

SELECTION

METHODOLOGY

**PUTTING PEOPLE AND THEIR CITIES AT THE HEART OF
POLICY-MAKING**

**Promoting and showcasing Romanian cities in their
transformation processes towards smart and climate-
neutral cities by 2035**

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ACRONYMS

- **AFOLU:** Agriculture, forestry, and other land uses
- **CCC:** Climate City Contract
- **CCS:** Carbon capture and storage
- **COM EU:** Covenant of Mayors - European Union
- **EEA:** EU Environmental Agency
- **EF:** Emission Factors
- **EOI:** Expression of Interest
- **E.G.:** For example
- **ETS:** Emissions Trading Scheme
- **EU:** European Union
- **GHG:** Greenhouse Gas
- **FAQ:** Frequently asked questions
- **I.E.:** "Id est," which is the Latin version for "that is"
- **IPPU:** Industrial Process and Product Use
- **IUDS:** Integrated Urban Development Strategies
- **MCID:** Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitalization
- **MDLPA:** Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration
- **MIPE:** Ministry of Investments and European Projects
- **NGOs:** Non-governmental organizations
- **RDI:** Research, Development and Innovation
- **RES:** Renewable energy sources
- **SECAP:** Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans
- **SEAP:** Sustainable Energy Action Plans
- **UEFISCDI:** Executive Agency for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development, and Innovation

DISCLAIMER

As the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania (M100) mirrors the EU Mission for 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030, the methodology and the associated documentation for this selection process adhere to the climate neutrality framework established by the European Commission for climate-neutral and smart cities. Consequently, the definitions provided within this document are sourced from the materials developed by the European Commission under the umbrella of the EU Mission for 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030. Furthermore, the selection process emulates the stages undertaken at the European level in order to designate the 112 cities involved in the European Mission. This approach aims to synchronize the national endeavors with the European vision for achieving climate neutrality and also to ensure a cohesive correlation between the European and national models.

PREAMBLE

As a member of the European Union (EU), Romania is committed to the union's ambitious new Green Deal which requires all member states to cut their absolute greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 55 percent (relative to 1990) by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. According to the EU Environmental Agency's (EEA) projection¹, Romania appears to be on track to achieve the mitigation target for 2030. The country has one of the lowest levels of GHG emissions in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per capita in the EU, together with Malta and Sweden. The share of green energy production in total electricity consumption is also higher than the European average.

However, the country's road to climate neutrality in 2050 is a long and challenging one. The World Bank estimates the investment required for this objective at around 360 billion Euros. These funds would be directed to key sectors, especially energy and transport. Nevertheless, the benefits of the zero emissions target are immeasurable: triple budget revenues, increasing resilience to climate change and creating new jobs.

Cities are central to achieving climate neutrality by 2050. They concentrate the production and consumption of electricity and heat, the main traffic flows, industrial activities and other activities that generate greenhouse gas emissions. On another note, urban areas also gather the knowledge and skilled workforce that will generate the innovative zero emission solutions.

Three of the Romanian cities (Bucharest - District 2, Cluj-Napoca and Suceava) have already committed to achieving zero emissions by 2030, by recently joining the EU Mission for 100 climate-neutral and smart cities. However, their number is too little compared with the targets envisaged

¹ <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/018/2023/063/article-A001-en.xml#A001fn06>

at the national level. This leads to the need to encourage and support other cities in the country to follow their example.

Therefore, the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania will directly support 10 more cities in Romania to become climate neutral by 2035. The remaining 300 urban centers will indirectly benefit from the efforts made by M100 and will hopefully join this effort in the following years. The process they will go through will be a complex one, inspired by the path designed for the cities in the EU Mission network. It will entail, first of all, the development of coherent and realistic plans of action and investments for climate neutrality, in the framework of a large-scale participatory effort involving all interested stakeholders. This process will also involve a strong cooperation with their counterparts from Norway and Iceland, two of the countries that were successful in setting up a strong foundation for the climate transition of their cities.

CONTEXT

M100 is a Romanian national hub designed as a support project for one of the new EU Missions – EU Mission: 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2035.

EU Missions are a novelty of the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme and they operate as a portfolio of actions – such as research projects, policy measures, or even legislative initiatives - to achieve a measurable goal that could not be achieved through individual actions. EU Missions aim to mobilize and activate public and private actors, such as EU Member States, regional and local authorities, research institutes, entrepreneurs, and investors to create a real and lasting impact. Missions will engage with citizens to boost societal uptake of new solutions and approaches. EU Missions will support Europe's transformation into a greener, healthier, more inclusive, and resilient continent.

EU Mission: 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030 is one of the 5 EU Missions and will support, promote, and showcase 100 European cities in their systemic transformation towards climate neutrality by 2030. Cities, as they play a pivotal role in achieving climate neutrality by 2050, are the places where decarbonization strategies for energy, transport, buildings, and even industry and agriculture coexist and intersect. The climate emergency must be tackled within cities and by engaging citizens who are not only political actors in a governance structure, but also users, producers, consumers, and owners. Through a multi-level and co-creative process, adjusted to the realities of each city, the Mission is fully anchored on the European Green Deal Strategy to make Europe climate-neutral by 2050.

Bucharest - District 2, Cluj-Napoca and Suceava are 3 of the 100 cities selected by the European Commission to become climate-neutral and smart by 2030. The 100 cities come from all 27 Member States, with 12 additional cities coming from countries associated with or in the process of being associated with Horizon Europe. The 100 selected cities are invited to develop Climate

City Contracts, which will include an overall plan for climate neutrality across all sectors such as energy, buildings, waste management, and transport, together with related investment plans. This process will involve citizens, research organizations, and the private sector.

M100, a mirror group of the mission, is a national hub established by The Ministry of Research, Innovation, and Digitalization aiming at implementing the Mission 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030. M100 is governed by a Coordination Committee involving the Ministry of Investments and European Projects (MIPE), the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitalization (MCID), the Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (MDLPA), the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests and the Ministry of Education. The Executive Agency for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development, and Innovation (UEFISCDI) will ensure the secretariat for the Coordination Committee formed of delegates from all the mentioned ministries, led by a state secretary from MIPE.

M100 will function as a virtual space to facilitate dialogue between central, regional, and local public authorities, universities and public research-innovation institutes, civil society, and citizens to maximize Romania's impact within Horizon Europe to achieve the Mission 100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030.

M100 will offer support to the three cities and municipalities selected within the European Mission, but more importantly, to the candidate cities, as well as to other cities in Romania that have the ambition to achieve climate neutrality. The goal is to spread the knowledge to as many cities in Romania as possible.

M100 ambition is to be a clear and visible commitment made by Romania to the EU goals towards climate neutrality across all sectors.

Within the CapaCITIES European network, M100 will facilitate the exchanges between the Romanian authorities and other public authorities in Europe for the planning and establishment of measures to support the Romanian M100 cities, bringing together the candidate cities, with the ambition to reach all the cities in Romania that are fighting to achieve the goals of neutrality climate by 2035 and 2050.

M100 will organize thematic working meetings between the central government, local public authorities, and regional development agencies, facilitating the dialogue and exchange of experience with the other Mission hubs in Europe and seeking to create a space where relevant stakeholders work together to identify solutions.

M100 will deliver impact by putting research and innovation into a new role, combined with new forms of governance and collaboration, as well as by engaging citizens.

M100 will take a cross-sectoral and demand-led approach, creating synergies between existing initiatives and basing its activities on the actual needs of the Romanian cities to support their transition to climate neutrality.

M100 will:

- **Be inspirational and relevant to the society.**
- **Link activities across different disciplines and different types of research and innovation.**
- **Make it easier for citizens to understand the value of investments in research and innovation.**

MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE URBAN CLIMATE NEUTRALITY DEFINITION

At the city level, there is currently no universally agreed-upon approach for implementing climate neutrality targets. Discrepancies in the definition of neutrality can result in significantly varying climate ambitions and actions. Since “two net-zero commitments can be dramatically different, aiming for different timelines, covering different kinds of GHG emissions, and relying on offsets to varying extents” (New Climate Institute, 2020), specifying these aspects by identifying gases, scopes, and sectors will support transparency in the overall process.

Achieving climate neutrality will require a M100 City to reduce the GHG emissions from all sectors and sources within the city’s boundary to net zero by 2035, including:

- Emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels in **all buildings and facilities (known as "stationary energy")**. This includes residential, commercial, and industrial buildings as well as municipal buildings and public lighting within the city boundary;
- Emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels for **all vehicles and transport** within the city boundary;
- Emissions arising from the **consumption of electricity and district heating/cooling** within the city’s boundary, from power plants located within or outside the city boundary;
- Emissions arising from **waste generated within the city boundary**, treated/managed/disposed of within or outside the city boundary;
- Emissions from **changes in land use** including agriculture, forestry, and other land uses (collectively referred to as "AFOLU") within the city boundary;
- Emissions from **chemical processes in industry** (collectively referred to as Industrial Process and Product Use or "IPPU") within the city boundary.

INDICATORS FOR MEASURING CLIMATE NEUTRALITY AT THE CITY LEVEL

<p>Scope 1 GHG emissions (direct emissions) for the city within its geographic boundary</p>	<p>The calculation of this indicator will be based on emissions originating from various sources including buildings, facilities, industrial operations, transportation, waste management (solid waste and wastewater), agriculture, forestry, and other relevant activities.</p>
<p>Scope 2 GHG emissions (indirect emissions) for the city</p>	<p>This indicator will be calculated based on the emissions from indirect emissions due to the consumption of grid-supplied electricity within the geographic boundary and indirect emissions due to the consumption of grid-supplied heat or cold within the geographic boundary.</p>
<p>Scope 3 GHG emissions (out-of-boundary emissions) for the city</p> <p>*** not required for inclusion at this stage</p>	<p>The Mission is, however, interested on delving deeper into Scope 3 emissions with participating cities, as ultimately, by 2050, they will need to be fully considered in achieving climate neutrality.</p> <p>This indicator will be calculated based on the emissions from out-of-boundary emissions from the treatment of waste produced within the geographic boundary, out-of-boundary emissions from transmission and distribution of energy consumed within the geographic boundary, out-of-boundary emissions from transportation of citizens living within the geographic boundary, out-of-boundary emissions from consumption made within the geographic boundary (food, clothes, furniture, materials, etc.) and other indirect emissions.</p>

RESIDUAL EMISSIONS AND OFFSETTING

While cities will need to reduce all sources of GHG emissions to the best of their ability, it is recognized that certain emission sources (such as specific industrial processes) may not be entirely mitigated by 2035 due to technological or financial limitations.

Consequently, compensating for any "residual emissions" will be feasible to some extent, to address those emission sources that cannot be entirely eradicated.

To ensure that cities achieve maximum emission reductions within their territory, the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania recommends as a guideline aiming for **a level of "residual emissions" within the city boundary in 2035 that does not exceed 20% of the baseline GHG inventory**, with the possibility that the remainder could be accounted for using carbon sinks or credits.²

However, this is not encouraged; i.e., residual emissions should be minimized as much as possible, and any form of offsetting should only be considered for emission sources that are very difficult or impossible to mitigate.

Ultimately, between direct reduction and offsetting of residual emissions, a net-zero emission balance must be achieved by 2035, meaning the number of GHGs emitted from a city territory is completely neutralized. This is in line with the European Climate Law, which recognizes that while GHG emissions should be avoided at source as a priority, removals of GHGs will be needed to compensate for remaining emissions from sectors where decarbonization is the most challenging.

A city will have two options to address its residual emissions to achieve net-zero:

- **Carbon sinks**, i.e., removals through natural and technological solutions, within the city boundary.
- **Carbon Credits** from outside the city's boundary and subject to certain rules and restrictions to be able to credibly demonstrate a city's climate neutrality (i.e., using formal credits/certificates verified and/or validated under rigorous standards by certified third-party auditors).

² The recommended minimum 80% reduction is in line with the Communication "A Clean Planet for all" (often referred to as the "long-term decarbonization strategy") which confirms Europe's commitment to lead in global climate action and presents a vision that can lead to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 through a socially-fair transition in a cost-efficient manner (European Commission, 2018b). The in-depth analysis underpinning the long-term decarbonization strategy presents eight different scenarios, all compatible with the Paris Agreement, that are based on different levels of ambition in terms of GHG emission reduction. All of the scenarios are based on a reduction of GHG emissions of at least 80%.

As participating cities are likely to need some form of offsetting to neutralize residual emissions, Mirror Cities must gain a comprehensive understanding early in the process. This understanding should be an integral part of developing their Climate City Contracts, including a strategy for addressing residual emissions within both the Action and Investment dimensions.

Participating cities must separately report gross and net emissions to ensure transparency regarding residual emissions neutralized through offsetting mechanisms.

OTHER RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

The key components of the climate neutrality definition used within the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania context are outlined below.

ELEMENTS OF THE DEFINITION OF CLIMATE NEUTRALITY AS APPLICABLE IN THE MISSION

ELEMENTS OF A CLIMATE NEUTRALITY DEFINITION	RECOMMENDED APPROACH
ETS plants	<p>Any large-scale energy generation or industrial facilities located within the city boundary that are registered under the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) will be exempt from the Mission on the basis that municipalities have very limited influence over their operation and there is a dedicated EU process to reduce emissions from these sources.</p> <p>It is optional for cities to include them if measures are foreseen.</p>
GHGs covered by the target boundary³	<p>Cities should account for emissions of the following gases (expressed as CO₂ equivalents): carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O).</p> <p>If emissions from the IPPU sector are present, cities also have to cover emissions of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆) and nitrogen trifluoride (NF₃).</p>
Sectors/sources of emissions covered by the target boundary	<p>Mandatory emissions categories include Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions from stationary energy, transportation, waste (including Scope 3 emissions at the point of disposal/treatment), IPPU, and AFOLU.</p>
Local energy generation measures⁴	<p>Reflect local energy generation measures through the local emission factor (Scope 2 emissions), splitting on-site consumption and what is provided to the grid.</p>
Share of residual	<p>Residual emissions should be minimized as much as possible,</p>

³ The inclusion of gases needs to be aligned with the sectors covered.

⁴ The CoM EU presents criteria to define what can be considered as local energy generation, to be included in the calculation of the local emission factor.

ELEMENTS OF A CLIMATE NEUTRALITY DEFINITION	RECOMMENDED APPROACH
emissions	with a suggested upper limit of residual emissions (20%) and compulsory offsetting of any remaining emissions, along with regulations for compensation (refer to the following four lines).
Offsetting – type and location	<p>Offsetting is only possible for emissions that are very difficult or impossible to mitigate (i.e., for residual emissions).</p> <p>Eligibility is limited depending on project types (e.g., projects within the country/EU, and with high additionality, and high co-benefits).</p>
GHG emission removal (within the territory)	<p>Pilot projects on carbon capture and storage are allowed, e.g., to account for negative emissions through greenhouse gas removal to tackle residual emissions.</p> <p>Only applications that result in the permanent sequestration of the CO₂ (e.g., injected into geological structures) will be permitted.</p>
Sinks	Allowed to account for negative emissions through the enlargement or enhancement of natural sinks within the territory to address residual emissions (taking into account all changes in the carbon stock).
Certified renewable energy purchases (Renewable energy credits)	Allowed for the reflection of certified renewable energy purchases in the calculation of the local emission factor to address Scope 2 emissions.
Local Emission Factors	The use of locally estimated Emission Factors (EF) for electricity and heat is permitted, but double-counting through dynamic national/regional EFs must be avoided. ⁵
Reflect grid decarbonisation	Change Emission Factor over the years (reflecting changes in the national/regional/local mix) (double-counting through locally weighted EF has to be avoided).
*** Other	Biomass: Zero emission factor is applicable only when

⁵ Local renewable electricity generation when shared with the electricity grid contributes to lowering the overall EF. At the same time, local emission factors taking into account local renewable energy generation will be important for urban areas, especially to represent their efforts to decarbonize the energy system in an equivalent amount to their local renewable energy generation

ELEMENTS OF A CLIMATE NEUTRALITY DEFINITION	RECOMMENDED APPROACH
methodological considerations	<p>sustainability criteria are met (a fundamental principle).</p> <p>Negative emissions are not permitted for biomass energy.</p>

APPLICATION PROCESS

The call for Expressions of Interest will be launched on **15 June 2023** and published on the **M100 platform**.

Each submitted Expression of Interest will undergo the following selection stages:

1. **ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION:** Will ensure that all the eligibility criteria are fulfilled and all the relevant information is provided.
 - If the Expression of Interest fails to meet the eligibility criteria, it will be rejected and will not proceed to the technical evaluation stage.
 - In this process, inquiries will not be sent to potential applicants.

! FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL CITY / DISTRICT FROM BUCHAREST, ONLY ONE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR ASSESSMENT.

Some relevant examples are presented below:

- If a city submits an EOI independently and another EOI in partnership with other cities, only the first EOI submitted chronologically on the submission platform will be accepted for assessment.
- If a city submits an EOI independently and another EOI through its metropolitan area (e.g., one EOI submitted by the City Hall of City X and another EOI submitted by the Intercommunity Development Association of City X), only the first application submitted chronologically on the submission platform will be accepted for verification.
- The same rule applies to the districts of Bucharest.

2. **TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT:** Will comprehensively examine the strengths of each Expression of Interest and implicitly assess the potential of each applicant, based on the scoring model outlined in the Technical Evaluation Matrix.
 - During this stage, a maximum of one set of clarifications will be issued (only if necessary), with a deadline of 7 working days for the applicant's response.
 - Failure to respond within the specified timeframe will result in the Expression of Interest being evaluated based on the information provided in the Expression of Interest.

- A team of international experts with specialized expertise in climate neutrality will conduct the technical evaluation, independently.
3. **STRATEGIC SELECTION:** Will focus on maximizing impact, promoting diversity, inclusivity, and fostering partnerships. As a result, the strategic selection process will take into account the following eight key aspects, in line with the four selection principles outlined in the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania.
- **The principle of maximizing impact:**
 - i. To maximize the overall greenhouse gas reduction, the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania encourages Expressions of Interest from cities where the majority of the population resides in urban centers with at least 100,000 inhabitants.
 - ii. The Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania particularly encourages large cities, metropolitan areas, and functional urban areas to participate due to their potential significant impact on emission reduction.
 - iii. While groupings of smaller cities are generally not encouraged, they may still be considered for participation if they are geographically contiguous and demonstrate the ability to coordinate effectively, with a single coordinating entity possessing the authority to make decisions and commitments for the entire group. In all cases, it is important that the entity participating in the Expression of Interest has legal status and the necessary competencies to commit the territory to the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania.
 - **The diversity principle:** The Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania will ensure representation from each of the 8 regions in Romania by selecting at least one M100 City, provided that eligible EOIs are received from cities in these regions and meet the necessary technical evaluation criteria.
 - **The inclusiveness principle:**
 - i. The Strategic selection process will ensure equitable access for cities of various sizes and types.
 - ii. The Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania seeks to encompass a diverse range of cities, engaging those with differing starting points toward achieving climate neutrality. Consequently, the Strategic selection process will consider cities at different stages of readiness and pursuing varied decarbonization efforts and pathways, while also considering the Mission's impact and added value.
 - **The partnership principle:**

- i. For cities applying as partnerships, preference will be given to functional urban areas or functioning metropolitan areas, as defined in the National Urban Policy.⁶
- ii. For cities with over 50,000 inhabitants, priority will be given to those applying alongside their existing and operational metropolitan areas.

The strategic selection will be conducted by an independent team of international jurors with the requisite expertise in climate neutrality and relevant field experience.

⁶ <https://www.mdlpa.ro/pages/politicaurbanaro2035>

CALL CALENDAR

STAGE	TIMELINE
Publication of the Call for Expression of Interest documentation for public review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Release date - initial version: 10 May 2024 ● Deadline for feedback: 10 June 2024 ● Release date - final version: 15 June 2024 <p>The documentation (Selection methodology and Expression of Interest Template) will be released on 10 May 2024, being available at m100.ro.</p> <p>Any requests, whether proposals or feedback, must be submitted by 10 June 2024, by e-mail at m100@uefiscdi.ro.</p> <p>Subsequently, the final version of the documentation will be published on 15 June 2024 at m100.ro.</p>
Implementation of the Call for Expression of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Official launch date of the Call for Expression of Interest: 15 June 2024 ● Expressions of Interest submission timeframe: 15 June – 15 September 2024 ● Expressions of Interest assessment timeframe: 15 September – 15 October 2024 ● Announcement date for applicant results: October 2024 ● Official public disclosure date for Mirror Cities: October 2024 <p>The publication of the funding call and its accompanying documentation will be made available at m100.ro.</p> <p>The submission process will adhere to the guidelines outlined on m100.ro, detailing the steps and necessary information for submitting the Expressions of Interest.</p> <p>The Expressions of Interest will be submitted through the uefiscdi-direct.ro platform, where the M100 call can be accessed. Only the EOIs submitted through this platform will be accepted for assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consequently, alternative submission methods (e.g., by email) will not be accepted. ● An explanatory material for registering on the platform will be published on m100.ro. <p>Upon the completion of the evaluation process, each applicant will receive an individual notification via email, regarding the selection outcome.</p>

STAGE	TIMELINE
	<p>Subsequently, the selected Mirror Cities will be officially announced on a wide scale, both online (via the m100.ro and the official digital channels of UEFISCDI and the other Romanian consortium partners, namely the Romanian Order of Architects and UrbanizeHub) and physically, during an official event, scheduled for the autumn of 2024, in Bucharest.⁷</p>
<p>Assistance provided to applicants for submitting Expressions of Interest</p>	<p>The Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania will offer participants a helpdesk service to assist with the preparation and submission of the Expressions of Interest. The helpdesk service will encompass 3 key tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General online sessions to introduce the call. • 1-to-1 workshops: Interested applicants can receive one hour of individual assistance for the EOI preparation. Requests for 1-to-1 support should be directed to m100@uefiscdi.ro • FAQ document available online on m100.ro, updated on a weekly basis. <p>The schedule for the collective online support sessions will be shared at a later date on m100.ro and the digital communication channels of UEFISCDI, the Romanian Order of Architects, and UrbanizeHub.</p> <p>Updates and additional details regarding each support tool will be regularly posted on m100.ro, but also on the aforementioned communication channels.</p> <p>The collective online support sessions will be recorded for later viewing in the event that potential applicants are unable to attend. However, participation is highly recommended, as these sessions will consist of 2 components: thematic presentations and interactive FAQ sessions.</p>

⁷ Additional information regarding the event, including its date and venue, will be disseminated later on m100.ro and the aforementioned communication channels.

ELIGIBILITY SELECTION CRITERIA

There are two specific eligibility criteria proposed, i.e., that cities MUST fulfill to express their interest in joining the Mission: size and ambition.

THE CRITERION FOR DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY BASED ON SIZE

Romanian cities may participate in the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania if they have at least 50,000 inhabitants (at the 2021 Census).

- For cities that have less than 50,000 inhabitants, there is the option of participating in partnership with neighboring local administrations.
- For cities that will apply as a partnership, preference will be given to functional urban areas, as defined in the National Urban Policy, or to functioning metropolitan areas.
- For cities with over 50,000 inhabitants, a higher preference will be given to those cities that apply together with their existing and functioning metropolitan areas.

By default, the participating city would commit the whole city or entity to become climate-neutral.

- If appropriately justified, the city can suggest exempting one or more neighborhoods from the 2035 deadline. However, in such instances, it must pledge to implement a climate neutrality strategy for these neighborhoods at the earliest opportunity, ensuring completion no later than 2050.

THE CRITERION FOR DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY BASED ON AMBITION

The second eligibility criterion is linked to the main objective of the EU Cities Mission, and implicitly of the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania. M100 cities must state clearly their ambition to become climate neutral by 2035, meaning to reach net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by that year.

- In principle, this ambition applies to the whole city, i.e., a city expressing its interest in joining the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania would commit the whole city to becoming climate-neutral. However, where duly justified, the city may propose to exclude one or more neighborhood(s) from the 2035 deadline.
- In line with the possibility of excluding neighborhoods, a city may propose excluding specific emission sources or zones of specific interest from the 2035 target (for example, a port, or industrial sites), if there are compelling and duly justified reasons. Source of emission in this context refers to a point source of emission, like a specific site or plant (for instance, an industrial complex). This could be the case either if it is financially or technically not viable to fully eliminate emissions by 2035 or if the zone does not fall under

the city's jurisdiction. If the city proposes to exclude specific sources of emissions by 2035, it still needs to commit to and outline a strategy for reaching climate neutrality including these sources as soon as possible. A letter of support from the city mayor (or a city representative designated by the mayor) must be provided. In the case of a multi-locality proposal, one letter must be provided for each locality. A sample support letter template is provided as a separate document among the materials related to this Call for Expressions of Interest.

TECHNICAL SELECTION CRITERIA

The evaluation criteria for this call are detailed below.

- Each criterion is rated on a scale of 0 to 5 by at least two independent external experts.
- The scores from all categories are summed to generate a ranked list of proposals.
- **The maximum attainable score is 110 points.**
- **The minimum score thresholds for each of the three main criteria, each with its specific sub-criteria, are presented in the table below.** In order to progress to the Strategic Selection stage, proposals must attain the minimum threshold score for each of the three main criteria categories.

TECHNICAL EVALUATION MATRIX

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
MANDATE TO ACT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total available points: 25 points • Minimum overall threshold: 15 points 	
MANDATE TO ACT Total available points: 10 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political: The proposal to participate in the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania has a high level of political support and endorsement from the city, with a strong mandate for continued support through political will. (5 points) • Strategic: A clear vision for climate neutrality is provided and evidence of past activities in this field is available. (5 points)
UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM(S) Total available points:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City emissions sources: The city's comprehension of the current status of emission sources is reliable and, where feasible or relevant, supported by data. (5 points)

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
5 points	
SUPPORTING POLICIES, STRATEGIES, AND PLANS Total available points: 10 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levers: At the local level, there are strategies, plans, and programs that articulate clear climate aspirations. (5 points) • Coverage: The climate goals and/or objectives outlined in the existing policies, strategies, and plans encompass a broad range of relevant climate areas. (5 points)
CAPACITY TO ACT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total available points: 30 points • Minimum overall threshold: 18 points 	
TRACK RECORD Total available points: 10 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change measures: The Expression of Interest showcases a diverse range of climate change measures (investments, projects) that have already been implemented or are currently under implementation. (5 points) • Climate mitigation budget: The budget already allocated/used for climate change measures demonstrates a clear and high commitment to addressing climate change objectives. (5 points)
OVERALL CAPACITY (GOVERNANCE, ORGANIZATION) Total available points: 15 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading implementation: The applicant details how climate transition efforts will be led and coordinated by the city, with representation from relevant city departments, roles, and capabilities. (5 points) • Technical capacity: The applicant demonstrates that adequate capacity is available across the various city emissions domains. (5 points) • Reporting and monitoring: The applicant consistently collects and reports relevant data for the key emission sources and also engages in ongoing monitoring, evaluation and updating of climate policies, in collaboration with other stakeholders. (5 points)

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
PARTNERSHIPS Total available points: 5 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder mapping: The applicant shows comprehension of the stakeholders that are relevant to achieving the proposed climate goals and demonstrates a clear understanding of their roles in the local ambition. (5 points)
IMPACT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total available points: 55 points • Minimum overall threshold: 33 points 	
INITIATIVES AND AWARDS Total available points: 10 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives: The Expression of Interest demonstrates engagement in relevant initiatives, which may provide a foundation for future ambitions and interventions. (5 points) • Awards: The Expression of Interest outlines relevant awards received in the past. (5 points)
AMBITION Total available points: 35 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall vision: The applicant possesses a clear vision for achieving climate neutrality by 2035, and the ambitions are thoroughly comprehended. (5 points) • Direct impact: The Expression of Interest delineates significant, direct impacts it aims to achieve on city-level greenhouse gas emissions within one or more emission domains, relative to the city's overall emissions profile. (5 points) • Closing the gap: The Expression of Interest proposes a wide number of proposed interventions, even if at a conceptual level, for achieving climate neutrality. (5 points) • Maturity: The proposed interventions demonstrate a high level of maturity, facilitating a rapid transition to implementation. (5 points) • Scalability and replicability: The proposed interventions and measures exhibit significant potential for scalability, as well as for transferability and/or replication to other cities in Romania and beyond. (5 points) • Financial and investment preparedness: The applicant demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the required investments for climate actions (including the needed

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
	<p>amounts and financing sources - even innovative financial instruments), and collaborates with other stakeholders to access the necessary funds. (5 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilization of other actors: The proposed interventions identify different stakeholders (including the private sector and citizens) that will assist with achieving the climate-neutrality goals. (5 points)
<p>OBSTACLES</p> <p>Total available points: 10 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk management: The risks are comprehensively understood and accurately described, including in terms of impact and likelihood. (5 points) • Barrier assessment: The applicant understands the obstacles they encounter in achieving climate neutrality (both across sectors and also at sector-specific levels), being aware of the assistance needed to successfully achieve climate neutrality. (5 points)

SCORING TABLE

SCORE	EXPLANATION
1	<p>POOR.</p> <p>The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.</p>
2	<p>FAIR.</p> <p>The Expression of Interest broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.</p>
3	<p>GOOD.</p> <p>The Expression of Interest addresses the criterion well, but some shortcomings are present.</p>
4	<p>VERY GOOD.</p> <p>The Expression of Interest addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.</p>
5	<p>EXCELLENT.</p> <p>The Expression of Interest successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.</p>

STRATEGIC SELECTION CRITERIA

SIZE INCLUSIVENESS

The Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania strives to encompass Romanian cities of various sizes, provided they have a minimum population of 50,000 inhabitants.

POTENTIAL IMPACT

Large cities or metropolitan areas are especially encouraged to join the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania because of their potential significant impact on emission reduction.

- To maximize the impact in terms of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions overall, we encourage expressions of interest, particularly from cities where the majority of the population lives in an urban center of at least 100,000 inhabitants.

Groupings of smaller-sized cities are generally not encouraged.

- Nevertheless, to be considered for participation, those cities would have to be geographically contiguous and demonstrate that they can indeed act in a coordinated manner, with a single coordinating entity having the authority to make decisions and commitments for the whole grouping.
- In all cases, the entity participating in the EOI must have a legal personality and the relevant competencies to commit the territory in question to the Mission.

GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSITY

The Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania intends to include at least one city from each of the 8 regions in Romania. Therefore, the selection process will also consider criteria for geographical balance, ensuring representation from all 8 regions.

MATURITY LEVEL

The Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania seeks to ensure that we have a fully diverse group of cities and aims to bring on board cities with very different starting points in terms of climate neutrality.

- The selection process will additionally consider criteria centered on diversity, encompassing cities at various stages of readiness and employing diverse decarbonization strategies. Furthermore, it will evaluate the impact and the value-added contributions of the Mission.
- This is an important point because one of the Mission's objectives is to pave the path for all Romanian cities to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Consequently, we strive to

encompass cities with diverse starting points, reflecting varying levels of readiness for the journey toward climate neutrality.

Besides demonstrating that a city meets the eligibility criteria in terms of size and ambition, the Call for Expression of Interest should be understood as an opportunity for cities to provide an accurate reflection of their current situation.

- The Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania aims not only to speed up the journey of the most advanced cities but also to be inclusive and involve cities that are just beginning their transition towards climate neutrality.
- Cities should not be discouraged if they cannot provide some of the information requested in the Call for the Expression of Interest; quite the opposite. More challenging circumstances, such as high levels of current emissions or existing barriers, do not limit a city's chances to be part of the Mission.
- During the second phase, Mirror Cities will receive customized support based on their requirements. This assistance will encompass tailored technical, regulatory, and financial guidance for developing the Climate City Contracts. These contracts will comprise three key components: Actions, Investments, and Official Commitments.

CLIMATE CITY CONTRACTS*

as defined and explained on the [NetZeroCities platform](#) (under the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities framework)**

"The **Cities Mission Climate City Contract** is a governance innovation tool to help cities collaboratively address their barriers to reaching climate neutrality.

The CCC is the documented result of an iterative co-creation process. Systemic in nature, this process will be led by cities and involve multiple stakeholders at various governance levels, as well as the wider ecosystem of private and civic stakeholders. Together, they will identify all the key actions to achieve climate neutrality, and the ways and means to implement them.

The Climate City Contract is a digital living document and should be revised periodically to add new stakeholders, concrete commitments, actions and/or investments, and to reflect on what is working and not working.

The CCC is one process and document with three interlinked components: Commitments, Actions, and Investments."

"The Commitments (CCC Core Contract) capture the outcomes of a co-creation process with local, regional, and national stakeholders

"The Action Plan identifies the strengths and gaps of existing strategies, policies, and plans, and uses all levers of change to create a

"The Investments Plan strategically mobilises and organises public resources and addresses how to attract private capital for funding and financing

CLIMATE CITY CONTRACTS*

as defined and explained on the [NetZeroCities platform](#) (under the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities framework)**

to establish new ways of working together to achieve climate neutrality faster. It includes a shared ambition and a strategy to achieve it, as well as the specific commitment(s) to action from stakeholders in the contract.”	coordinated portfolio of interventions to achieve the ambition.”	cities pathways to climate neutrality.”
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*** The template developed within M100 for the three components will be customized to accommodate the national specifics, thereby facilitating a streamlined yet impactful and practical completion process for the M100 Cohort Cities.**

As such, the M100 version for Climate City Contracts will draw inspiration, both in its structure and content, from the methodology developed by the European Commission for elaborating the documents pertaining to the Climate City Contracts (the Climate Neutrality Action Plan, Investment Plan and Commitments) for the 112 cities which officially participated in the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities.

**** The information provided above has been sourced directly from the [NetZeroCities platform](#). For comprehensive details offered by this platform regarding the Climate City Contracts, ranging from key concepts for deploying the CCCs, to explanatory visuals, contract frameworks, inspirational examples, and supplementary resources, please refer to [the dedicated page on the NetZeroCities website](#).**

Please note that the information provided on the NetZeroCities platform refers to The Cities Mission Climate City Contracts, which are developed within the framework of the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities. As previously mentioned, the M100 version will undergo specific adaptations to better align with the characteristics of Romanian cities and accommodate their unique context, while retaining the overarching objectives set at the European level.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST CONTENT

As part of their Expression of Interest, cities will have the opportunity to:

- Demonstrate their high level of ambition and their strong political commitment to climate neutrality.
- Outline their starting point for embarking on the climate neutrality transition, including:
- Their current levels of emissions and the decarbonization effort required across different sectors.
- Their level of preparedness, including existing plans and policies, targets, governance structures, and administrative capacity.
- Describe their commitment to involve citizens and other stakeholders in planning and implementing their climate neutrality plans.
- Describe their commitment to the quality of interventions aimed at reducing the GHG emissions (i.e. prioritize increasing architectural and urban values through renovation measures; prioritize renovation and reuse of existing building stock over demolition and replacement; incentivize sensitive energy renovation of cultural heritage buildings and areas; restrict greenfield development and control expansion of urbanized land).

Cities should respond to the Expression of Interest to express their interest in joining the Mission, covering the elements outlined in the table below.

- The notes provided in the table below aim to offer initial guidance on the types of issues to be addressed in the Call for Expression of Interest.
- Except for the eligibility criteria, none of the categories below should be considered as qualifying or excluding criteria, as the Call for Expression of Interest seeks to collect comprehensive information about the cities, to ensure diversity among participants.

INDICATIVE ELEMENTS OF THE CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

INDICATIVE GROUP OF QUESTIONS	INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED BY CITIES EXPRESSING THEIR INTEREST
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	
Eligibility criteria and information about the city expressing its interest	1. SIZE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Romanian cities are eligible to take part in the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania, provided they have a

INDICATIVE GROUP OF QUESTIONS	INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED BY CITIES EXPRESSING THEIR INTEREST
	<p>minimum population of 50,000 residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the outset of the EOI, cities are required to specify their population size based on the 2021 National Population and Housing Census. Cities may also explain why they propose to include a larger Functional Urban Area or a functioning Metropolitan Area, when applicable. <p>2. AMBITION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicants who are interested in becoming part of the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania are required to explicitly declare, at the beginning of the Expression of Interest, their ambition and commitment to achieve climate neutrality by 2035, signifying the aim to attain net-zero GHG emissions by that time. Apart from collecting relevant administrative information such as location and population size, the EOI will allow cities to elaborate on and substantiate, where applicable, any suggested exclusions from the objective of achieving climate neutrality by 2035: this might entail excluding particular neighborhoods or emission sources. <p>If the EOI is on behalf of a group of entities, information on the group composition and the group's coordinating entity has to be provided.</p>
OTHER EOI ELEMENTS	
<p>The climate-neutrality target and vision for closing the gap towards reaching net-zero emissions by 2035</p>	<p>At the point of expressing their interest in participating in the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania, cities are not required to have fully developed plans on achieving climate neutrality by 2035.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While some cities may already have a clear vision, others might be at varying stages of planning. As previously mentioned, these details will be further developed during the development of the Climate City Contract, which will cover three key dimensions: Actions, Investments, and Official Commitments. However, this section gives cities the chance to confirm

INDICATIVE GROUP OF QUESTIONS	INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED BY CITIES EXPRESSING THEIR INTEREST
	<p>that they understand and are aligned with the scope of the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania and the required level of ambition and to outline their vision on how they can accelerate and close the gap to be climate neutral by 2035.</p> <p>Besides the overarching vision, cities also have the chance to outline the main directions for reducing emissions across all sectors covered by the Mission.</p>
<p>Current level of emissions</p>	<p>This section compiles information from cities regarding their current greenhouse gas emissions levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's important to note that this isn't intended as an exclusionary criterion. Cities are not expected, at this stage, to have conducted a comprehensive GHG emissions inventory across all sectors and scopes covered by the Mission. However, they are encouraged to share any available information gathered in the past (regardless of the methods used) to approximate their current emissions levels and the required effort for GHG emissions reduction. For instance, cities can refer to relevant strategic documents such as the Integrated Urban Development Strategies, Sustainable Energy Action Plans, Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans, as well as other strategic documents like Heating Strategies, various Plans and Programs, or relevant studies/reports/analyses. • Wherever possible, cities are requested to provide an estimate of their annual GHG emissions both overall and by sector. They may also present the methodology used for assessing GHG emissions, along with any supporting studies or documentation.
<p>Existing initiatives and plans</p>	<p>In this section, cities are invited to showcase their past performance regarding climate action and are allowed to outline any official targets already established, such as the city's envisaged trajectory before joining the Mission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is not intended to serve as a qualifying or excluding criterion. • The inquiries allow cities to provide details on past and

INDICATIVE GROUP OF QUESTIONS	INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED BY CITIES EXPRESSING THEIR INTEREST
	<p>existing initiatives related to reducing GHG emissions and their experience in designing and implementing mitigation strategies, as well as monitoring their progress. This encompasses both cross-sectoral and sector-specific strategies or plans for climate change mitigation and GHG emissions reduction that have already been adopted by cities. The section aims to provide an overview of the progress these initiatives will generate in terms of emission reduction by 2035.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Furthermore, this set of questions seeks to gather information on the extent of involvement in other relevant initiatives at the EU, national, regional, or local levels. <p>Moreover, cities are invited to indicate their approach to the quality of their past plans and actions, and to present, if deemed necessary, adjustments and improvements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality will be understood in terms of improvements to the architectural and urban value and attractiveness, and in promoting current visions on urban development, such as preference to reuse and renovation of existing building stock over demolish and build new; preference to considerate solutions, that include architectural, ecological and social values, in all energy renovation projects; use of local / locally sourced materials and techniques; apply circular economy principles and strategies; use culturally and ecologically proven local strategies to climate adaptation.
<p>Current key policies</p>	<p>In this section, cities will answer questions on their current policies, e.g., energy, transport, waste, and wastewater management, giving a more detailed picture of their starting point in the most relevant sectors for urban climate action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities will also provide information on how much energy is generated from RES within the city boundaries. Another set of questions explores the cities' experience and preparedness for enabling and implementing digitalization strategies and other smart city solutions. If applicable, cities can describe digitalization strategies, digital innovation hubs, or any other type of smart city

INDICATIVE GROUP OF QUESTIONS	INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED BY CITIES EXPRESSING THEIR INTEREST
	intervention.
	<p>The questions in this section explore the partnerships established by cities and how they contribute to achieving climate neutrality by 2035.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities are asked to outline their collaborations with various stakeholders, including other levels of government, the private sector (companies, clusters, etc.), academia, RDI sectors, civil society, and other NGOs, to foster the development and implementation of their climate actions. • A particularly important point is to hear plans, if already in place, for engaging citizens in the design and implementation of climate policies. • Cities are further invited to describe how they are collaborating and sharing experiences across city and national boundaries.
<p>Investment needs and strategy</p>	<p>Cities expressing interest in joining the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania are not expected to have an investment plan ready at the time of application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As previously mentioned, the Investment aspects will be integrated into the Climate City Contract, alongside Actions and Official Commitments. These dimensions will be developed further within the Climate City Contracts, at a later stage. • The questions in this section aim to assess the cities' progress in estimating their investment requirements and encourage participating cities to evaluate their readiness for investment by considering past experiences and current budgets. • Consulting the available advisory services, such as the ones provided by Energy Managers, could be helpful in this regard.
<p>Governance and capacities of the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this section, cities can outline how the climate agenda and specific actions to move towards climate neutrality are addressed within their administration, by describing

INDICATIVE GROUP OF QUESTIONS	INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED BY CITIES EXPRESSING THEIR INTEREST
administration	<p>the structures in place or planned and the human resources allocated or planned to be allocated in the next phase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities are then asked to outline the systems they have put in place to collect the relevant data and ensure effective monitoring of GHG emissions and reporting on climate action.
Synergies / Horizontal aspects	<p>In this section, cities are encouraged to consider potential synergies and trade-offs in specific areas related to the scope of the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania, such as air pollution or energy poverty, and to specify if and how these issues are currently being addressed.</p>
Barriers, risks and assistance needs	<p>In the final block of questions, cities are encouraged to reflect on the critical barriers, risks, and challenges they face in achieving climate neutrality by 2035.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this section, cities will have the opportunity to specify the type and extent of assistance they will likely require to develop and implement their Climate City Contracts. • Once again, any information provided here is not intended to serve as a qualifying or excluding factor, but it will be relevant for the city's efforts in the subsequent phases of implementation toward achieving climate neutrality.

M100 SUPPORT

ASSISTANCE FOR PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS (PHASE 1)

Throughout the Expressions of Interest submission period (running from June 15 to September 15), a mix of technical assistance resources will be provided by the M100 staff, in order to aid the prospective applicants during the preparation and submission phases:

- Help desk service
- Collective online support sessions
- Individual online workshops with each potential applicant, including Q&A sessions and specific recommendations as needed
- Online FAQs: email Q&A and FAQs document
- M100 regional caravan: conducted in Brasov, Timisoara, Iasi, and Constanta, according to the calendar published on m100.ro.

Comprehensive information regarding all the aforementioned support tools is provided within the CALL CALENDAR section of this document.

Furthermore, the key details concerning the M100 regional caravan are outlined below:

- Each caravan will span two days.
- The activities undertaken during each caravan will comprise:

■ Informative component - dissemination and collaboration:

- Presentations covering various topics, to assist the potential applicants and disseminate information about M100 to the interested stakeholders. The presentation themes will encompass subjects such as the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, the Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania, the Call for Expressions of Interest, and best practices from other European cities concerning climate neutrality.
- Workshops offering insights into:
 - The selection methodology (including scope and approach).
 - The application form (including content and completion procedures).
 - Funding sources available for cities, metropolitan areas, and functional areas transitioning towards climate neutrality.
- M100 impact (pursued objectives, future forms of support, etc.)
- Peer collaboration among the future M100 beneficiaries

■ Participatory component – UrbanLab:

- An urban innovation laboratory for the co-design of collaborative solutions to achieve climate neutrality within the urban communities.

Further details regarding the aforementioned support resources will be disseminated via m100.ro and the digital platforms of UEFISCDI, the Romanian Order of Architects, and UrbanizeHub. We encourage regular consultation of these channels to stay informed about the latest updates.

SUPPORT FOR CITIES SELECTED TO JOIN THE M100 COHORT (PHASE 2)

Subsequent to the official announcement of the cities selected to join the M100 Cohort, spanning from November 2024 to March 2025, these cities will receive technical support aimed at developing the Climate City Contracts documentation. This documentation will center on three key planning components for achieving climate neutrality: Actions, Investments, and Official Commitments.

The documentation related to the Climate City Contracts will be developed in the forthcoming period, and alongside the templates needed for its preparation, it will be made available on m100.ro subsequent to finalization by M100 experts.

The assistance provided to the M100 Cohort Cities will cover the following:

- Materials and guidelines for the Climate City Contract, comprising templates with explanatory information for the three key planning components for achieving climate neutrality: Actions, Investments, and Official Commitments.
- Explanatory materials and guidelines for participatory approaches towards achieving climate neutrality, including letters of commitment and guidance on tools for stakeholder engagement.
- Specialized technical support sessions designed for the M100 Cohort Cities, to facilitate the development of the Climate City Contracts. These sessions will be managed by City Advisors, who will be designated in the upcoming period to guide the Cities through this process.
 - Collective online sessions focused on the Climate City Contract, wherein each of its three components (Actions, Investments, and Official Commitments) will be presented and discussed. M100 Cohort Cities will have the opportunity to address any queries regarding the preparation of the documentation.

- One-on-one sessions with each M100 Cohort Cities, focusing on specific aspects related to their local context (uncertainties, needs, challenges). These sessions, led by the City Advisors, will clarify and address any potential issues collaboratively, thereby ensuring the development of comprehensive and impactful documentation for achieving climate neutrality.
- Collaborative learning workshops, featuring presentations, discussions, and interactive learning sessions involving the M100 Cohort Cities, together with other European cities participating in the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities. These workshops will promote the exchange of experiences, best practices, and innovative ideas related to climate neutrality among the participating cities, fostering mutual learning and knowledge sharing.

Further details concerning the documentation concerning the Climate City Contracts, along with the assistance offered for its development, and any additional forms of support available to the M100 Cohort Cities beyond March 2025, or in conjunction with the previously outlined tools (subject to the availability of supplementary assistance, if applicable), will be shared on m100.ro and the digital communication channels of UEFISCDI, the Romanian Order of Architects, and UrbanizeHub. We recommend frequent reference to remain informed about the latest updates.