

**Global Covenant of Mayors   
Common Reporting Framework**

**Version 6.0**

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## 4. Target Setting

All local governments and cities are required to set and report city-wide emissions reduction targets. The GCoM defines eight categories of requirements for target setting, as explained below.

Local governments **shall** submit their greenhouse gas emissions reduction target(s) to GCoM within two years upon joining GCoM.

**(1) Boundary (geographic coverage, sectors, and GHGs)**

The target boundary[[1]](#footnote-1) **shall** be consistent with all emissions sources included in the GHG emissions inventory, with the possibility to exclude sources that are not controlled by the local government. In case that the target boundary does not align with the inventory boundary, any additions or exclusions **shall** be specified and justified. All exclusions **shall** be indicated by the notation key “Included Elsewhere” (IE), along with clear justification.[[2]](#footnote-2) Local governments are **recommended** to report any sector-level targets alongside their city-wide target(s).

**(2) Target type**

Local governments **shall** use one of the following four target types: base year emissions target, base year intensity target, baseline scenario target, or fixed level target[[3]](#footnote-3). For a baseline scenario target, the modelling methodologies, and parameters **shall** be transparently described.

**Base year emissions target**: Reduce, or control the increase of, emissions by a specified quantity relative to a base year. For example, a 25% reduction from 1990 levels by 2030.

**Base year intensity target**: Reduce emissions intensity (emissions per unit of another variable, typically GDP or capital Gross Domestic Product – GDP or per capita) by a specified quantity relative to a base year. For example, a 40% reduction from 1990 base year intensity by 2030.

**Baseline scenario target**: Reduce emissions by a specified quantity relative to a projected emissions baseline scenario. A Business as Usual (BaU) baseline scenario is a reference case that represents future events or conditions most likely to occur in the absence of activities taken to meet the mitigation target. For example, a 30% reduction from baseline scenario emissions in 2030.

**Fixed-level target**: Reduce, or control the increase of, emissions to an absolute emissions level in a target year. One type of fixed-level target is a carbon neutrality target, which is designed to reach zero net emissions by a certain date (e.g. 2050).

*(Source: Greenhouse Gas Protocol Mitigation Goal Standard)*

**(3) Target year**

The target year **shall** be the same as, or later than, the target year adopted in the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC[[4]](#footnote-4)) or as set by Regional/National Covenants. Cities that set a target year beyond 2030 **shall** also include an interim target between now and 2030.

If the NDC target is before 2030, cities **should** additionally set a target for 2030.

**(4) Base year** (only for base year emissions target and base year intensity target)

The base year should be the same as the base year used in the NDC or as set by Regional/National Covenants. Where the base year is different from the NDC (e.g. where a city has previously adopted another base year or due to a lack of data availability), this **shall** be explained.

**(5) Ambition**

At a minimum, the target **shall** be as ambitious as the unconditional components[[5]](#footnote-5) of the NDC (see also footnote 15). Local governments **should** set targets that are more ambitious than the NDC. When a national government increases their NDC, local governments **shall** have a maximum of five years to ensure their target remains as ambitious as the unconditional components of the NDC.

Where target (and base/scenario) years are different between the local government and NDC, GCoM will apply linear interpolation to both targets to determine whether the above requirement is met.

**(6) Units**

Targets **shall** be reported as a percentage (%) reduction from the base year or scenario year (for base year emissions, base year intensity and baseline scenario targets). The absolute emissions in the target year(s) in metric tonnes CO2e **shall** also be reported for all target types.

If possible, the same approach should be chosen as is the case for the NDC target.

**(7) Use of transferable emissions**

The use of transferable emissions units[[6]](#footnote-6) is only permissible when a local government’s target ambition exceeds the unconditional components of the NDC. Where this is the case, the local government **shall** report the target, with and without the transferable emissions units, as well as identify the source of the transferable emissions units. Further guidance on the use of transferable emissions will be provided in the implementation phase.

**(8) Conditionality**

The use of conditional components is only permissible when a local government’s target ambition exceeds the unconditional components of the NDC. Any conditional components included in the target **shall** be identified and, where possible, the conditional components **should** also be quantified. Conditional components include where cities set a stretch target, or where actions are identified for other key stakeholders beyond that which they have committed to themselves (for example, where a local government assumes a more ambitious reduction in the carbon-intensity of the national electricity grid than that committed to in the NDC or official government policy).

1. Please note that the local government’s administrative boundary may go beyond to the city’s geographic boundary. According to the GCoM all the emission within the “city boundary”, even beyond the geographic boundary, shall be reported to the GCoM. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For example, some European cities’ targets do not include emissions sources that are already included in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Please refer to the [*Greenhouse Gas Protocol Mitigation Goal Standard*](http://www.ghgprotocol.org/greenhouse-gas-protocol-accounting-reporting-standard-cities) for more details on these target types. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See e.g. [UNFCCC NDC List](http://www4.unfccc.int/ndcregistry/Pages/All.aspx), [Climate Tracker](https://climateactiontracker.org/countries), [CLIMATEWATCH](https://www.climatewatchdata.org/) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Many countries have submitted two sets of NDC targets: unconditional targets, to be implemented without any explicit external support; and conditional targets. The latter are more ambitious than unconditional targets and require external support for their fulfilment. This includes financial support, and policies or action in other countries which support or facilitate a given country’s mitigation policy (e.g. adoption of carbon taxes in a particular country may be conditional on the widespread use of carbon taxes in other countries, to ensure that domestic industry is not unduly impacted). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. These are emissions allowances and offset credits from market mechanisms outside the target boundary that are used toward meeting a target. Please refer to the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Mitigation Goal Standard for more details. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)