

NET ZERO CITIES



EU MISSION PLATFORM

CLIMATE NEUTRAL AND SMART CITIES



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EU MISSIONS

CLIMATE-NEUTRAL & SMART CITIES

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Call for proposals: Enabling City Transformation 2 (ECT2)

Information session 2 / 3: Eligibility, assessment criteria and how to submit
Tuesday 29 September 2026



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Overview

- Welcome
- Eligibility & Assessment Criteria
- Grant Management System
- Q&A (remaining time as required)



This event is being recorded



Use the Q&A functionality to ask questions



Re/Name yourself and include your city and department



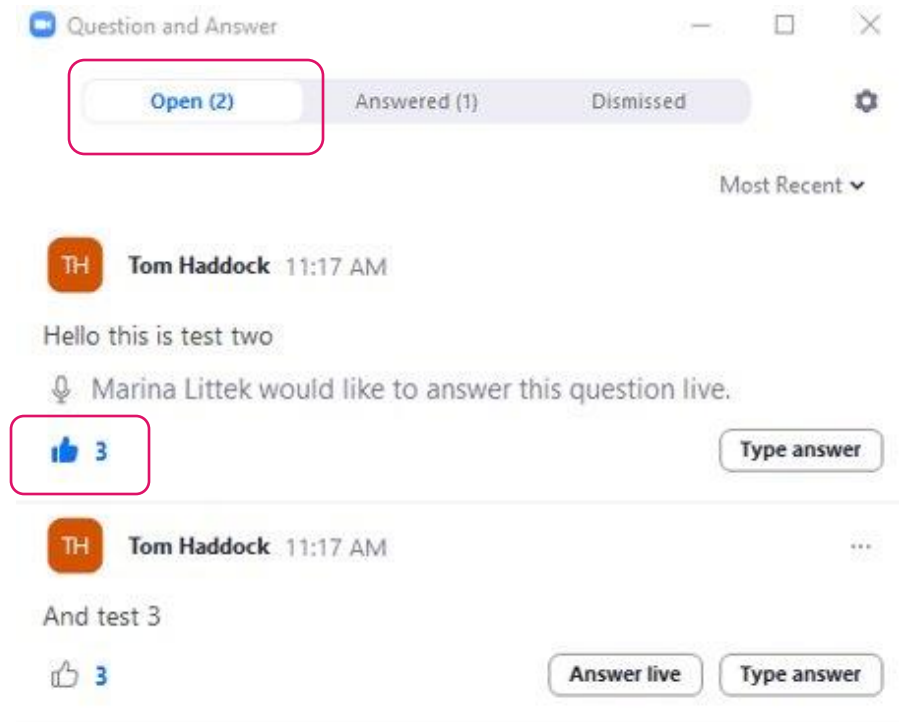


How to use the Q&A

1) Type down your questions



2) Vote up the questions





The call at a glance

CALL IDENTITY

NZC-SGA3-HE-202608 · Cascade funding under Horizon Europe Grant Agreement 101261829 (SGA3-NZC)

OPENS

31 August 2026, 12.00 CET

DEADLINE

3 December 2026, 12.00 CET

No late or out-of-system submissions; no modification after submission

BUDGET

€8 million total

*Subgrants: €500,000 – €1,500,000
(100% reimbursement of eligible actual costs)*

DURATION

22 months

April 2027 – January 2029

LANGUAGE

English

*Supporting docs may use local language
+ English summary*

AI USE

100% human accountability

*Disclose AI tools used;
evident/predominant AI use will be penalised*





Where ECT2 sits

Pilot Cities Programme

“test and learn”

102 cities · 32 countries

68 projects · €61.2m

Three cohorts

Key exploration:

What is your city struggling with?



Enabling City Transformation

“enable and scale”

48 cities · 19 countries

26 projects · €22.6m

18 months, Mar 2025–Sep 2026

Key exploration:

Where are the collective implementation challenges?



Enabling City Transformation 2

“enable and scale” + “unblock and sustain”

Expands the portfolio — sharper focus on what’s blocking cities’ transition

Translates enabling innovations into durable, policy-anchored delivery



Towards a challenge-based approach



PREVIOUS APPROACH (ECT1)

Broad, domain-based support — no thematic guardrails



THE ECT2 SHIFT

A focused model, organised around clearly defined, shared systemic barriers and bottlenecks

OUR HYPOTHESIS

City progress is most often blocked by specific, diagnosable obstacles — organising delivery around those obstacles produces faster, more durable progress than generic or topic-based support.



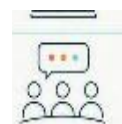
Fund support explicitly around diagnosed barriers shared by Mission Cities



Identify the key impact pathways — what actually needs to change — and act on them



Help committed cities achieve breakthroughs that benefit the wider Cities Mission



Enable stronger peer learning and collaboration between cities

Barriers are grounded in evidence: Mission Cities' Climate City Contracts, challenge-specific documentation, an EU policy and funding scan, and a landscape review of Horizon Europe projects.



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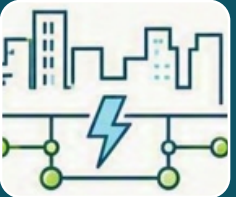
The six challenge areas



Place based heating and cooling



Nature-based solutions at city scale



Urban energy systems



City Finance innovations for climate neutrality



Large-scale building retrofits and renovations



Decarbonising urban mobility and logistics





Call timeline





This info session...

- **Three information sessions**
 - 15 September – Overview, ambition and approach (this session)
 - **29 September – Eligibility, assessment criteria and how to submit**
 - 9 October – Impact Framework and Monitoring, Evaluation and LearningRegister for all three at www.netzerocities.eu
- **We will cover today:**
 - Eligibility
 - Assessment Criteria
 - Strategic Selection
 - Decision Communication
 - Grant Management System
- Please keep questions relevant to the content of this session.



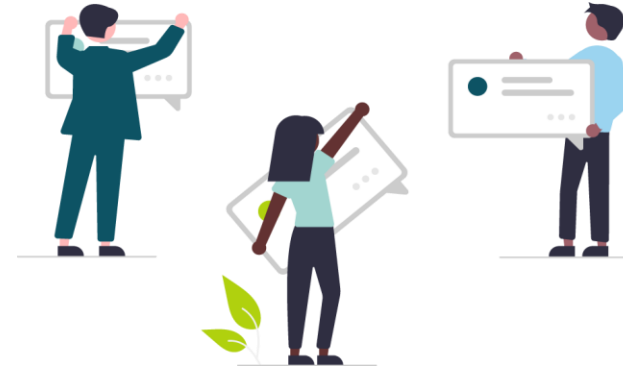


Three-stage selection process





Three-stage selection process



Stage 1: Eligibility

Verifies **compliance with core programme rules**)
Assessed by Climate KIC.
Assessment of **pass/fail criteria** that must be all met



Stage 2: Assessment

Assessment by at least two independent experts of quality, credibility, and delivery readiness against three weighted categories: :

- **Mandate to Act**
- **Capacity to Act**
- **Impact**

NB: There are **no specific points threshold** for individual or grouped criteria



Stage 3: Strategic selection & Funding decision

Not re-scoring
the Selection committee picks the final portfolio using Stage 2 scores plus portfolio lenses: selecting proposals that strengthen the portfolio and together maximise replication potential and impact





Stage 1: Eligibility



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Who can apply

ELIGIBLE APPLICANT

A local authority or city administration designated as an EU Mission City (100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030)

PROPOSAL LEAD

Mission City administration — min. 2 legal entities in the consortium

CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

Research institutions, universities, SMEs, NGOs, associations, citizen groups and other relevant stakeholders

NZC Consortium Partners cannot participate

HIGHER-LEVEL GOVERNANCE (OPTIONAL)

A metropolis, region or national department — only with a formal governance link to the Mission City

Doesn't count towards the Mission City count, unless it is itself the Mission City

APPLIES TO EVERY PROPOSAL

ONE PER CITY

One proposal per city or district — no territorial double-funding. Coordinate across administrative levels before applying.

CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT

Should be signed before the Award Agreement. The DESCA model is recommended.





Stage 1 Eligibility Criteria

1. **Only one proposal may be submitted by an eligible Mission City / District** (also in case of multi-city applications).
2. The **consortium** must contain **at least two legal entities** (one of which must be the local authority or city administration).
3. The proposal must be **led by one of the city administrations**
In case of a district submission, it must be led by an authorised administration from within the specified district.
4. **A letter of support from the city mayor (or equivalent) must be provided. In the case of a multi-city proposal, one letter must be provided for each city.**
5. Challenge Area Selection (primary and secondary) Note: Scoring in Stage 2.
6. **List of stakeholders** engaged/to be engaged provided





Eligible cost categories



Eligibility period: April 2027- January 2029

- **A- Personnel:** daily rate = annual salary cost ÷ 215 working days; needs timesheets, payslips, contracts
- **B- Subcontracting:** limited part of the action only; not allowed between consortium members; competitive procurement required.
- **C- Purchase:** accessory activities. C1 travel/subsistence, C2 equipment (depreciation), C3 other goods/works/services (e.g., dissemination, audit costs).
- **D- Internally invoiced goods/services**
- **E- Indirect costs:** flat 25% of (A + C1 + C2 + C3); no evidence required (flat rate)

REIMBURSEMENT OF 100% ELIGIBLE ACTUAL COSTS UP TO ENVELOPE



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Funding envelopes and budget rules



Funding envelopes

- **€ 500.000:** minimum one Mission City plus at least one additional consortium partner
- **€ 1.000.000:** minimum two distinct Mission Cities, plus any additional partners
- **€ 1.500.000:** minimum three Mission City plus at least one additional consortium partner.



Budget rules

- **Two/thirds:** At least two legal entities must hold budget; no single entity may hold more than two-thirds of the total subgrant requested
- **Principles:** no double financing, no-profit, best value for money, transparency and no conflict of interests, single EUR exchange rate per reporting period
- **Build-in:** coordination effort for the lead city, a systemic innovation focal point (3–4 person months), travel for the in-person Boot Camp and Sensemaking events, communication and dissemination, and a CFS for consortium leads





Stage 2: Evaluation



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Stage 2 Assessment

Assessment Criteria

- Each criterion is scored, on a scale of **0 to 5**, by at least two independent external experts.
- The score across all categories is totalled to produce a ranked list of proposals. The maximum available score is **100 points**.

Criteria grouping	Points available / number of criteria
Mandate to Act	25pts / 3 criteria
Capacity to Act	35pts / 4 criteria
Impact	40pts / 3 criteria





Scores



Mandate to Act 25 pts

- **Challenge area alignment 10 pts**
 - Local context & diagnosed barriers 5 pts
 - System constraint 5 pts
- **Authority to act 5 pts**
 - Authority & political support
- **Strategic coherence with Mission commitments 10 pts**
 - Strategic connectivity to city vision 5 pts
 - EU-level relevance 5 pts



Capacity to Act 35 pts

- **Credible delivery architecture 15 pts**
 - Effective delivery structure 5 pts
 - Consortia 5 pts
 - Planned interventions 5 pts
- **Awareness of risks 5 pts**
 - Risk management
- **Stakeholder engagement 10 pts**
 - Embedded engagement 5 pts
 - Decision-orientated participation 5 pts
- **Cross-cutting considerations 5 pts**
 - Inclusion & just transition integration



Impact 40 pts

- **Lasting outcomes & measurable impacts 20 pts**
 - Sustainability of outcomes 5 pts
 - GHG impact monitoring & evidence 5 pts
 - Co-benefits impacts 5 pts
 - Policy & institutionalisation 5 pts
- **Innovation & learning 5 pts**
- **Scaling & replication potential 15 pts**
 - Scaling 5 pts
 - Transferability 5 pts
 - Replicability 5 pts





Mandate to Act

- **Diagnosis, not description:** why the selected challenge area matters in your local context, with a robust diagnosis of the barriers blocking progress (institutional, policy, financial, market, data...)
- **A genuine system-level constraint**, not an isolated project gap – clearly linked to the challenge area and your proposed outputs.
- **Formal authority and political backing** to implement the proposed changes
- **Strategic coherence:** alignment with the city's overarching vision for climate neutrality, including its Climate City Contract
- **EU-level relevance:** a credible rationale for why other Mission Cities will benefit, including potential to inform policy, standards or funding frameworks





Mandate to Act

Criterion	Description
Challenge area alignment (10 points)	• Local context & diagnosed barriers: The proposal clearly demonstrates why the selected challenge area is relevant to the city's local context and delivery realities, and provides a robust diagnosis of the barriers (e.g. institutional, policy, financial, market, data) that are preventing progress. (5 points) • System constraint: The proposal identifies a genuine system-level constraint, rather than an isolated project gap, and demonstrates a clear link between the selected challenge area, the identified system constraint and the proposed outputs. (5 points)
Authority to act (5 points)	• Authority & political support: The proposal demonstrates the city's formal authority and political backing to implement the proposed changes. (5 points)
Strategic coherence with existing Mission commitments (10 points)	• Strategic connectivity to city vision: The proposal is aligned with the city's/cities' overarching vision for climate neutrality (including the city's Climate City Contract). (5 points) • EU-level relevance: The proposal is relevant to other Mission Cities, with a credible rationale for EU-level relevance (including potential to inform policy, standards or funding frameworks). (5 points)





Capacity to Act

- **It's not a long programme (22 months):** a clear, empowered delivery structure and a well-aligned consortium are essential to move from intention to delivery
- **Deliverable and good value:** interventions can be delivered within the proposed timeframe and budget, with coherent value for money
- **Risks actively managed:** key delivery risks are identified, with realistic mitigation that maintains delivery continuity
- **Embedded engagement:** stakeholder engagement (including citizens where appropriate) is durable, decision-linked and embedded in governance and delivery – not just consultation
- **Inclusion and just transition** are embedded in core delivery structures and decisions, not treated as add-ons





Capacity to Act

Criterion	Description
Credible delivery architecture (15 points)	• Effective delivery structure: The proposal establishes a clear and effective delivery structure, including empowered teams or coordination mechanisms. (5 points) • Consortia: Consortium partners are well aligned, with complementary roles that enable delivery. (5 points) • Planned interventions: The proposed interventions are deliverable within the proposed timeframes and budget, and demonstrate coherent value for money. (5 points)
Awareness of risks (5 points)	• Risk management: Key delivery risks are identified and actively managed, with realistic mitigation approaches that maintain delivery continuity. (5 points)
Stakeholder engagement (10 points)	• Embedded engagement: Stakeholder engagement (including citizens where appropriate) is durable, decision-linked, and embedded in governance and delivery processes. (5 points) • Decision-orientated participation: Engagement contributes meaningfully to delivery and decision-making, not just consultation. (5 points)
Cross-cutting considerations (5 points)	• Inclusion & just transition integration: Inclusion and just transition considerations are embedded in core delivery structures and decisions, rather than treated as add-ons. (5 points)





Impact

- **Impact carries the highest weight in ECT2 (40%):** the focus is durable transformation rather than activity completion
- **Lasting outcomes:** enabling conditions and long-lasting changes that are sustained beyond the project
- **Measurable impacts:** credible GHG reduction potential and co-benefits, evidenced through the indicators you select (Impact Framework – 9 October session)
- **Policy and institutionalisation:** credible pathways into policy, governance, standards, regulation, procurement, budgeting, staffing and operational routines.
- **Innovation and learning:** new knowledge and insight on delivery models, captured and shared throughout implementation
- **Scaling and replication:** scaling that unblocks the system constraint at larger scale, with concrete, transferable practice and usable replication outputs (playbooks, templates, standards)



Impact



Criterion	Description
Lasting outcomes and measurable impacts (20 points)	• Sustainability of outcomes: The proposal is explicit in how activities can develop enabling conditions or long-lasting changes that are sustained beyond the project duration. (5 points) • GHG impact monitoring & evidence: Potential GHG reduction impacts are clarified, and credible approaches for monitoring or evidencing these are identified in terms of indicator selection. (5 points) • Co-benefits impacts: The proposal identifies credible social, economic, environmental or resilience-related co-benefits beyond its primary objectives, and credible approaches for monitoring or evidencing these are identified in terms of indicator selection. (5 points) • Policy & institutionalisation: The proposal identifies credible pathways through which its outcomes will influence and become embedded in policy, governance arrangements, standards, statutory or regulatory frameworks, procurement or engagement practices, budgeting processes, staffing models, operational routines or other institutional mechanisms beyond the duration of the project. (5 points)
Innovation & learning (5 points)	• Innovation & learning: The proposal demonstrates how it could generate new knowledge, data and insights on delivery models and innovative impact pathways relevant to other Mission Cities, and demonstrates a clear commitment to capturing, applying, sharing and disseminating learning throughout implementation. (5 points)
Scaling and replication potential (15 points)	• Scaling: The proposal demonstrates how scaling will directly address or unblock the identified system constraint at larger scale. (5 points) • Transferability: The proposal clearly articulates what is predicted to be transferable in practice, beyond high-level lessons. (5 points) • Replicability: Replication outputs (e.g. playbooks, templates, standards) are intended to be produced; they are concrete, usable and well specified. (5 points)





Stage 3: Strategic Selection & Funding decision





Stage 3

Stage 3 is conducted by the Programme Owner and is not a re-scoring exercise.

The Selection Committee specifically looks for:



INNOVATION

Innovative potential

*Transferable “how-to”
assets*



CHALLENGE

**Challenge area
coverage & coherence**



DIVERSITY

**Geographic & city-type
diversity**



SYSTEMS COVERAGE

**Emissions domains &
levers represented**

*Replication & institutional
adoption are core
outcomes*



BUDGET

**Availability &
proportionality**

Final funding decisions, budget allocations and any conditionalities are communicated after portfolio selection.

See Call Guidelines, section 9.4.



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A portfolio, not a set of projects

STRATEGIC PORTFOLIO

Designed for results & adoption
beyond individual cities

COLLABORATION

Applicants are encouraged to signal
openness across the portfolio

BOOT CAMP & SENSEMAKING

Where synergies between interventions
get identified and built

Funding decisions are made at portfolio level — not solely on individual proposals.

A high-scoring proposal may not be funded if it doesn't strengthen portfolio coherence; a slightly lower-scoring one may be funded if it fills a critical gap.





What ECT2 will not prioritise

EARLY-STAGE EXPERIMENTATION

Without a credible institutionalisation route

STANDALONE PILOTS

Don't change operating models, policy, budget or procurement

ISOLATED TECH TRIALS

Without delivery integration, financing or policy embedment

STRAIGHTFORWARD REPLICATION

Of proven approaches — little new learning or transformative value expected

The test is not novelty for its own sake.



It is whether the work changes how the city operates once the grant ends.





Decision Communication



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Decision Communication

- Climate KIC aims to communicate final outcomes to applicants by **5 February 2027**
- Final communication will indicate the grant allocation and state the cost eligibility period.
- **A list of selected projects** with a description of the action, grant amounts and legal names of selected applicants and their country, date of the award and duration will be **published on the NetZeroCities Platform and website.**
- Contract development and signing processes are expected to proceed between **February and March 2027**
- The **ECT Boot Camp** will run between **February and April 2027 – with a face to face event TBD**
- The grant programme start date will be **1 April 2027**, ending on **31 January 2029**



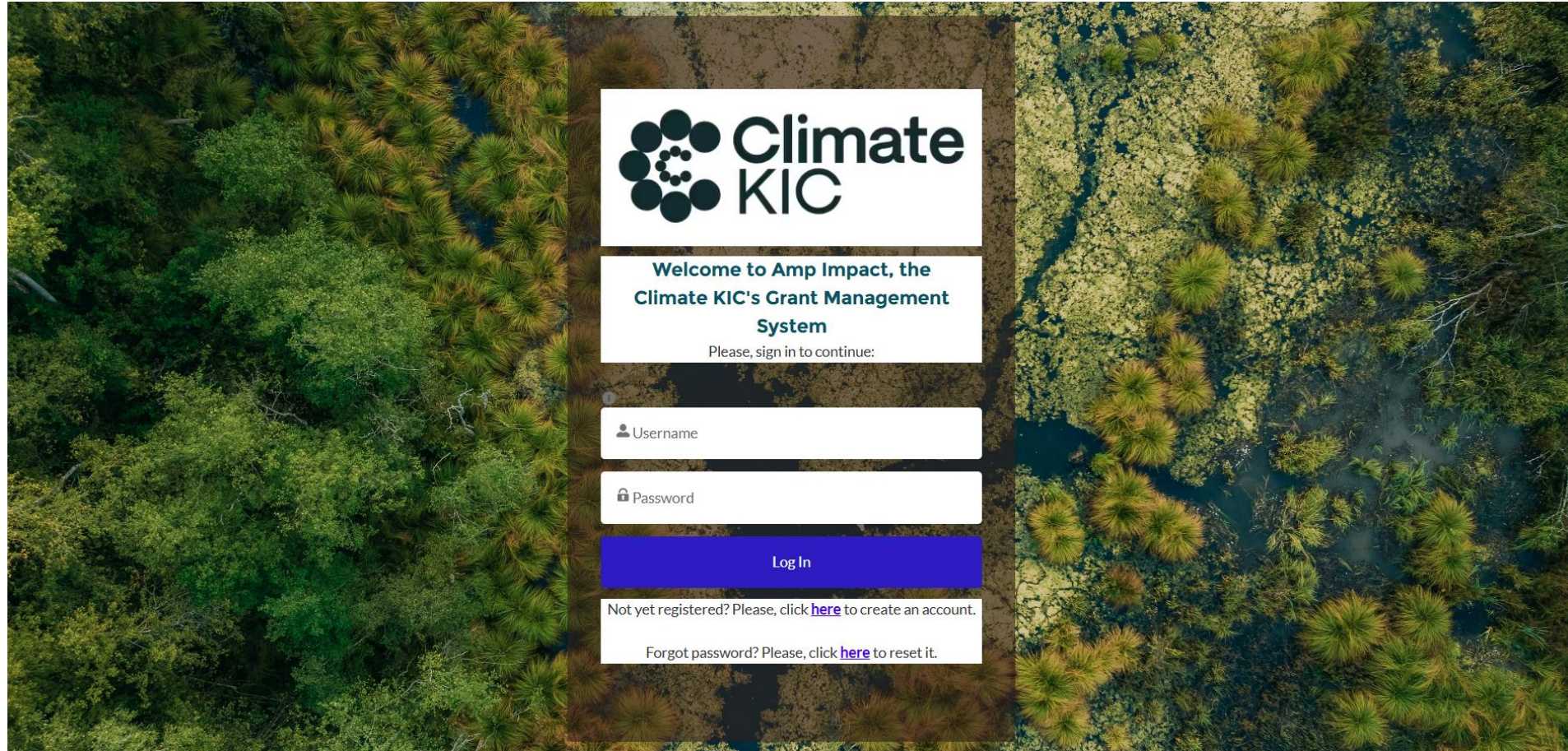


Submission: Grant Management System





GMS HOMEPAGE





**Welcome to Amp Impact, the
Climate KIC's Grant Management
System**

Please, sign in to continue:

 Username

 Password

Log In

Not yet registered? Please, click [here](#) to create an account.

Forgot password? Please, click [here](#) to reset it.





Accessing the system useful resources:

- Make sure you're registered to the system.
 - User Registration Instructions: [LINK](#)
- Log-in Page: [LINK](#)
- Proposal creation– [click here](#)
- All instructions – click [here](#)
- For question/issue regarding the platform:
ampimpact@climate-kic.org
 - Add ect@netzerocities.eu in copy for a faster reply





Additional Resources & Links

Challenge Synergies Exploration Session – OCT 16

A session for cities to explore their priorities within relevant challenge area(s) and identify potential collaboration opportunities with others:

[Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)

Existing Portfolio Project Posters

Discover activities from other projects across the Pilot Cities Programmes and first ECT programme relating to:

[NZC built environment | Linktree](#)

[NZC circular economy | Linktree](#)

[NZC energy systems | Linktree](#)

[NZC green industry | Linktree](#)

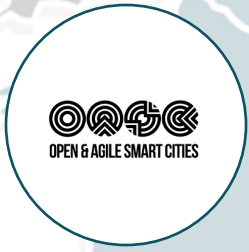
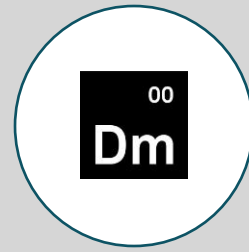
[NZC mobility transport Official: Facebook | Linktree](#)





Q&A





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