



Zero Emissions Cities



Cities are critical to reduce global emissions

In 2050, 70% of the world's population will live in cities and will be responsible for more than 70% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Cities will bear the brunt of the effects of climate change. This means that cities have a critical role in the transition to a sustainable world. There is a large potential for cities to significantly reduce GHG emissions by focusing on solutions in the major urban systems that drive these emissions: energy, buildings and mobility.

Business supports transformation

Many cities are taking the lead. Mayors around the world make ambitious commitments to reduce their emissions to improve their citizens' living conditions. However, building a clear roadmap to facilitate the transformation towards zero emissions is a complex process for city governments. This is why a growing number of cities is looking to involve the private sector, to access a wide range of inter-connected know-how on technology and implementation possibilities. An early strategic engagement between the city and the private sector is needed in order to develop a common vision, to align actions and to build trust and transparency.

Zero Emissions Cities (ZEC)

The WBCSD Zero Emissions Cities project (ZEC) brings together a group of global companies from different sectors to work with selected cities to develop a zero emissions implementation plan. The city and the businesses work together in an early, pre-commercial engagement to develop a sustainable approach in a specific context that can be replicated, scaled city-wide and across other cities.

The ZEC project creates value for governments, business and local stakeholders by stimulating collaborative engagement and by providing expertise directly to city officials through an integrated approach on energy-infrastructure, buildings, mobility/logistics and green infrastructure to maintain biodiversity and provide ecosystem services. It mobilizes representatives of local ZEC companies' members and local stakeholders' participation to support and leverage the city's ambition to reduce its carbon emissions.

Together, WBCSD members develop roadmaps on topics cities want to tackle and develop platforms to align key stakeholders on a common vision toward a zero emissions pathway. These models can serve as examples to cities around the world.

Cities taking the lead

Cities participating in the Zero Emissions Cities project are Amsterdam (Netherlands), Birmingham (UK) and San Diego (US).

Amsterdam

In Amsterdam, the ZEC project is developing the ZO Energy platform that will help aligning local stakeholders on collaborative sustainability initiatives around the zero emissions approach. The revenues from these activities will be reinvested in ZO Energy as the central organization for the area. Amsterdam ArenA's Energy Hub initiative is the first result of this multi-stakeholder collaboration. The Hub will help Zuidoost move toward shared use of energy resources and infrastructures. A feasibility study on energy for ArenA and ING's new headquarters has been initiated to develop a project management organization that will initiate and implement projects that drive emissions reductions across the district. The Municipality of Amsterdam and WBCSD have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalize this new partnership.

Companies engaged:

DNV GL (lead), Accenture, Arcadis, ENGIE, Schneider Electric, UPS

Birmingham

In Birmingham, the ZEC project is supporting Birmingham City Council with a Zero Emissions framework that will inform the planning requirements for an urban redevelopment of the inner-city district of Smithfield - with significant opportunities to embrace new approaches and technologies to embed a sustainability approach in the developments from the beginning. The ZEC framework helps the city raise its ambition for sustainability by proposing best practice and aspirational principles on ten key topics including energy and climate, water, waste, buildings, natural capital, transport and accessibility, community and culture among others. A cost-benefit analysis is under development to inform the master planning process.

Companies engaged:

Arcadis (lead), ENGIE, Schneider Electric, Toshiba, UPS

San Diego

The objective of the ZEC engagement in San Diego is to engage local companies to actively support the city's Climate Action Plan (CAP, published end-2015) through participation in voluntary programs and offering innovative solutions. The ZEC team will offer ideas drawn from global experience with other cities. The project will develop a cost-benefit framework of the CAP for the city and the businesses operating in the city, identify barriers for business action and supporting mechanisms and incentives.

Companies engaged:

AECOM (lead), Accenture, DNV GL, ENGIE, Toshiba, UPS

These three ZEC cities have been selected according to their level of ambition to minimize their carbon emissions and willingness to engage with business. Going forward, the project is looking to engage more cities and companies. If you are interested to join this project from a city or a business perspective, please contact:

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