

Integrated peri-urban areas in the transition towards climate neutrality

Call: [Changing urban spaces and mindsets to accelerate the transition to climate neutrality \(HORIZON-MISS-2024-CIT-01\)](#)

Programme: Horizon Europe (HORIZON)

Call: Changing urban spaces and mindsets to accelerate the transition to climate neutrality (HORIZON-MISS-2024-CIT-01)

Type of action: HORIZON-IA HORIZON Innovation Actions

Deadline model: single-stage

Opening date: 17 September 2024

Deadline date: 11 February 2025 17:00:00 Brussels time

Expected outcome:

Project results are expected to contribute to the Climate-neutral and Smart Cities Mission's objective of climate neutrality in at least 2 of the 4 domains listed below (Mobility, Energy, Industry, Governance) and give all the following outcomes in the selected domains by the end of the project:

Mobility:

- Increase accessibility and connectivity of peri-urban areas by providing inclusive, suitable and affordable alternatives with:
 - o 30% increase of sustainable transport modes, providing diversity of the transport offer, especially with regards to ensuring mass-transit, including among others energy-efficient shared and/or on-demand mobility services
 - o 20% reduction of GHG emissions
 - o 20% Improvement of air quality and noise reduction
 - o 30% Reduction of urban road congestion whilst increasing the accessibility for both passengers and freight, and the reliability, predictability and efficiency of travel times and transport operations
 - o 30% reduction of human health effects due to exposure to transport pollution
- Improved transport peri-urban network performance (demand and supply) and transport connectivity through enhanced interoperability and multimodality;
- Improved access to/from commercial and health services, educational establishments, businesses, leisure and recreational facilities for the inhabitants of peri-urban areas;
- Inclusive mobility solutions that respond to the needs of all peri-urban inhabitants, irrespective of their age, gender, economic or social status, which are co-designed with all the relevant stakeholders (including, local and regional authorities, settled populations, in-migrants, transient workers, developers, entrepreneurs, etc.), and then tested and implemented in the identified

peri-urban areas, which could have a geographical coverage that goes as far as the full functional urban area;

- Improved safety particularly for vulnerable road users;
- Optimize and improve the use of the existent infrastructure (following the principle of re-use and circularity);
- Integrated land-use and transport planning models and policies, which could have a geographical coverage that goes as far as the full functional urban area.

Energy:

- Improved and decarbonized energy grids with economic & social benefits to peri-urban areas thanks to the vicinity of the city;
- Business models, and technological solutions and/or guidance for setting up local energy communities, with RES and energy storage infrastructure co-financed by peri-urban dwellers, industrial actors and proceeds from energy sales or ancillary service provision (e.g. storage) to the city grid and/or heating and cooling networks. Together with electricity sharing leading to reduction of electricity prices for the community members, counter energy poverty, reduce fossil fuel use and facilitate sustainable mobility;
- Business models and/or guidance for energy generation (biomethane, electricity, biofuels) from agricultural waste, second generation bioenergy crops and technologies such as ground mounted solar or agrivoltaics in rural dominated peri-urban areas. They should include also thermal storage systems (seasonal STES, shorter term UTES etc) and thermal energy generation technologies (e.g. solar thermal, geothermal, etc.) for heating and cooling.

Industry:

- Reduction of GHG emissions (CO₂, methane from waste/wastewater, fluorinated gas, refrigerants) in industries located in peri-urban areas, supporting the 55% reduction goal for 2030;
- 25% improved energy efficiency in industrial processes;
- 30% increase in deployment of strategic net-zero technologies, such as solar (PV and thermal, wind, hydrogen, batteries and storage (incl. thermal energy storage), heat pumps and geothermal energy, electrolyzers and fuel cells, biogas/biomethane, carbon capture and storage (CCS), and grid technologies, notably for energy-intensive industries located in peri-urban areas;
- Reinforce the green transition of industry, through Local Green Deals, i.e., mutual agreements between city authorities and local businesses and industry and citizens associations to support the territorial sustainability agenda in the peri-urban areas;
- 25% enhanced recycling in industrial processes and materials reuse, including construction materials and demonstration and optimisation of recycling facilities for industries and processes located in peri-urban areas.

Governance:

- Capacity building (such as training courses and awareness raising activities) among local authorities, users and mobility systems providers, energy and industry stakeholders to accelerate the take-up of shared, smart and zero emission solutions and to implement their monitoring and evaluation;
- Support the development of planning and implementation skills, policy implementation/infrastructure investment impact assessment and funding aspects;
- Better integration of peri-urban areas into the current spatial/land-use/transport/landscape planning;
- Integration of development strategies with planning and regulatory documentations across different administrative levels/scales/territorial units, at least from local level to regional level).

Scope:

This call for proposals addresses the unique challenges and opportunities of peri-urban areas, the transitional spaces between urban and rural environments, often subject to unplanned development, environmental degradation, and governance limitations. The goal is to foster the integration of climate-neutral, green, and smart solutions across mobility, energy, industry, and governance to achieve sustainable and decarbonized development in these regions.

Proposals should focus on innovative approaches to address the specific dynamics of peri-urban areas, such as fragmented land use, inadequate transport infrastructure, and socio-demographic shifts, while exploring models of sustainable urban expansion. Projects must develop, test, and demonstrate scalable solutions in real-life "living laboratories" in at least three lead urban/peri-urban areas across different EU Member States, with replication in three additional areas. Key domains include:

1. **Mobility:** Reducing emissions through sustainable transport options and addressing commuter traffic impacts.
2. **Energy:** Transitioning to renewable energy sources and improving energy efficiency in industrial and residential areas.
3. **Industry:** Promoting circular economy practices, innovative recycling processes, and low-carbon industrial technologies.
4. **Governance:** Strengthening regulatory frameworks, integrated planning, and stakeholder engagement.

Proposals must prioritize co-design processes with stakeholders, measurable impact indicators, and collaboration with EU initiatives such as the Mission Platform and CIVITAS. The expected outcomes include long-term decarbonization impacts, improved social cohesion, and policy changes supporting climate-neutral and sustainable development in peri-urban areas. This interdisciplinary approach integrates Social Sciences and Humanities to enhance societal impact and inclusiveness, with a focus on vulnerable populations and gender perspectives.

Type of activities

General conditions:

1. Admissibility conditions: described in [Annex A](#) and [Annex E](#) of the Horizon Europe Work Programme General Annexes

Proposal page limits and layout: described in Part B of the Application Form available in the Submission System

2. Eligible countries: described in [Annex B](#) of the Work Programme General Annexes

A number of non-EU/non-Associated Countries that are not automatically eligible for funding have made specific provisions for making funding available for their participants in Horizon Europe projects. See the information in the [Horizon Europe Programme Guide](#).

The following exceptions apply: subject to restrictions for the protection of European communication networks.

3. Other eligibility conditions: described in [Annex B](#) of the Work Programme General Annexes

4. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion: described in [Annex C](#) of the Work Programme General Annexes

- Award criteria, scoring and thresholds are described in [Annex D](#) of the Work Programme General Annexes
- Submission and evaluation processes are described in [Annex F](#) of the Work Programme General Annexes and the [Online Manual](#)
- Indicative timeline for evaluation and grant agreement: described in [Annex F](#) of the Work Programme General Annexes

Grants awarded under this topic will be linked to the following action(s):

HORIZON-MISS-2021-CIT-02-03

Collaboration with the Cities Mission Platform[[Conceived through the Horizon 2020 project NetZeroCities - Accelerating cities' transition to net zero emissions by 2030, Grant Agreement n. 101036519, and scaled up through the topic *HORIZON-MISS-2021-CIT-02-03: Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) for the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission Platform*]] is essential and projects must ensure that appropriate provisions for activities and resources aimed at enforcing this collaboration are included in the work plan of the proposal. The collaboration with the Mission Platform must be formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding to be concluded as soon as possible after the project starting date.

6. Legal and financial set-up of the grants: described in [Annex G](#) of the Work Programme General Annexes

Specific conditions

7. Specific conditions: described in the specific topic of the [Work Programme](#)