



Compact of Mayors – Background Document

January 2016

What is the Compact of Mayors?

Launched at the 2014 United Nations Climate Summit, [the Compact of Mayors](#) is a global coalition of mayors and city officials pledging to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions, enhance resilience to climate change, and track their progress transparently.

By committing to the Compact, cities and towns must actively and publicly demonstrate their efforts to reduce emissions and build climate resilience. Consistent, transparent reporting of climate data captures the significance of these efforts — and achieves an overarching goal to drive more aggressive local actions and reaffirm existing targets.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, his Special Envoy Michael R. Bloomberg, and global city networks [ICLE – Local Governments for Sustainability](#) (ICLEI), [C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group](#) (C40) and [United Cities and Local Governments](#) (UCLG), with support from UN Habitat, formed the Compact of Mayors to empower and engage cities of all shapes and sizes to accelerate local climate action. With the successful outcome of the COP21, resulting in the Paris Agreement, cities are continuing to contribute to and support national commitments as momentum builds after Paris. In particular – cities are now moving to meet milestones they have committed to and report on their progress.

Why is climate action so critical?

The effects of climate change are far reaching—from rising temperatures and higher sea levels to increased damage from storm surges, droughts, and other extreme weather events. In fact, if we kept on our current path, the costs of climate change will be significant. It is predicted that by 2030, we may see as much [as \\$4 trillion in accumulated climate change-related losses](#) around the world.

This is particularly true for cities, many of which are on the world's coastlines. Cities, and their vital industries, are likely to encounter slower production, damage to property and infrastructure, and negative effects on public health and economic activity. The consequences of climate change are very real, and cities are poised to lead the way to address these issues.

Why are cities so important when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions?

Cities are in the best position to effect real change—local leaders have a wide range of powers that they can use to reduce emissions and adapt to climate risks, often without having to depend on action by other levels of government.

Accounting for 70 percent of the world's total energy related carbon emissions, there's an enormous opportunity for cities to make an impact.

Not surprisingly, cities also stand to reap great rewards for taking climate action. Smart city planning can lower energy costs and improve mobility and quality of life. This, in turn, will create a healthy and attractive environment where people want to live and businesses want to invest.



Why does the Compact of Mayors focus on measurement and reporting?

The Compact follows the adage of former three-term New York City Mayor and the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change, Michael R. Bloomberg: "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it."

The data collected through the Compact of Mayors will help quantify the impact city actions have on global greenhouse gas emissions and climate risks. This will allow open and transparent access to cities' climate data, which can be used by national governments, private investors, the public or academics.

To ensure consistent and transparent measurement of emissions, the Compact of Mayors uses the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventories (GPC)—the world's most widely endorsed greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting and reporting standard for cities.

These measurements will highlight the impact of cities' climate actions and may later be incorporated into national strategies or used to encourage increased public or private sector investments supporting local action in cities.

What have some cities done to reduce their emissions to date?

There are many policies and approaches a city can adopt to reduce its emissions measurably. Globally, the greatest opportunity for mayors to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is in urban building energy use, followed closely by transportation, waste and water management. Some examples of how cities are approaching climate action include:

- **Seoul (South Korea)** – Seoul's Weekly "No Driving Day" program is improving air quality, reducing congestion and saving energy. Every year, two million cars stay off the road—decreasing traffic volume by 3.7 percent and reducing CO₂ vehicle emissions by 10 percent, delivering annual savings of \$50 million USD in fuel costs. Additionally, Seoul's Building Retrofit Program aims to save energy and boost efficiency in buildings by installing new—or improving existing—equipment. Along with other measures like providing energy education for citizens and offering tips on energy conservation, the BRP will help Seoul reach its goal of reducing GHG emissions by 40 percent from 1990 levels by 2030.
- **Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)** – Rio's Bus Rapid Transit systems provide high-quality, fast and cost-effective high-capacity transportation by creating dedicated lanes, set stations, and regular and frequent service, greatly improving mobility, especially in dense urban settings. In 2011, a public bicycle sharing system, "Bike Rio," was launched as a complement to the city's effort to provide bicycle lanes and alternative transportation options. Ahead of COP21, Mayor of Rio de Janeiro announced the city's goal to be carbon neutral by 2065.
- **Paris (France)** – The Paris School Retrofit Project tackles energy efficiency in public schools. One of the Climate Plan's ongoing goals is to reduce energy consumption and CO₂ emissions in municipal buildings by 30 percent by 2020 compared with 2004 levels. Additionally, in 2007, Paris launched Vélib, a 24/7 cycle hire scheme that is changing the face of transport in Paris; importantly, with Vélib, the City of Paris will generate €34 million over the first 10 years of the project without investing a single cent.
- **Vancouver (Canada)** – Vancouver's district energy strategy was established to facilitate the conversion of legacy steam heat systems to lower carbon fuel sources and to promote the development of new low-carbon systems in high-density areas of the city. The strategy will help the city achieve its target to run on 100 percent renewable energy by 2020.



How can a city participate in the Compact of Mayors?

As participants in the Compact of Mayors, cities will strive to meet a series of milestones outlined in the Compact, report annually on progress and disclose information publicly by reporting through a recognized city platform either [CDP](#) or the [carbonn® Climate Registry](#). For more detailed information about reporting and compliance, please visit: www.compactofmayors.org.

To join the Compact of Mayors, a city leader must:

1. **Register and make a commitment.** Register your pledge to take all of the steps under the Compact at [carbonn® Climate Registry](#) or [CDP](#), the two recognized reporting platforms. Or email a letter of intent to become Compact compliant to info@compactofmayors.org.
2. **Assess the current situation.** Within one year of pledging, the city must take stock of the current emissions and impacts of climate change in the city. To do so, the city must (1) Build and complete an inventory of overall greenhouse gas emissions using the Compact standard; (2) Identify its climate risks; and (3) Report via either the [CDP](#) or [carbonn](#) Climate Registry data [platforms](#).
3. **Create reduction targets and establish a system of measurement.** Within two years, the city must update its GHG inventory to include a breakdown of emissions by sources and sectors; set a target to reduce its GHG emissions using [the Compact standard](#); conduct a “climate change vulnerability assessment” using a Compact standard; and report in its chosen platform.
4. **Establish an action plan.** Within three years, the city must publish a climate action plan that shows how it will deliver on its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase local climate resilience.
5. **Report on progress annually.** To maintain compliance with Compact of Mayors, cities must report on their progress annually.