City (MMC) case studies began. On this occasion, the WP and task leads based their preselection on projects and cities already involved in other WP tasks. The pool consisted mainly of MMCs participating in the Twinning Learning Programme. This approach ensured established contacts with the cities and promoted visibility for municipalities already engaging with NZC. The main difference between MC and MMC, case studies, therefore, lies in the sources from which the

cases were drawn. TalTech, Resilient Cities and Eurocities conducted additional research to present a complete list of possible initiatives, and the same process of final selection by partners was then followed.

If, during research, a partner found that a chosen case did not meet the agreed criteria, they had to alert the core group or task lead. Replacements were sought whenever possible, particularly during the second batch (MMC case studies), where suitable examples were more complex to identify.

Criteria for selection

Mandatory criteria

- **Replicability/scale-up:** already scaled/replicated or with clear potential for replication elsewhere. Indicators included: transferable features identified; concrete components highlighted; barriers or challenges for replication acknowledged.
- **Climate neutrality:** contributes to or aims at climate neutrality.
- **Data availability:** sufficient evaluation/impact monitoring data, including GHG emissions.
- **Link to CTM/CCC:** aligns with the steps of the CTM or contributes to CCC components.

Indicative criteria

- Geographic balance (max. one case study per city, two per country per batch).



- City size balance, with preference for smaller cities when possible.
- Balance of sectors and domains: energy efficiency/building renovation; digital tools/smart cities; sustainable mobility; innovative finance. The second batch excluded case studies focused on citizen participation and multilevel governance, as these were covered in other NZC tasks.
- Different maturity levels and stages of impact pathways, including unusual or less visible cases.
- Priority for cases with demonstrator and replicator cities.

3.2 Research and content gathering

Each case study was developed using a common template covering:

a) Information about the city (**mandatory in every case study**)

- Name of the city
- Area
- Population
- Overall annual CO2 emissions
- Overall CO2 emission reduction target
- Climate neutrality commitment timeline

b) Information about the project or solution implemented

- Description of the activity
- Status of implementation of the activity
- Goal/objective to be achieved through the implementation of the activity (in other words, what problems does the city aim to address by implementing this project?)
- How does the project align with the city's overall climate objectives? How does it align with the CCC (only in the case of MC)

c) Partners and stakeholders involved in the project

- Strategy followed to involve these stakeholders
- Challenges faced in the involvement of these stakeholders
- Benefits of ensuring the involvement of these stakeholders
- Success factors that ensured the involvement of the stakeholders

d) Drivers and challenges/barriers during the design and implementation of the project (political, economic, social, technical, legal)

- Expand on this and how were these overcome

e) Financing of the project

- Financing source and total amount
- Payback period
- Return to investment

f) The key lessons learnt (**mandatory in every case study**)



g) *Potential for replication (mandatory in every case study)*

- Is the project/solution replicable/upscaling entirely or partially (some of its components)?
- What are the replicable/upscaling features?
- Where would the project/solution have higher potential for replication/upscaling? (e.g. based on location: at European, national, regional level, or climate conditions: in Mediterranean cities, Nordic cities, etc.)
- What would be the pre-conditions for successful replication/upscaling?
- What would be the limitations for replication/upscaling?
- What would you recommend to a city that is willing to implement your project/solution?
- Has the project already been replicated/upscaled? If so, can you elaborate on it?

To guide partners in applying this template, Eurocities developed a series of supporting documents. These included the *Guidelines for developing multimedia case studies*, which explained how to use the template and ensure that content was consistent and ready to be turned into engaging outputs.

- The research process began with a desk review of existing materials. Partners collected content from:
 - Twinning applications.
 - Seasonal School presentations.
 - Previous WP tasks.
 - City websites and project pages.
 - Other internal NZC deliverables.

In addition to desk research, partners were strongly encouraged to conduct interviews with the cities responsible for each initiative. To make these discussions effective, partners were asked to pre-fill the case study template with available information before the interview. This ensured that conversations with cities could focus on filling gaps and exploring the most important aspects, especially drivers, barriers, and lessons learned. Interviews typically lasted around one hour.

Because these interviews could themselves serve as dissemination material, partners were also invited to record and edit them where appropriate. Eurocities provided a dedicated set of *Guidelines for conducting and recording online interviews* to support this process.

From the very beginning, the case studies were designed as multimedia products intended to be engaging and visually rich. When contacting cities, partners already explained this aspect. They requested that they share existing multimedia materials such as raw video footage, photos, project websites, promotional materials, and links to relevant videos. While the priority was to reuse existing resources to minimise demands on cities, partners also encouraged them to provide new materials if they wished. To facilitate this, Eurocities shared *Guidelines for self-recorded videos* with cities, offering practical advice on how to capture new footage for potential inclusion.

3.3 Production and drafting

Once the research and interviews were completed, partners moved to the drafting stage, where the information collected was transformed into a written case study of around 500–600 words. The drafting process followed the template structure but aimed to create a coherent narrative that was both accurate and engaging.

From the outset, production was guided by the fact that the case studies were intended as multimedia products. Partners were therefore encouraged to write with the final look in mind, ensuring that text



could be complemented by visual resources gathered from cities. This meant integrating references to images, raw footage, project websites, infographics, or videos directly into the draft, so that the story would be reinforced by visuals from the start rather than added at the end.

To ensure homogeneity and quality across all case studies, Eurocities, in collaboration with Resilient Cities and TalTech, developed a set of production guidelines. These covered:

- Writing style and tone to ensure consistency across case studies.
- How to structure the narrative based on the template.
- How to incorporate drivers, barriers, and lessons learned — the three most important aspects of every case study.
- How to embed references to multimedia resources and indicate where they should appear in the final layout.
- How to prepare text for integration into Adobe Express later on.

Drafts were shared with Eurocities for review. At this stage, Eurocities often suggested edits or restructuring to improve clarity, flow, or emphasis on the most important aspects. This was an iterative process: partners revised their drafts based on feedback, resubmitted them, and continued refining the text until it met the agreed-upon quality standard.

By combining narrative writing with visual elements already identified in the research phase, the drafting stage ensured that each case study was not only informative but also prepared for its transformation into a visually engaging, multimedia product.

3.4 Layout and design

After the drafting stage, the next step was the layout of the case studies. This process transformed the written text and collected multimedia resources into a visually engaging format, ready for publication.

Several options and tools were considered for producing the case studies. Adobe Express was selected because it is easy to use, does not require a licence, and can be integrated into the NetZeroCities portal without the need for extensive development work to host such materials.

All case studies were formatted using a design template in Adobe Express, created by Eurocities' communications team. The template was specifically designed to facilitate the smooth integration of text with multimedia elements, such as images, photos, videos, and links, ensuring that the case studies reflected the engaging, multimedia nature envisioned from the outset of the process.



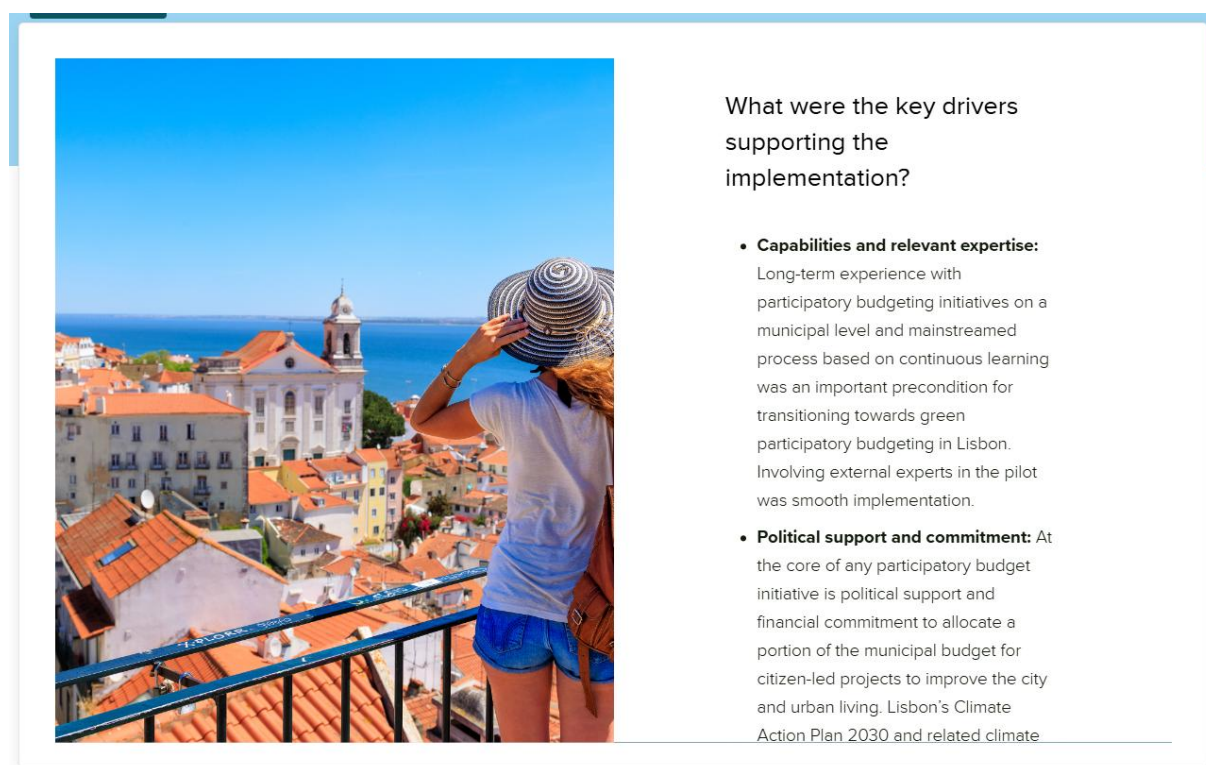


Figure 4. Adobe Express allows for different content modules to structure the content

To guide this step, Eurocities developed dedicated *Guidelines for integrating text into the Adobe Express template*. These guidelines helped partners prepare their drafts for layout, making sure text was concise, structured, and visually adaptable, and that references to multimedia materials were clear.

In practice, Eurocities carried out the layout for 20 case studies, while the remaining case studies were laid out directly by the drafting partners. Regardless of who created the layout, Eurocities performed a quality check of each final design to ensure consistency in look and feel across all case studies, alignment with the project's visual identity, and clarity of presentation.

3.5 Quality checks, editing and proofreading

Quality control took place at several points, rather than being left to the final stage. The following steps were taken by the task lead (Eurocities):

- Initial check:** After partners selected case studies and completed initial research, Eurocities validated the suitability of topics.
- Draft review:** Eurocities carefully reviewed draft texts to check content quality, coherence, and emphasis on key aspects (drivers, barriers, replication).
- Editing and restructuring:** Where necessary, Eurocities suggested or implemented structural changes, dedicating time to improve clarity and flow.
- Partner revision:** Drafts were returned to partners for adjustments and further detail.
- Validation by Eurocities:** Final texts were checked again for consistency with the criteria and guidelines.
- Validation by cities:** Each case study was shared back with the relevant city for confirmation and approval.
- Proofreading:** Final proofreading was conducted by Eurocities before layout and publication.
- Final quality check** of the laid-out case study was conducted by Eurocities right before publication on the Portal.

This iterative process ensured that case studies not only met technical requirements but also maintained a high editorial and communication standard.

3.6 Publication

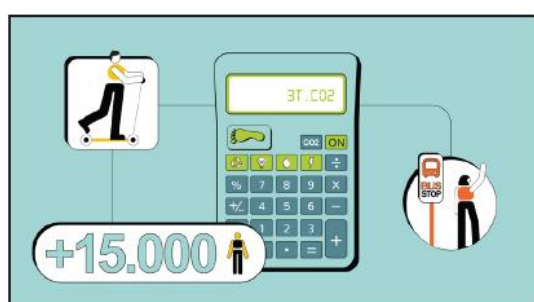
Once finalised and approved, the case studies were published on the NetZeroCities portal. Eurocities was in close contact with LGI to ensure that the Adobe Express templates could be easily integrated into the portal using an *iframe*. LGI produced clear, step-by-step guidelines on how to upload and display the case studies. Following these, Eurocities published all case studies on the portal, guaranteeing that the outputs were accessible and visually consistent across the platform.

3.7 Case study videos

In addition to the written case studies, a series of five short, animated videos was produced to highlight the breadth of city action within the NetZeroCities project.

Concept and selection of stories

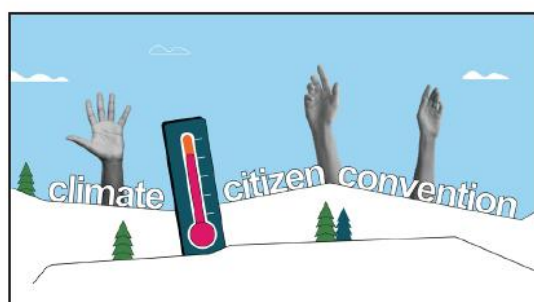
The videos were conceptualised and clustered thematically in line with the case study framework developed by the project team. Each story was chosen to illustrate a distinct dimension of the transition towards climate neutrality: the built environment, sustainable energy, sustainable mobility, citizen engagement, and smart solutions.



So far, more than 15,000 people have joined the shift to sustainable living, and counting!



What about Grenoble? Here,



the metropolitan authorities organised a climate citizen convention,



where residents proposed ideas,

Figure 5. Stills of the storyboard from the video on citizen engagement

Production process

The visual concept was developed by Huracán Estudio, with a deliberate effort to move away from standard clichés in climate communication. The design employed the NZC colour palette, specifically



the secondary colours, to create contrast and distinctiveness. Simple, diverse, and relatable characters were created without specific markers of gender or race, while black-and-white photography was integrated to add realism and differentiate the series from conventional flat-design explainers. Typography was adapted from the NetZeroCities font (Arial), with outlines added to enhance readability and coherence with the overall visual identity.

Scripts were co-drafted with Eurocities staff to ensure both technical accuracy and engaging storytelling. The production process followed several stages: (1) defining the concept and illustration style, (2) scripting and storyboarding, (3) animation, (4) selection of voiceover and production, and (5) development of short promotional snippets tailored for social media channels.

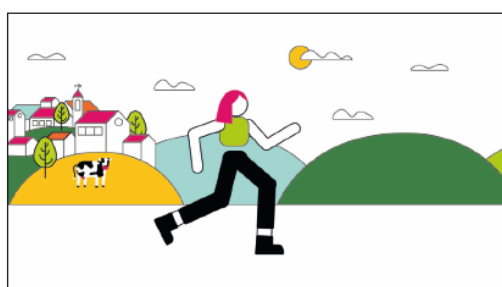
Overview of the videos

- **Built Environment** – Featuring Oslo, Helsinki, Brussels, Glasgow, and Greater Manchester, this video illustrates how cities are advancing building efficiency, electrification, and retrofitting.
- **Sustainable Energy** – Showcasing projects such as Viladecans' Vilawatt, the video highlights local renewable energy, district heating solutions, and citizen-owned solar initiatives.
- **Sustainable Mobility** – Highlighting Taurage's free public transport, Bordeaux's cycling express network, and Helsingborg's digital tools, this video presents innovative mobility solutions.
- **Citizen Engagement** – Demonstrating participatory practices in Lisbon, Grenoble, and Rzeszów, the video focuses on citizen conventions, open platforms, and participatory budgeting.
- **Smart Solutions** – Highlighting innovations such as Konya's green campus, Florence's smart lighting, Malmö's green bonds, and Wiesbaden's digital twin, the video showcases digital and financial tools for transition.

4 Conclusion

The production of the case studies highlighted several important lessons for future work. First, a clear and realistic preselection process is essential, as initial attempts proved too complex and slowed progress. Building on existing NetZeroCities activities such as the Seasonal Schools and the Twinning Programme offered a reliable and effective pool of examples, while also demonstrating to cities that their earlier efforts in sharing best practices were valued and incorporated, helping to avoid duplication.

Cities particularly valued that the process was efficient and did not take much of their time. Because partners had already pre-drafted the templates before interviews, discussions with cities were focused and concise. They also appreciated that existing materials were reused, since in many cases cities had already invested considerable effort and resources in creating photos, videos, or infographics for previous projects that were never widely used afterwards. Another added value for cities was the visibility at European level. Having their projects featured on the NetZeroCities portal and highlighted through communications was considered highly beneficial and very welcome.



From rural roads to urban hubs, the route to climate neutrality is underway.



Cities lead the Europe of tomorrow.

Figure 6. Stills of the storyboard from the video on sustainable mobility



Integrating the multimedia approach from the outset ensured that partners and cities were aware of visual and dissemination needs early in the process. By requesting existing materials and providing guidance for new ones, it was possible to create engaging outputs while minimising the burden on cities. This process underlined the importance of involving communications expertise from the outset. While the communications team ensured consistency with NetZeroCities branding and supported the layout process, stronger involvement earlier on would likely have made it easier to promote the outputs and maximise their impact.

This was particularly evident in the animation video series, which was not yet finalised by the time of submitting this report. As a result, opportunities to fully integrate videos into the communications cycle and build a strong promotion strategy were limited. In addition, translating the diversity of city actions into short, dynamic formats required balancing depth with accessibility. Despite these challenges, the series succeeded in creating an attractive, recognisable format that complemented the written case studies and enhanced the visibility of city achievements under NetZeroCities.

Finally, the iterative quality control process proved key to ensuring high standards. Multiple checks by Eurocities and validation by partners and cities guaranteed that the final products were accurate, well-structured, and ready for publication on the NetZeroCities portal.

The work does not conclude here, now is the time to put it to use and ensure that other cities benefit from it. Consortium partners will actively disseminate the final case studies through both internal and external communication channels, while also building on the efforts made by cities and task partners in future activities, such as peer learning programs or thematic discussions, under the EU Cities Mission.

