



CLIMATE CITY CONTRACT

HANDBOOK

**Interreg
Danube Region**



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HARMONMISSIONS

A Practical Guide for
Climate City Contract
preparation

This Handbook is inspired by the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities and is aligned with the NetZeroCities approach, <https://netzerocities.eu/>.

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Executive Summary

Climate City Contracts (CCCs) are dynamic, systemic frameworks that guide cities on their journey toward climate neutrality by 2030. They serve as living documents that adapt to technological innovations, policy shifts, and practical insights gained through implementation. By integrating political commitment, cross-sectoral actions, inclusive governance, and innovative financing, CCCs translate ambitious visions into tangible, scalable projects across urban systems such as energy, mobility, buildings, and circular economy.

Crucially, CCCs foster systemic climate neutrality transformation through collaborative partnerships involving public authorities, private investors, civic organizations, and citizens.

They underpin cities' efforts to mobilize diverse funding streams, develop innovative solutions, and accelerate the deployment of impactful interventions. Their iterative nature emphasizes learning, experimentation, and scaling, ensuring resilience and relevance amid changing economic and technological landscapes.

By aligning city strategies with investment and policy frameworks, CCCs strengthen credibility with investors and support long-term urban resilience. They promote transparency, evidence-based decision-making, and stakeholder engagement, creating an inclusive platform for co-creating sustainable urban futures. Drawing on practical experiences across Europe, this Handbook aims to equip cities with the tools, inspiration, and strategic guidance needed to fast-track their climate-neutral ambitions and foster thriving, resilient communities.

Climate City Contracts are a core implementation instrument of the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, supporting cities in achieving climate neutrality by 2030. At the same time, they provide a common framework that can be adapted by any city, integrating political commitments, concrete actions, governance structures, investment needs, and monitoring mechanisms into a coherent approach.

Unlike traditional climate or energy strategies, Climate City Contracts are designed by the cities and municipalities as delivery-oriented and adaptive frameworks. Their purpose is not only to define long-term goals, but to guide cities through the complex process of systemic transformation. CCCs translate ambition into coordinated action across key urban systems, while allowing for learning, adjustment, and scaling over time.

A Climate City Contract typically brings together:

- a clear political commitment to climate neutrality,
- a portfolio of cross-sectoral actions,
- a collaborative governance model involving public, private, and civic actors,
- an investment logic that supports implementation and scaling,
- and mechanisms for monitoring progress and learning.

CCCs are living documents. They evolve as cities test solutions, gain implementation experience, and respond to changing economic, technological, and political conditions. Experience from cities implementing Climate City Contracts shows that progress towards climate neutrality follows a journey rather than a linear pathway. This journey usually includes an initial phase of political commitment and stakeholder mobilisation, followed by co-creation and design of actions, formalisation of the contract, implementation and experimentation, scaling of successful measures, and continuous learning and adaptation. Understanding this journey helps cities manage expectations and focus on steady progress rather than immediate perfection.

Across Europe, Climate City Contracts translate ambition into action through portfolios of interventions in areas such as energy systems, sustainable mobility, buildings and districts, circular economy, green infrastructure, and enabling governance measures. Typical examples include the decarbonisation of district heating systems, the introduction of integrated low-emission mobility solutions, deep renovation of buildings, and the establishment of circular economy initiatives.

These actions are often implemented in phases, starting with pilots and scaling up as experience and capacity grow.

Climate City Contracts create value by providing a shared reference framework across city administrations and partners, strengthening credibility towards investors and funding institutions, and supporting coordinated action across sectors. For stakeholders, they offer a clear entry point to contribute to the climate-neutral transition of cities through investment, innovation, service provision, or community engagement.

This Executive Summary is informed by practical experience from cities working with Climate City Contracts, including within the context of the HARMONMISSIONS project, and aims to support a common understanding of CCCs as practical tools for achieving climate neutrality by 2030.

This Handbook equips cities that have decided to embark on the path towards climate neutrality — but may not yet know how to get started — with the tools, guidance, and inspiration needed to fast-track their journey and build thriving, high-quality living environments for their residents.

CLIMATE CITY CONTRACT (CCC)

How to Prepare a Climate City Contract from Start to Finish

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1. What is a CCC

1.1 Definition

A Climate City Contract (CCC) is a mission-oriented governance and planning instrument that enables cities to define a shared climate neutrality ambition, co-create commitments with stakeholders, develop a coordinated portfolio of interventions, mobilise investment, and monitor progress transparently. It is suitable for cities of all sizes and with a wide range of specific characteristics and local contexts.

1.2 Origin and Inspiration

The CCC concept builds on pioneering national initiatives such as:

- Sweden's Climate City Contract 2030, involving 23 cities and national institutions.
- Spain's citiES 2030, which mobilises Spanish cities around decarbonisation.

These initiatives demonstrated that climate neutrality requires:

- shared ownership,
- multi-level governance,
- coordinated investments,
- and continuous learning.

1.3 Purpose of the CCC

The CCC is designed to:

- align political leadership and stakeholders,
- integrate actions across sectors,
- provide a unified investment logic,
- and create a transparent monitoring framework.

It is one process and one document with three components:

1. 2030 Climate Neutrality Commitments.
2. 2030 Action Plan.
3. 2030 Investment Plan.



2. Why Cities Need a CCC

2.1 Systemic Transformation

Climate neutrality is not a single project but a transformation of:

- energy systems,
- mobility,
- buildings,
- waste and circular economy,
- governance,
- and citizen behaviour.

2.2 Multi-Actor Responsibility

Actors outside the city administration typically control up to 90% of urban emissions.

A CCC ensures:

- shared responsibility,
- coordinated action,
- and aligned investments.

2.3 Investment Coordination

Climate neutrality requires large-scale investment. A CCC:

- identifies investment needs,
- mobilises public and private capital,
- and provides confidence to investors.

2.4 Governance Redesign

Cities need new governance structures to:

- break silos,
- coordinate departments,
- engage stakeholders,
- and manage data.

2.5 Transparency and Accountability

A CCC provides:

- measurable progress,
- annual updates,
- and clear responsibilities.

A CCC is the contractual backbone of the city's climate neutrality transition.

3. CCC Structure: Commitments – Actions – Investments

3.1 Commitments (CCC Core Contract)

3.1.1 Purpose

The Commitments document is the political and strategic backbone of the CCC. It expresses the city's ambition and the shared responsibility of stakeholders.

3.1.2 Content

- Shared 2030 climate neutrality ambition and strategic objectives for achieving this ambition.
- Governance model (roles, structures, decision-making).
- Stakeholder commitments (public, private, civic).
- Multi-level governance alignment (regional and national actors).

3.1.3 Function

It provides:

- legitimacy,
- political mandate,
- and an unified direction for the Action and Investment Plans.

3.2 2030 Action Plan

3.2.1 Purpose

The Action Plan translates ambition into concrete interventions and pathways.

3.2.2 Content

- Baseline analysis (GHG inventory, system mapping).
- Gap analysis (difference between current trajectory and neutrality).
- Sectoral pathways (energy, mobility, buildings, waste, NBS).
- Interventions (actions, pilots, regulatory changes).
- KPIs (monitoring indicators).

3.2.3 Function

It provides:

- a roadmap for implementation,
- prioritisation of actions,
- and a basis for costing and investment planning.

3.3 2030 Investment Plan

3.3.1 Purpose

The Investment Plan ensures that the Action Plan is financially feasible.

3.3.2 Content

- Investment needs (CAPEX, OPEX, scaling costs).
- Financing models (public, private, blended).
- Capital mobilisation strategy.
- Risk assessment (financial, regulatory, market).

3.3.3 Function

It provides:

- credibility for investors,
- clarity for decision-makers,
- and a structured approach to financing climate neutrality.



4. Full CCC Preparation Process (Step-by-Step)

The CCC process consists of seven phases, each with specific outputs and responsibilities:

1. Preparation & Governance Setup (0-3 months).
2. Baseline Analysis (1-6 months).
3. Stakeholder Engagement & Co Creation (3-9 months).
4. Drafting the CCC Components (6-12 months).
5. Validation, Approval & Submission (10-12 months).
6. Implementation & Monitoring (Year 1-3).

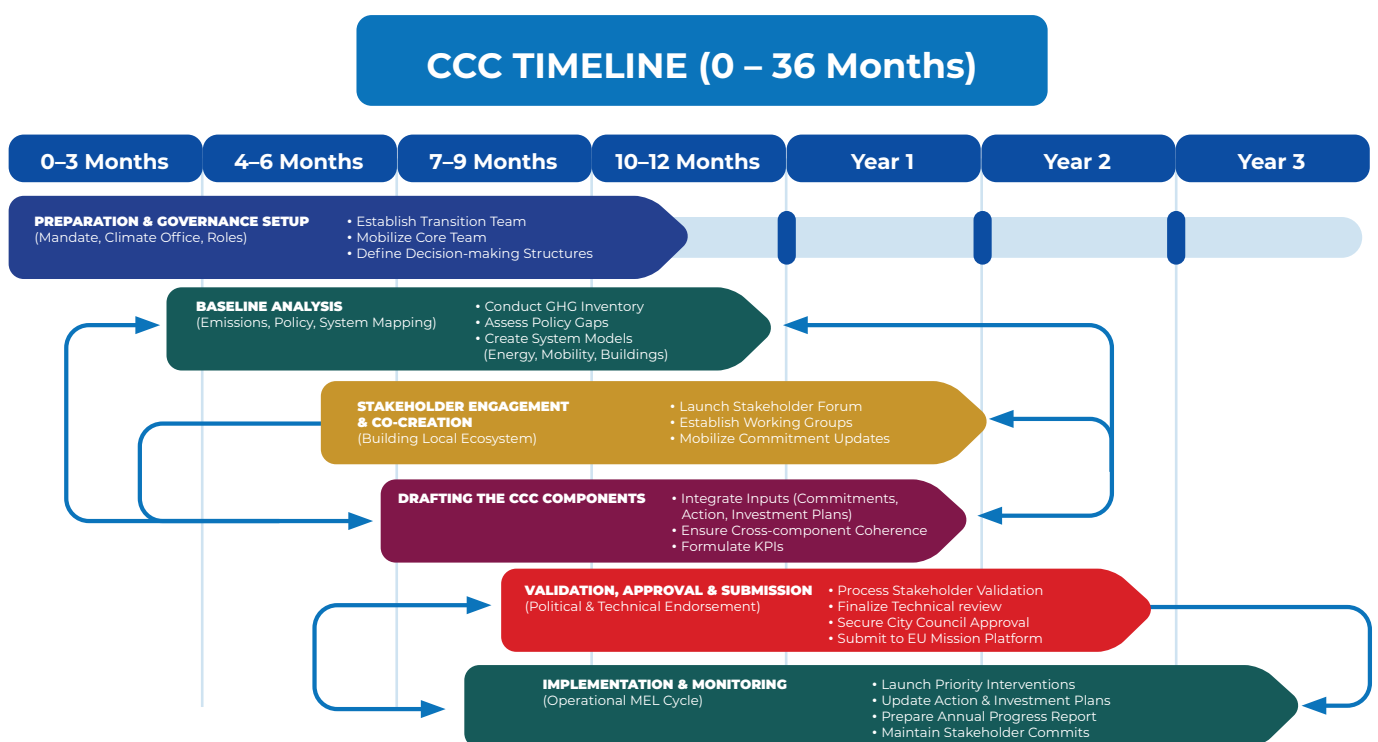


Figure 1: CCC Strategic Implementation Roadmap (0-36 Months)

5. Phase 1: Preparation & Governance Setup (0–3 months)

The Preparation & Governance Setup phase establishes the organisational foundation required to develop a credible and coordinated Climate City Contract (CCC). During these first three months, the city creates the structures, teams, and processes that will guide the entire climate neutrality mission.

This phase ensures that the CCC is not developed in isolation, but is supported by a dedicated coordination unit, a strong governance backbone, and a clear work plan that aligns all departments and stakeholders from the start.

5.1 Establish the Transition Team

Some cities establish dedicated climate agencies, while others create climate offices. In other cases, responsibility for climate action is assigned to existing departments within the city administration. Regardless of the organisational model, the key is to ensure that a small, dedicated team is in place to coordinate and manage the Climate City Contract (CCC) process.

Its core tasks include:

- Coordinating all phases of the CCC development.
- Managing data, including the GHG inventory and monitoring systems.
- Facilitating stakeholder engagement and co-creation.
- Ensuring cross-departmental alignment across mobility, energy, buildings, finance, planning, IT, and environment.

The Transition Team acts as the central engine of the city's climate-neutrality mission. The transition team can be anchored within a single office, such as a Climate Office, but may also include members from other departments responsible for key climate-related sectors and can be expanded to include additional stakeholders where relevant and needed.

5.2 Create the Governance Backbone

The current description of Phase 1: Preparation & Governance Setup is clear and comprehensive.

To further improve it, consider the following enhancements:

- **Emphasize the Importance of Leadership and Political Commitment:** Highlight securing political buy-in early on to ensure sustained support and resource allocation.
- **Include Capacity Building and Training:** Mention the need for initial capacity-building activities for the Transition Team and governance bodies to equip them with necessary skills.
- **Clarify the Integration of Climate Goals into City Policies:** Ensure that establishing alignment with existing city strategies and policies is part of the preparatory work.
- **Address Risk Management and Flexibility:** Incorporate the importance of identifying potential risks (e.g., staffing, political changes) and building flexibility into the work plan.
- **Set Clear Success Metrics for Setup Activities:** Define indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of governance structures and stakeholder mapping early on.
- **Outline Communication and Change Management:** Describe strategies for internal and external communication to foster transparency, engagement, and change readiness.
- **Mention Resource Mobilization and Funding:** Identify initial resource needs, including budget planning and funding sources, to support setup activities. A multi level governance structure that ensures strategic direction, operational coordination, and stakeholder participation.

It typically includes at least:

- Steering Committee provides political and executive leadership, validates key decisions, and ensures alignment with city priorities.

- Sectoral Working Groups are technical teams for energy, mobility, buildings, waste, digitalisation, nature based solutions, etc.
- Stakeholder Forum is a broad platform that brings together utilities, industry, SMEs, academia, NGOs, and citizens to co create and validate the CCC.
- Data Governance Board ensures data quality, access, transparency, and consistency across departments and external partners.



Figure 2: Governance Structure for City Climate Action

This governance backbone prevents siloed work and ensures that climate neutrality becomes a whole city mission.

5.3 Map Stakeholders

A systematic identification of all actors who influence emissions or are essential for implementation.

This includes:

- utilities and energy providers,
- transport operators,
- industry and large employers,
- SMEs and business associations,
- universities and research institutions,
- NGOs and community groups (citizens),
- financial institutions and investors,
- regional and national authorities.

The output is a stakeholder map that guides engagement, co-creation, and the Stakeholder Climate Neutrality Audit (procedural and strategic).

5.4 Prepare the Work Plan

A structured plan that defines:

- timeline and milestones for all CCC phases,
- responsibilities of each governance body,
- required resources and capacities,
- coordination mechanisms,
- expected outputs (Commitments, Action Plan, Investment Plan).

The work plan ensures that the CCC process is predictable, transparent, and manageable, even with limited staff and time.

Overall Purpose of Phase 1

The goal of the Preparation & Governance Setup phase is to create the institutional, organisational, and collaborative foundation needed for the city to successfully design, implement, and update its Climate City Contract.

Without this phase, the CCC risks becoming a fragmented document.

With it, the city builds a strong, coordinated, mission-driven structure capable of delivering climate neutrality by 2030.

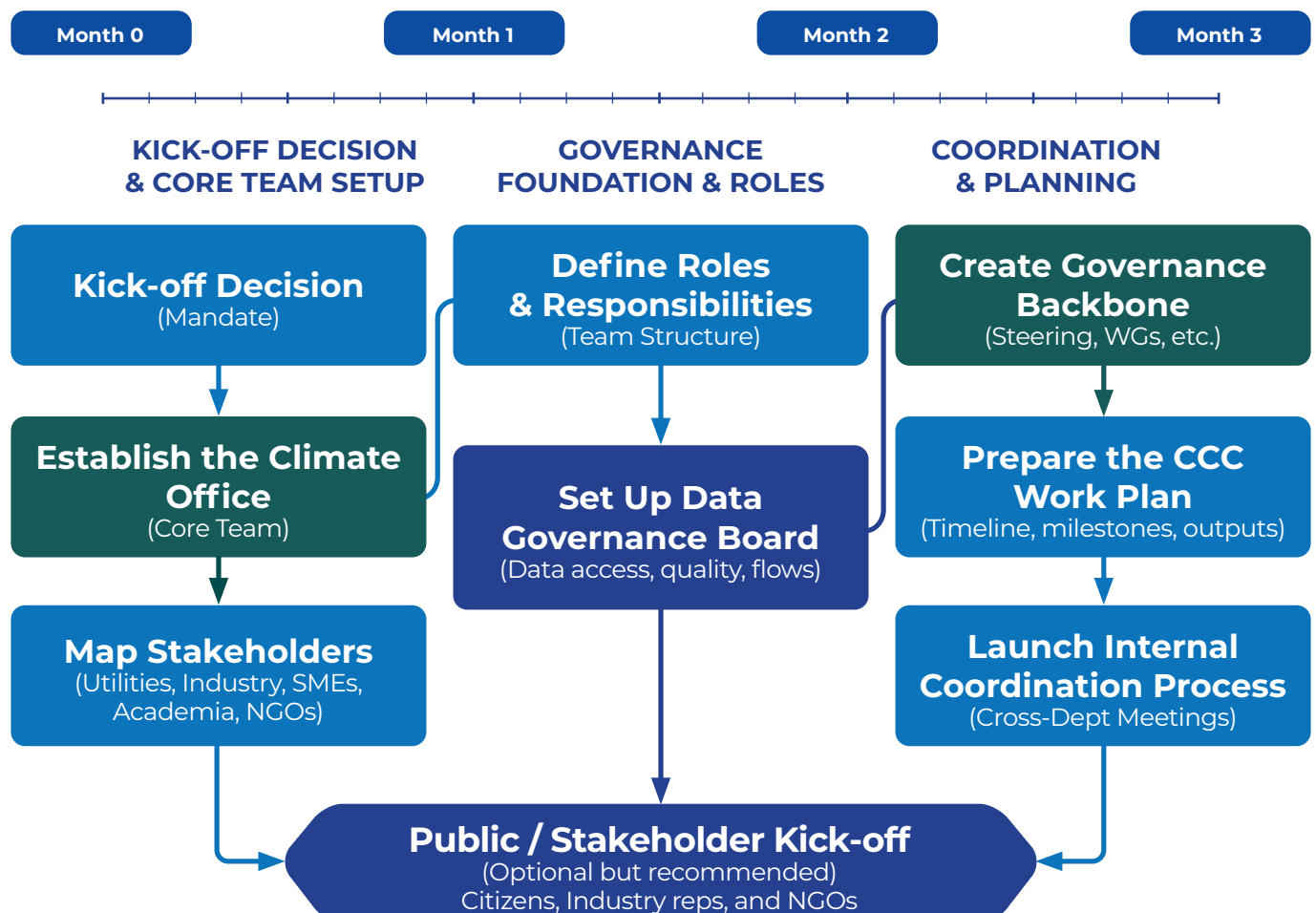


Figure 3: Roadmap for Phase 1: Preparation & Governance Setup

The primary goal of the Preparation & Governance Setup phase is to establish a resilient institutional, organizational, and collaborative framework that enables the city to successfully design, implement, and continuously update its Climate City Contract. Without this foundational phase, the CCC risks becoming a fragmented or disconnected document lacking strategic coherence.

By building a strong, coordinated, and mission-driven governance structure from the start, the city positions itself to deliver impactful climate actions that are well-organized, inclusive, and aligned with broader urban sustainability objectives. This phase sets the stage for effective implementation, stakeholder trust, and long-term success in achieving climate neutrality by 2030.



6. Phase 2: Baseline Analysis (1–6 months)

The current text for Phase 2 is thorough, covering essential components such as the GHG inventory, strategy review, system mapping, and gap analysis. However, there are several areas where it can be improved or expanded to ensure completeness and clarity:

Data Quality and Validation Processes: Explicitly mention the importance of data quality assurance, validation, and verification procedures to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the inventory and analyses. Including processes for data triangulation and stakeholder validation can enhance trustworthiness.

- **Integration of Socioeconomic and Demographic Data:** In addition to emissions data, integrating socioeconomic, demographic, and land-use data can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the drivers and barriers for climate action, supporting more targeted interventions.
- **Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment:** Incorporate an assessment of climate risks and vulnerabilities, which can influence the prioritization of actions and adaptation strategies. This ensures the city considers both mitigation and resilience in its planning.
- **Scenario Development and Sensitivity Analysis:** Introduce the development of future scenarios based on different assumptions (e.g., policy trajectories, technological advancements). Sensitivity analysis can help understand the robustness of pathways and inform adaptive planning.
- **Stakeholder Engagement in Data Collection and Validation:** Highlight the role of stakeholders in providing local knowledge, validating data, and identifying gaps. This participatory approach improves data relevance and fosters buy-in.
- **Technology and Innovation Assessment:** Consider including an assessment of emerging technologies and innovations relevant to the city's decarbonization pathways, which could influence strategic options.
- **Monitoring Data and Indicators Framework:** Outline the need for establishing key monitoring indicators and a data collection framework that will be used during implementation to track progress against the baseline.

The Baseline Analysis phase provides the analytical foundation for the entire Climate City Contract. Its purpose is to understand where the city stands today, how its systems function, and what gaps must be closed to reach climate neutrality by 2030.

This phase produces the evidence base for the Action Plan, Investment Plan, and stakeholder commitments.

Without a robust baseline, the CCC cannot be credible, measurable, or investment-ready.

6.1 GHG Inventory

The GHG inventory is the core analytical output of Phase 2.

It quantifies emissions across all major sectors and scopes using the 2026 IPCC methodology (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, 2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines) <https://www.ipcc.ch/> or GPC-aligned methods.

This includes:

- emissions by sector (stationary energy, transport, waste, IPPU, AFOLU),
- emissions by scope (Scope 1, 2, and optionally 3),
- emissions by gas (CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, F-gases),
- data sources, assumptions, and emission factors,
- documentation of uncertainties and data gaps.

The GHG inventory:

- establishes the baseline year (as recent as possible, representative),
- identifies the largest emitting sectors,
- supports the emissions gap analysis,
- informs sectoral pathways and investment needs.

Enterprises covered by the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) are not included in the emissions inventory. Where specific sectors or areas within the city are particularly challenging, they may be excluded from this process.

Table 1: Explanation and examples of Scopes, Major Sectors, and IPCC 2006 Methodology

Category	Description	What It Includes	Examples for Cities
Scope 1 – Direct Emissions	Emissions occurring within the city boundary from sources owned or controlled by the city or local actors.	Fuel combustion, industrial processes, municipal fleets, fugitive emissions.	Heating in buildings, city buses (diesel/CNG), industrial chimneys, refrigerant leaks.
Scope 2 – Indirect Emissions from Purchased Energy	Emissions occurring outside the city, caused by energy consumed inside the city.	Purchased electricity, district heating, cooling, steam.	Electricity for households, public buildings, trams, metro; heat from external CHP plants.
Scope 3 – Other Indirect Emissions	Emissions occurring outside the city boundary, caused by activities, consumption, and economic life within the city.	Supply chains, waste treatment, travel, materials, upstream fuel emissions.	Air travel by residents, production of construction materials, imported goods, waste processed elsewhere.
Stationary Energy	Emissions from fuel combustion in buildings and facilities.	Residential, commercial, public buildings; energy plants; district heating.	Gas boilers, biomass heating, CHP plants, electricity use in buildings.
Transport	Emissions from all transport modes operating within the city.	Road transport, public transport, freight, off-road vehicles.	Cars, buses, delivery vans, construction machinery, taxis.
Waste & Wastewater	Emissions from waste treatment and disposal.	Landfills, composting, anaerobic digestion, incineration, wastewater treatment.	Landfill methane, wastewater N ₂ O, waste transport.
IPPU (Industrial Processes & Product Use)	Emissions from industrial chemical/physical processes, not from fuel combustion.	Cement, lime, chemicals, metals, refrigerants, solvents.	F-gas leakage, cement production, chemical manufacturing.
AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry & Other Land Use)	Emissions and removals from land use and biological processes.	Livestock, soils, forests, urban green areas, land-use change.	Carbon sequestration in parks, emissions from livestock, soil management.
Other (Optional)	Additional sectors relevant to the city.	Ports, airports, tourism, digital infrastructure.	Airport emissions (Scope 3), port operations.
IPCC 2006 Methodology	Standardised global method for calculating GHG emissions.	Activity data + emission factors + formulas; Tier 1–3 methods.	Fuel consumption × emission factor; waste volumes × CH ₄ factor.

IPCC Tiers	Levels of methodological detail.	Tier 1 (default factors), Tier 2 (national factors), Tier 3 (detailed models).	Tier 1 for buildings, Tier 2 for transport, Tier 3 for industry.
Gases Included	Greenhouse gases covered by IPCC.	CO ₂ , CH ₄ , N ₂ O, HFCs, PFCs, SF ₆ , NF ₃ .	CO ₂ from fuel, CH ₄ from waste, N ₂ O from wastewater, F-gases from cooling.

Source: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2006). *2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*. IGES.; World Resources Institute & World Business Council for Sustainable Development. (2004). *The Greenhouse Gas Protocol: A Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard*.; NetZeroCities. (2023). *GHG Inventory Guidance for Mission Cities*. NetZeroCities Consortium.; ICLEI, C40, & WRI. (2014). *Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories (GPC).6.2 Strategy Review*

Cities often have many existing plans, but they are fragmented. The strategy review consolidates and evaluates all relevant documents on national, regional and local level to understand the current policy landscape.

Analyse existing plans:

- climate strategies,
- mobility plans,
- energy plans,
- urban development plans,
- circular economy strategies,
- regional and national policies affecting the city.

The review identifies:

- what is already planned,
- what is outdated or insufficient,
- where policies overlap or contradict,
- which actions can be integrated into the CCC,
- which gaps require new interventions.

This ensures the CCC builds on existing work rather than duplicating it.

6.3 System Mapping

System mapping helps the city understand, how its key urban systems function, how they interact, and where leverage points exist.

Systems typically analysed:

- Energy system (generation, distribution, consumption)
- Mobility system (flows, modes, infrastructure)
- Building stock (age, typology, energy performance)
- Waste and circular economy system
- Green and blue infrastructure
- Digital and data infrastructure
- Residual emissions

System mapping reveals:

- structural barriers,

- lock ins (e.g., fossil based district heating),
- opportunities (e.g., unused rooftops for PV),
- interdependencies between sectors,
- where interventions will have the highest impact.

It supports the design of impact pathways and cross sectoral actions.

6.4 Gap Analysis

The gap analysis compares the city's current trajectory with the 2030 climate neutrality target.

Identify:

- the emissions gap (difference between baseline and target),
- the policy gap (missing or insufficient measures),
- the investment gap (funding needs vs. available resources),
- the capacity gap (skills, governance, data),
- the stakeholder gap (actors not yet engaged or misaligned).

The gap analysis:

- defines the scale of transformation required,
- guides the prioritisation of interventions,
- informs the Investment Plan,
- supports stakeholder engagement by showing who must act.

It is the analytical bridge between the baseline and the Action Plan.

Overall Purpose of Phase 2

Phase 2 ensures that the CCC is built on evidence, data, and system understanding, not assumptions. It provides the analytical clarity needed to design realistic, impactful, and investment ready pathways to climate neutrality.

By the end of this phase, the city has:

- a complete GHG inventory,
- a consolidated policy landscape,
- a map of key urban systems,
- a clear understanding of the gaps to be closed.

This becomes the foundation for Phase 3 (Stakeholder Engagement & Co Creation) and Phase 4 (Drafting the CCC Components).

The Baseline Analysis phase forms the foundational analytical framework for the Climate City Contract (CCC), aiming to understand the city's current emissions profile, systemic functioning, and critical gaps towards achieving climate neutrality by 2030. This phase produces essential evidence, including a comprehensive GHG inventory that quantifies emissions across sectors and scopes, identifies the largest emitters, and supports emissions gap analysis and sectoral planning. It also involves reviewing existing policies and strategies, mapping key urban systems to reveal interdependencies and leverage points, and performing a gap analysis to assess the difference between current trajectories and climate targets. Together, these activities ensure that the CCC is rooted in reliable data, systemic understanding, and strategic priorities, enabling realistic and impactful pathways to sustainability.

Overall, Phase 2 equips the city with a detailed evidence base—comprising an accurate GHG inventory, a consolidated policy landscape, a system map, and identified transformation gaps—that informs subsequent stakeholder engagement and co-creation efforts. This analytical rigor ensures the CCC is credible, measurable, and investment-ready, laying a strong foundation for designing targeted interventions, mobilizing resources, and aligning city actions with long-term climate goals. By systematically integrating data and insights, the city sets the stage for effective, coordinated climate action in the following phases.

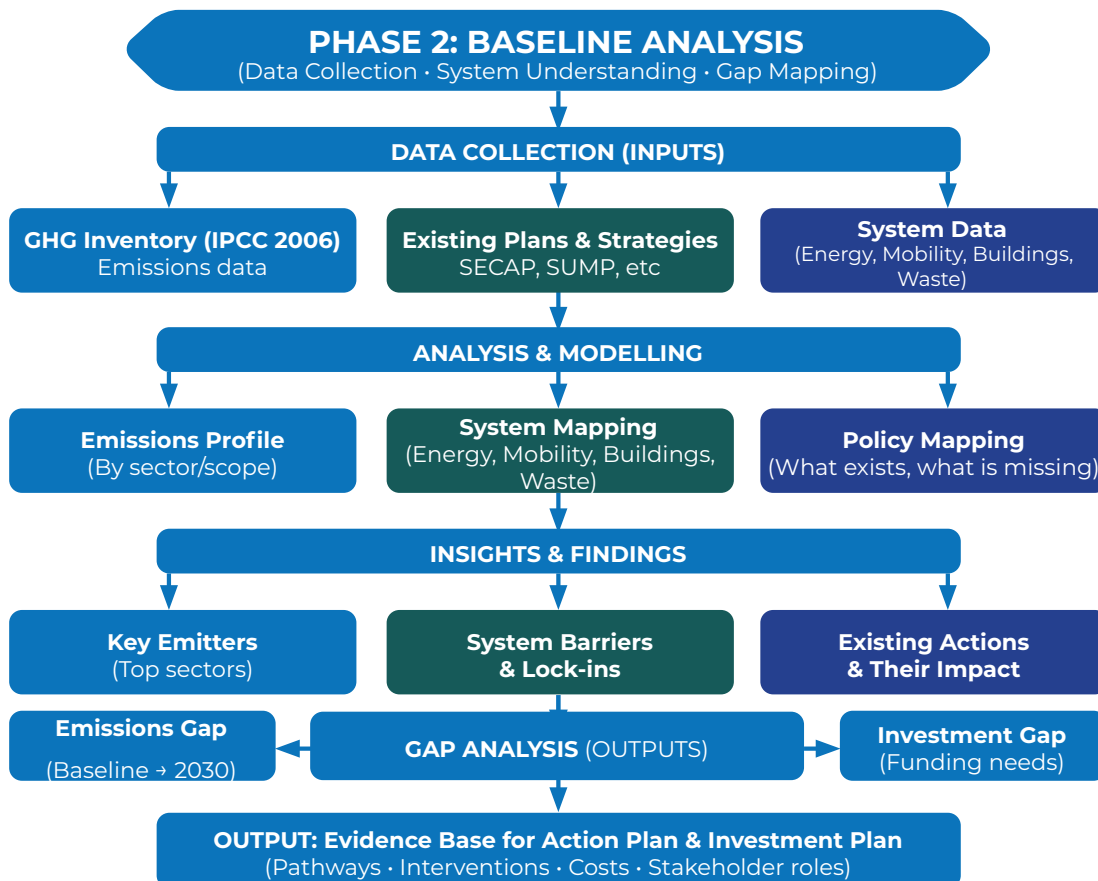


Figure 4: Methodological Framework for Phase 2: Baseline Analysis



7. Phase 3: Stakeholder Engagement & Co Creation (3–9 months)

The provided text for Phase 3 is comprehensive, covering stakeholder engagement activities, the stakeholder forum, climate neutrality audit, ecosystem building, and co-creation of CCC components. However, some key elements are missing or could be expanded to enhance clarity and effectiveness:

- **Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement Planning:** Before launching the forum, a detailed stakeholder mapping and engagement strategy should be conducted to identify key actors, their influence, and tailored engagement approaches. This planning ensures inclusivity and prevents overlooking critical stakeholders.
- **Communication and Outreach Strategy:** A clear plan for ongoing communication, transparency, and outreach is missing. Regular updates, feedback channels, and accessible information are essential to maintain stakeholder trust and participation throughout the process.
- **Capacity Building and Support for Stakeholders:** Stakeholders may require technical assistance, training, or resources to effectively participate in co-creation and audits. Including capacity-building activities ensures meaningful engagement and quality contributions.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation of Engagement Processes:** Mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of stakeholder participation, forum activities, and co-creation efforts should be established. This allows continuous improvement and ensures the process remains inclusive and impactful.
- **Conflict Resolution and Managing Resistance:** Strategies for addressing disagreements, resistance, or diverse interests among stakeholders are not mentioned. Proactively managing conflicts helps sustain collaboration and shared purpose.
- **Legal and Policy Frameworks for Engagement:** Clarifying any legal or policy requirements that support stakeholder involvement and co-creation can reinforce legitimacy and formalize commitments.

Phase 3 is where the Climate City Contract becomes a shared mission, not just a municipal document. This phase activates the city's full ecosystem — utilities, industry, SMEs, academia, NGOs, citizens, and financial actors — and transforms them from observers into co owners of the climate neutrality transition.

The goal is to build legitimacy, shared responsibility, and coordinated action, ensuring that the CCC reflects the real capabilities, commitments, and needs of all actors who influence emissions.

7.1 Launch the Stakeholder Forum

The Stakeholder Forum is the central participation platform of the CCC. It brings together all relevant actors in a structured, transparent, and inclusive process.

It does:

- hosts plenary meetings to present progress and gather input,
- organises thematic working groups (energy, mobility, buildings, circular economy, etc.),
- facilitates co creation workshops,
- validates draft components of the CCC,
- builds trust and shared ownership.

Up to 90% of emissions are controlled by actors outside the city administration. The Forum ensures that these actors are actively involved, not passively informed.

7.2 Conduct the Stakeholder Climate Neutrality Audit

The Stakeholder Audit is a data driven assessment of each actor's readiness, influence, and alignment with climate neutrality.

A data-driven assessment of each stakeholder covering, at a minimum:

- readiness,
- climate maturity,
- commitment potential,
- emissions responsibility,
- barriers and enablers.

Outputs include:

- classification of stakeholders (champions, enablers, followers, laggards, critical actors),
- engagement strategy tailored to each group,
- risk map showing where resistance or gaps may occur,
- evidence for stakeholder specific commitments in the CCC.

The audit ensures that commitments in the CCC are:

- realistic,
- targeted,
- measurable,
- and aligned with actual influence on emissions.

7.3 Build the Local Ecosystem

A successful CCC requires a functioning ecosystem, not isolated actors. This phase strengthens the city's innovation, governance, and collaboration infrastructure.

Develop the enabling environment:

- Living labs and testbeds for piloting solutions.
- Innovation districts and climate-neutral zones.
- Data infrastructure for monitoring and decision-making.
- Partnerships with universities, utilities, investors, and community groups.
- Public-private collaboration models (PPPs, innovation clusters).

A strong ecosystem:

- accelerates implementation,
- mobilises investment,
- supports experimentation,
- and enables scaling of successful solutions.

7.4 Co Create the CCC Components

Stakeholders actively contribute to the development of all three CCC components.

Stakeholders contribute to:

- shared ambition,
- sectoral interventions (energy, mobility, buildings, waste, NBS),
- investment needs and opportunities,

- governance improvements.

Co creation ensures that:

- actions are feasible and supported,
- investments are aligned with market actors,
- commitments are credible,
- and the CCC reflects the real dynamics of the city.

Overall Purpose of Phase 3

Phase 3 transforms the CCC from a municipal document into a city wide mission. It builds the relationships, trust, and shared ownership needed for implementation.

By the end of this phase, the city has:

- an active Stakeholder Forum,
- a completed Stakeholder Audit,
- a functioning climate neutrality ecosystem,
- and co created content for the Commitments, Action Plan, and Investment Plan.

This prepares the ground for Phase 4: Drafting the CCC Components, where all inputs are consolidated into the formal CCC package.

The overall purpose of Phase 3 is to actively engage stakeholders, co-create solutions, and build consensus around the Climate City Contract (CCC). This phase ensures that diverse voices, including citizens, businesses, community groups, and public authorities, are involved in shaping realistic, accepted, and innovative pathways to achieve climate neutrality. By fostering collaboration and shared ownership, Phase 3 aims to align interests, leverage local knowledge, and generate commitment and momentum for implementing the actions identified in the CCC. Ultimately, this phase helps transform analytical plans into practical, jointly agreed-upon strategies that drive effective and inclusive climate action.

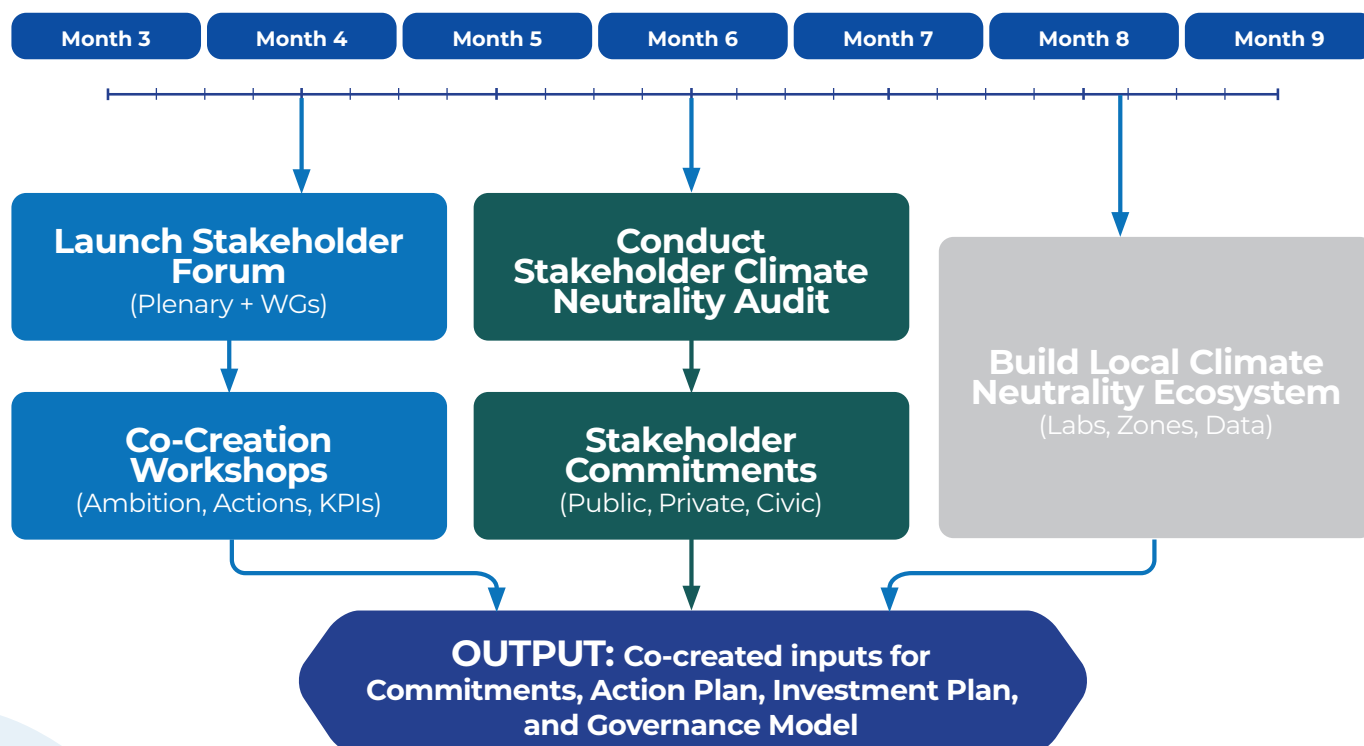


Figure 5: Roadmap for Phase 3: Stakeholder Engagement & Co-Creation

8. Phase 4: Drafting the CCC Components (6–12 months)

The current draft provides a comprehensive overview of Phase 4, covering the drafting of commitments, action plans, investment plans, coherence, and outputs. However, some potentially important elements that could enhance this section include:

Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback Process: Explicit mention of how stakeholder validation and feedback will be incorporated before finalization. Clarifying the mechanisms for stakeholder review can strengthen legitimacy and buy-in.

- **Quality Assurance and Review:** Details about internal review processes, expert validation, or peer review to ensure the robustness, accuracy, and consistency of the drafted components.
- **Integration with Existing Frameworks and Policies:** Reference to how the CCC components align with national policies, international agreements (e.g., Paris Agreement), or existing city strategies.
- **Timeline and Milestones:** A clear outline of key milestones within Phase 4, including deadlines for drafts, review periods, and finalization steps.
- **Capacity Building and Support:** Mention of any training, technical assistance, or resources provided to teams responsible for drafting these components.
- **Risk of Misalignment or Gaps:** Discussion of potential risks in developing these components and strategies to mitigate misalignment or gaps.
- **Documentation and Record-Keeping:** Procedures for documenting the drafting process, decisions made, and versions of each component.
- **Legal and Policy Considerations:** Mention of any legal or policy frameworks that the drafts must comply with or incorporate.

Phase 4 is where all analytical work (Phase 2) and stakeholder co creation (Phase 3) are transformed into formal, coherent, and investment ready documents. This is the phase in which the City Climate Contract (CCC) becomes a structured package consisting of:

1. 2030 Climate Neutrality Commitments (Core Contract),
2. 2030 Action Plan,
3. 2030 Investment Plan.

These three components must be aligned, mutually reinforcing, and ready for validation in Phase 5.

8.1 Draft the Commitments

The Commitments form the strategic and political backbone of the CCC. They define the shared ambition and the governance model that will guide implementation.

Define:

- Shared 2030 climate neutrality ambition (the level of GHG emissions reduction) and strategic objectives,
- Governance model (roles, decision making, coordination mechanisms),
- Stakeholder commitments (public, private, civic actors),
- Multi-level governance alignment (regional and national cooperation).

The Commitments:

- provide political legitimacy,
- establish a unified direction,
- build trust with investors and EU support providers,
- ensure that climate neutrality is a shared responsibility.

8.2 Draft the 2030 Action Plan

The Action Plan is the technical and operational core of the CCC. It translates ambition and strategic objectives into concrete interventions, sectoral pathways, and measurable indicators.

Develop:

- sectoral pathways for energy, mobility, buildings, waste, nature based solutions, focus on key sectors,
- interventions (projects, pilots, regulatory changes, programs),
- KPIs for monitoring progress,
- prioritisation criteria based on impact, feasibility, and readiness.

The Action Plan builds on:

- the GHG inventory,
- system mapping,
- gap analysis,
- stakeholder co creation,
- and stakeholder commitments.

The Action Plan is essential for:

- implementation,
- investment planning,
- monitoring,
- and achieving measurable progress toward 2030.

Design your pathway and measures with co-benefits in mind—enhancing quality of life for residents, improving health and air quality, while supporting the environment, biodiversity, and public space.

8.3 Draft the 2030 Investment Plan

The Investment Plan is the financial engine of the CCC. It ensures that the interventions in the Action Plan are financially viable and scalable.

The Investment Plan includes:

- investment needs (CAPEX, OPEX, scaling costs),
- financing models (public, private, blended finance, PPPs),
- investment packages (e.g., buildings, mobility, energy systems),
- risk assessment (financial, regulatory, market risks).

A strong Investment Plan:

- increases investor confidence,
- enables access to EU and national funding,
- and ensures long term financial sustainability.

8.4. Ensuring Coherence Between the Three Components

The three CCC components must be fully aligned:

- Commitments define what the city aims to achieve.
- Action Plan defines how the city will achieve it.
- Investment Plan defines how it will be financed.

Coherence is essential for:

- credibility,
- stakeholder trust,
- and successful implementation.

8.5. Outputs of Phase 4

By the end of this phase, the city has:

- draft 2030 Climate Neutrality Commitments.
- draft 2030 Action Plan.
- draft 2030 Investment Plan.

A coherent CCC package ready for:

- stakeholder validation,
- political approval.

Overall Purpose of Phase 4

Phase 4 transforms data, analysis, and co creation into a complete, structured, and investment ready Climate City Contract. It is the most critical phase for ensuring the CCC is the draft CCC components (Commitments, Action Plan, Investment Plan) are presented to the Stakeholder Forum and key actors for review and validation. Credible, actionable, and aligned with the requirements of the EU Cities Mission.

The overall purpose of Phase 4 is to transform the comprehensive analytical work from Phase 2 and the stakeholder co-creation efforts from Phase 3 into a cohesive, structured, and investment-ready Climate City Contract (CCC). This phase involves drafting and aligning three key components: the Climate Neutrality Commitments, the 2030 Action Plan, and the 2030 Investment Plan. Together, these elements form a credible, strategic, and operational package that clearly defines the city's climate ambitions, the concrete pathways to achieve them, and the financial mechanisms to fund necessary interventions. Ensuring coherence and mutual reinforcement among these components is vital for building stakeholder trust, securing political approval, and setting the stage for successful implementation.

By the end of Phase 4, the city has a complete draft of the CCC that is ready for validation by stakeholders and political authorities. This ensures that the CCC is not only based on rigorous analysis and inclusive co-creation but also structured in a way that is credible, actionable, and aligned with EU requirements. The phase's goal is to produce a coherent, comprehensive, and investment-ready package that paves the way for formal approval, effective implementation, and measurable progress toward the city's climate neutrality goals by 2030.

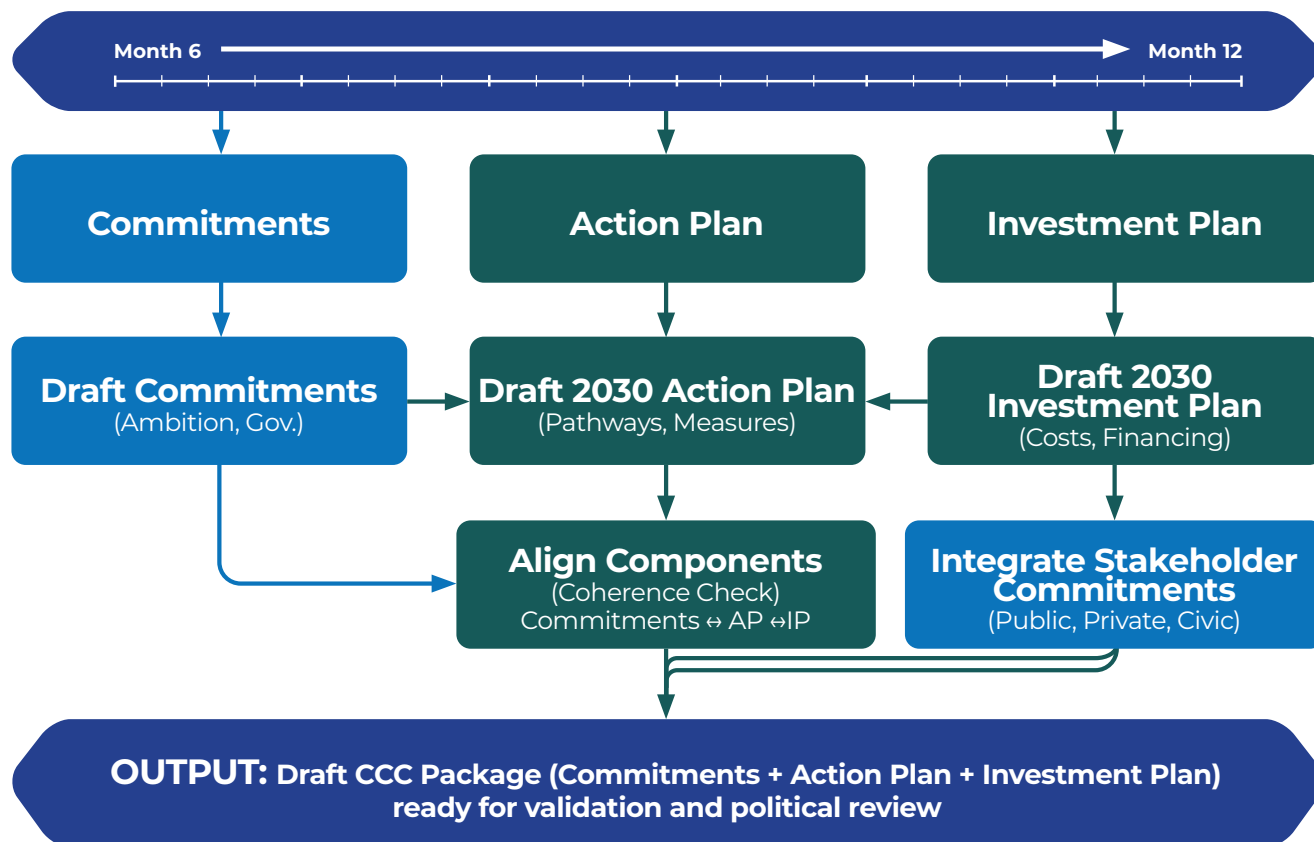


Figure 6. Roadmap for Phase 4: Drafting the CCC Components



9. Phase 5: Validation & Approval (10–12 months)

Phase 5 ensures that the Climate City Contract (CCC) is credible, aligned and politically supported. This phase transforms the draft CCC package into a validated, approved, and officially endorsed contract that reflects the city's ambition and the commitments of its stakeholders:

- **Stakeholder Engagement Strategy Development:** While stakeholder mapping is mentioned, explicitly developing a formal strategy for ongoing engagement, co-creation, and feedback mechanisms ensures sustained participation and buy-in throughout the process.
- **Establishment of Data and Monitoring Frameworks:** Setting up initial data collection, management, and monitoring systems early on ensures that data-driven decision-making and tracking progress are embedded from the start.
- **Alignment with Broader Urban and Climate Strategies:** Explicitly emphasizing the integration of the CCC with existing city development plans, sustainability strategies, and regional or national climate commitments avoids duplication and enhances coherence.
- **Legal and Regulatory Considerations:** Assessing and addressing any legal or regulatory barriers that may impact CCC development and implementation, such as permitting processes or data sharing agreements.
- **Change Management and Organizational Culture:** Beyond communication, fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and climate awareness within city departments and stakeholders helps sustain momentum.
- **Technology and Digital Infrastructure Assessment:** Evaluating existing digital tools, platforms, and infrastructure that support climate data management, stakeholder engagement, and reporting.
- **Initial Pilot Activities or Quick Wins:** Identifying and implementing early small-scale initiatives that demonstrate progress and build momentum can be valuable.
- **Clear Roles and Responsibilities for All Actors:** Beyond governance structures, explicitly defining roles, responsibilities, and expectations for each stakeholder and department ensures accountability.

9.1 Stakeholder Validation

The draft CCC components (Commitments, Action Plan, Investment Plan) are presented to the Stakeholder Forum and key actors for review and validation.

This includes:

- presenting the full CCC package,
- collecting feedback from utilities, industry, SMEs, academia, NGOs, citizens,
- validating stakeholder commitments,
- ensuring feasibility and alignment with real world capabilities,
- resolving inconsistencies or conflicts.

Stakeholder validation ensures:

- shared ownership,
- realistic commitments,
- alignment with market actors,
- and credibility for EU support.

It confirms that the CCC is not only a municipal document but a city wide agreement.

Before political approval, the CCC undergoes a technical quality check.

Review includes:

- coherence between Commitments, Action Plan, and Investment Plan,
- consistency with GHG inventory and gap analysis,
- clarity of KPIs and monitoring framework,
- financial realism of investment packages,
- governance and implementation readiness.

This step ensures the CCC is:

- technically sound,
- internally consistent,
- aligned with EU Mission requirements,
- and ready for political decision making.

9.2 Political Approval

The CCC must be formally approved by the city's political leadership.

Typical approval steps:

- presentation to the Mayor and City Executive,
- review by relevant committees,
- approval by City Council (resolution or formal mandate).

Political approval:

- gives the CCC legal and institutional legitimacy,
- ensures long-term commitment beyond election cycles,
- signals seriousness to investors and the EU support.

Cities participating in the EU Mission for 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030 submit their Climate City Contracts (CCCs) to the European Commission for assessment. Following a successful review, cities are awarded the Mission Label, which acknowledges both the quality of their Climate City Contract and their commitment to accelerating the transition towards climate neutrality. Cities from countries associated with Horizon Europe that participate in the Cities Mission initiative are also eligible to apply for the EU Mission Label.

Overall Purpose of Phase 5

Phase 5 ensures that the CCC is:

- validated by stakeholders,
- technically robust,
- politically approved,

By the end of this phase, the city has a fully endorsed, high quality Climate City Contract ready for implementation.

The overall purpose of Phase 5 is to ensure that the Climate City Contract (CCC) is credible, fully validated, and officially endorsed. This phase involves comprehensive stakeholder validation to confirm shared ownership and alignment with real-world capabilities, followed by securing formal political approval to grant the CCC legal legitimacy and long-term commitment. By transforming the draft CCC into a validated, approved, and politically supported document, Phase 5 establishes a solid foundation for effective implementation, ensuring the CCC reflects the city's ambitions, stakeholder commitments, and is positioned for successful delivery of climate neutrality goals in alignment with regional, national, and EU targets.

10. Phase 6: Implementation & Monitoring (Year 1–3)

Phase 6 marks the transition from planning to real world delivery. With the CCC approved, the city enters a multi year cycle of implementation, monitoring, learning, and continuous improvement.

This phase ensures that the commitments, actions, and investments outlined in the CCC translate into measurable progress toward climate neutrality.

10.1 Launch Interventions of Priority Actions

The city begins implementing the highest impact, highest readiness interventions identified in the Action Plan.

Implement:

- initiating flagship projects (energy, mobility, buildings, circular economy, NBS),
- launching pilots and living labs,
- scaling successful solutions across districts,
- coordinating with utilities, industry, SMEs, and community partners,
- securing financing for investment packages.

Early implementation:

- builds momentum,
- demonstrates credibility,
- attracts investors,
- and delivers visible benefits to citizens.

10.2. Operationalise the Governance Model

The governance structures defined in the CCC become fully active.

Key elements:

- Transition Team /City Climate Office leads coordination and reporting.
- Steering Committee provides strategic oversight.
- Sectoral Working Groups manage implementation in their domains.
- Data Governance Board ensures data quality and access.
- Stakeholder Forum continues as a co creation and monitoring platform.

Strong governance ensures:

- accountability,
- cross departmental coordination,
- stakeholder alignment,
- and rapid problem solving.

10.3. Establish the Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) System

A robust MEL system tracks progress toward 2030 climate neutrality.

The MEL system includes:

- annual (periodic) GHG inventory updates,
- KPI tracking for all interventions,
- dashboards and data platforms,

- progress reports for stakeholders,
- learning loops to adjust actions and investments.

Monitoring ensures:

- transparency,
- evidence based decision making,
- early detection of delays or gaps,
- and continuous improvement.

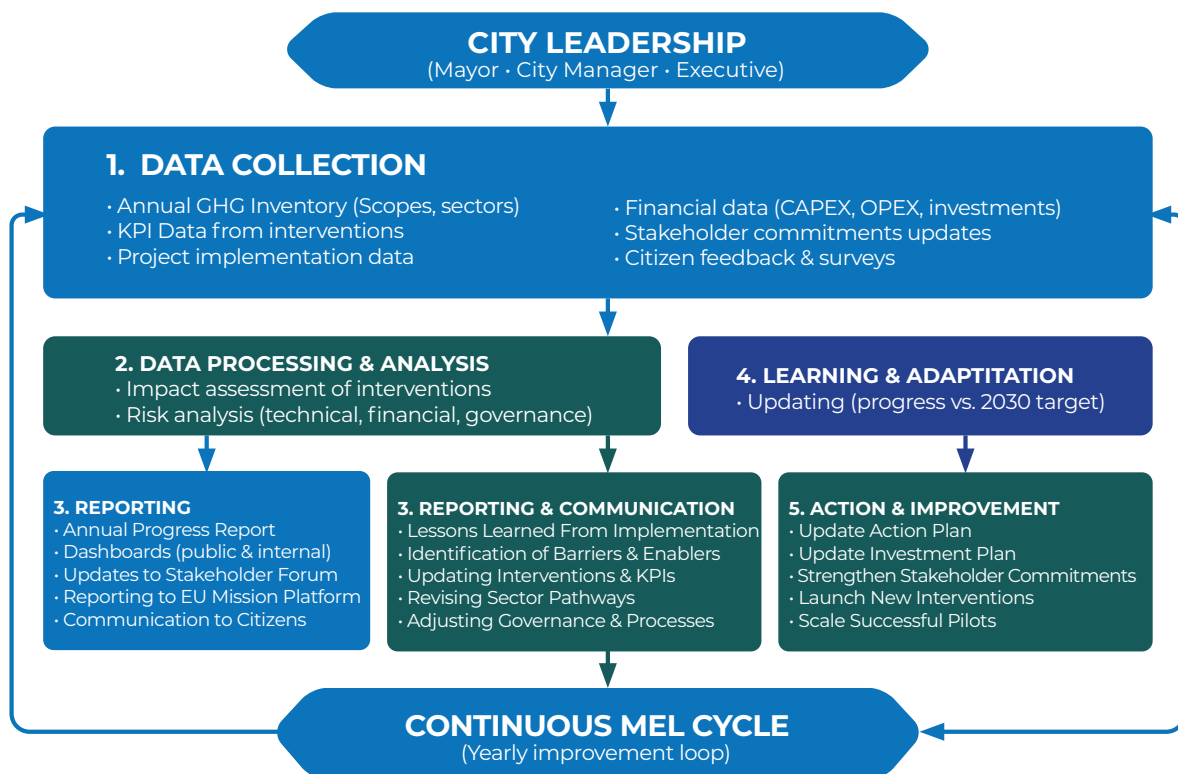


Figure 7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Framework

10.4. Update the Action Plan and Investment Plan

Implementation generates new insights, requiring periodic updates.

Update:

- sectoral pathways,
- intervention lists,
- KPIs and targets,
- investment needs and financing models,
- stakeholder commitments.

Cities operate in dynamic environments. Updating the plans ensures the CCC remains:

- relevant,
- realistic,
- aligned with new technologies,
- and responsive to market and policy changes.

10.5. Maintain Stakeholder Engagement

The Stakeholder Forum continues to play a central role.

Activities include:

- co designing new interventions,
- validating progress,
- updating commitments,
- mobilising new partners,
- communicating results to the public.

Climate neutrality requires whole city mobilisation. Ongoing engagement ensures shared ownership and sustained momentum.

10.6. Report Progress

Reporting includes:

- annual progress reports,
- updated GHG inventories,
- updated KPIs,
- financial progress and investment mobilisation,
- governance and stakeholder engagement updates.

Transparent reporting:

- strengthens investor confidence,
- maintains EU support.

Overall Purpose of Phase 6

Phase 6 ensures that the CCC becomes a living, evolving, and operational framework that drives real emissions reductions. It shifts the city from planning to delivery, supported by strong governance, continuous monitoring, and active stakeholder participation.

By the end of Year 3, the city should have:

- implemented key interventions,
- established a functioning MEL system,
- updated its Action and Investment Plans,
- and demonstrated measurable progress toward climate neutrality.

The overall purpose of Phase 6 is to transition from planning to active implementation, ensuring that the commitments, actions, and investments outlined in the Climate City Contract (CCC) are effectively executed and produce measurable progress toward climate neutrality. This phase establishes a dynamic, operational framework supported by strong governance, continuous monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems. Through the rollout of priority interventions, active stakeholder engagement, and regular progress reporting, Phase 6 aims to embed the CCC into the city's ongoing operations, fostering transparency, adaptability, and sustained momentum toward achieving long-term climate goals.

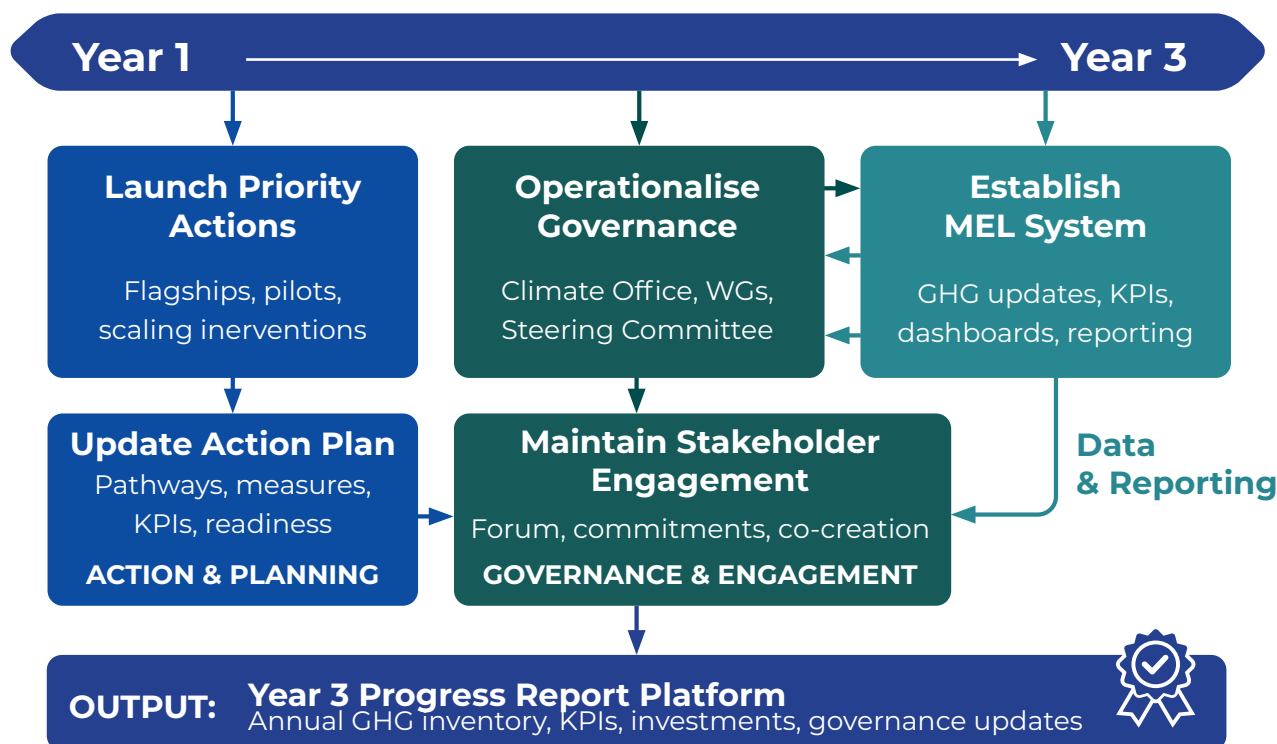


Figure 8. Roadmap for Phase 7: Implementation & Monitoring (Years 1–3)

Summary

In addition to establishing a strategic framework, the CCC emphasizes inclusive stakeholder engagement, ensuring diverse community voices contribute to the process. Continuous capacity building and knowledge exchange are integral to maintaining momentum and adapting strategies. The approach incorporates risk management and contingency planning to address uncertainties, while digital tools and open data facilitate transparent monitoring and decision-making. The CCC aligns with broader urban resilience and sustainability objectives, leveraging diverse funding sources to scale impactful solutions. Effective communication strategies foster public support and active participation, creating an environment where innovation and emerging technologies accelerate the transition toward a climate-neutral city. This comprehensive, adaptive approach positions the city to realize long-term resilience, economic growth, and enhanced quality of life for all citizens.

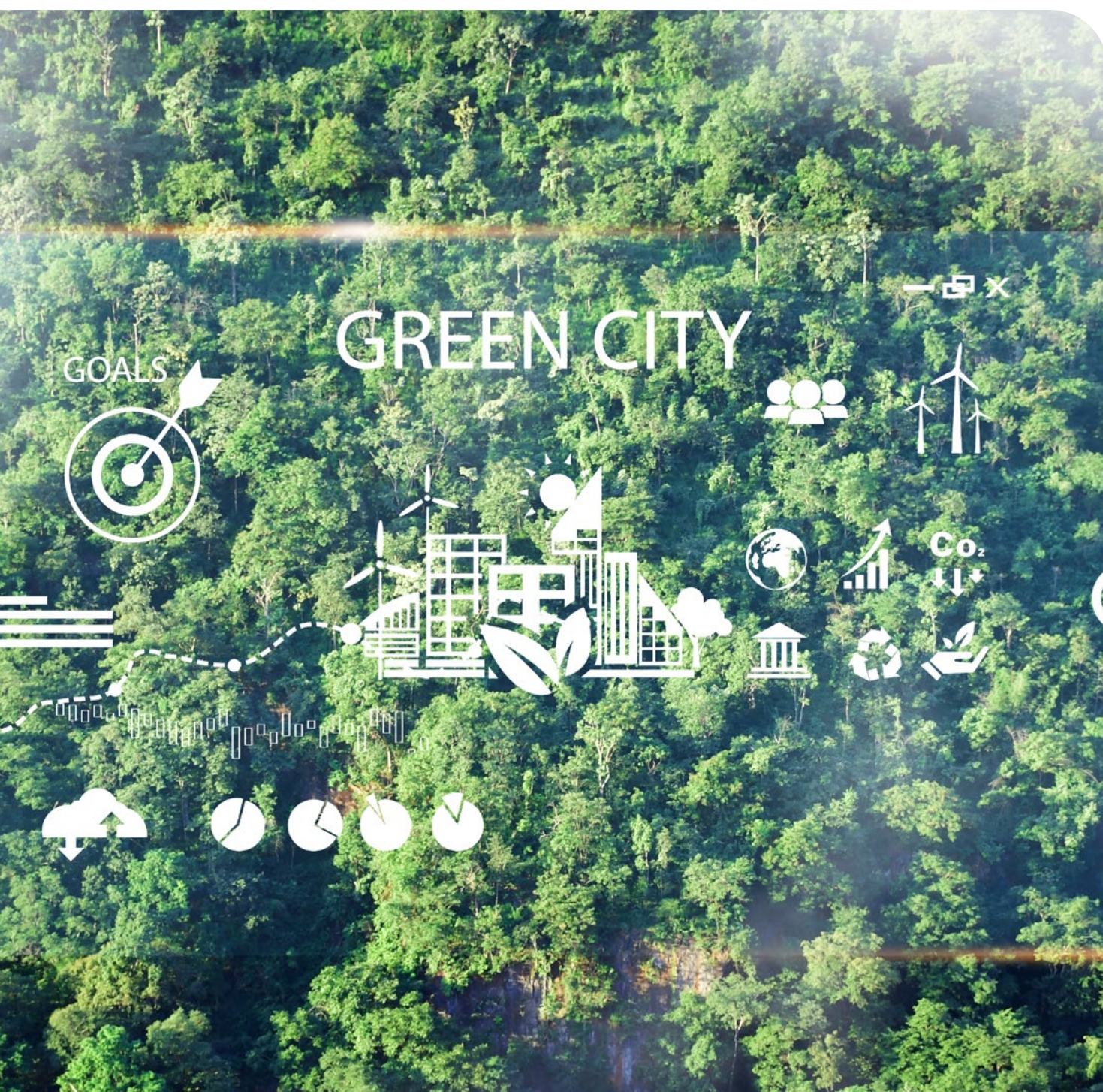
The City Climate Contract (CCC) serves as the primary strategic framework for transforming a city into a climate-neutral hub by 2030. Rather than acting as a separate policy, it functions as a unifying instrument that brings together governance, data, and finance into one investment-ready package. By aligning existing city strategies with the participation of external partners, it creates a coherent roadmap that strengthens the city's ability to attract international funding and private investment.

The core of the CCC is built upon three essential pillars that ensure the transition is both actionable and financially grounded. The Commitments section defines the shared ambition and the governance model, establishing clear roles for both public and private actors. The Action Plan outlines the technical sectoral pathways, such as energy and mobility, by identifying the specific interventions needed to eliminate emissions. Finally, the Investment Plan translates these goals into financial reality by detailing capital requirements, operational costs, and the financing models necessary to scale solutions.

The process follows a logical progression that begins with a strong foundation and ends with long-term implementation. It starts by establishing transition team to manage coordination and performing a baseline analysis to map emissions and policy gaps. This is followed by a co-creation phase where the city ecosystem—including utilities, industry, and academia—works together to design solutions. Once the plan receives political approval and stakeholder validation, its implementation started.

The city moves from planning to action by launching flagship projects and operationalizing its governance structures. Through a continuous cycle of monitoring, evaluation, and learning, the city tracks its progress against key indicators and adapts its strategy as new technologies emerge. For city leadership, this provides a clear mandate to drive economic resilience and innovation while significantly improving the quality of life for all citizens.

From ambition to action—your city's path to climate neutrality starts now.



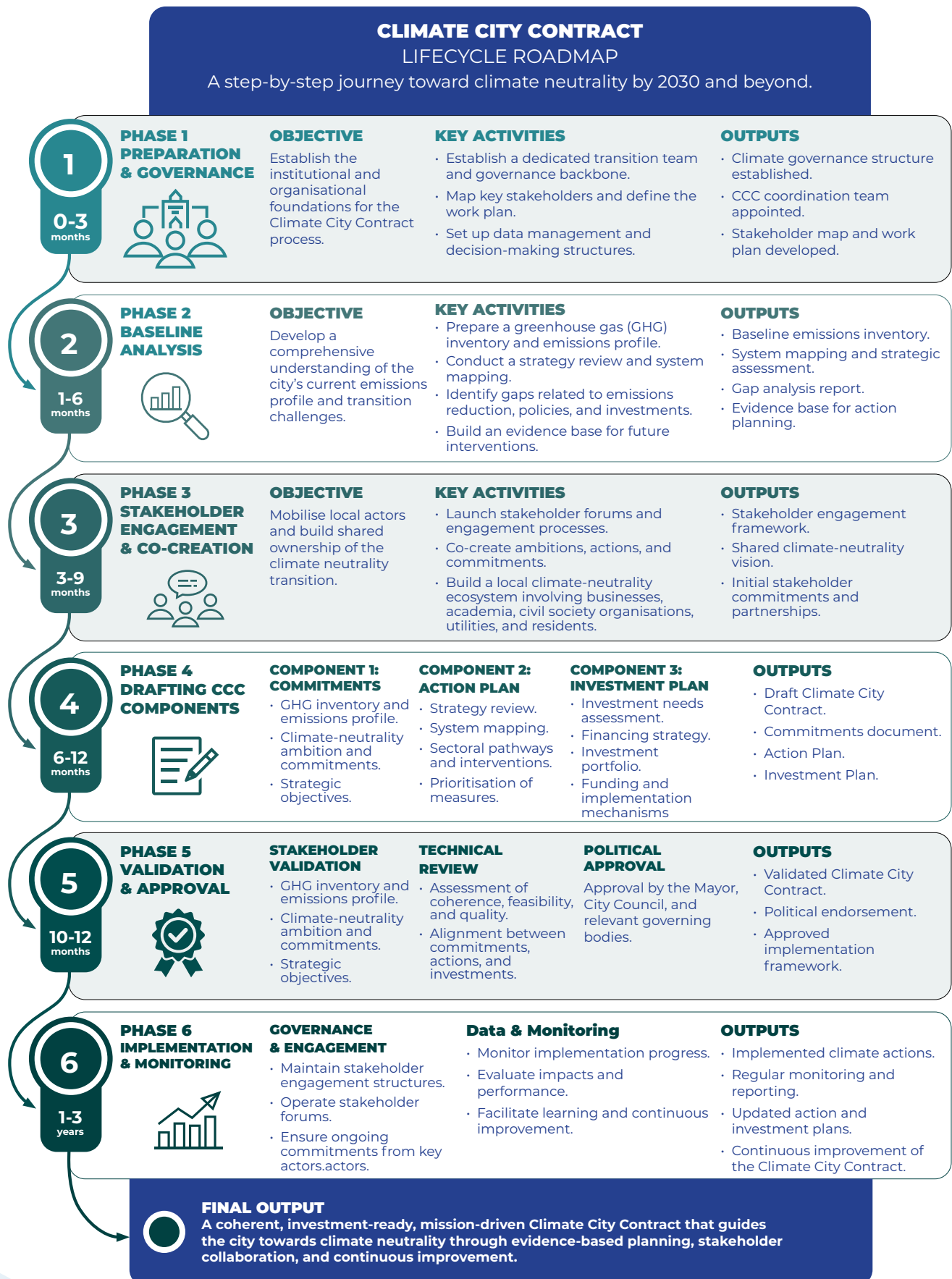


Figure 9. The City Climate Contract (CCC) Lifecycle Roadmap

Appendix I – Glossary of Terms

Action Plan: A structured set of interventions, projects, and policies designed to achieve climate neutrality targets by 2030.

Baseline Analysis: An assessment of the city's current emissions profile, systems, policies, and gaps related to climate neutrality.

CAPEX: Capital expenditures required for investments in infrastructure, technologies, and climate interventions.

CCC (Climate City Contract): A strategic framework that aligns commitments, actions, investments, and governance mechanisms to support climate neutrality.

Climate Neutrality: Achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions through emission reductions and residual emissions balancing.

Co-Creation: A collaborative process where stakeholders jointly design actions, policies, and solutions.

Data Governance Board: A governance structure responsible for ensuring data quality, consistency, transparency, and accessibility.

GHG Inventory: A quantified assessment of greenhouse gas emissions across sectors and scopes within the city.

IPCC Methodology: The internationally recognized methodology developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for calculating emissions.

Investment Plan: A financial framework outlining investment needs, funding sources, financing models, and risk assessments.

KPI (Key Performance Indicator): A measurable indicator used to monitor progress toward climate neutrality objectives.

Living Labs: Real-world testing environments used to pilot and evaluate innovative climate solutions.

MEL System: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning system used to track implementation progress and adapt strategies.

Multi-Level Governance: Coordination between local, regional, national, and EU actors involved in climate action.

Nature-Based Solutions (NBS): Actions that use natural processes and ecosystems to address climate and environmental challenges.

OPEX: Operational expenditures related to maintaining and operating climate interventions and services.

Scope 1 Emissions: Direct greenhouse gas emissions occurring within the city boundary from owned or controlled sources.

Scope 2 Emissions: Indirect emissions from purchased electricity, heating, cooling, or steam consumed within the city.

Scope 3 Emissions: Indirect emissions occurring outside the city boundary but linked to activities within the city.

Stakeholder Forum: A participatory platform involving public, private, civic, and community actors in the CCC process.

System Mapping: An analytical process used to understand urban systems, interdependencies, and leverage points.

Transition Team: A dedicated coordination team responsible for managing the development and implementation of the CCC.

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