



**NET  
ZERO  
CITIES**

# **Open Call for Twin City Applications: Twinning Learning Programme Cohort 2 (2024) - NetZeroCities**

**Call Opens:** 08 April 2024, 09:00 CEST

**Deadline:** 31 May 2024, 23.59 CEST

**Call ID:** NZC-SGA-HE-202404

**Publication Date:** 08 April 2024

**[netzerocities.eu](https://netzerocities.eu)**

## Disclaimer

The content of this document reflects only the author's view. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

## History of changes

Version	Date	Item

All amendments to this Call Guideline, as well as any additional guidance and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), will be made available at the NetZeroCities Platform and NetZeroCities website.

To stay informed on the latest developments, we encourage proponents to check the website regularly. Changes to these guidelines will be detailed in the above table.

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# Introduction to the Call for Twin Cities Cohort 2

## 1. Call Summary

This Call for applications to join the **NetZeroCities (NZC) Twinning Learning Programme** is for cities who wish to embark on a 20-month tailored learning programme for knowledge sharing and transfer of good practices with the recently selected NZC Pilot Cities Cohort 2, toward climate neutrality. **The Call will open on 08 April 2024 and applications will be accepted until 31 May 2024 at 23:59 CEST.**

Cities are encouraged to apply to the Call for Twin Cities Cohort 2 if they meet **all the following three criteria**: 1) cities that are located within EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries<sup>1</sup>, 2) that are not part of the EU Cities Mission (i.e. are non-Mission Cities)<sup>2</sup> and not already a Twin City and/or a Pilot City<sup>3</sup> within the current cohorts of the NZC Twinning Learning Programme and NZC Pilot Cities Programme, and 3) demonstrated commitment to achieving climate neutrality before or by 2050.

NZC Twinning Learning Programme's main aim is to strengthen the capacities of Twin Cities through tailored learning exchanges with their paired Pilot City/ies in different learning modules (including online and in-person). To enable a two-way knowledge exchange, Twin Cities will also share their experiences and good practices, responding to the challenges and learning needs of Pilot Cities, as described in the [online catalogue of Pilot City profiles](#). Twin Cities will be empowered to transfer learnings from their Pilot City counterparts into concrete actions to support their decarbonisation efforts and climate transition plans, materialised in a Twin City Action Plan, at the end of the learning phase.

A careful selection and matching procedure of Twin and Pilot Cities activities by NZC consortium partners will ensure that both Twin and Pilot Cities' learning needs are addressed throughout their participation in the NZC Twinning Learning Programme, and that the programme reflects diversity of city sizes and geographic diversity, with the aim of maximising learning and scaling potential across the EU.

The learning programme will be facilitated by NZC consortium partners, with the primary role to encourage open and constructive discussions between Pilot and Twin Cities and to support the work of Pilot Cities, ensuring that the participants make the most of the NZC Twinning Learning Programme. NZC consortium partners will also support the outlining of the Twin City Action Plans, enabling the monitoring of concrete results and impacts of the Twinning Learning Programme in Twin and Pilot Cities.

## 2. Background

**NetZeroCities (NZC)** is a multi-year project designed to help cities overcome the current structural, institutional, and cultural barriers they face to achieve climate neutrality by 2030. NZC recognises the need for cities to develop specific strategies that are tailored to suit local and regional contexts, and will support them by developing, promoting, and integrating new and existing tools, resources, and expertise into an online platform accessible to all cities ([Mission Platform](#)). The project enables city teams to tailor and advance their capabilities related to systemic change, citizen engagement and democratic, participatory governance, capital and financial structuring, and social innovation; and facilitate access

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> A non-Mission City is a city that is not listed among the 112 cities participating in the [EU Cities Mission for 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030](#).

<sup>3</sup> Refer to the [NZC website](#) to see Pilot and Twin cities that are already part of the Twinning Learning Programme and Pilot Cities Programme.

to relevant expertise in their journey towards climate neutrality.

The **NZC Mission Platform** provides support in the co-creation of Climate City Contracts with local stakeholders and citizens. Drawing up, signing, and implementing Climate City Contracts is a central feature of the [EU Mission on 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities](#) by 2030. The Climate City Contract is a set of innovative governance tools, comprising a Commitments document, an Action Plan and an Investment Plan. While not legally binding, the Climate City Contract-Commitments document constitutes a clear and highly visible political commitment to achieving climate neutrality, sending a crucial message to the EC, national and regional government, stakeholders, and citizens that the city is willing and ready to journey towards climate neutrality. The Action Plan and Investment Plan set out how climate neutrality will be achieved by 2030.

In the context of NZC project, the **NZC Pilot Cities Programme** supports large scale piloting activities to exploit, deploy, and scale R&I and systemic solutions combining social, cultural, technological, nature-based, regulatory, and financial innovation, and new business and governance models to underpin the climate transition. In January 2024, [Cohort 2 Pilot Cities](#) were selected, and over their two-year journey (starting in May 2024), these 26 Pilot Cities will test and implement systemic and locally designed innovative actions that work across thematic areas, from the energy systems and the built environment to mobility, and leverages various levers of change in support of transforming systems, for cross-sectoral and city-wide impact. Within the NZC Pilot Cities Programme, Pilot Cities will be providing opportunities for Twin Cities to follow in their footsteps, transferring and/or scaling approaches and solutions relevant to their context.

The **NZC Twinning Learning Programme** will guide selected Twin Cities in their learning efforts from Cohort 2 Pilot Cities, with a practical focus on transferring the systemic transformation methodologies and innovative approaches demonstrated by the NZC Pilot Cities Programme Cohort 2 Pilot activities, to underpin the climate transition. To that end, the Twinning Learning Programme will include identification of good practices, action-oriented goal setting, co-creation activities and site visits in Pilot Cities and Twin Cities, facilitated and structured learning exchanges, and supported development of an Action Plan for Twin Cities outlining the learnings from the pilot activities and transferability of actions to their specific local contexts, through the twinning exchange.

Any amendments to these Call Guidelines, as well as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), will be made available on the [NZC website](#). To stay informed on the latest development, we encourage applicants to check the website regularly. Changes to these guidelines will be detailed in the *History of Changes* table on page 3 of this document.

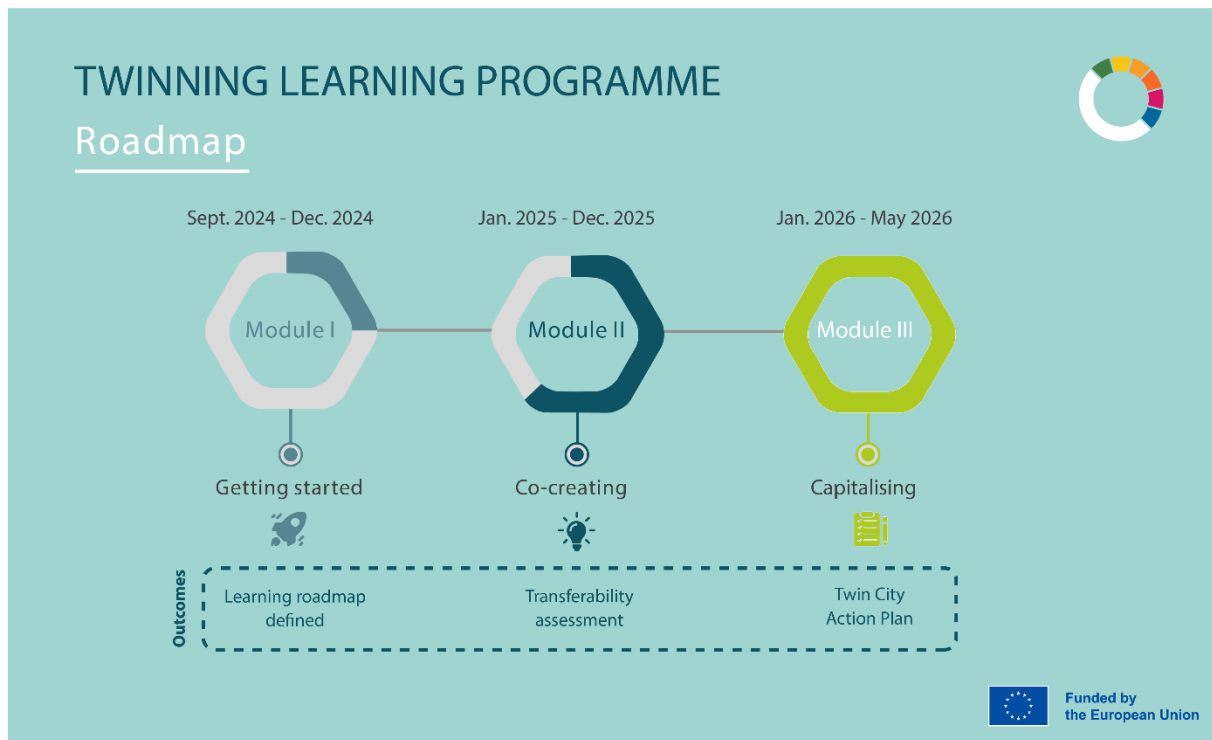
### 3. NZC Twinning Learning Programme – How cities will work in and through the programme

The NZC Twinning Learning Programme is a structured and expert-facilitated city-to-city learning programme. It aims to enable a two-way knowledge transfer between Pilot and Twin Cities, focusing on climate-neutrality ambitions and activities tackling multiple emission domains and systemic barriers. The specific objectives of the Programme are threefold:

- To enable learning and inspiration between Pilot and Twin Cities;
- To facilitate institutionalisation of learning and knowledge transfer across different city departments and stakeholders;
- To build long-lasting collaboration between Pilot and Twin Cities beyond the scope of the Programme.

The Twinning Learning Programme for Cohort 2 Twin Cities will start in late September 2024 and last for 20 months (until May 2026). The Programme is made up of three modules, namely **Getting started**, **Co-creating** and **Capitalising**, see Figure 1 below. The framework is built around dedicated milestones and outputs. It is designed as a facilitated process while leaving enough flexibility for cities to choose the focus for the knowledge transfer and shape the learning journey. Throughout the Programme, Pilot Cities will share their pilot activities' implementation experience and empower the transfer of innovative measures to Twin Cities while being inspired by good practices already tested in Twin Cities.

Figure 1: Twinning Learning Programme Roadmap (Cohort 2)



**Module I: Getting started** marks the beginning of the Twinning Learning Programme and focuses on building a relationship between Pilot and Twin Cities and identifying their learning needs and interests. Module I incorporates two online sessions - a kick-off meeting of the Twinning Learning Programme with all Pilot and Twin Cities and an online workshop to define the learning needs. By the end of this Module, cities will have designed their respective *Twinning Learning Roadmaps*, which include the solutions and approaches that the Twin City is willing to appropriate and transfer from the Pilot City to their local context and the Pilot City's learning interests based on the Twin City's best practices.

**Module II: Co-creating** aims to deepen and accelerate city-to-city learning by addressing the enabling factors and barriers for the transfer of solutions and approaches to the local context. Module II is structured around a mix of online and in-person activities, including two site visits. It offers the visiting cities an opportunity to get a first-hand learning experience about the practical implementation of different solutions and approaches from the host city. Moreover, this Module will go beyond individual learning and involve the activation and engagement of the local ecosystem in each city. It will enable the Twin City to carry out a *Transferability assessment* – a practical exercise to explore the enabling conditions for transferring solutions and approaches from the Pilot City to the Twin's local context and, consequently, assess their transferability potential.

**Module III: Capitalising** wraps up the learning experience between the cities by reinforcing the knowledge transfer and collaboration commitment in a *Twin City Action Plan*. This Module incorporates

both online and in-person activities, providing space and support for the Twin City to propose an Action Plan for transferring solutions or approaches and reinforce continued collaboration and partnership between cities beyond the Twinning Learning Programme. Finally, the Twin City is expected to present the Action Plan to the Pilot City and the local ecosystem to share the learnings and provide concrete indications about future steps.

Each learning Module will be facilitated by NZC partners. It will enable open and constructive discussions among Pilot and Twin Cities while supporting and accelerating knowledge transfer. Facilitators will ensure the quality and consistency of the NZC Twinning Learning Programme. They will encourage the active participation of city representatives, collect input from the different exchanges and monitor the transfer of learning and good practices.

The Twinning Learning Programme aims to support local authorities in developing or further developing knowledge on innovative approaches to reach their climate neutrality commitments. Twin Cities are expected to have enhanced their capabilities after completing the Programme on the following three levels:

- At an individual level, with a minimum of two city representatives who will be participating in the learning programme for 20 months,
- At the institutional level within the administrative and governance framework of the municipality, sharing the learnings across different municipal departments,
- At a societal level, benefiting the local ecosystem by supporting climate neutrality actions on technology, innovation, learning and knowledge by bringing together different partners from universities to local businesses.

At the start of the Twinning Learning Programme, the participating Pilot and Twin Cities will receive an information pack explaining the programme in more detail.

## 4. Practical Matters

### 4.1. Who can apply

**Local authorities (from small, mid- and large-sized cities, metropolitan areas, districts, any other public administration linked to the city) based within EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries<sup>4</sup>, who are non-Mission Cities, i.e. cities who are *not* listed among the 112 cities participating in the [EU Cities Mission](#), and who are not already Twin or Pilot Cities, can apply.**

Twin City applicants must be supported by an enabling environment, allowing the transfer of learnings from the innovative pilot activities to their local context. This support is based on **the applicant city demonstrating an existing climate neutrality commitment before or by 2050, in the application process.**

**Twin Cities should ensure adequate human resources and time (a minimum of 12 hours per month) to engage in the 20-months Twinning Learning Programme and assign between 1-2 (recommended) city representatives per Twin City, with at least a proficiency level of B2 English.** Twin City representatives should be city practitioners or experts who can use the knowledge gained to institutionalise the learnings within the municipalities in their local contexts. To ensure that Twin City

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<sup>4</sup> Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom



participants gain the most from the in-person exchanges, travel costs will be reimbursed up to a given amount (see section 4.3). Further information on this will be made available to successfully selected Twin City applicants.

This Call is addressed to individual Twin City applications rather than to a group of cities applying together. The logic behind requesting individual Twin City applications lies in the impact of higher potential for learning and allowing Pilot Cities to focus on an individual city's learning needs.

For further information on eligibility, please see section 6.2. Stage 1 – Eligibility below.

## 4.2. What you commit to

As a Twin City you commit to the following elements of the NZC Twinning Learning Programme:

- **Participation in the twinning exchange** (by signing a peer learning agreement at Director of the Department level). This is a two-way exchange in which **both Pilot and Twin Cities** commit to completing and participating in the Modules, as outlined in Figure 1, and attend a study visit to the paired Pilot City and host a site visit for the paired Pilot City in their city.
- **Preparation of a transferability assessment.** On completion of the twinning exercise, the **Pilot and Twin Cities** are expected to complete a transferability assessment of learnings, good practices and/or policies that could be taken up in their own context.
- **Preparation of a Twin City Action Plan.** On completion of the Twinning Learning Programme and based on the learnings from the Pilot City/ies, the **Twin City** is expected to write an Action Plan on concrete actions that could be taken to implement innovative approaches to reach climate neutrality commitments, in their own city. This report should include:
  1. a statement of the problem and the likely solutions.
  2. an assessment of the feasibility of the pilot activity solutions in their local context.
  3. an action plan for developing or further developing a similar project as in the Pilot City

## 4.3. Available budget for the Twinning Learning Programme

A budget of 900 EUR per city representative is earmarked for the site-visits of the Twinning Learning Programme. This budget is foreseen to cover reimbursement of travel and hosting costs of Twin Cities. This includes travel, accommodation, and subsistence costs for up to two Twin City representatives per selected Twin City to attend a site-visit to the respective Pilot City, and hosting costs, when hosting the site visits of the Pilot City/ies.

Each Twin City should be represented by two city practitioners from their local authority, who will be responsible for the implementation of the Twinning Learning Programme modules, hence, their participation in the site-visits to their respective Pilot City/ies. Reimbursement of travel costs for more than two practitioner representatives from Twin Cities will not be covered by the Twinning Learning Programme. However, this should not prevent the Twin Cities from involving additional practitioners and/or politicians from the exchanges with their Pilot City/ies.

The travel and accommodation cost reimbursements will be subject to providing original supporting documents. Exact guidelines and procedures will be shared with the selected Twin Cities.

**Beyond the reimbursement of travel costs, no further budget is available, and no financial compensation can be granted to Twin Cities for the implementation of the Twinning Learning Programme.**

#### 4.4. How to submit an application

The application form is structured as a questionnaire to collect the information about the city, the motivation for applying to the programme and to assess alignment with the NZC Pilot City Programme Pilot Activities.

Tailored questions are included in the application form to collect relevant information needed for evaluating the involvement of Twin Cities in the Twinning Learning Programme and their motivation to be paired with the proposed thematic areas of the different Pilot activities. Twin City applicants should use the online catalogue of [Cohort 2 Pilot City profiles](#), to explore and gain full understanding of the different pilot activities, allowing them to tailor their application form with the objectives, addressed barriers, enabling opportunities and description of the pilot activities. However, the information available in the Pilot City profiles is by no means exhaustive as additional and alternative options may arise during the exchanges with the paired Pilot City/ies as part of the twinning learning journey (this is particularly relevant to the last four sections of the Pilot City profiles – transferable features, enabling conditions for replicating, and Pilot Cities’ learning needs).

The completion of the Open Call for Twin Cities application form, in line with the Pilot City profiles, will enable NZC consortium members to pair the Twin City with the relevant Pilot Activity.

**The following pre-submission checklist supports the prospective Twin City applicant to develop a good quality application:**

Checklist	
Confirm that you are eligible to apply to the Twinning Learning Programme Cohort 2. See section 6.3	
Assess that the city has sufficient time and human resources to actively participate for the full duration of the programme.	
Read this document carefully and consider the questions from the Twin City application form (see Annexure 1).	
Carefully read through the online catalogue for the <a href="#">Pilot Cities Cohort 2</a> and establish which pilot activities are relevant to your local context, where you share similar challenges, and with whom you would want to exchange knowledge and experiences.	
Attend the information session webinar for the Call for Twin Cities Cohort 2. See section 5 (Call Timeline) below for the date and registration link.	
All applications should be submitted in English. Exceptions can be made for supporting documents, such as formal council resolutions, city climate plan – these documents could be written in one of the official languages spoken in the country from which the proposal is submitted.	

Once you have followed the suggested steps as shown in the checklist, please submit your Twin City application using the online application form found on the [NZC website](#). **Please note that only one application may be submitted by each eligible local authority, and it should be submitted by a city representative (external consultants are advised to refrain from submitting applications on behalf of the city they work with).** If several applications are received by the same local authority, the Twin City Team will select the first one submitted.

## 5. Call timeline

Date/Time (CET/CEST)	Item	Link applicable (if applicable)
08 March 2024	Early announcement of the Open Call for Twin Cities Cohort 2	<a href="#">NZN website</a>
05 April 2024	<b>Publication: Online catalogue of Pilot City Profiles Cohort 2.</b> The online catalogue showcases Pilot Cities' focus and context and provides Twin City applicants the opportunity to gain a full understanding of the Pilot City/ies activities.	<a href="#">NZN website</a>
08 April 2024	<b>Publication: Call Guidelines</b> The guidelines for the Call, including eligibility, quality assessment, and selection criteria, will be published both to the NZC website and Mission Portal.	<a href="#">NZN website</a> <a href="#">NZN Mission Portal</a>
08 April 2024	<b>Call Opens</b> On <b>Monday, 08 April</b> , the NZC Open Call for Twin Cities Cohort 2 will go live. Cities will be able to access the application link and fill in the information, up until the submission deadline as stated below.	<a href="#">NZN website</a>
18 April 2024	<b>Twin Cities Call 2 information webinar</b> On <b>Thursday, 18 April, from 14:00 – 15:15 (CEST)</b> , Twin City applicants will be able to join an information webinar that will provide guidance and support for prospective applicants. It will offer a space for applicants to ask questions on the Twin Cities Cohort 2 Open Call as well as on the Twinning Learning Programme	Register <a href="#">here</a>
Friday, 31 May 2024 (23.59 CEST)	<b>Call Closes</b> The formal deadline for submission of Twin City applications is on <b>Friday, 31 May 2024</b> . Applications received after this date will not be accepted. No extensions can be granted, and modification of your proposal after submission is not possible. We suggest setting your own internal deadline ahead of this date.	<a href="#">NZN website</a>
June 2024	<b>Evaluation and Selection</b> Applications will be checked against Eligibility criteria (Stage 1) and quality evaluation (Stage 2). Applications passing the threshold score in the quality evaluation will proceed to final selection and matching (Stage 3). More information about these Stages can be found in <b>Section 6</b> of this document.	N/A
July-August 2024	<b>Decision Communication</b> Formal outcomes will be sent to applicants, along with feedback	Email
August-September 2024	<b>Peer Learning Agreement</b> A Peer Learning Agreement will be sent to the selected Cohort 2 Twin Cities to officially endorse them as Twin Cities and commence the Twinning Learning Programme.	Email
September 2024	<b>Public announcement of the Call outcomes</b> and selected Twin cities Cohort 2 <b>Start of the Twinning Learning Programme Cohort 2</b>	<a href="#">NZN website</a>

## 6. Review Mechanism and Selection Criteria

### 6.1. Overview

The call will follow a three-staged evaluation and selection process as outlined below:

- Stage 1: Eligibility criteria**  
 The eligibility check is where pass/fail requirements related to the conditions of the call are assessed by the NZC consortium members. Applications must pass all eligibility criteria to proceed to Stage 2.
- Stage 2: Quality evaluation and scoring of eligible applications.**  
 The cross-partner evaluation panel, comprised of members from the NZC consortium, will assess scores against the individual assessment criteria outlined in section 6.3 below. Applications that meet the minimum threshold score will proceed to stage 3.
- Stage 3: Strategic Selection and matching**  
 A selection committee panel will select up to 22 Twin Cities to be paired with Cohort 2 Pilot Activities, based on their mutual thematic interests in the different emissions domain(s), related challenges, learning needs and exchange of good practices (as outlined in section 6.4).

The output of this stage is the resulted Twin-Pilot City pairs of the Twinning Learning Programme. Pilot Cities will be consulted and informed about the state of the matching process, while ensuring that the Twinning selection and matching process is based on quality and transparency.

All submissions will be assessed fairly and transparently in the scope of the eligibility criteria and the assessment of quality criteria. Decision as to whether an application is accepted or rejected will be communicated to the applicant.

### 6.2. Stage 1 – Eligibility

Eligibility criteria are used to ensure applications submitted under the call meet mandatory requirements as set out in the Grant Agreement (HORIZON-RIA-SGA-NZC-101121530). **Applicants must pass on all eligibility criteria**, otherwise they will not proceed to Stage 2 of the process, and they will be rejected from the call outright. The pass/fail eligibility criteria for this call are:

#	Eligibility criterion	How demonstrated	How assessed
1	Local authority must be within either an EU Member State or an approved Horizon Europe Associated Country, on the day of the submission deadline.	As compared with official, online EU/EC information at the time of submission.	Pass/fail
2	Climate neutrality commitment	Applicant city outlines commitment to achieve climate neutrality before or by 2050.  Provide formalised evidence (City Council Resolution, Strategy, Action Plan or equivalent adopted by the City Council and/or other initiative they signed up to e.g. Covenant of Mayors 2050 targets)	Pass/fail

4	The applicant city is not part of the <a href="#">EU Cities Mission</a> and not already a Twin City or Pilot City	As compared with the NZC Mission Platform for Twin Cities from Cohort 1 (2023), and Pilot Cities from Cohort 1 (2023) and Cohort 2 (2024).	Pass/Fail
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### 6.3. Stage 2 – Quality evaluation

#### Assessment

The assessment criteria for this call are set out below. Each criterion is scored, on a scale of 0 to 3, by a NZC cross-partner evaluation panel. The score across all categories is totalled to produce a ranked list of proposals. **The maximum available score is 21 points. The threshold score to pass the Stage 2 Quality Evaluation and proceed to Stage 3 is 11 points\***.

#### Scoring table

Score	Description
0	Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
1	Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
2	Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a few shortcomings are present.
3	Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

\*The threshold score may be adjusted by the NZC Twin City team depending on the number and quality of applications received.

Alignment with the NZC Pilot City Programme			
#	Criterion	How demonstrated	How assessed
<b>Learning needs</b>			
1	Selection of pilot activities, in order of preference	Applicant should rank up to 5 pilot activities, as listed in the application form, based on their city learning needs and interests from the Twinning Learning Programme	No score
2	Emissions domain(s)	Applicant should select the emissions domain(s) relevant to their city learning needs and interests from the Twinning Learning Programme	No score
3	Motivation for selection of Pilot City activities and identified emissions domains	Applicant should explain their motivation to learn from the above-mentioned selected pilot activities and link it to the emission(s) domains they are targeting.	0 Weak identification of motivation 1 Fair identification of motivation 2 Good explanation of the motivation 3 Excellent explanation of the motivation
4	Specific activities and/or projects that the applicant is currently developing/implementing to reach climate neutrality	Applicant should outline current activities and/or projects related to the city's climate neutrality goals, selected emission domains and pilot activities, and explain how they will build on this work through the Twinning Learning Programme.	0 weak identification and explanation 1 Some identification and explanation 2 Good identification and explanation 3 Excellent identification and explanation
<b>Drivers and barriers</b>			

5	Enabling conditions in the local context to achieve the climate-related objectives	Applicant should list and explain up to 5 enabling conditions that would support the city to achieve their climate-related plans and objectives.	0 weak explanation of enabling conditions 1 Fair explanation of enabling conditions to achieve climate neutrality objectives 2 Good explanation of enabling conditions to reach climate neutrality objectives 3 Excellent explanation of enabling conditions to reach climate neutrality objectives.
6	Barriers in the local context preventing the achievement of the climate-related objectives	Applicant should list and explain up to 5 barriers that could prevent them from achieving their climate-related plans and objectives.	0 weak explanation of barriers 1 Fair explanation of barriers 2 Good explanation of barriers 3 Excellent explanation of barriers
7	Lever(s) of change	Applicant should select up to 3 lever(s) of change, in line with their learning needs from the twinning programme	No score
<b>Stakeholder engagement</b>			
8	Stakeholder engagement strategy, approaches, and practices to reach climate neutrality goals.	Applicant should describe how the city plans to or is already engaging stakeholders, who the stakeholders are, and what the stakeholder engagement approaches and practices are for climate action.	0 lack of explanation on stakeholder engagement 1 Fair explanation on stakeholder engagement with less than 3 stakeholders identified 2 Good explanation on stakeholder engagement with less than 5 stakeholders identified 3 Excellent explanation on stakeholder engagement with more than 5 stakeholders identified
<b>Good practices</b>			
9	Good practices to share with the Pilot cities	Applicant should identify and explain at least 3 good practices they would like to share with the Pilot cities and link them with the challenges and learning needs from Pilot city profiles	0 weak identification and explanation 1 Fair identification and explanation 2 Good identification and explanation 3 Excellent identification and clear explanation, with excellent links to the Pilot activities
<b>Local ecosystem activation</b>			
10	Share knowledge and learnings across the city to mobilise the local ecosystem for climate action.	Applicant should outline how they plan to share learning outcomes and knowledge acquired from the twinning learning programme across city departments and with relevant stakeholders.	0 weak explanation 1 fair explanation 2 good explanation 3 excellent explanation

## 6.4. Stage 3 – Strategic Selection

A NZC cross-partner selection panel will be set up to review and agree on the selection and matching proposal. This stage constitutes a contextual judgment that considers and prioritises the criteria identified by the Pilot Cities for an optimal pairing with their pilot activities as well as the pilot activities ranked by Twin City (having received the highest scores of applicants in Stage 2) while avoiding a concentration of interests among a limited set of Pilot Cities.

To ensure the highest potential for learning opportunities and uptake of lessons learned, the strategic selection takes into account (in order):

- Score in quality evaluation (see section 6.3 Stage 2 – Quality evaluation)
- Clear link between the Twin City's identified barriers and the Pilot Activity of first choice
- Geographic diversity – based on data gathered at the application stage (best possible representation of geographic diversity)
- Diversity of city size – based on data gathered at the application stage (best possible representation of city size)
- Balanced focus on different pilot activities- based on data gathered at the application stage (best possible matching).

## 6.5. Decision communication

The NZC Twin Cities Team will aim to communicate final outcomes to applicants between July and August 2024. The final communication will indicate whether their application was successful and if so, the Pilot City that they will be paired with. The NZC Twinning Learning Programme is expected to kick start in late September 2024.

## 7. Data and appeals

### 7.1. Your Data

All applicants will be required to accept EIT Climate-KIC's [General Terms and Conditions](#) which also includes, in particular, our [Privacy Policy](#), [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and [Cookie Policy](#) and warrant and represent that they have the authority to agree and accept these on behalf of the named organisation. The public sharing of data may include, but is not limited to, EIT Climate-KIC making the outcome of this call for proposals available on its website in relation to statistics on number of proposals, per country, (i.e., aggregated Call data). Information on each activity selected, including data on each participant and twin pairing as well as other project data, may also be made available for publication purposes. Personal data provided may be processed, including sharing with other organisations, by EIT Climate-KIC and certain sensitive data elements will be visible to other NZC Consortium partners. The applicant warrants and represents that in providing personal data in connection with the proposal, the data subjects have consented to the provision of this personal data and the processing of it by EIT Climate-KIC in the manner indicated in accordance with our Privacy Policy, and that the organisation provides the personal data in accordance with applicable law. Applicants shall comply with applicable data protection legislation including but not limited to the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) and any national implementing laws, regulations, and secondary legislation, in each case as amended, supplemented, or replaced from time to time.

### 7.2. Appeals

Once the Twin City applicant has received the formal communication outlining the final outcome of their application, the applicant has up to 5 calendar days to submit a request for further feedback into their application if they identify any shortcoming in the result/feedback provided.

The feedback request should be sent to NZC Twin Cities team at [twincities@netzerocities.eu](mailto:twincities@netzerocities.eu). NetZeroCities maintains a fair assessment procedure to avoid potential conflicts of interest and ensure fair treatment among applicants.



## Annex 1: Application Form

### Contact point(s) for Twinning Learning Programme

The contact points should be the specific names of persons who will be the main points of contact for communications around the programme and who will be actively involved in the implementation of the programme. *(The contact points should be city representatives- external consultants are advised to refrain from submitting applications on behalf of the city they work with).*

#### Primary contact

First Name – Last Name

Function

Email

Phone number

#### Secondary contact

First Name – Last Name

Function

Email

Phone number

#### Local authority details

**City** (Please provide the official name of your city in English)

*Local authorities must be a non-Mission City, i.e. cities not part of the [EU Cities Mission](#) and not already part of the Twinning and Pilot Cities Programme. Only one application may be submitted by an eligible local authority. If several applications are received by the same local authority, the Twin City Team will select the first one submitted.*

(e.g. Brussels Capital Region)

#### Type of authority

*What type of authority is the subject of the application?*

- City authority
- Metropolitan authority
- District
- Other (please detail)

#### Country

*Local authorities must be within either an EU Member state or an approved Horizon Europe Associated Country\*, as compared with official, online EU/EC information at the time of submission.*

#### City department (or equivalent)

*Please list participating city departments (or equivalent) committed to and relevant for the Twinning Learning Programme (e.g. environment/climate department, transport department, etc).*





**Size of city**

- Less than 50,000 inhabitants
- Between 50,000 – 100,000
- Between 100,000 - 250,000
- Between 250,000 –500,000
- More than 500,000

**Tell us more about your city’s climate commitments**

Has your city committed to climate neutrality before or by 2050?

- YES
- NO

**Mandate to act:** Please outline your city’s demonstrated climate commitments, its associated target date and describe how this has been formalised. (300 words)

Please upload a document and/or add a link demonstrating this formalised evidence (e.g. City Council Resolution, Strategy, Action Plan or equivalent adopted by the City Council and/or other committed initiative e.g. Covenant of Mayors 2050 targets). *Supporting documents could be submitted in one of the official languages of the country.*

**Alignment with the Pilot City Programme**

In the framework of the NZC Pilot Cities Programme, we will pair your city with one of [the selected Cohort 2 Pilot Cities](#) based on their pilot activities and your learning priorities, to exchange on similar emissions domain(s). Please be as accurate and concrete as possible. We will use this information to evaluate your application and pair your city with the most relevant Pilot City for your local context and learning needs.

**Learning needs**

**Q1 Pilot activities selection.** From the list of selected Pilot activities, **please rank, in order of preference, up to five** Pilot Activities that align best with your city’s learning priorities. We will consider the top 5 as your city’s preferred Pilot Activities. *Please note that your selection will serve NZC partners as a guidance in the matching process, but this will not guarantee that you will be paired with one of the preferred options.* (You should use the *Pilot City profiles* for your reference).

**Q2 Emission domains.** Pilot activities will explore and test pathways to accelerate change towards 2030 climate neutrality goals across the following key emissions domain(s). Please, **select up to three** relevant emission domain(s) that reflect the learning needs of your city for the Twinning Learning Programme:

- Consumption of electricity generated for buildings, facilities, and infrastructure
- Consumption of non-electricity energy for thermal uses in buildings and facilities (e.g., heating, cooking, etc.)

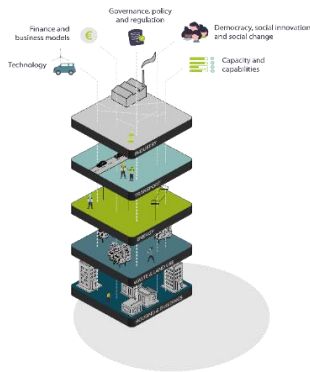
- Industrial process emissions
- Multi-sector waste management and disposal
- All vehicles and transport (mobile energy)
- Land use (including agriculture, forestry, and other land uses)

**Q3 Motivation for selecting the Pilot Activities.** Please, explain why you want to learn from each of the (up to/top) 5 pilot activities you selected in Q1 above (following your order of preference as ranked above). This can relate to your city’s learning interests, city priorities and local needs relevant to emission domains, and common challenges with the selected Pilot activities. (500 words)

**Q4 Current projects to reach climate neutrality.** List some of the current activities and projects that your city has in planning or implementation stage, relevant to the NZC emission domains (selected above) targeting your city’s climate neutrality commitments. (*Please, focus on relevance and depth rather than on quantity*). Text (300 words)

**Drivers and barriers**

Pilot Cities will implement systemic innovative actions based in a multi-lever approach. Their aim is to pursue “systems innovation” to achieve climate neutrality, by addressing embedded structural barriers and challenges at local level and acting on the interdependence between multiple levers of change – such as capacity and capability building; culture, participation and social innovation; governance, policy and regulation; finance and business models; technology/infrastructure, data and digitalisation, and procurement.



**Q5 List and explain up to five enabling conditions** that would allow your city and/or administration to reach its climate neutrality commitments before or by 2050? (*e.g. political support from the Mayor, socioeconomic context, citizen acceptance, high employment rate in decarbonisation sector, etc.*). (300 words)

**Q6 List and explain up to five barriers** your city and/or administration is facing, in view of achieving its climate neutrality commitments before or by 2050? (*e.g. natural, technological, sociocultural,*

*institutional, etc).* (300 words)

**Q7 Please select up to three levers of change**, following your city learning needs from the Twinning Learning Programme:

- Technology/infrastructure
- Governance and policy
- Social innovation
- Democracy/participation
- Finance & funding
- Learning and capabilities
- Data and Digitalisation
- Procurement

**Stakeholder engagement**

**Q8** List the main stakeholder groups that you are engaging or planning to engage and describe the stakeholder engagement approaches and/or practices that your city envisions to or currently uses for engaging the different stakeholder groups in climate action. (*e.g. these could refer to the engagement of local business, research communities, citizens, etc).* (300 words)

**Good practices**

**Q9** Please identify **at least three good practices** that you would like to share with the Pilot city? These should be related to the learning needs and/or challenges from the Pilot city profiles, available at the bottom of their online profiles (*e.g. citizens engagement practices, successfully implemented project in data collection and monitoring*) (300 words)

**Local ecosystem**

**Q10** Please outline how you are planning to share your city's learning outcomes and the knowledge acquired from the Twinning Learning Programme, widely across your city (*i.e. across the different departments, with the relevant stakeholders in your city, etc.*)? (300 words)

**Declarations**

**Capacity to engage in the Twinning Learning Programme**

The Twinning Learning Programme is designed to allow transfer of knowledge from the pilot activities to your city through reflective and participative exchanges based on dedicated modules, in online and in-person format, structured in three phases: Getting started, Co-creating and Capitalising. **The Twinning**

**Learning Programme will run for a period of 20 months, with a minimum time dedication of 12 hours/month.**

With this in mind, I hereby declare that the applicant city has the capacity to dedicate time and human resources to actively engage in the planned exchanges and commits to completing the full learning cycle of the 20-month Twinning Learning Programme. This also includes ensuring that the city representatives involved in the learning cycle possess an adequate command of English.

- YES
- NO

#### **GDPR**

I consent to NetZeroCities using the information submitted in this questionnaire for internal Twinning application purposes, reports and for project activities aimed to support the Twinning Learning Programme.

- YES
- NO

*Please note that no personal information will be used in any project reports or activities. The personal information collected in this questionnaire is for the Twin City call purposes only and managed by NZC consortium partners.*

I consent to be contacted for other opportunities arising for non-Mission Cities in the framework of the NetZeroCities project.

- YES
- NO

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