

Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy

Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides information for cities who are reporting to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy through the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System.

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Preface: Reporting in the context of COVID-19

The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM), CDP, and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) fully recognize the socioeconomic, political, and geographic impacts that COVID-19 is having on communities around the world. This includes the prioritization of responses to the pandemic and its immediate consequences, as well as the safeguarding of individuals, families, and societies-at-large.

GCoM, CDP, and ICLEI are committed to providing flexibility in the 2020 reporting process and timeline to cities and local governments, who are invited to report if they have the capacity to do so.

Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy

The [Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy](#) (GCoM) is the largest alliance for city climate leadership, uniting a global coalition of more than 10,000 cities and local governments who share a long-term vision of supporting voluntary action to combat climate change and moving towards a resilient and low-emission society. Led today by Former New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and European Commission Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans, the coalition comprises cities across 6 continents and 138 countries, representing over 864 million people – or more than 10% of the global population. Local governments committed to GCoM pledge to implement policies and undertake measures to: (i) reduce/limit greenhouse gas emissions, (ii) prepare for the impacts of climate change, (iii) increase access to sustainable energy, and (iv) track progress toward these objectives. In addition, GCoM cities connect and exchange knowledge and ideas, supported by relevant regional stakeholders.

In June 2016, Bloomberg Philanthropies and the European Commission, under the leadership of Vice President Maroš Šefčovič, merged the Covenant of Mayors with the Compact of Mayors to form the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy. Local governments that have made a commitment to either the Covenant of Mayors or the Compact of Mayors prior to the merger are automatically considered signatories to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy and the relevant Regional Covenant where one exists. For more information, [click here](#).

To commit to the Global Covenant of Mayors, cities can follow [this link](#) to download the appropriate commitment letter. Once signed, the letter must be returned to your regional helpdesk using the contact details provided.

Regional and National Covenants

GCoM's Regional and National Covenants convene, encourage, and strengthen stakeholders at the local, national, and regional levels to help accelerate city climate action. Building on local expertise and capacity, Regional and National Covenants oversee the development of technical assistance plans for cities, ensure that the Common Reporting Framework (CRF) is implemented region-wide, and recruit cities of all sizes to join the alliance. Critical to their mandate is the effort to tailor a globally coherent GCoM strategy to regional realities, ensuring effective planning, implementation, and evaluation that aligns with regional- and national-level priorities.

Each Regional or National Covenant is comprised of the city networks and partners who support and contribute to the implementation of the GCoM mission and vision. The list of current [Regional/National Covenants](#) includes:

- East Asia
- Eastern Europe & Central Asia
- European Union and Western Europe
- Japan
- Korea

- Latin America
- Middle East & North Africa
- North America – United States of America
- North America – Canada
- Oceania
- The Caribbean
- South Asia
- Southeast Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa

Reporting to the Global Covenant of Mayors

Cities committed to GCoM agree to make key data publicly available to the GCoM via regular reporting in order to track overall progress in achieving the aims of the alliance. Reporting can be done via one of the officially recognised reporting platforms of the Global Covenant:

- ▼ [CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System](#)
- ▼ [My Covenant](#), the European Covenant of Mayors platform
- ▼ Other reporting platforms as identified by your Regional/National Covenant

The Common Reporting Framework (CRF)

The [Common Reporting Framework \(CRF\)](#) was introduced by the Global Covenant of Mayors and has been in effect since January 1st, 2019. It is the first global reporting framework which allows for cities across the world to use a single, standardized approach to sharing information on their climate activities.

The new framework was developed by multi-disciplinary experts from GCoM partner organizations and in consultation with stakeholders, cities and local governments around the world. It outlines the requirements that cities should comply with and the timeframes they should follow to lead in the fight against climate change.

Further, the new framework was developed with best practices from pre-existing reporting structures and as such, is not intended to introduce further complexity, but rather harmonize city data reporting globally.

The aims of the new framework are to:

- ▼ Ensure solid climate action planning
- ▼ Streamline measurement and reporting procedures
- ▼ Encourage regular reporting, with a focus on implementation and monitoring phases
- ▼ Enable comparison and aggregation of data for the assessment of collective impact
- ▼ Introduce more flexibility to reporting, as it can be applied by cities and local governments in different regions and of all sizes, accommodating different local circumstances and needs.

FAQs

Common Reporting Framework

1. How does the Common Reporting Framework (CRF) tie into the unified reporting system?

The CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System fully integrates the CRF and related changes, which means that any data point required by the CRF can be reported through the system.

2. What is the Guidance Note?

The [Guidance Note](#) accompanies the [CRF](#) with the purpose of explaining the framework and its applicability in more detail. It offers examples and references to help understand and correctly interpret the requirements and recommendations laid out by the CRF.

The Guidance Note complements the CRF but is not a methodological guidebook. It does not replace available guidance materials which exist from various sources. The Guidance Note provides reference to these extended resources and tools and how they can help cities in meeting the requirements of the CRF (see Annex 3 of the [Guidance Note](#)).

There are instances where the Guidance Note differs from the CRF, i.e. there are additional or excluded requirements compared to the original document. In these cases, the Guidance Note takes precedence over the original CRF document.

3. What are the badges on the GCoM website?

The CRF has introduced a new badging format which better acknowledges the progress of signatories. There are three badges, each representing a specific pillar: Mitigation, Adaptation and Access to Energy. The badges are further divided into three phases, shown as progress bars in Figure 1 below. The intention is to better recognize cities' achievements as they progress and report updates. Cities achieve compliance in a phase once they have met all the associated requirements outlined in the CRF.

The progress of each city is visually recognised on their online profile ([city dashboard](#)) on the GCoM website. Each badge lights up as soon as a city completes a phase. A city will be considered fully compliant once all phases have been completed for all badges. The badges may also be displayed on the Regional/National Covenant websites.

Note that as part of the adaptation badge, cities now must report adaptation goal(s) based on the major risks identified in their climate risk and vulnerability assessment. This element was assessed for the first time in 2019. Please refer to page 56 of the [CRF Guidance Note](#) for more information on how to set adaptation goal(s).

Further, the GCoM is currently developing the Access to Energy pillar of the CRF. As it has yet to be finalized, the badges are faded out on all city profile pages. The reporting framework is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2020.

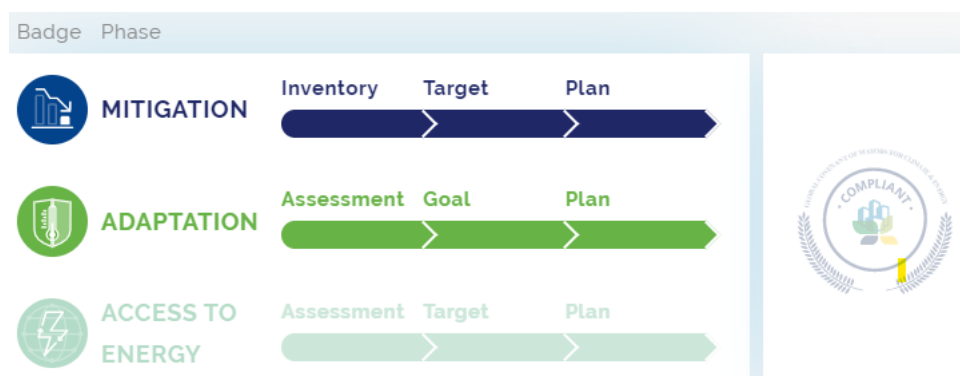


Figure 1: Pillars and phases of the GCoM Common Reporting Framework, as shown on the GCoM website.

4. What is the equivalence between the old and new GCoM badges?

Below is the mapping between the old and new badges. The badges will be updated on cities' respective online profiles each year that data is reported through the online reporting systems.

Pre-CRF (2018) badges	CRF badge equivalence
Inventory Badge (Mitigation)	Mitigation Badge: Inventory phase
Target Badge (Mitigation)	Mitigation Badge: Target Phase
Target Badge (Adaptation + Vulnerability Assessment)	Adaptation Badge: Assessment phase
Plan Badge (Mitigation)	Mitigation Badge: Plan phase
Plan Badge (Adaptation)	Adaptation Badge: Plan phase
New requirement	Adaptation Badge: Goal Phase

Table 1: Mapping of the pre-CRF (2018 and prior) badges to the CRF badges (2019 onward).

5. How is city data validated against the requirements of the CRF?

Once a city has submitted their data through the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System, their questionnaire response will be validated against the requirements of the CRF.

Cities will receive an email with their compliance results from CDP, ICLEI or C40 including comprehensive feedback and recommendations for improving the data. Compliance is achieved once all the associated requirements of the CRF have been met. Cities have a chance to amend their response based on the feedback received and can reach out for support with their respective contact from CDP, ICLEI or C40.

Any amendments are reviewed and an email with the final compliance results will be sent to the city. The city's data will be shared with their respective Regional/National Covenant, who will send an official communication on behalf of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy to award the badges earned. These badges will also be displayed on the city's profile on the Global Covenant of Mayors' website.

For more information on the 2nd level validation, please see Question [18](#) or contact your regional helpdesk.

6. What happens to cities' badges if they previously reported against the Compact of Mayors' requirements and have not had time to integrate the new CRF requirements into their response?

The Global Covenant of Mayors established 2019 as a transition year for cities to familiarize themselves with the new framework. Cities that earned one or multiple badges in 2018 kept them in 2019. CDP assessed responses based on the new requirements and provided comprehensive feedback to help cities integrate the new requirements and reach compliance.

The requirements of the CRF need to be fully integrated in responses for 2020 if cities wish to keep those badges, and progress needs to be updated through the platform as specified for each badge phase in the ['How-to' document](#) in order to maintain compliance. CDP recommends that cities report every year to track progress and receive tailored feedback and support towards achieving compliance.

7. How often do cities have to report data to GCoM?

Once a city has achieved compliance in any of the badge phases it is necessary to update progress per the specific requirement for those badge phases (see the [‘How-to’ document](#) for more information).

CDP strongly recommends that cities report progress on an annual basis. Reporting annually means that cities receive feedback on their progress on an annual basis, have access to Cities Analytics and ensures that the data is updated on the [CDP Open Data Portal](#).

In addition, cities can benefit from the ‘copy-forward’ feature, which simplifies the reporting process by copying-over data reported in the previous year – saving time and effort in reporting years where no updates to any of the badge phases are required (see the [‘How-to’ document](#) for information on when updates are required).

A commitment to flexibility in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

In light of the unprecedented socioeconomic, political, and geographic impacts of COVID-19, cities and local governments committed to GCoM are invited, but not required, to report in 2020.

Cities and local governments will not lose any badges earned and maintained in the 2019 reporting cycle, regardless of whether or not they report data in the 2020 reporting cycle (period beginning 06 April 2020 and ending 31 December 2020).

Cities and local governments who choose to report in 2020 *and fulfil* reporting requirements as outlined in the Common Reporting Framework and the CDP Questionnaire will qualify for, and may be awarded, GCoM badges in the 2020 reporting cycle.

8. If a city has developed a GHG emission inventory, climate risk and vulnerability assessment, target or action plan with neighbouring cities, do all neighbouring cities have to be committed?

CDP recommends that all cities working jointly on any of the elements in the reporting journey are formally committed to the GCoM. To join the Global Covenant of Mayors, cities can follow this [link](#) where the registration documents can be found.

It remains a requirement that the climate action plans are adopted by each municipal council individually, according to the local government’s formal procedure. The reporting platforms can accommodate reporting from signatories that follow this joint/grouped approach.

9. Do cities have to attach their commitment letter every year to the questionnaire?

Cities are only required to attach their signed commitment letter to Question 0.2 of the questionnaire if they have not previously submitted it to their respective Regional Covenant. It is strongly recommended that cities send their signed commitment letter directly to their [Regional Covenant](#).

10. What’s the difference between a CRF and GPC inventory?

The CRF is a new standard framework for cities to report their environmental data corresponding to three pillars: Mitigation, Adaptation and Access to Energy. It includes a series of requirements and recommendations defined by GCoM surrounding what information and level of detail cities should include in their inventories.

The CRF provides the flexibility to develop inventories in any methodology. So long as all mandatory information outlined in the CRF is provided (refer to the [CRF Guidance Note](#) for full details), cities can develop their inventory following the protocol of the GPC or any other protocol.

The GPC protocol is an emissions inventory methodology and is aligned with the CRF. For cities with a GPC inventory, [Appendix 1: Mapping of the CRF emission sources to the GPC](#) at the end of this document can be used to map the GPC subsectors to the CRF and ensure all emissions sources are included. Please also refer to [Question 10](#) for further details on the energy generation sector, which has additional disaggregation requirements in the CRF. Using the GPC methodology is a valid process for reporting to the requirements of the CRF. In addition and going beyond the GPC, information on adaptation and energy access are also required as part of the CRF¹.

The notation keys used in your GPC inventory can also be used when reporting in the format of the CRF. However, please note that the notation key NE (not estimated) cannot be used for the mandatory subsectors required by the CRF.

As well as attaching a full copy of their GHG emissions inventory, GCoM cites are required to report their emissions in the format of the CRF in the questionnaire, including summary emissions (Question 4.6a) as well as activity data and emission factors (Question 4.15). We recommend that cities refer to the full [CRF Guidance Note](#) to ensure all requirements of the CRF are met.

The GPC remains a structured and useful format through which cities can develop their mitigation data for the CRF requirements. The GPC does not cover any adaptation data. The [GPC reporting template \(CIRIS\)](#) is available to download for free.

11. Where should cities report GHG emissions from energy generation?

The CRF asks that cities report all GHG emissions from the generation of grid-supplied energy by facilities within their boundary, as well as by facilities owned by the local government outside the city boundary.

Cities should further disaggregate this subsector by:

- ▼ Electricity-only generation
- ▼ Heat/cold-only generation
- ▼ Combined Heat and Power (CHP) generation (including combined cooling, heat and power - CCHP)

This disaggregation is integrated into the CRF format inventory table in Question 4.6a of the questionnaire.

Furthermore, it is important that these emissions are not included in the GHG emissions inventory total, in order to avoid double-counting.

If developing a GPC inventory, GHG emissions from energy generation will be reported under subsector **I.4.4**. This subsector is already included in the CIRIS tool, and the tool should ensure the GHG emissions are excluded from the total. However, it is necessary to ensure that the emissions are disaggregated by the categories above, as this level of detail is not currently provided automatically in CIRIS.

If reporting an inventory in a format other than the GPC, cities must ensure to include GHG emissions from energy generation in a separate sector. This sector can also be referred to using the IPCC reference number **1A1**.

¹ GCoM is currently developing the Access to Energy pillar of the CRF. As it has yet to be finalized, reporting against the requirements of this pillar is not mandatory for 2020. Further guidance on Access to Energy is forthcoming and will be communicated accordingly. [See Question 3 for further details.](#)

12. Where should cities report emissions from waste that is used for energy generation?

Emissions sourced from the use of waste for energy generation (including by-products of waste disposal and treatment, such as landfill gas, biogas, sludge, etc.) are considered energy-related emissions and therefore should be reported under the Stationary Energy sector. The notation key IE should be used in the relevant section for the waste sector, and a comment explaining where they have been included must be provided.

- ▼ If the energy generated is not grid-connected but used on-site, this should be reported as direct emissions, similar to fuel combustion
- ▼ If energy generated is supplied to the grid, this should be reported as indirect emissions

Additionally, the emissions need to be disclosed in the Energy Generation section of the inventory (see Question 10 above).

13. What is the Energy Access badge and when will cities receive more information on it?

Further details on the energy access pillar will be added to the Guidance Note as soon as this has been defined and formally adopted (expected later in 2020).

In the meantime, the Energy Access badge and phases will remain 'faded out' on the GCoM profiles as shown in Figure 1.

14. How often do cities need to develop an entirely new inventory?

Once a city achieves compliance for their inventory, a new inventory must be reported through the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System at least once every four years in order to maintain compliance.

15. What exactly is a monitoring report, and how do cities report this?

The Common Reporting Framework requires that cities and local governments report their progress in the format of a 'monitoring report' on a regular basis once compliance is achieved in any of the badge phases. The specific metrics to be collected from each of these badge phases are currently under development, and guidance on monitoring reports is forthcoming.

For more details on maintaining compliance for each badge phase in the meantime, please consult the ['How-to' document](#).

16. What are the benefits of disclosing through the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System?

The CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System (CDP-ICLEI) is a recognized reporting platform to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM). Cities reporting through the system can also take full advantage of the benefits provided by CDP, and report directly to initiatives offered by our partners ([C40](#), [ICLEI](#) and [WWF](#)), all within one questionnaire.

Benefits of disclosing data through the CDP-ICLEI unified reporting system:

- ▼ CDP makes publicly reported data available for free through the [Open Data Portal](#). This provides transparency and allows organizations to access data from local governments to conduct analysis and monitor their progress.
- ▼ CDP uses the data to produce city scores, provide analytics, snapshot reports and feedback for local and regional governments to improve their performance. The [Cities A List](#) recognises cities who are leading on environmental action globally, mitigating and adapting against climate change and driving the transition to a low-carbon economy. For more information on CDP's scoring methodologies, please visit [this](#) page.
- ▼ CDP also provides support and technical assistance, through webinars, events, workshops, and other initiatives. The [Matchmaker](#) project showcases cities' planned projects to the finance sector, improving the potential for investment and implementation.

Cities committed to the Global Covenant of Mayors in Europe (EU Covenant of Mayors)

17. What about European cities committed to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy?

Cities and local governments located in countries covered by the [European Covenant of Mayors](#) and the [Covenant of Mayors East](#) may choose to either report through the CDP-ICLEI Unified Reporting System or the [My Covenant platform](#).

18. What is 2nd level validation?

Secondary validation is more in-depth feedback on the submitted Climate Action Plan and is available in some regions. To find out more, please contact your Regional Covenant Helpdesk and ask if this is currently available in your region.

19. For cities that have developed a SEACAP, can this be used to report to the Global Covenant of Mayors?

Cities can report their Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plan (SEACAP) as an integrated mitigation and adaptation climate plan through the reporting platform of their choice. The relevant sections of the questionnaire can be completed with the information contained within the SEACAP. As long as all the mandatory requirements of the Common Reporting Framework (CRF) are covered in the plan and reported correspondingly, the city should reach compliance. We recommend that cities familiarize themselves with the requirements of [CRF Guidance Note](#).

20. What non-GCoM data will I need to report to CDP?

The 2020 Cities questionnaire contains GCoM questions along with questions asked by other initiatives. These contribute to cities' CDP scores but do not affect GCoM compliance (i.e. questions regarding Local Government Emissions, Energy, Transport, Food, Water Security, etc.).

Aside from GCoM requirements, the questionnaire has no minimum information requirements and cities can provide as much detail as they want or have available. Cities are encouraged to provide as much information as possible to ensure data completeness, higher CDP Scores and the chance of featuring in CDP's [Cities A List](#).

21. Who can cities contact if they need help accessing or reporting through the CDP-ICLEI unified reporting system?

Cities can contact either cities@cdp.net or their regional CDP contact. ICLEI cities can also reach out to their ICLEI regional contact and the carbonn Center - carbonn@iclei.org can direct queries to the appropriate person.

Resources

External resources

Resource	Description
Global Covenant of Mayors Technical FAQ	Technical FAQ for GCoM Signatories
Global Covenant of Mayors CRF	GCoM Common Reporting Framework
Global Covenant of Mayors Guidance Note	Explanatory guidance to accompany the CRF

CDP Cities GCoM Guidance	Offline version of the questionnaire for guidance
ICLEI Cities Reporting FAQ	FAQ for ICLEI cities reporting to the GCoM
How-to report to the Global Covenant of Mayors	Checklist style guidance for reporting and meeting compliance against the requirements of the CRF.

For a comprehensive list of further guidance materials, tools and resources for cities see also Annex 3 of the [Global Covenant of Mayors Guidance Note](#).

Contacts

For any questions please get in touch with the Global Covenant of Mayors team at CDP:

- ▼ CDP Cities: cities@cdp.net

Appendix 1: Mapping of the CRF emission sources against the GPC

Sectors and sub-sectors in GCoM reporting framework	Included?		GPC (ref no.)
	Direct emissions	Indirect emissions	
Stationary Energy			
Residential buildings	Required	Required	I.1.1, I.1.2
Commercial building and facilities	Required	Required	I.2.1, I.2.2
Institutional buildings and facilities	Required	Required	
Industrial buildings and facilities	Required	Required	I.3.1, I.3.2, I.4.1, I.4.2
Agriculture	Required	Required	I.5.1, I.5.2
Fugitive emissions	Required		I.7.1, I.8.1
Transportation			
On-road	Required	Required	II.1.1, II.1.2
Rail	Required	Required	II.2.1, II.2.2
Waterborne navigation	Required	Required	II.3.1, II.3.2
Aviation	Required	Required	II.4.1, II.4.2
Off-road	Required	Required	II.5.1, II.5.2
Waste			
Solid waste disposal	Required		III.1.1, III.1.2
Biological treatment	Required		III.2.1, III.2.2
Incineration and open burning	Required		III.3.1, III.3.2
Wastewater	Required		III.4.1, III.4.2
Industrial Process and Product Use (IPPU)			
Industrial Process	Optional		IV.1.1
Product Use	Optional		IV.2.1
Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU)			
Livestock	Optional		V.1.1
Land use	Optional		V.2.1
Other AFOLU	Optional		V.3.1
Energy Generation			
Electricity-only generation	Required		I.4.4
CHP generation	Required		
Heat/cold generation	Required		
Local renewable generation	Optional	Optional	