



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Read me first

Thank you for your interest in joining the Cities Race to Zero. This document includes Frequently Asked Questions on the Cities Race to Zero. If you do not find an answer to your question please email info@citiesracetozero.org.

Please note, there are already over 400 cities in Cities Race to Zero¹ recognizing the commitments of cities under previously existing initiatives. You can see if your city is already part of the Race to Zero [here](#). If you are already in the Race to Zero jump directly to [➔ Information about recruiting your peers in the Race to Zero](#)

If you wish to be part of Race to Zero, we invite you to join via the [Cities Race to Zero](#) portal. Please note that it is not possible to join the Race to Zero directly via the UNFCCC or COP26 website (see "[How to join Race to Zero](#)"). For further information about joining, jump directly to: [➔ Information about joining Cities Race to Zero](#).

All cities who are committed to C40's Deadline 2020 and ICLEI's Climate Neutrality Framework are automatically in the Cities Race to Zero. If you are unsure if your city has a Deadline 2020 commitment/ are part of Race to Zero, check [here](#).

¹ This number changes with every new commitment. For the latest figure please refer to the Race to Zero website: <https://racetozero.unfccc.int/>



TABLE OF CONTENT

→ General information about Cities Race to Zero	3
What is the Race to Zero?	3
What is the Cities Race to Zero?	4
Who is part of Race to Zero?	4
Why is my city already part of Race to Zero?	4
I am already in Cities Race to Zero, what role can I play ahead of COP26?	5
I am a member of C40, should I join the Cities Race to Zero?	5
I am a member of ICLEI, should I join the Cities Race to Zero?	5
I am committed to Deadline 2020, should I join the Cities Race to Zero?	5
I participate in WWF’s One Planet City Challenge (OPCC), does this qualify for joining Race to Zero?	6
I am already committed to GCoM, should I join the Cities Race to Zero?	6
→ Information about joining Cities Race to Zero	6
How do I join Cities Race to Zero?	6
What is the Cities Race to Zero pledge?	7
What are the benefits of joining Cities Race to Zero?	7
Do I need to join Cities Race to Zero to be part of the Race to Zero?	9
When should I join the Cities Race to Zero?	10
Who should sign the Cities Race to Zero pledge?	10
When will my commitment be announced?	10
Will cities know in advance when their commitment will be announced?	10
When can I announce my commitment?	10
What should I do after joining Cities Race to Zero?	10
What support is available to cities who join the Cities Race to Zero ?	11
→ Targets and reporting	12
What should my city do if it already has a science-based 1.5°C compliant climate target ?	12
What should I do if my city does not currently have a science-based 1.5°C compliant climate target?	12
Do I need to report annually on both my science based target and climate action?	13
My city has not been reporting its climate data publicly due to lack of capacity. What can I expect from this process?	13

➔ General information about Cities Race to Zero

What is the Race to Zero?

The [Race to Zero](#) is a global campaign - [led by the UN High-Level Climate Champions for Climate Action – Nigel Topping and Gonzalo Muñoz](#) - to rally leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions, and investors for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon recovery that prevents future threats, creates decent jobs, and unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth ahead of COP26 in November 2021.

Race to Zero mobilizes a coalition of leading net zero initiatives, representing cities, regions, companies, universities and investors. These 'real economy' actors join 120 countries in the largest ever alliance committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest. Collectively these actors now cover nearly 25% global CO2 emissions and over 50% GDP. Different stakeholders are running different campaigns/initiatives to enable businesses, regions, universities of investors join the Race to Zero. For cities wishing to join, please read further and go to: www.citiesracetozero.org.

The objective is to build momentum around the shift to a decarbonized economy ahead of COP26, where governments must strengthen their contributions to the Paris Agreement. This will send governments a resounding signal that business, cities, regions and investors are united in meeting the Paris goals and creating a more inclusive and resilient economy.

It is not possible to join the Race to Zero directly via the UNFCCC or COP26 website. Stakeholders wishing to be a part of Race to Zero should join via one of the recognized partner networks or initiatives.

The High-level Climate Champions require that the commitments brought forward by the different tracks of Race to Zero meet a [set of minimum criteria](#). Meeting these criteria is like crossing the starting line of a race: it means that stakeholders have begun the process to reach net-zero emissions. All stakeholders are part of the "Race to Zero" once they meet the criteria. The Race to Zero criteria was inspired by Deadline 2020.

To understand what cities must do to meet the Race to Zero criteria jump to: [What is the Cities Race to Zero pledge?](#)



What is the Cities Race to Zero?

Like any race, Race to Zero has many tracks for different stakeholders. Cities Race to Zero is the official track for cities. It is especially designed to help them meet the Race's criteria and access the best available expertise along the way.

The [Cities Race to Zero](#) is organised by C40 Cities, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM), ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), CDP, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the World Resources Institute (WRI). It is an official partner and the city track of the COP26 Race to Zero, designed to help cities meet the Race's commitment criteria using the best available tools and expertise available.

Cities Race to Zero is a campaign for cities by cities to inspire commitments and action from their peers around the world and channel the best available tools and expertise to help them stay on track with 1.5°C. The objective of Cities Race to Zero is to recruit 1000 cities by COP26.

Cities Race to Zero was launched on [November 9th 2020](#) by C40 Chair and Los Angeles Mayor, Eric Garcetti.

Who is part of Race to Zero?

There are over 400 cities² already in the Race to Zero - recognizing the commitments of cities under previously existing initiatives - along with 1391 businesses, 74 investors, 23 regions and 569 universities.

You can see if your city is already part of the Race to Zero [here](#).

Since its launch on November 9th 2020, just [over 70 cities have joined](#) the Race to Zero via Cities Race to Zero.

Why is my city already part of Race to Zero?

Race to Zero recognises the commitments of cities made prior to its existence and automatically counts them as part of the Race.

For example, C40's Deadline 2020 was one of the pioneering initiatives recognized by the Race and as a result all cities who had a Deadline 2020 commitment were automatically counted in - as well as cities and prefectures communicated by ICLEI by May 2020 before the adoption of Minimum Criteria for Race-To-Zero. Those cities take no further action such as signing and

² After the last Race to Zero update during the Climate Ambition Summit on December 12th, 2020





submitting the pledge as they are already in the Race. But they should demonstrate their fulfillment with the Minimum Criteria before COP26.

I am already in Cities Race to Zero, what role can I play ahead of COP26?

Although you are already part of the Race to Zero you can play a crucial role in recruiting more of your peers. Get in touch at info@citiesracetozero.org if you want to be involved.

I am a member of C40, should I join the Cities Race to Zero?

As a C40 city committed to Deadline 2020 to deliver a fair share of a global 50% emission reduction by 2030 and to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 is aligned with the minimum criteria of the Race to Zero, you are not required to do anything to join the (Cities) Race to Zero.

If you are unsure if your city has committed to Deadline 2020 please contact your C40 Regional team. If your city has not committed but you want to join the Race to Zero, please contact your C40 Regional team.

Although you are already part of the Race to Zero you can play a crucial role in recruiting more of your peers. Get in touch at info@citiesracetozero.org if you want to be involved.

I am a member of ICLEI, should I join the Cities Race to Zero?

Should your city be part of the ICLEI network and has set up a Climate Neutral or Net Zero target fully aligned to a 1.5°C pathway we welcome your city to commit and participate on the Race to Zero through the use of the Climate Neutrality Framework; even if your city has not yet set up a target but if it is in the process of doing so within the next year we highly encourage to showcase your leadership and engagement towards a sustainable development along with those local governments ahead of the curve.

If you are unsure that your target complies with the minimum criteria for Race to Zero; you can contact your ICLEI relevant office in your region for further information on how to assess this particular piece of work. Additionally you can write to carbonn@iclei.org for more information about ICLEI's Climate Neutrality Framework and how it connects with Race to Zero.

I am committed to Deadline 2020, should I join the Cities Race to Zero?

As a city with a Deadline 2020 commitment you are already in the Race to Zero. Your Deadline 2020 commitment to deliver a fair share of a global 50% emission





reduction by 2030 and to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 is aligned with the minimum criteria of the Race to Zero. You are not required to do anything to join the Cities Race to Zero but you can play a crucial role recruiting more of your peers. Get in touch at info@citiesracetozero.org if you want to be involved.

I participate in WWF's One Planet City Challenge (OPCC), does this qualify for joining Race to Zero?

No. But participation in the OPCC provides guidance on whether your climate targets and actions are aligned with the requirements of the Race to Zero. Use this assessment to determine if your current plans are aligned with the goals of the Race to Zero and to guide your next steps.

I am already committed to GCoM, should I join the Cities Race to Zero?

The Race to Zero campaign is completely in line with GCoM commitments and will not be considered a separate campaign but as a mechanism for raising the ambition of your current mitigation target. After making the pledge on the Cities Race to Zero website, you can continue to report your progress through the regular reporting platform that you are using.

Is the Race to Resilience connected to the Cities Race to Zero?

The Race to Resilience officially launched on January 25th 2021. Cities Race to Zero is in the process of including the Race to Resilience commitment to the Mayors' pledge, which will allow cities to commit to both campaigns simultaneously.

➔ Information about joining Cities Race to Zero

How do I join Cities Race to Zero?

To join Cities Race to Zero please go to the online portal at: www.citiesracetozero.org where your mayor, council leader (or equivalent) will be asked to sign the Cities Race to Zero pledge and follow the step by step process to completing your Cities Race to Zero commitment.

The Cities Race to Zero pledge is fully aligned with the [criteria](#) of the Race to Zero and specifically designed to speak to cities and direct them to the most impactful climate actions for the community.

You will be invited to take the Cities Race to Zero pledge through a secured online form. Once you have submitted your pledge we will direct you to the next relevant step for your city: target setting, action planning or reporting and point you to the relevant resources along the way.





What is the Cities Race to Zero pledge?

The Cities Race to Zero pledge, that we require cities to sign to be a part of the Race, is fully aligned with the required [minimum criteria](#) of the Race to Zero. Cities should sign it online at www.citiesracetozero.org

The Cities Race to Zero pledge asks that you do the following:

1. Publicly endorse the following principles:
 - We recognise the global climate emergency.
 - We are committed to keeping global heating below the 1.5°Celsius goal of the Paris Agreement.
 - We are committed to putting inclusive climate action at the center of all urban decision-making, to create thriving and equitable communities for everyone.
 - We invite our partners – political leaders, CEOs, trade unions, investors, and civil society – to join us in recognising the global climate emergency and help us deliver on science-based action to overcome it.
2. Pledge to reach (net)-zero in the 2040s or sooner, or by mid-century at the latest, in line with global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°Celsius.
3. In advance of COP26, explain what steps will be taken toward achieving net zero, especially in the short- to medium-term. Set an interim target to achieve in the next decade, which reflects a fair share of the 50% global reduction in CO2 by 2030 identified in the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°Celsius.
4. Immediately proceed to planning at least one inclusive and equitable climate action as listed on www.citiesracetozero.org that will help to place your city on a resilient pathway consistent with the 1.5°Celsius objective of the Paris Agreement and begin implementation no later than 2022.
5. Report progress annually, beginning no later than 2022 to your usual or the recommended reporting platform.

What are the benefits of joining Cities Race to Zero?

The main benefit of joining the Cities Race to Zero is to gain access to the COP26 Race to Zero but there are many more benefits such as:

- **Race to Zero membership:** joining Cities Race to Zero automatically makes your city a part of the Race to Zero run



by the COP26 Presidency and High-Level Climate Champions and ensures formal recognition for your efforts by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). By bringing a clear focus on immediate action, equity and local coalition building, this campaign will establish our cities as the global leaders and strongest champions of the Paris Agreement and equitable climate action ahead of COP26 in Glasgow.

- **Leadership and visibility** as part of a global movement capable of changing the world, for example drumbeat of events and announcements leading up to COP26 in Glasgow, Nov 1-12 2021 when new commitments to Cities Race to Zero will be celebrated.
- **Endorsements by partners** and access to some of their initiatives (see next question).
- **Access to a range of tools and resources** to set or increase the ambition of your city's science based target and resources to support the implementation of your inclusive and equitable climate action.

In time we hope to also give cities easy access to the Race to Resilience, which was launched at the Climate Adaptation Summit on 25 January 2021 by Alok Sharma, COP26 President designate. The Race to Resilience is a sister initiative focused on building the resilience of vulnerable groups and communities.

As a member of the Cities Race to Zero, will I gain access to other initiatives?

Joining the Cities Race to Zero is compatible with the following partner initiatives:

- The C40 Global Green New Deal: The Cities Race to Zero is part of C40's broader effort to build a Global Green New Deal coalition of cities, governments, businesses, labor unions, investors, youth, and civil society to deliver inclusive climate action and a green and just recovery from COVID-19, consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The Cities Race to Zero commitment qualifies any city to be a part of the C40 Global Green New Deal coalition. C40 will be in touch with signatories about how they can participate.

- Global Covenant of Mayors City Commitments: your pledge meets the GCoM requirements for mitigation targets and may be paired with commitments to climate resilience and energy access for full compliance with the Common Reporting Framework. More information and support will be available through your Regional Covenant: <https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/journey/>
- CDP: Race to Zero reporting can be done through the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System. CDP's free to use platform streamlines your climate reporting to different initiatives, such as GCoM. It improves transparency, offers access to events and webinars, and provides insights to identify areas where you can improve: <https://www.cdp.net/en/cities-discloser>
- The One Planet City Challenge (OPCC): with your pledge and progress reporting we invite you to participate in this friendly global competition where [cities' climate action plans are assessed and](#) frontrunners are recognized. The OPCC also provides guidance on science-based targets, and strategic feedback on your climate action package: <https://wwf.panda.org/opcc>
- ICLEI: through ICLEI Climate Neutrality Framework embedded in its GreenClimateCities (GCC) Program the ICLEI network will receive guidance on how to accelerate climate action through ICLEI's 5 Pathways to urban sustainability. Reporting via the GCC is done through the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System. Please visit: https://iclei.org/en/climate_neutrality.html
- UCLG: through its Ecological Transition Strategy will promote city engagement in a path towards the Race to Zero. It will further facilitate the engagement of other city networks through the Global Taskforce.

Do I need to join Cities Race to Zero to be part of the Race to Zero?

Yes. Like any race, Race to Zero has many tracks for many different stakeholders (businesses, regions, investors, universities, etc.). Cities Race to Zero is the track for cities. It is especially designed to help them meet the Race's criteria and access the best available expertise along the way. All cities joining the Cities Race to Zero are automatically then part of the larger Race to Zero. It is not possible to join the Race to Zero directly via the UNFCCC or COP26 website.



When should I join the Cities Race to Zero?

Cities can join the Race to Zero via the [Cities Race to Zero portal](#) at any time before COP26.

Who should sign the Cities Race to Zero pledge?

We ask that only mayors, council leaders or equivalent individuals at the head of their city or local government sign the pledge. Staff members may fill the online form on their behalf with their authorisation.

When will my commitment be announced?

After submitting your signed pledge via the [Cities Race to Zero platform](#), the team will check it for completeness and will be in touch with you if needed. Your pledge will not be announced right away.

New commitments to the Race to Zero are announced at momentous occasions where we believe they can have the biggest impact with the media, global community and send effective signals to the national governments parties of the UNFCCC who are expected to enhance their own climate pledges.

New commitments will be celebrated during a drumbeat of events and announcements leading up to COP26 in Glasgow, Nov 1-12 2021.

Previous Race to Zero announcements were made at the 2019 UNSG's Climate Action Summit, COP25, New York Climate Week 2020, the 2020 Race to Zero Dialogues and the 2020 Climate Ambition Summit.

Will cities know in advance when their commitment will be announced?

Yes, cities will be informed when their commitments will officially be announced.

When can I announce my commitment?

Cities can announce their Race to Zero commitment at any point after it has been formally announced by the Cities Race to Zero campaign. A communications toolkit will be shared with the Cities Race to Zero signatory cities to support them in communicating their commitment and promoting the Cities Race to Zero.

What should I do after joining Cities Race to Zero?

After crossing the starting line of the Race to Zero, cities should immediately take action on their pledge:

- Start developing and adopting climate targets consistent with a 1.5°C trajectory, including developing and adopting a 2030 target (that



represents your city's fair share of the global 50% emissions reduction needed) and a target to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest.

- Commit to at least one action ahead of COP26 from the Cities Race to Zero actions catalogue.
- Report the information you have in 2021, even if incomplete, then by 2022 report your target and thereafter report progress annually on your usual reporting platform or the recommended one.

Cities Race to Zero partners are available all along the way to support cities in their race.

What support is available to cities who join the Cities Race to Zero ?

We are conscious that not all cities will easily be able to meet the ambitious criteria of the Race to Zero, which is by design about high ambition in accordance with science. However the Cities Race to Zero partners are striving to give newly committed cities the simplest and most supportive experience possible. Technical support, resources and tools developed by the partners are forthcoming.

In the meantime, the following are presently available:

- A [guide to develop science-based climate targets](#), developed by the Science Based Targets Network's core cities partners is available to all cities with guidance on different target setting methodologies.
- A catalogue of actions has been compiled by the Cities Race to Zero partners to help cities choose the most relevant action to commit to as part of their pledge. Deriving from the science-based C40 Declarations and built on a framework of equity and inclusion. Research shows that these actions can deliver 90%-100% of the emission reductions required by 2030 on the pathway to neutrality. They have been put together for the Cities Race to Zero - per sector - ranging across different levels of ambition so that cities can commit to at least one action based on where they are in their particular climate action journey. Should a city find no action they can commit to, there is room to propose additional ones. These actions are consistent with the principles of the Global Green New Deal and are appropriate for both Global South and Global North cities alike.
- [Knowledge Hub](#) resources: technical information, implementation guides, policy briefs and case studies for the actions in the catalogue are available on the C40 Knowledge Hub along with resources from partners too.
- A [Climate Action Planning Resource Centre](#), developed by C40: a wide range of resources and tools to support city climate planners in the process of delivering action consistent with the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

- The [One Planet City Challenge \(OPCC\)](#), provides strategic feedback to participating cities to guide them on the most effective action plans and science based targets aligned with the Race to Zero criteria.

A helpdesk is available at info@citiesracetozero.org to answer basic questions about the Race to Zero and direct cities with more technical questions to the right partner.

→ Targets and reporting

What should my city do if it already has a science-based 1.5°C compliant climate target ?

You must report it through one of the Cities Race to Zero reporting platforms in 2021: CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System or MyCovenant.

If you don't currently report using CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System or MyCovenant, make sure you have provided this information in your pledge (choose: I don't currently report in the dropdown menu). You will be contacted by someone at Cities Race to Zero for guidance on reporting. If you have any questions please contact us at cities@cdp.net.

What should I do if my city does not currently have a science-based 1.5°C compliant climate target?

You will need to start developing one or updating your existing target, then adopt and report it no later than by 2022.

We recommend that you use the [Science Based Targets methodology](#) guide released by the Science-Based Targets Network (SBTN), to learn more about science-based targets and the most appropriate methodology for your city. The Cities Race to Zero partners can provide guidance and support in this process. If you need guidance please contact us at info@citiesracetozero.org

If you don't currently report, make sure you have provided this information in your pledge (choose: I don't currently report in the dropdown menu). You will be contacted by someone at Cities Race to Zero for guidance on reporting. If you have any questions please contact us at cities@cdp.net.



What should I do if I'm not sure if my city's target is science-based and 1.5°C compliant?

You will need to make sure it is reported as soon as possible through one of the Cities Race to Zero verified platforms: CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System or MyCovenant. Only reported targets can be evaluated against the Cities Race to Zero criteria. Someone from Cities Race to Zero will be in touch if your target needs updating. Your updated target must be reported by no later than 2022.

If you don't currently report, make sure you have provided this information in your pledge (choose: I don't currently report in the dropdown menu). You will be contacted by someone at Cities Race to Zero for guidance on reporting. If you have any questions please contact us at cities@cdp.net.

Do I need to report annually on both my science based target and climate action?

Yes, reporting on progress for Race to Zero is annual, to enable tracking of progress against commitments. Begin by reporting the information you have in 2021, even if this is incomplete. For cities who report annually to CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System or MyCovenant, there is no additional reporting requirement.

My city has not been reporting its climate data publicly due to lack of capacity. What can I expect from this process?

For cities already familiar with reporting through the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System or My Covenant, there will be no added reporting effort required. In 2021, cities that have not reported before will get support to ease them into the process to ensure this transition is not burdensome.

