

JOINT MISSION STATEMENT

for the MI ‘Urban Transitions’ MISSION

The Mission

The scale of action needed to tackle climate change is unmatched before in human history, and it represents both a challenge and a tremendous opportunity. Cities¹ account for nearly three-quarters of global energy consumption, 70% global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and are responsible for 80% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (IEA 2021a). An urgent and fast net-zero urban transition globally is key to meet the Paris Agreement goals. Many local and national governments have made commitments to ambitious climate action and cutting emissions, but most still need to raise their ambition, approaches are often not holistic and implementation as scale is not following.

Net-zero transitions and green recovery plans demand clear investment priorities and long-term development strategies. This represents a triple challenge for national governments. The urban transition is a driver for change and net-zero Cities are key for countries to achieve the National Determined Contributions (NDCs) and go beyond their ambition in the framework of the Paris Agreement.

To meet the global climate goals, national governments, local governments, the business sector, local stakeholders and civil society must quickly come together to develop, test, and widely replicate ambitious innovative net-zero and climate resilient approaches for sustainable, liveable and inclusive urban areas worldwide, delivering integrated co-benefits across all the Sustainable Development Goals.

¹ The term **city** is used to refer to a geographical discernible subnational entity of any size, such as communities, townships, cities, and neighborhoods, and as the subnational jurisdiction administration, such as a local government or a municipality ([GCoM 2018a](#)), understanding that the institutions of local governments may vary from country to country and terminology used in national contexts may differ ([EU Cities Infokit 2021](#))

The transformation of the urban environment must follow a long-term and holistic strategic approach involving multiple actors in the co-creation and co-implementation. Socio-cultural, environmental, market and economic barriers to far-reaching behaviour change can be overcome thanks to commitment and coordination.

The Urban Transitions Mission wants to increase the capacity of cities and national governments to overcome the most common barriers for a global urban transition to a net-zero future. It will close the gap between research, development and deployment on systemic transition pathways to net-zero, climate resilient and people-centred cities, through multi-level and multi-sectoral partnerships. It will also mobilise cities and national governments to develop and adopt innovative solutions and approaches for the urban transitions based on renewable energy sources, resilience and circular economy principles, and people-centred transition across all sectors (building and construction, mobility and waste sector particularly).

These objectives will be delivered by the UT Mission partnership following 3 Pillars:

1. **Innovative urban net-zero transition** – including the development of the **Urban Transitions net-zero framework**, helping cities to strengthen their existing climate and energy action plans and adopt systemic approaches to reach net-zero, with the potential of global replication and mainstreaming offered by the Mission’s outreach.
2. **Capacity building and funding for the net-zero urban transition** – including the creation of a **Global Knowledge Exchange Centre on emissions reduction pathways for urban environments** that aims to facilitate the management and transfer of global knowledge on urban climate action
3. **Research and innovation challenges for the global net-zero transition** – including the organisation of an **Annual Innovation Summit** to share and disseminate the Mission findings and provide a networking space to the **Global Innovation Alliance**.

Crosscutting to the Pillars, sprints and active collaboration and synergy with existing initiatives focusing on net-zero transition in the urban environment will accelerate the objectives of the Mission.

Vision and approach

This Mission is part of MI's commitment to a decade of clean energy innovation to galvanise action. It builds on the mission members' acknowledgement of the **gap between the climate and energy ambitions of governments and their approach to financing technology innovation relevant to cities**. This gap acts as a barrier to fulfilling urban needs linked to housing, mobility, and energy access. It also hampers the implementation of integrated solutions at large scale and of new business and social models in sync with private initiatives.

In light of this, the Mission will work to identify **system-wide intervention pathways for maximising the impact of investments**, thus enabling national and local governments to confidently set and deliver on ambitious clean energy and climate targets. Such global action has the potential to lead to **tipping points in the cost and scale of low-emission and climate-resilient energy solutions across sectors and across world regions**. In addition, by boosting political momentum, the Mission will ensure that more innovation happens more rapidly over the next decade.

To achieve these ambitious goals, the Mission approach is composed of the following components:

- **Simplification:** Pinpoint where existing technologies and approaches on finance, policy, governance and social aspects of the energy transition at the urban level need better integration and implementation, and spearhead new R&I and investment priorities following these needs. Offer access to guidance, tools, resources, good practices on innovative and systemic solutions at each step of the GCoM city climate action journey.
- **Scaling:** Move from pilot level to global implementation of integrated urban net-zero pathways, based on an urban transition net-zero framework that bridges the gap between ambition and implementation. Accelerate the integration of available and new technologies within the built environment, mobility and transport, industry, waste, and energy sectors.
- **Synergies:** Drive partnerships with similar and complementary initiatives at the global and national levels to help shift the system, by scaling and bringing down both technology and implementation cost of the net-zero urban transition.

The Mission will work with a cohort of 50 ambitious cities worldwide to demonstrate integrated pathways towards holistic, people-centred urban transitions built around clean energy and innovative net-zero carbon solutions. By 2030, these pathways will be validated by a group of 250 cities and inspire cities across world regions on their journey towards decarbonisation.

The global replication potential of the partnership can lead to tipping points in the cost and scale of integrated climate-resilient and accessible solutions across sectors and across world regions.

The Mission will share its findings and opportunities with cities around the world through meaningful partnerships, a **Global Knowledge Exchange Centre** and an **Annual Innovation Summit**, that will help cities implement innovative approaches in technology, resilience, governance, policy, finance/investment and social aspects in an integrated, accessible and holistic manner.

The Urban Transitions Mission will leverage existing complementary initiatives, partnerships and programmes within and beyond the Mission's consortium. It will also build on strong engagement of national governments to foster the urban transition and on support of the Global Innovation Alliance partners. Synergies with several initiatives of the co-leads will be instrumental in the delivery of the Mission. Such initiatives include the European Union's Mission on [Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities](#) and the Global Knowledge Exchange Centre for urban climate neutrality, JPI Urban Europe's [Driving Urban Transitions to a Sustainable Future \(DUT\) partnership](#) and [Mical series](#), as well as on the GCoM activities ([Data4Cities](#), [Innovate4Cities](#), [Invest4Cities](#)) and [National/Regional Chapters](#). Synergy with initiatives of the core and support members will play a key role as well, such as [MI Innovation Community of Affordable Heating and Cooling of Buildings](#), [India's Smart Cities Mission](#), [ENoLL's Living Labs](#) and the urban components of the [UNFCCC Global Innovation Hub](#).

The UTM will explore opportunities for collaboration with activities of Mission Innovation (MI) such as the Net-zero compatibility assessment initiative (NCI) and with other MI Missions, such as the Green Powered Future Mission (GPFM).

The Mission will gather available knowledge and networking opportunities (such as through the [MI Innovation Platform](#) or the [Global Covenant of Mayors Regional Chapters](#)), and build on results from R&I projects on innovative data gathering, policy innovation, and finance models.

Members of the mission commit to:

Co-leads:

- Strong public commitment to accelerate the urban energy transition
- Frame, organise, and drive the development process of the urban transitions net-zero framework
- Deliver significant R&I investment in the cohort of pilot cities (jointly initiate and execute development of large scale demonstrators and translation to R&I needs and activities)
- Provide significant additional financial resources for admin/ non-staff costs (e.g. events, publications)
- Develop framework for the road mapping exercise and the link to R&I agenda iterations
- Contribute to the setup of a Global Knowledge Exchange Centre and the organisation of the Annual Innovation Summit

Core group members

- Attend meetings on a regular basis to disseminate programmes and initiatives they are driving or are being involved in
- Deliver modest public R&I investment to the fund activities (development of large scale demonstrators and/or support of pilot cities in the cohort)
- Contribute to portfolio build-up with regard to data, tools, finance, policy, business model, value model, ... innovation
- Provide additional financial and in-kind contributions (e.g. provision of IT tools, labs, publications)
- Help provide content to the Global Knowledge Exchange Centre and the Annual Innovation Summit

Support Group members

- Commitment to actively engage with their government and facilitate investments, national-local dialogues, dissemination on specific topics

- Contribution to development or refinement of deep demonstrators, portfolio build-up or delivery of small-scale engagement activities.

Members of the mission will advance this work by adhering to the following principles:

- **Cooperation:** members will engage and work on the interaction between national and local level where relevant for system-wide transitions, but also with other countries, the private sector and other initiatives nationally and internationally.
- **Transparency:** members will share data, expertise, best practices and analysis, as well as iterative reflexive monitoring to help advance mission objectives and continuously improve them.
- **Participation:** members will actively participate in the mission and support mission objectives (e.g. shared resources), building on ongoing initiatives and commitments
- **Accelerate action:** members will focus on key barriers, needs, gaps and challenges that will be revealed when setting up organisation and developing a one-stop-shop approach to speed up innovation toward the mission goal and stimulate more action either individually or collaboratively.
- **Build demand:** with a focus on putting cities central, members will identify the 'demand-pull' efforts needed to disseminate, deploy, scale and customise solutions that emerge through the mission and partner with initiatives or actors that can deliver those activities.

The Mission will report on its progress regularly to the MI community annually.

This joint statement builds on the [Mission Innovation 2.0 Launch Statement](#) and does not constitute a legally binding commitment. This Joint Mission Statement will commence on November 9 2021 (launch of the Urban Transitions Mission at COP26) and will continue in effect for five years, with the option to be amended by Mission members. After this period, the Mission may be extended for a further five years to support the delivery of the mission goal by 2030, subject to a review of Mission achievements.

Members

The Mission will bring together a dynamic, ambitious, and delivery-focused alliance of governments, corporations, investors, and research institutes to accelerate innovation on urban energy transitions. This alliance takes the name of **Global Innovation Alliance**.

The following governments and organisations commit to advancing the Mission's objectives:

Co-leads

- European Commission, Directorate-General for Research & Innovation (EC DG RTD)
- Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM)
- Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) Urban Europe

Core group

- Austria, Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology
- India, Ministry of Science and Technology
- Sweden, Swedish Energy Agency / Ministry of the Environment and Energy
- MI Innovation Community on affordable heating and cooling of buildings (IC7)

Support Group

- EIT Climate KIC
- European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL)
- International Energy Agency (IEA)
- International Renewable Energy Association (IRENA)
- Student Energy
- United Nations Climate Change (UNFCCC) Global Innovation Hub
- World Economic Forum (WEF)

The addition of Mission core- and support members will be inclusive and impact based, to support the activities and acceleration of the foreseen objectives.