

GLOBAL COVENANT OF MAYORS FOR CLIMATE & ENERGY 2026-2028 STRATEGIC PLAN



ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

The organizing principles of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM) alliance underpin its key activities and the impact we collectively seek to achieve:

➤ **Local governments are key contributors:**

GCoM works to mobilize cities and to catalyze all levels of government to actively contribute to global climate solutions. This includes enabling climate action that is responsive to local contexts and frontline vulnerabilities, particularly in cities of the Global South.

➤ **City networks as critical partners:**

Local, regional, and global city networks are core partners, providing essential support for participating cities and local governments. These networks play a key role in capacity building, peer-to-peer learning, knowledge transfer, and advocacy. City networks can also help align local efforts with national frameworks (e.g., NDCs and NAPs), and amplify local solutions on regional and global platforms.

➤ **Multi-level, cross-sector collaboration as a crucial approach:**

National, regional, and local governments remain essential for enabling and mainstreaming subnational climate action in policy and finance systems. National governments, primarily those involved in local and urban development planning and urban management, have a crucial role in setting and implementing climate policies and actions, as well as a future role in enabling and mainstreaming their national climate plans (NDCs). Regional governments, such as governorates, extended districts, new urban communities' governments, and unions of municipalities, play an important role in many aspects. Engaging academia, industry, and civil society can also unlock levers for implementation at local level.

➤ **A robust and regionally responsive solution agenda:**

Focusing on those sectors where cities have the greatest impact, GCoM supports ambitious, locally relevant solutions, captured through strategic action plans that are registered, implemented, monitored, and publicly available, when possible.

➤ **Equitably reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fostering local climate resilience:**

GCoM emphasizes the dual importance of climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as increased and equitable access to clean and sustainable energy.

➤ **A locally tailored and globally coherent alliance:**

Driven by the efforts of cities, local governments, and regions, GCoM works to facilitate regional responses to local climate vulnerabilities, development needs, and governance structures while remaining aligned with global ambitions, to meet local level needs and ambitions under one united, all-encompassing vision.



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A Message from the GCoM Co-Chairs

Dear Mayors, Partners, and GCoM Alliance Members,

We are proud to introduce the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM) Strategic Plan for 2026-2028. Building on a decade of city leadership, this plan is our shared roadmap for the next critical phase of climate action.

Over ten years after the Paris Agreement, the world stands at a critical juncture. While cities and local governments have made enormous strides in setting bold ambitions, the climate crisis continues to accelerate, with temperatures rising beyond the 1.5 degrees Celsius target and extreme weather impacting billions — especially in the Global South. It is clearer than ever that the future of our planet depends on how effectively national governments partner with the local leaders already delivering real-world progress.

This Strategic Plan is a crucial evolution, shifting our alliance's focus from commitment to implementation. Our work must be defined by action. This is why we have sharpened our focus on the goals of Deepen (engagement) and Accelerate (action), strengthening the support, tools, and accountability mechanisms cities need to deliver on their climate pledges.

Our updated vision is clear: to empower Mayors and local and regional governments to transition rapidly towards a climate-safe, resilient, and inclusive future. To achieve this, our mission will focus on mobilizing resources, raising awareness, building capacity, and supporting measurable climate and energy action in your communities.

More than ever, the road ahead demands determination and collaboration. Cities are ready to lead, and GCoM is committed to ensuring that local leadership is not only recognized, but empowered to shape a climate-resilient future for all.



Michael R. Bloomberg

UN Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solutions
Founder, Bloomberg Philanthropies
GCoM Co-Chair



Teresa Ribera

Executive Vice-President of the European Commission
for Clean, Just and Competitive Transition
GCoM Co-Chair

Executive Summary: GCoM Strategic Plan 2026-2028

The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM) Strategic Plan for 2026-2028 is designed to accelerate city-led climate action and cement GCoM's role as the leading global alliance for local climate and energy initiatives. Building on the momentum of the past ten years, and recognizing the urgency of the climate crisis for cities around the world, this plan shifts from commitment to implementation, prioritizing the Deepen and Accelerate goals.

GCoM's updated core vision is to empower cities and local governments worldwide to transition rapidly towards a climate-safe, resilient, and inclusive future.

This plan outlines strategies for new and expanded multilevel partnerships and forms of global and regional collaboration that will enable cities and local governments to deliver on their promise for bold climate action.

With this renewed focus, GCoM is strengthening its support to cities to enhance implementation, monitor progress, and scale impact, ensuring that local governments remain key drivers of global climate ambition by:

Elevating Multi-level Governance: Amplify the role of local leaders, urging national governments to empower local action and ensuring national climate plans (NDCs) fully integrate and support subnational efforts, as exemplified by the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnership for Climate Action (CHAMP) coalition.

Addressing Global South Vulnerabilities: Increase focus on cities in the Global South. These regions, despite their low emissions contributions, face the most severe climate impacts and compounding challenges.

Unlocking Finance: Local ambition alone is not enough. Expand efforts to empower subnational actors with dedicated and direct financial access, working with partners like multilateral development banks to aggregate and package local urban investment proposals.

GCoM is delivering this strategy through five primary pathways representing categories of action that guide alliance activities. To ensure effective implementation and tangible progress toward its strategic objectives, GCoM is using key performance indicators (KPIs) for tracking progress, aligning actions, and maintaining transparency with stakeholders. A set of nine outcome indicators developed during the 2023-2025 reporting period, and directly aligned with GCoM's three overarching strategic goals: Deepen, Accelerate, and Grow will continue to be used between 2026 and 2028.

Successful execution of this plan will ensure GCoM remains a powerful catalyst for city climate ambition on the world stage, accelerating the achievement of local, regional, and global climate goals.

INTRODUCTION

Global Context

The current global economic, security, and geopolitical landscape demonstrates that cities are more important than ever in the clean energy transition. While there has been much progress in subnational climate action, temperatures continue to rise beyond the Paris Agreement 1.5 degrees Celsius target. Cities, states, and regions around the world are on the front lines of increasingly dangerous, multiple, and simultaneous climate and extreme weather crises, including heatwaves, fires, and flooding impacting billions of people, particularly in the Global South, where cities are facing compounded developmental challenges. At the same time, the rapid uptake of artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies can pose risks when unguided and unregulated — feeding climate disinformation and misinformation.

Facing such unprecedented circumstances, mayors around the world need more support than ever to navigate these challenges at the local level — and contribute their perspective towards solutions at the global level. By continuing to act on climate mitigation and adaptation, cities will drive investment in innovation, create more jobs, increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, and become more energy independent. Our own modeling indicates that if all actions currently in city action plans across the globe were fully enabled and delivered, this contribution could close almost 40% of the gap to Paris Agreement emissions reduction ambitions (C40/GCoM/Ville de Paris/Bloomberg Philanthropies *From Paris to Belem* report, June 2025).



Liubljana, Slovenia
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Rapidly Increasing Urbanization & Climate Risks

Cities are already home to over half the world's population and produce more than 70% of global emissions. By 2030, more than 60% of the global population will live in cities and by 2050 the urban population is expected to more than double. While the greatest number of new signatory cities between 2023 to 2025 were in the European Union and Western Europe, 75 million people, or approximately 65% of the population represented by new signatory cities were located across the Global South.

The effects of climate risks and hazards are particularly exacerbated in rapidly urbanizing, industrializing and Global South contexts — due to lack of resource, capacity, and infrastructure. The Global South, despite contributing the least to greenhouse gas emissions, bears some of the most severe consequences of climate change (World Bank, 2023). Cities and local governments are increasingly reporting climate risks and hazards: Among the hazards most frequently identified by GCoM cities within the Risk and Vulnerability assessments (RVAs), extreme heat emerges as the most prevalent, reported in 85% of the RVAs, followed by droughts and water scarcity and then floods and sea level rise, identified respectively in 79% and 78% of RVAs ([JRC, 2025](#)). Global South regions often experience even more frequent and intense climate-related disasters, such as extreme heat, flooding, and droughts. Many also face compounding challenges, including limited infrastructure, financial constraints, and institutional capacity gaps that hinder effective prevention, adaptation, and recovery.



The Global Covenant

The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM) was established ten years ago in 2016 with a focus on helping cities make climate mitigation and adaptation commitments, to plan, act, track, and report transparently. The GCoM alliance was created to mobilize and support ambitious, measurable, meaningful, and equitable local climate action, and the need for this in today's world is stronger than ever.

Co-funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies and the European Commission, GCoM has been supported by a number of local, regional, and global partners including city networks such as C40 Cities, ICLEI — Local Governments for Sustainability, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), Climate Alliance, Energy Cities, Eurocities, FEDARENE, as well as European and international organizations such as the European Committee of the Regions, UN-Habitat, and UNFCCC. Over the course of nearly ten years, partnerships have also been built with multilateral development banks (MDBs) and international financial institutions (IFIs), technology providers, academic institutions, businesses, and private sector players, all to support locally-led, solutions-focused climate action.



GCoM HAS GROWN FROM THE INITIAL

6,000 SIGNATORIES TO
INCLUDE MORE THAN

14,000+ CITIES AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

150 COUNTRIES,
REPRESENTING OVER

1.3 BILLION PEOPLE
AND MORE THAN

10% OF THE GLOBAL
POPULATION.

The [2025 GCoM Impact Report](#) revealed that in the last decade 8,150 GCoM signatories have completed emissions inventories and set emissions reduction targets. More than 75% of GCoM signatories set a more ambitious target than their respective national governments, and more than 50% aimed to achieve their targets faster — representing a crucial urban opportunity to accelerate national climate action ([2024 GCoM Impact Report](#)). Despite strong city climate ambition, implementation capacity remains uneven, especially in cities with limited resources.

In the last three years, the GCoM alliance has experienced significant expansion, with seven percent growth in the number of cities, bringing its total number of signatories to 13,800 local governments worldwide. This expansion is even more pronounced in population terms, with an increase of 10% in the global population now living in GCoM cities.

GCoM New Commitments in the Past 3 Years



896 NEW COMMITMENTS

OF WHICH



218 ARE INTERMEDIARY CITIES (*UN-Habitat, 2022*)

REPRESENTING



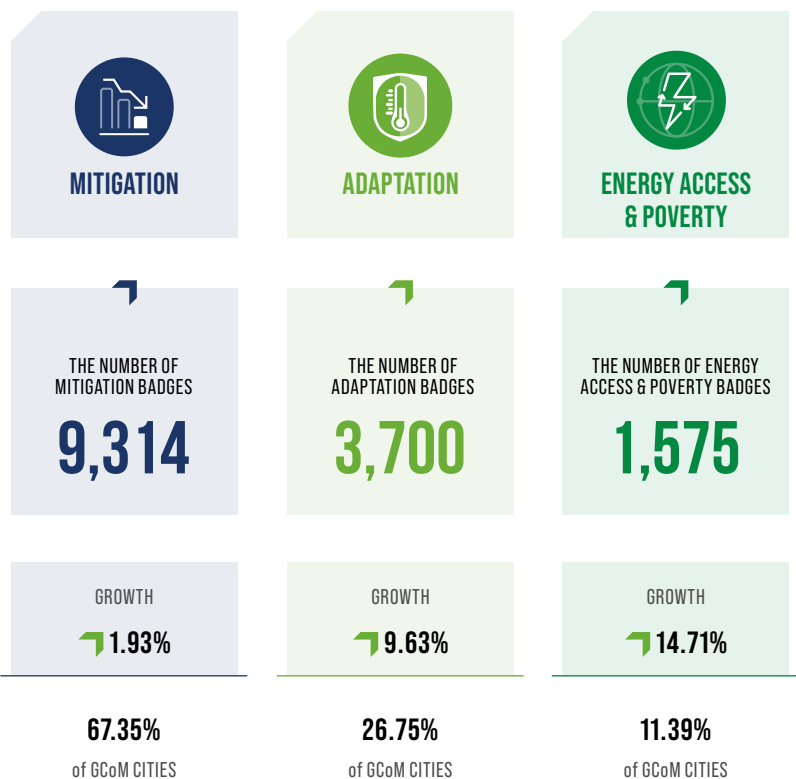
116 MILLION INHABITANTS

COMMITMENTS BY REGION

EU & Western Europe	365	→ 7.23M
Latin America	166	→ 24.15M
Eastern Europe & Central Asia	128	→ 4.95M
Middle East & North Africa	127	→ 15.77M
Sub Saharan Africa	68	→ 12.99M
East Asia	14	→ 6.37M
South Asia	11	→ 30.76M
North America	6	→ 912K
Oceania	6	→ 364K
Southeast Asia	4	→ 12.66M
The Caribbean	1	→ 70K

Data source: GCoM Regions Portal, November 2025

The growth rate remains strong. To date, signatory cities have made tangible commitments, with over 10,500 action plans submitted across mitigation, adaptation, and energy access and poverty initiatives. As of 2025, over 9,300 (67%) of GCoM signatories have achieved the Mitigation badge, 3,700 (27%) cities have achieved the Adaptation badge and more than 1,500 (11%) signatories have achieved the Energy Access and Poverty badge ([2025 GCoM Impact Report](#)).



The GCoM Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan serves as a roadmap for the entire Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM) alliance, convening the Global Secretariat, Regional and National Covenants, city networks, partners, and funders in collective action.

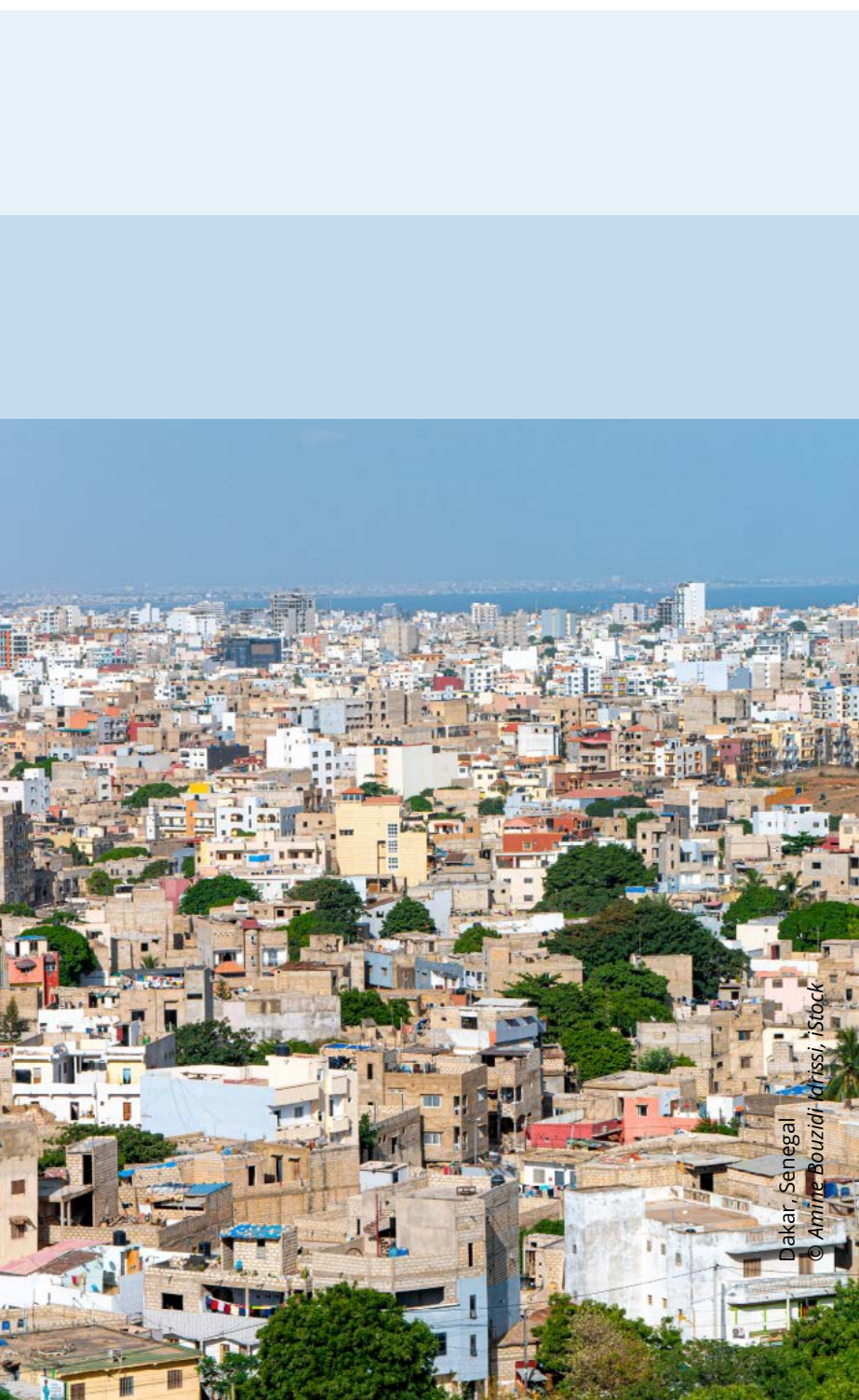
Updating the Strategic Plan every few years provides an opportunity to evolve and refine GCoM's core purpose — responding to emerging trends and shifts across geopolitical, partnership and programmatic contexts to adjust priorities and key activities to best support signatories and renew, as well as advance the common objectives of the alliance. Through consultations with partners of the GCoM alliance and the 2025 GCoM City Needs Assessment — including the Strategic Advisory Committee, Board, Regional and National Covenants, Co-Funders, and others — key input has been incorporated to create a plan that is strategic and visionary, yet also practical for tracking and monitoring purposes.

In the next three years, the GCoM alliance will undergo a strategic evolution. This Strategic Plan will guide collective action among its Global Secretariat, Regional and National Covenants, city networks, and partners.

Between 2026 and 2028, the GCoM alliance will:

- Facilitate **climate action implementation** and a strong monitoring system to track progress, ensuring that local governments not only commit to climate goals but are supported with the tools, capacity, and accountability mechanisms to deliver on them.
- Re-build and revitalize global attention on **climate action priorities**, urging national governments to empower local action, and amplifying the role of local leaders at the forefront of climate ambition.
- Update the narrative** around climate change to secure the broadest social and political reach, speaking directly to communities and decision-makers at all levels to resonate, inspire action, and rebuild public support for bold climate policies.
- Draw on the action and collective voices** of more than 13,800 cities and towns and tell their climate action implementation stories.

A key change is the sharpened focus on Deepen and Accelerate among the three core goals (deepening engagement, accelerating action, and growing the alliance). This shift reflects the alliance's maturity and the urgent need to move from climate commitments to tangible implementation. The vision emphasizes providing Mayors and local governments with the ambition, funding, and support, including from national governments, to achieve equitable transitions to clean climate and energy solutions, build resilience, and address energy poverty. The revised mission focuses on mobilizing resources, raising awareness, and supporting measurable climate and energy action in communities.



Dakar, Senegal
© Amine Bouzidi / iStock

GCoM will also significantly increase its focus on cities in the Global South. These regions, despite low emissions contributions, face severe climate impacts and challenges like limited infrastructure and access to energy. GCoM sees an opportunity to foster equitable urban planning and address higher vulnerabilities, to substantially contribute to a broader global impact.

Cities in the Global South also often lack the necessary climate and sustainable urban planning capacities, data, technical national climate mainstreaming assistance, access to funds, and financing abilities. Rapid urbanization adds complexity but also offers an opportunity to re-imagine how cities are planned, governed, and designed with equity at the center.



The Road Ahead

The coming years will test our collective resolve, yet they also represent an extraordinary opportunity to realign global climate efforts by leveraging the bold leadership, innovation, and legitimacy of local governments. To deliver the Decade of Acceleration called for by the United Nations Secretary General, decision-makers need to act now, not in five or ten years. Cities are moving from negotiation to delivery, turning climate pledges into real-world progress. The path forward demands renewed determination, courage, and collaboration. Local and regional governments are ready — and GCoM is committed to ensuring their leadership is not only recognized, but empowered to shape a climate-resilient future for all. The next decade must be defined by convergence: between subnational realities and national plans, between international finance and frontline needs, between global ambition and local implementation.



The Paris Agreement was designed to be a framework for deep societal transformation — not a finish line, but a launching pad. Ten years on, the climate crisis has only grown more urgent. The latest science is clear: we are not on track to meet our global targets. To change course, we need exponential climate action this decade. That means phasing out fossil fuels, scaling renewables, increasing energy efficiency, and delivering finance where it is needed most. Cities and regions are already leading this charge.

Laurence Tubiana

CEO, European Climate Foundation France's Climate Change Ambassador and Special Representative for COP21



GCoM Alliance Vision, Mission & Values

Vision

The GCoM vision for 2026-2028 has been updated to clearly define the future state of the alliance and Global Secretariat, reflecting what signatory cities aim to achieve in the future. Based on feedback from the Co-Funders, Board, alliance members, partners, and cities, the vision specifies key outcomes for local and regional governments — including access to critical funding and support — to equitably transition to clean climate and energy solutions, to build resilience and to access clean energy and address energy poverty. **This vision acts as a guide post to inform strategic decision-making on key GCoM activities over the next three years.**

Vision

Mayors and local and regional governments around the world have the ambition, capacity, funding, and support from partners — including national governments — to equitably transition to clean climate and energy solutions, creating a resilient future.

Mission

GCoM's mission statement defines the alliance's core purpose and reason for existence. The mission communicates the alliance's value to partners and key stakeholders, inspires global and regional partners towards a common goal, and guides day-to-day operations. The updated mission statement reflects feedback from the Board, alliance members, partners and cities to specify how GCoM can best support local and regional governments on their climate action journey in the next three years.

Mission

GCoM empowers and supports Mayors and local and regional governments by working with city/regional networks, national governments, and other cross-sector partners to mobilize resources, raise awareness, build capacity, and support ambitious, measurable, planned climate and energy action in their communities.

Values

Building on the Organizing Principles, **GCoM's core values help guide decision-making and the identification of priority actions across the alliance in the next three years.**

Values

- **Local Climate Leadership:** Supporting local long-term climate and energy solutions that reduce carbon, and build resilience to climate impacts.
- **Multilevel Governance and Cross-Sector Partnerships:** Making climate strategies more inclusive and effective by strengthening the link between national policies and local-level initiatives.
- **Information Integrity:** Strengthening and promoting factually correct information to enable ambitious climate policies.
- **Justice and Equity:** Meaningfully engaging diverse cultures and stakeholders, including all genders, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and marginalized groups, in the planning and implementation of climate actions.
- **Innovation:** Developing and deploying new technologies and methodologies to support local climate action.
- **Impact:** Measuring outcomes through data, and tangible positive impact it has on local climate action and resilience efforts.

Opportunity Through Partnership

Through partnership between Bloomberg Philanthropies, the European Commission, Regional and National Covenants, city network partners, and others, the GCoM alliance will continually engage its partners on cross-cutting initiatives to ensure that GCoM remains a global alliance able to accommodate local and regional needs.

New and expanded partnerships and forms of collaboration for the GCoM alliance are critical for cities and local governments to be able to deliver on their promise for bold climate action. Cities require even stronger collaboration and coordination with network and multilevel partners, both globally and in-region to ensure that the world stays on course towards climate neutrality.

CHAMP CASE STUDY

Launched at COP28 in 2023, by the COP28 Presidency in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies, the [Coalition for the High-Level Ambition and Multilevel Partnership \(CHAMP\)](#) brings together 78 endorsers (77 countries and the European Union) representing 36% of global population, 69% of global GDP and 40% of global emissions. The objective of the Coalition is to strengthen collaboration between national and subnational governments on climate policy and finance. After COP30, the majority of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3.0) submitted by CHAMP endorsing countries were found to have stronger subnational content - an assessment corroborated by the [UNFCCC NDC Synthesis Report](#) which found that overall, 4 out of 5 plans referenced subnational entities and two-thirds recognized subnational governments as partners in planning, implementing, and monitoring climate action, and by the [UN Habitat Urban Content of NDC 3.0](#). By the start of 2026 the CHAMP coalition was moving towards shared implementation goals, to turn their plans into action. City, state, and region mobilization has been crucial and will remain crucial to the activation and scaling of such initiatives.

The last decade has seen the rise of multilevel governance as a powerful enabler of climate progress, spurred by an effective and ambitious campaign of support from the Local Government and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) constituency (the official body that represents cities, regions, and other subnational governments in the UNFCCC process and climate negotiations). Although not an accredited UNFCCC observer organization, the GCoM alliance, including its Global Secretariat and partners are very active in the LGMA and have been instrumental in driving the global conversation on multi-level governance and partnerships. As a result, there is growing consensus that climate objectives and strategies developed through collaboration between national and local governments are the most effective way to turn global goals into tangible, real-world impact in people's lives and communities.



Acknowledging the urgency to focus global climate efforts and resources on the local frontlines is a critical first step, but more is needed. Empowering subnational actors with dedicated and direct financial access, and not just through national intermediaries, is critical to unlocking their full delivery potential and meeting global climate investment needs. The cost of inaction — on infrastructure, on livelihoods, on ecosystems — is too great to ignore. The next step to scale up local climate action is access to finance — unlocking the resources, partnerships, and political will needed to bring proven local solutions to the global scale.

CHAMP BRAZIL CASE STUDY

As the host of COP 30, Brazil has seized a unique diplomatic moment to align its international climate ambitions with a vigorous domestic agenda. Brazil was the first CHAMP-endorsing country to submit its NDC 3.0, a landmark document that reinforces the commitment to carbon neutrality by 2050 and sets a global precedent for subnational integration, using the pioneering concept of "Climate Federalism." This governance framework, institutionalized through the Plano Clima (Brazil National Climate Plan), mandates structured cooperation between the federal government, states, and municipalities. At the implementation level, the Green Resilient Cities Program (PCVR) serves as the primary engine for local climate action. The PCVR has fostered a direct dialogue on urban priorities, aligning federal support with the specific needs of local governments and ensuring inclusive and impactful climate policy. The Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) has played a pivotal role in this ecosystem, strengthening the bridge between the Federal Government and Brazilian cities. A standout achievement of this collaboration, in partnership with C40, is the [Climate Compass](#) (Bússola Climática) platform. Launched as a proof of concept for 50 Brazilian cities within the PCVR framework, the tool revolutionized access to data — simplifying complex climate analytics, allowing local governments to bypass data bottlenecks and focus on implementing high-impact climate actions. In 2025, Brazil's role as Co-Chair of CHAMP underscored the effectiveness of this multilevel approach. By launching an implementation-focused plan in Belém, Brazil has demonstrated that global resilience depends on empowering subnational leaders through integrated governance, data-driven support, and enhanced financing. Brazil's CHAMP experience demonstrates that the future of global climate resilience depends on how effectively national governments can empower the cities and regions leading the charge.

GCoM's Finance Technical Working group has brought together Regional and National Covenants, city network partners, financial intermediaries and multilateral development banks, and others to explore and commission work on the role of carbon markets, development bank finance for African cities, and project preparation. Aggregation and bundling of projects in particular from smaller and medium sized cities will be needed in order to package local urban investment proposals to be more attractive for investors. Work with country platforms on the role of guarantee mechanisms and other support instruments will be needed to continue building momentum to deliver on a large number of investment ready projects. GCoM Asia has supported cities in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand to develop local climate action plans, and mobilize finance for climate and capacity-building projects.



UTM CASE STUDY

The Urban Transitions Mission (UTM) was launched at COP26 in November 2021 with the aim to increase the capacity of cities worldwide, empowering them to accelerate urban transitions based on robust knowledge and a strong net-zero community of support and exchange. The UTM works with a cohort of 136 ambitious GCoM signatory cities from 50 countries across the world, accounting for an aggregated potential of 92 million tCO₂e reduced, equivalent to 15.9 million roundtrip flights from Istanbul to Buenos Aires. The UTM mobilizes decision makers across all levels of government to prioritize climate-neutral and net-zero pathways enabled by clean energy and systemic innovation across all sectors and in urban governance. UTM brings together a group of Global Innovation Alliance (GIA) partners (some are also GCoM alliance partners) and national governments, who commit to support cities to develop, pilot, and scale innovative solutions and approaches by sharing solutions, needs, and lessons learned. Thanks to increased capacity and access to knowledge, cities will be able to mobilize their inherent strength and the potential of their communities — and develop their own customized solutions to effectively transition to net-zero. The Mission aims to close the gap between research, development and deployment on systemic transition pathways to net-zero, resilient, and human-centered cities through multi-level, multi-sectoral, and outcome-oriented partnerships.

Source: *Urban Transitions Mission*, (2023) [About Us](#)



GAP FUND CASE STUDY

The City Climate Finance Gap Fund, implemented by the World Bank and European Investment Bank in 2020, aims to help cities in developing and emerging countries realize their climate ambitions by turning low-carbon, climate-resilient ideas into strategies and finance-ready projects. Cities face gaps in data collection, stakeholder engagement, and governance, limiting their ability to plan effectively and attract necessary investments. Strengthening local capacity is essential for bridging these gaps. The Gap Fund provides a range of technical assistance and capacity building, facilitating connections between cities and prospective financing partners, leveraging international collaboration to drive climate-smart planning, investments, and financing for implementation. By fostering collaboration, sharing expertise, and mobilizing finance, these partnerships can empower cities to implement resilient infrastructure solutions that meet both immediate and long-term needs. The Gap Fund team has worked closely with Regional and National Covenants in their target development aid recipient regions.

Source: *City Climate Finance Gap Fund*, (2025): [Turning resilient low-carbon ideas into strategies and finance-ready projects](#)

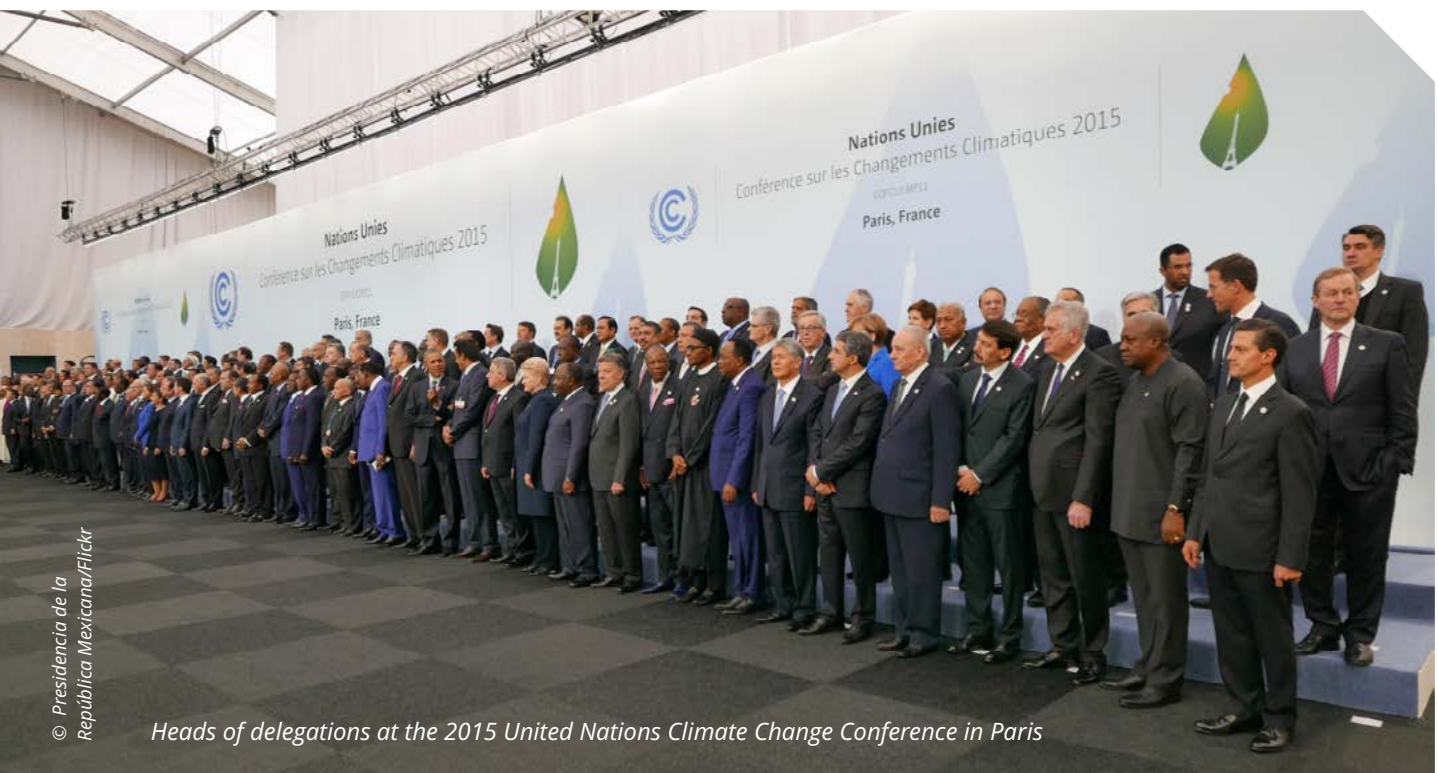




For many years, climate change was generally thought of as a problem for national governments to solve alone, from the top down. But Mayors looked at the challenge the other way around: from the bottom up. Mayors have long understood that fighting climate change, growing the economy, and improving public health all go hand-in-hand — and since the Paris Agreement was signed ten years ago, local governments have continued to make enormous strides forward. Mayors have passed ambitious policies to cut greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, while creating new jobs and making communities more resilient to extreme weather. In doing so, they've shown why national governments must look to cities as partners in achieving the goals set out in the Paris Agreement. The next phase of the fight against climate change depends on strengthening those partnerships. The road to success runs through cities — and the more we work together, the faster we'll make progress.

Michael R. Bloomberg

UN Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solutions Founder,
Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayor of New York City (2002–2013),
and GCoM Co-Chair



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Heads of delegations at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris





Cities are where people live — where children grow, where communities breathe. Climate action must make cities healthier, greener, and easier places to live, especially for those who can least afford to adapt. Insulating homes, creating parks, protecting neighborhoods from extreme heat — these are not luxuries. They are the foundation of a just, sustainable future. As Co-Chair of the Global Covenant of Mayors, I am committed to making the clean transition a transition for everyone — not just the few.

Teresa Ribera

Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for Clean, Just and Competitive Transition and GCoM Co-Chair



Fez, Morocco
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How We Work

The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy is the world's largest alliance for city climate leadership — in partnership with local, regional, and global city networks, and others. These actors assemble their existing talents, resources, and capacities to mobilize and support the commitments of cities and local governments of all sizes to achieve and exceed the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Support from the European Commission, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and partners, has allowed the growth and collective capacity of the GCoM alliance to support the development of city-led plans to effectively mitigate against and adapt to climate change, and increase access to clean, affordable, and sustainable energy.

To maximize both local and global perspectives, GCoM has a governing Board of Mayors that sets its strategic direction. The work of the Board is supported by the Strategic Advisory Committee and technical working groups as needed to serve the work (recent TWGs have focused on Data, Research and Innovation, Finance, Communications and Global-Regional Coherence).

Thirteen Regional and National Covenants (RCs) compose the GCoM alliance, addressing region-specific needs, practices, and principles. The GCoM alliance also works to engage city, sub-national, and national governments, community-based organizations, regional alliances, and parallel initiatives to encourage and support climate action from the ground up.

The GCoM Global Secretariat, based in Brussels, serves as an organizing platform for this work and a hub to inspire the ambition of cities worldwide, while galvanizing support for issues centered on the nexus of cities and climate change.

In 2025, a review of the GCoM governance was initiated, aiming to ensure that both the Global Secretariat, and alliance partners are structured effectively to respond to evolving priorities for global signatory cities.



GCoM Board meeting in Rio, November 2025

Strategic Delivery Framework

To effectively deliver on its strategic goals for the next three years, the GCoM alliance will operate through a three-phase activity cycle structure: **Plan, Implement, Monitor**. This cyclical approach applies to any potential activity undertaken by the GCoM alliance, serving to define activities, categorize and group them under specific delivery pathways (see Delivery Pathways section), and finally, facilitate the monitoring of their impact towards achieving the overarching goals. This comprehensive framework enables the alliance to align priorities, coordinate delivery, and track progress in a cohesive and transparent manner.

PLAN The planning phase defines the collective agenda of the GCoM alliance between 2026 and 2028. It reflects a shared commitment shaped by three main sources:

- **Co-funders:** Bloomberg Philanthropies and the European Commission define high-level strategic priorities that guide GCoM operations globally.
- **Partners:** GCoM partners contribute to the planning process by bringing forward their own priorities and areas of expertise that align with GCoM's mission, vision, and overarching goals.
- **Regional & National Covenants:** Regional and National Covenants contribute to the global planning process and also seek alignment and synergies between the global and regional/country priorities to ensure relevance and impact across different geographies. The GCoM Board, representing signatories across the alliance, also supports the identification of regional priorities by providing advice from a city perspective.

The resulting plan defines activities carried out by the alliance as a whole and supported by the GCoM Secretariat in collaboration with Regional and National Covenants and partners.

IMPLEMENT In the implementation phase, all GCoM activities are organized under five delivery pathways, categories that structure how work is carried out.

These pathways include activity such as communication and advocacy, capacity building, financial, and technical support, research and innovation, and data. Where possible, partner and regional office activities are also categorized under these pathways to provide a comprehensive and homogeneous view of alliance-wide implementation.

Each activity is aligned with one or more of GCoM's three overarching goals: **Deepen, Accelerate, and Grow**. While all three remain essential, the current strategy places a greater emphasis on Deepening and Accelerating climate action implementation. The Grow goal has evolved to focus on expanding participation from cities in the Global South and emerging regions, and enhancing the level of active engagement across all signatories.

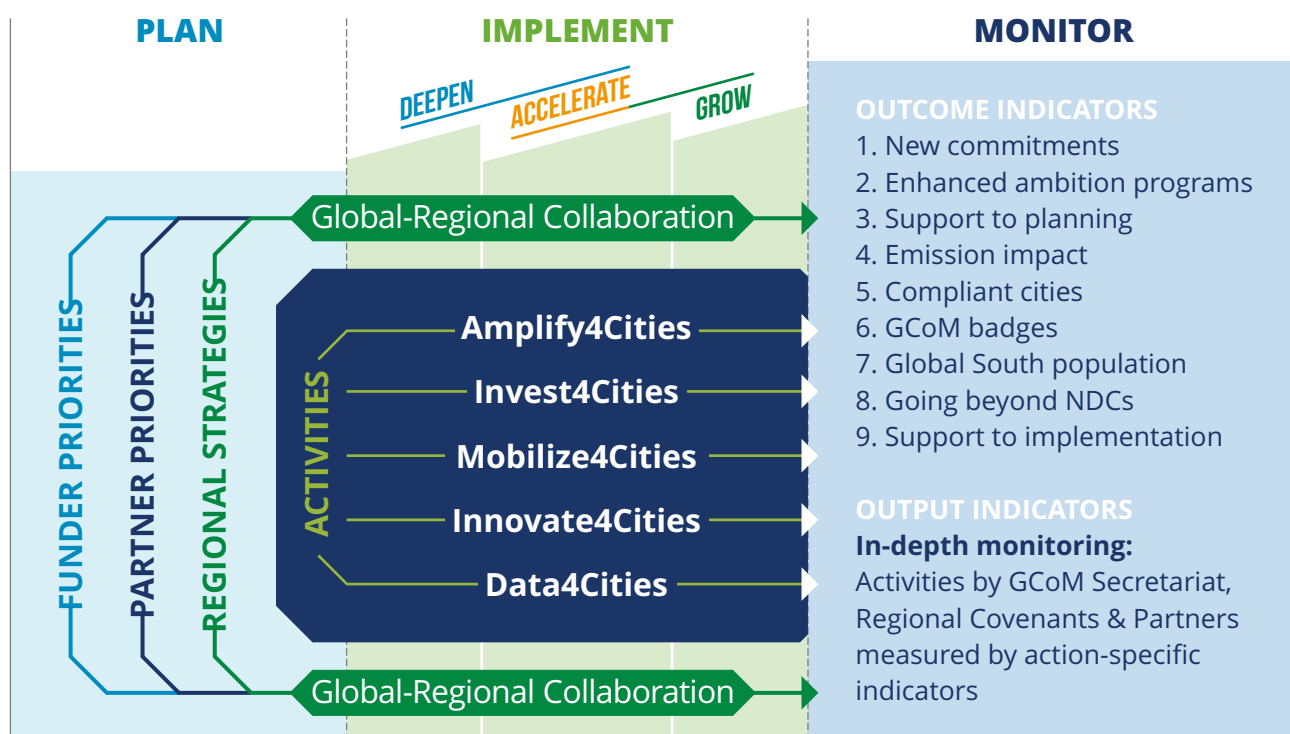
MONITOR

To assess our alliance impact in totality and guide future activities, GCoM will continue tracking progress through a robust monitoring framework:

- The existing set of nine outcome indicators designed in the reporting period 2023-2025 will remain the core metrics used to evaluate the outcomes of GCoM’s activities, and will contribute to demonstrating global city progress and contributions towards the GCoM Alliance overarching goals (growing, accelerating, deepening). These monitoring efforts capture the entire GCoM Alliance, connecting regional and global outcomes.
- Indicators for measuring the GCoM Alliance activities are specific and output-focused, reflecting the varied nature of the work undertaken by the GCoM Secretariat, Regional Covenants, and partners. The entities responsible for driving the individual activities design these indicators.

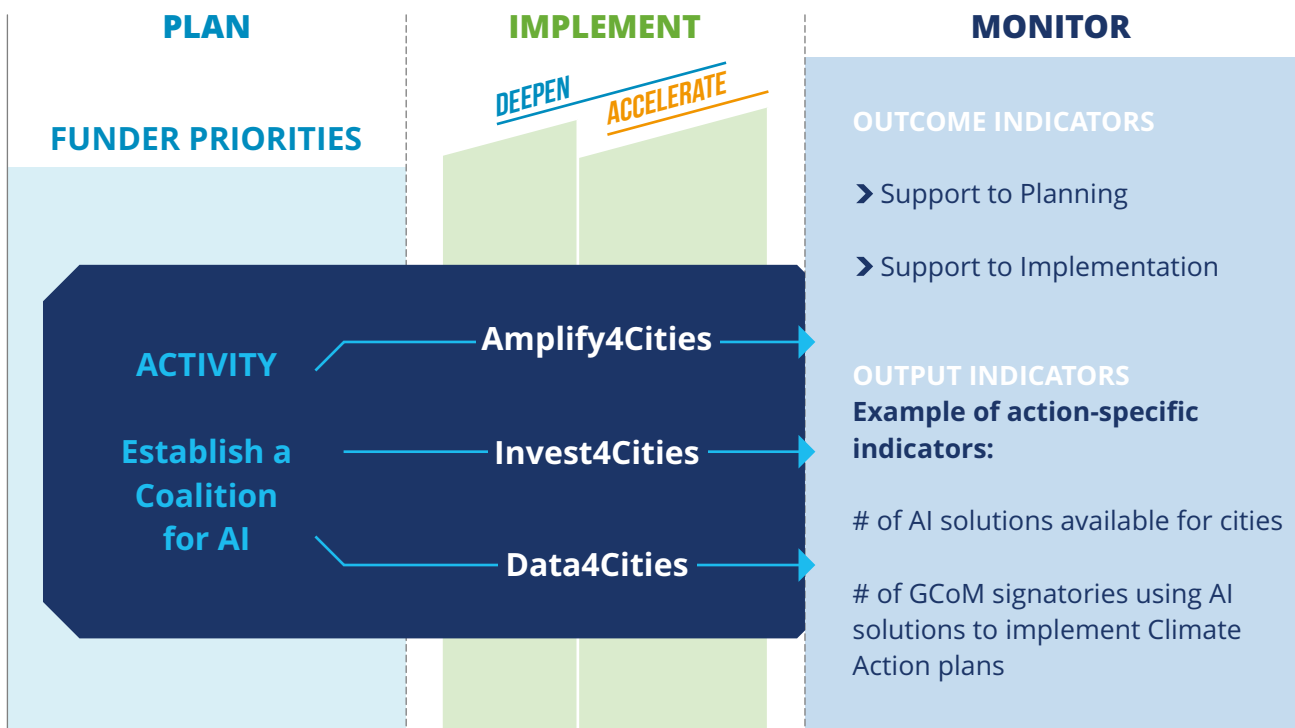
Activity Cycle Example:

Activities conducted under the GCoM Secretariat and/or pursued by the GCoM alliance can be framed under this strategic delivery framework to ensure alignment and impact. This structure can support the creation, identification, implementation, and monitoring of activities within the GCoM alliance. When an activity emerges as a priority for a partner or funder, it is integrated into the GCoM delivery framework through a standardized cycle: the activity is mapped to the most relevant delivery pathway and subsequently monitored and evaluated through the nine outcome indicators. This ensures that every effort coming from a member of the alliance directly contributes to GCoM overarching goals.



Example: Coalition for AI

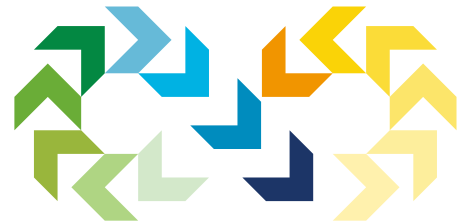
- AI was identified as a relevant topic for the GCoM Alliance, which Funders asked to be translated into specific activities;
- In response, the GCoM Secretariat establishes and leads a Coalition for AI as a key activity on AI;
- GCoM partners also contribute e.g. GCoM LATAM works with the COP30 Presidency on their program on AI – partners in the region (Secretariat, Helpdesk and global networks) track the number of signatories using AI solutions and contribute monitoring data and examples to the KPI;
- The Coalition for AI is implemented within Innovate4Cities, with strong linkages to Data4Cities and Amplify4Cities;
- The Coalition for AI, as an activity of the GCoM Secretariat, is monitored by its own activity-specific (output) indicators, and its results — measured by (outcomes) indicators n. 3,9 — contribute to achieving the goals of accelerating and deepening;
- Periodic reviews in collaboration with partners and Regional and National Covenants will monitor the progress of the activities via an update of the outcome indicators.



Three-Year Goals

The strategic framework for the next three years — 2026 to 2028 — defines the mission and vision, organizing principles, and a proposed strategic direction centered around three goal areas, and outlines the strategies, tactics, and delivery pathways needed to achieve the overarching goals:

- 1 DEEPEN** Deepening engagement with cities and local governments committed to climate action;
- 2 ACCELERATE** Accelerating climate action delivery through multi-level governance; and
- 3 GROW** Growing GCoM to include more cities and local governments.



Recognizing the urgency of the climate crisis and the critical need to shift from commitment to implementation, GCoM will now prioritize the Deepen and Accelerate goals.

While the three individual priority goals for the GCoM alliance remain constant from the previous Strategic Plan, the re-prioritization better reflects where the majority of GCoM cities are in their climate action journey.

This revision aligns with the 2025 needs assessment and with the UNFCCC's, among others, focus on implementation of the Paris Agreement's ambition. The re-prioritization also reflects the alliance's evolution and maturity in response to shifting global needs, especially following GCoM's significant expansion to over 13,800 signatory cities and local governments. This remarkable growth has laid the groundwork for a sharpened strategic focus for the next three years.

These focus areas are essential for equipping cities to deliver transformative climate action at scale and speed. This is an imperative that defines GCoM's ambition for the next three years, especially in light of the over 10,500 climate mitigation, adaptation, energy access, and poverty plans being advanced in GCoM signatory cities.

While Grow remains a vital goal, particularly in underserved and high-potential regions, the emphasis on Deepen and Accelerate acknowledges the readiness of thousands of cities to act and the need to support them in implementing action plans, whether through access to finance, readiness support, and capacity-building.

These three strategic goals will serve as the overarching focus areas for all GCoM activities. They will guide how alliance resources are channeled and mobilized and will measure collective impact. Every partner operating within the GCoM framework is encouraged to align with and contribute to these priorities, which are designed to be achieved through the full spectrum of the GCoM alliance activities, delivery pathways, and engagements over the coming years.



DEEPEN

Ten years since the inception of the GCoM alliance, cities and local governments globally have heeded the call for ambition by establishing thousands of action plans that are facing implementation: more than 7,000 for mitigation, 2,000 for adaptation, and 1,000 for energy access and energy poverty. Additionally, the 2025 GCoM Needs Assessment conducted across GCoM alliance cities and partners showed that most signatories are currently in the most time-intensive step, namely the implementation of actions, and over the next 3-5 years, the phase that will see them most engaged will be monitoring. Another crucial finding of the assessment highlights that the most essential support mechanism required by cities and local governments for implementing climate action is improved access to funding and financing.

Harnessing this critical mass of potential energy requires deep, regionally-responsive, and globally-coherent engagement that provides concrete capacity, resources, and knowledge to deliver on the implementation needs of cities and local governments. This support is especially crucial for cities facing capacity constraints, intensifying climate risks, and increasingly vulnerable populations.

Deepen is the GCoM alliance response to the implementation gap, with a four-pronged focus on finance and technical assistance (*Invest4Cities*), knowledge and innovation (*Innovate4Cities*), data and impact (*Data4Cities*), and impactful communications (*Amplify4Cities*).

Finance and Technical Assistance

Cities receive only seven to eight percent of an estimated USD 5 trillion in climate financing needed annually for investment¹. In an era marked by geopolitical instability, shifting foreign aid priorities, rising transaction costs, and retrenchment of climate finance by key institutions, cities face mounting barriers to accessing the resources needed for climate action.

The GCoM alliance recognizes that cities and local governments require conditions, capacity, and capital to translate ambition into tangible, project-level action. As an integral response to capacity constraints, GCoM will focus on cultivating enabling environments where cities can strengthen fiscal capacity and the ability to receive, manage, and deploy climate investments. Equally important is the continued and accelerated development of technical assistance and capacity building programs, including the City Climate Finance Gap Fund (*see Case Study*), that convert climate concepts into viable, bankable infrastructure projects through early-stage expertise and support. Ultimately, capital — delivered through innovative and collaborative mechanisms across both public and private sources — needs to be placed in the hands of local climate action implementation managers now more than ever.

¹ Climate Policy Initiative, (2023), *Accelerating Urban Climate Finance in Low- and Middle- Income Countries*

GAP FUND IN ACTION CASE STUDY

In Phnom Penh, Cambodia, informal urban expansion has quadrupled the city's footprint since the 1980s, heightening the frequency and severity of floods and heatwaves. To address these mounting challenges, the World Bank's City Climate Finance Gap Fund provided Cambodia with early-stage technical assistance between 2022 and 2023. This support helped the municipality of Phnom Penh and the national Ministry of Land Management Urban Planning and Construction to strengthen urban planning and integrate climate risks into long-term development strategies. The Gap Fund's analysis highlighted how adopting key, cost-efficient urban policy actions, and investment decisions could help Phnom Penh move closer to a low-carbon, sustainable future. Encouraged by Phnom Penh's progress, the Gap Fund scaled support to seven additional cities. The Gap Fund's early-stage technical assistance set the groundwork to build trust across government levels and helped secure further assistance. Gap Fund support has helped Cambodia chart a path toward greener cities — laying the foundation for over US\$7.6 billion in potential climate-smart urban investments.

Source: City Climate Finance Gap Fund, (2025): [Turning resilient low-carbon ideas into strategies and finance-ready projects](#)



Cambodia
© Aleksandra Novikova, iStock

Knowledge, Innovation, and Data

In its 2024 update, the Global Research and Action Agenda on Cities and Climate Change Science (GRAA) reinforced the need for greater knowledge co-generation among local practitioners, academia, business, and civil society across 150+ knowledge gaps and 200+ action priorities². Chief among them are data and artificial intelligence, energy access and poverty, and collaboration mechanisms for knowledge co-generation across cities, sectors, and regions.

As the GCoM alliance looks towards converting ambition into implementation, there is a vital need to better measure, monitor, and evaluate progress across all stages of each city's journey. In response, continued deployment of the Common Reporting Framework (CRF) – inclusive of its simplified level introduced in 2024 – will be crucial to ensuring a balance between impactful and aggregable information across the alliance while keeping the reporting burden to a minimum. Following discussions at the 2025 GCoM Strategic Retreat, the alliance recognizes the need to further develop, test, and deploy how it measures the actions taken by GCoM signatories, inclusive of strategies and statuses across financing, project pipeline, and engagement. Crucially, the responsible and inclusive integration of artificial intelligence (AI) models and tools throughout the city climate action journey – where possible, integrated with [Data Portal for Cities](#) – serves as an opportunity to further simplify the process for capacity-strapped local governments while maximizing impact.

With more than 600 million people still without access to electricity globally in 2025, simultaneous volatility in energy-related costs, and a persistent lack of city powers in the energy sector, a comprehensive response is needed to equip local governments with the knowledge and capacity needed to take meaningful action³. Building on the launch of the Energy Access and Poverty Pillar in 2022, the GCoM alliance will continue engagement and exploration of opportunities to unlock data, multi-level, and cross-sector collaboration to cultivate an action-oriented enabling environment for local governments globally and regionally.

Deepening engagement in cities and local governments also necessitates listening to the lived experiences and evolving knowledge of the communities that are impacted by the deleterious effects of climate change. Through the Innovate4Cities process, the GCoM alliance will continue to co-generate knowledge with diverse, cross-sector, and multi-level stakeholders at the nexus of science, policy, and practice. It will also elevate knowledge across language, regional specificity, and sectoral expertise at global level, including through processes like the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities.

² Global Covenant of Mayors, (2024), *Accelerating Next-Generation City Climate Action: Findings from the 2024 Innovate4Cities Conference and Update to the Global Research and Action Agenda on Cities and Climate Change Science (GRAA)*

³ <https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/press/gcom-arup-release-barriers-to-urban-energy-access/>

UNLOCKING URBAN ENERGY & ACCESS TO POVERTY CASE STUDY

Around 685 million people lacked access to electricity in 2022, according to the Energy Progress Report — and a further 2 billion people were still unable to cook cleanly and safely. Cities and local governments recognize the urgency and benefits of addressing energy access and poverty but often face significant barriers. Responding to this need, at COP27, GCoM launched the [Energy Access and Poverty Pillar](#) of the Common Reporting Framework (CRF): a set of indicators, guidelines, and timelines for cities to take action towards a secure, sustainable, and affordable energy future.

Recognizing the importance of accompanying the CRF with guidance and resources, the GCoM alliance then launched the [Unlocking Urban Energy Access and Poverty report](#), followed by the “[Urban Energy Access Toolkit for Local Governments](#)” in 2024, in partnership with Arup and in collaboration with the Energy Access and Poverty Subcommittee of the GCoM Data Technical Working Group as well as several GCoM Regional and National Covenants. The Toolkit supports local government staff as they pursue measurement, reporting, and action along their energy access and poverty journeys.

Global Covenant of Mayors, (2024): [Unlocking Urban Energy Access and Poverty: A New Toolkit for Local Governments](#)



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Impactful Communications and Combating Disinformation

Climate disinformation and misinformation have emerged as major challenges for city officials, undermining trust and propagating falsehoods⁴. Countering the crisis of trust requires informing people with clear, accurate information, comprehensive engagement strategies, and inspirational, empowering action. The GCoM alliance will employ this three-pronged approach to strengthen communications across partners as well as cities and local governments.

Building on the GCoM Resource Library, further resources — including case studies, white papers, peer-reviewed articles, global and regional campaigns, and other items — will be collated and co-generated with a focus on accuracy, inspiration, and action-orientation. These resources will be ready-to-share, fit-for-purpose, linguistically diverse, and offer insights on how climate action is already taking place in cities and local governments globally – with the aim of catalyzing further progress.

Accompanying the GCoM alliance-wide focus on multi-level governance will be campaigns that are tailored, regionally-relevant, and inclusive, targeting priority geographies that present significant opportunities for local action implementation. Inspired by the examples of local governments like Despeñaderos, Argentina (leveraging Instagram to publicize youth engagement strategies) and Hobart, Australia (creating the **Hobart Climate Assembly** with 33 community members to inform strategy), these campaigns will be built on the principles of effective communications: staying positive, focusing on benefits, being specific, centered on people, and stocked with creativity.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE DISINFORMATION CASE STUDY

Climate disinformation and misinformation have turned into major challenges for city officials engaged in climate action by undermining trust in institutions and leaders. Falsehoods and lies undermine public support for action, discredit efforts for change, create confusion, and sow mistrust for climate solutions. GCoM, at the request of its Board Members, is taking a closer look at how to respond to disinformation. The paper, 'Addressing Rampant Climate Disinformation,' released in 2024, explores current narratives of climate denial, explores best practices, and proposes proactive strategies to counter misinformation by informing, engaging, inspiring, and empowering constituents to expand public understanding and support for climate action.

Global Covenant of Mayors, (2024): [Addressing Rampant Climate Disinformation](#)



⁴ <https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Addressing-Rampant-Climate-Disinformation-FINAL-.pdf>



ACCELERATE

To accelerate large-scale systems change for just, inclusive, and equitable city climate action means confronting the structural barriers that continue to limit cities' and local governments' ability to deliver on their climate commitments. In a geopolitical context marked by intensifying climate hazards and increasing pressures from multiple dimensions, and some political reluctance to face the reality of the crisis, it is more urgent than ever to create enabling environments that empower cities to implement their climate plans effectively. This transformation is essential if we are to achieve meaningful progress at the speed and scale the climate emergency demands.

Accelerate is the GCoM alliance response to the need for large-scale systems change through innovative and inclusive approaches — at the speed and scale required to meet the Paris Agreement goals.

GCoM's Innovate4Cities initiative was built on the premise that no single person, organization, or government — regardless of how well-resourced they are — can solve the climate crisis alone. Six years, two Innovate4Cities Conferences, and more than 13 Innovate4Cities Marketplaces later, the GCoM alliance has learned from its collaborative, co-generative, and cross-sectoral response to the challenge.



Broader and deeper regional deployment of the GRAA — which since the 2024 Innovate4Cities Conference now indicates more than 150 knowledge gaps and 220 action priorities across the city climate action journey - will remain a priority for the GCoM alliance. Centered around the nexus of science, policy, and practice — and focused on knowledge exchange, cutting-edge solution deployment, and multi-level government engagement, the GRAA serves as an evolving, yet reliable foundation for elevating the grey- and peer-reviewed research needed to accompany action implementation.

AI x CITY CLIMATE ACTION HACKATHON CASE STUDY

The AI x City Climate Action Hackathon has emerged as a vital bridge between transformative artificial intelligence and the practical needs of local governments. By ensuring that AI solutions are people-centered and policy-relevant, the initiative has successfully moved beyond theoretical innovation to real-world implementation. Over its first two editions, the program engaged more than 640 participants across 15 webinars, resulting in over 60 innovative applications designed to assist cities in assessing climate hazards.

The inaugural 2024 edition focused on adaptation solutions for Brazilian cities, leading to a high-profile pitch finale at the Innovate4Cities Conference (I4C24) in Montréal. The winning team, DUCTExplorer from Singapore, developed an AI model that utilizes local and satellite data to create city — and district-scale heat risk models. Building on this success, the 2025 edition expanded its scope to tackle Energy Poverty and City Climate Action Tracking. The finale, held at IBM One during New York Climate Week, concluded with two winners, Polisense.AI (Peru) and EcoGuardians.AI (Algeria), securing seed funding for their projects. The program's impact is further amplified by a robust ecosystem of partners, including city networks like C40 Cities and ICLEI, alongside academic leaders such as the University of Cambridge, ensuring that every solution is anchored in scientific rigor and municipal necessity.

Source: Innovate4Cities, (2025): [AI x City Climate Action](#)



To supercharge the deep response to action implementation, the GCoM alliance will explore and pursue the synergies, integrations, and opportunities embedded with the rapidly evolving artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies landscape. As innovative and efficient models and tools that can simplify the journey for cities and local governments of all shapes and sizes, AI and emerging technologies serve as critical opportunities for accelerated action implementation that remains evidence-driven, inclusive, and indicative of the co-benefits that can be gained through holistic climate action. AI-powered integrations can benefit not only the data-intensive stages of climate action planning, but also help surface communications-relevant narratives and opportunities that local governments can leverage to combat disinformation, as well as strengthen early-stage project preparation alignment between local governments and financial institutions. Deploying AI and emerging technologies responsibly, and with sufficient knowledge around its risks alongside its opportunities, are also paramount.

Underpinning the climate action fast-track is multi-level governance: collaboration, communication, engagement and reporting, among and across all levels of government in a process led by national governments. Key to achieving credible, just, and ambitious commitments means identifying, exploring, and pursuing options for national, regional, and local governments from policy levers to institution-building — with an emphasis on the multi-actor, multilevel areas for action that bring together national, regional, and local governments with civil society, local and indigenous communities, researchers, and businesses. Through the Coalition for High-Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP), now with 78 endorsers, the GCoM alliance is helping embed solutions across mitigation, adaptation, and energy — in partnership with leading industry and academic institutions — to help countries unlock the urban opportunity for climate action.

MULTILEVEL CLIMATE ACTION PLAYBOOKS CASE STUDY

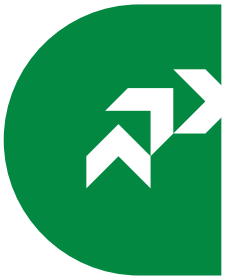
The 2021 [Multilevel Climate Action Playbook](#), followed by the [Second Edition](#) in 2022, and the [Multilevel Climate Action Guide for Decision Makers](#) in 2023, lay out the options for national, regional, and local authorities to engage in multilevel climate action, from policy levers to institution-building. Each draws on examples from the national, regional, and local level of both urban climate mitigation and adaptation and emphasize the multi-actor, multilevel areas for action that bring together national, regional, and local governments with civil society, local and indigenous communities, researchers, and businesses. They also highlight connections with ongoing policy and program development for climate, sustainable development, urban development, and biodiversity.

*Source: Global Covenant of Mayors, (2022):
[The Multilevel Climate Action Playbook Second Edition](#)*

**NATIONAL
REGIONAL
LOCAL**
GOVERNMENTS

**THE MULTILEVEL
CLIMATE ACTION
PLAYBOOK**
SECOND EDITION

**THE MULTILEVEL
CLIMATE ACTION
GUIDE FOR
DECISION
MAKERS**



GROW

As of 2025, GCoM has continued to grow in both scale and significance, with over 13,800 cities and local governments from 148 countries across 6 continents now committed to the alliance goals. This momentum reflects a shared recognition that cities are not only on the frontlines of the climate crisis, but also essential drivers of the solutions needed to address it.

While large, well-resourced, and committed cities are leading the way on climate thanks to their scale and visibility, many advancing toward Net Zero, thousands of small and medium-sized cities must also be part of the global response. Today, half of the urban emissions reduction potential rests in rapidly growing cities with fewer than 250,000 people. These cities, many located in low- and middle-income countries, are experiencing rapid population growth, with the majority of the 70 million people migrating to urban areas each year settling in these regions.

To increase the global impact and expand the reach of the GCoM alliance, we must reframe what **growth** means. The path forward must prioritize expanding engagement in the Global South, where the stakes are highest and the need for support is greatest, while maintaining strong momentum and leadership in the Global North. Just as importantly, growth must be measured not only by the number of cities joining the alliance, but also by population growth and urbanization, as well as the number actively implementing climate action on the ground. Growth also means expanding the ecosystem of partners, technical institutions, and implementing actors that can efficiently support cities in turning their commitments into measurable progress.

This requires more than invitations; it requires clear and compelling communication about the value of local climate leadership. That means connecting climate action to the everyday priorities of communities: adaptation, energy access, poverty reduction, and long-term sustainability.

In conclusion, the alliance must continue to grow, but with a sharper focus on expanding the number of cities that are actively implementing climate action, those with the greatest potential for impact and in most need of support. At the same time, it is essential to maintain momentum among frontrunning cities, ensuring they continue to lead and inspire global efforts. In the next three years, we have the opportunity to grow GCoM's reach in service of greater impact and to accelerate progress toward achieving global climate goals.

Delivery Pathways

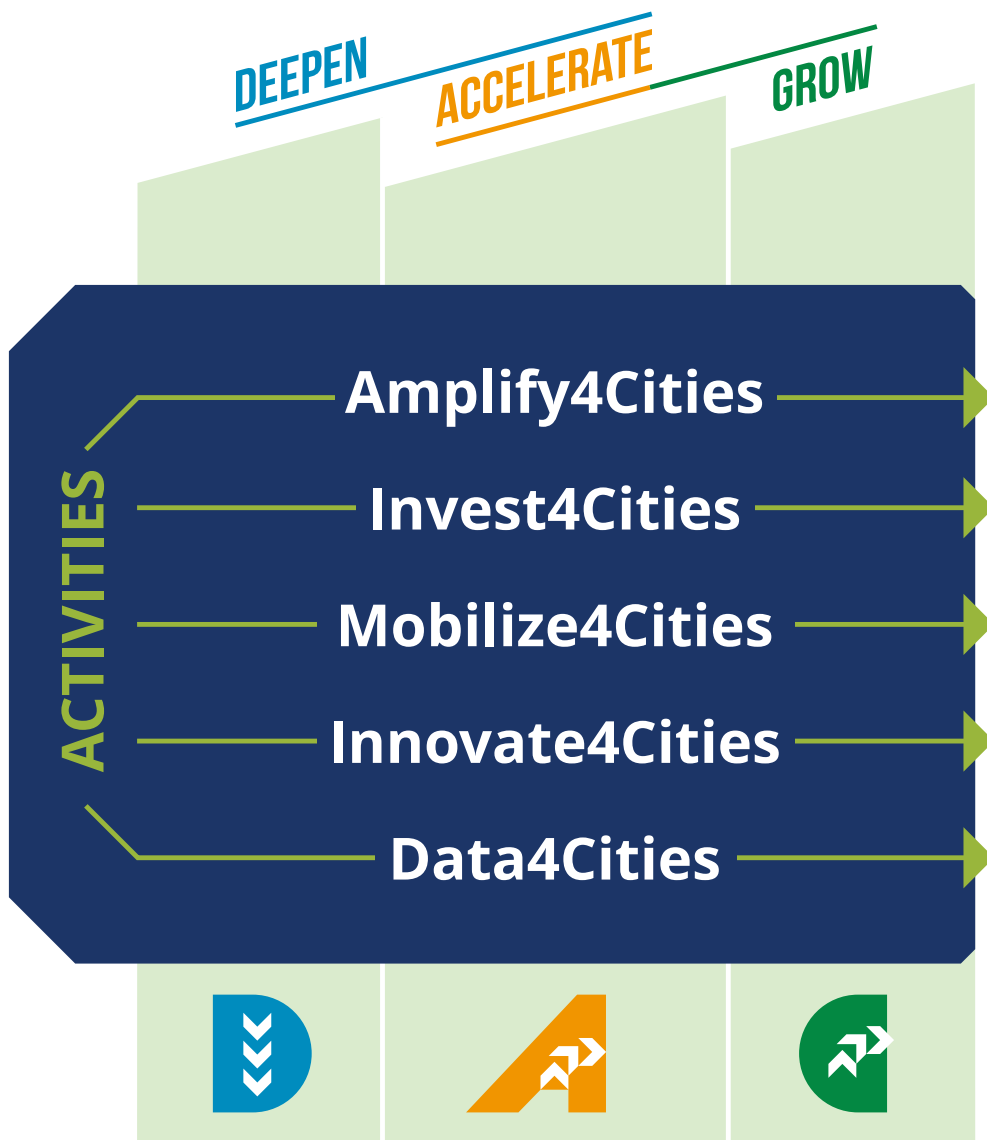
GCoM will deliver its strategy through five primary pathways that underpin the core initiatives and focus of our work. These delivery pathways remain consistent from the previous strategic plan, and should be understood as the main toolbox through which the GCoM alliance advances its strategic goals. Each pathway represents a distinct means of implementation — categories of action that guide how we design, organize, and execute our activities. These include, for example, communication and advocacy, capacity building, financial and technical support, research and innovation, and policy alignment and engagement.

The delivery pathways serve a dual purpose: not only do they shape the strategic direction and operational planning of the GCoM alliance, but they also act as a common framework to categorize and map the efforts of GCoM partners, where data is available. By using these pathways as means of implementation, we can more effectively align our collective efforts, track progress across the alliance, and ensure that all activities contribute to achieving our overarching goals of Deepen, Accelerate, and Grow.

Remaining transversal to the three overarching goals, the five delivery pathways serve several critical functions that enhance coordination, alignment, and impact across the alliance:

- **Categorization and labeling:** Delivery pathways provide a common structure to categorize GCoM Secretariat, Regional and National Covenants, and partner activities (where data is made available), allowing for a unified and comprehensive view of how various initiatives contribute to the alliance's strategic goals.
- **Linking activities to goals:** Delivery pathways enable a clear connection between single activities and overarching goals, ensuring that all efforts are purpose fully aligned with our strategic direction.
- **Monitoring and tracking implementation:** Delivery pathways support more effective planning and monitoring by establishing a consistent framework to track progress, strengthening accountability, and strategic coherence.
- **Collaboration and synergy:** by organizing activities under shared categories, delivery pathways make it easier to collect inputs from partners, identify overlapping or complementary efforts, and leverage synergies to amplify collective impact across the alliance.

To ensure the delivery pathways remain comprehensive and reflective of the full scope of implementation efforts across the alliance, the GCoM Secretariat will establish a streamlined and continuous process to collect inputs from partners on their activities. To ensure delivery pathways are effectively localized, Regional and National Covenants will be equipped to tailor these five pathways to their unique regional contexts. This ensures relevance, scalability, and higher engagement with subnational actors, especially in the Global South. This approach will help keep the pathways regularly updated with the latest data, enabling a more accurate and dynamic picture of how the alliance is progressing toward its strategic goals. By maintaining this ongoing exchange, we aim to foster greater transparency, strengthen alignment across initiatives, and maximize the collective impact of GCoM's global alliance.





AMPLIFY 4CITIES

► Strategic Communications, Advocacy & Thought Leadership

Inspire citizens and policymakers alike toward meaningful climate action.

We will use communications and advocacy tools that draw from diverse voices to tell powerful stories, elevate the successes of cities and local governments — including Mayors and local leaders — and use the alliance of partners as a collective platform to share insights between cities, across multiple levels of government, and with other sectors. Critically, we will call on national governments and international institutions to implement policy frameworks that broaden and deepen their ambition and the scope of their climate priorities and recognize the value of city climate action in the NDC implementation process - while delivering a socially equitable and just transition. Amplify4Cities will ensure inclusive participation of youth, Indigenous peoples, and marginalized groups, amplifying their role in co-creating climate solutions. Alliance-wide communications and advocacy efforts will support targeted, region-specific campaigns and local government constituencies at the nexus of climate and energy ambition, capacity, and policy.

INVEST 4CITIES

› Resource Mobilization

Enhance & accelerate city and local government access to financial resources.

We will unlock domestic and international resources for investment in projects critical to accelerate the realization of city climate action commitments. We will do this by advocating for policy shifts in support of city climate action implementation, enhancing local government capacity for financial innovation and blending, removing barriers to investor-oriented climate action plans and projects, and unlocking large-scale financing instruments to boost urban action implementation.

INNOVATE 4CITIES

› Research & Innovation

Tackle the information and technology gaps cities have prioritized to drive science-based replicable action and sustainable innovation at the scale the world demands and cities need.

Innovate4Cities is the GCoM global climate action accelerator, a city-led initiative to establish a research and innovation agenda that builds off existing work done by city networks. We aim to provide the knowledge and innovation to arm local government practitioners to successfully make the case and advance their efforts with city leaders, private sector, citizens, and the financial community as they strive to undertake bold climate action, and ultimately drive resources to ensure successful delivery of global systems change.



DATA 4CITIES

► Data & Reporting

Develop, maintain, and manage the data underpinning the GCoM alliance, partnering networks and cities, and highlighting the progress and power of cities.

We will do this by determining appropriate methodologies, minimum requirements, protocols, and policies related to data collection/reporting, verification, analysis, and access. This includes the maintenance, improvement, and regionally-responsive harmonization of the Common Reporting Framework (CRF). We will work to establish a harmonized suite of protocols across the GCoM alliance, open access to new and connected sources of city climate data and identify and confirm parameters for validation of city reporting. These efforts will establish a global consistency to city climate data which will allow GCoM to highlight the alliance's progress.

MOBILIZE 4CITIES

► Technical Assistance & Capacity Building

Provide expertise via local, national, and international specialists to enable urban action along the city climate journey and across regional contexts.

Delivering high-quality, cost-efficient technical assistance at scale will be critical in helping cities meet their own commitments and the global community meeting the Paris Agreement goals. On-the-job assistance can take many forms — sharing information and expertise, instruction, skills training, transmission of working knowledge, consulting services, and transfer of technical data. Working together with private sector companies and other partners we facilitate city to city cooperation, connect resource availability with local needs, and subsequently channel resources and support for high-quality training and support that can ensure development and delivery of outcomes/outputs, whether it be a service, plan, physical output, or asset.



Delivery Through Global-Regional Collaboration

Regional and National Covenants are an essential part of the GCoM alliance. The global Strategic Plan unifies GCoM activities carried out at global, regional, and country level, strengthening our collective narrative and impact. With Deepen chosen as the alliance's priority global goal, Regional and National Covenants are critical in ensuring tailored support to cities, using their presence on the ground to integrate specific contexts.

Key principles for effective global and regional collaboration include:

Addressing regional specificities: the global Strategic Plan provides a common framework for the alliance rather than a one size fits all approach. The global plan is reciprocally informed by regional strategies, ensuring a two-way alignment of delivery pathways and contextual needs. The following approaches could be considered:

● **Developing tailored regional strategies and technical support:**

- Regional and National Covenants are encouraged to localize the global strategic plan to address their specific needs, challenges, and context within their existing or forthcoming regional strategies to align regional and global priorities. Regional and National Covenants are uniquely positioned to provide tailored support to cities by mobilizing optimal expertise on the ground. By harnessing regional partners' knowledge of existing tools and proven practices, diverse support services can be operationalized to deliver efficient, needs-based support to cities at any stage of their climate journey.
- Where there are dedicated regional funding streams and contracts in place to support GCoM delivery, the funders' priorities will guide implementation, but opportunities to seek alignment and synergies on both sides should always be explored.

● **Prioritizing Global South:**

- With over 60% of the GCoM signatories total population residing in the Global South, we recognize the increasing needs and unique challenges facing these cities. GCoM commits to ensuring cities in the Global South are not only included but prioritized in decision-making, funding pipelines, and technical support.

GCoM CoM SSA BUSINESS MATCHMAKING PROJECT CASE STUDY

Following the momentum generated at the Regional Climate Action Project Implementation Forum held in Cape Town in June 2025, the GCoM Global Secretariat and the Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA) regional team joined forces to operationalize a multi-city waste-to-biogas pilot initiative involving Sekondi-Takoradi (Ghana), Basse (The Gambia) and Mombasa (Kenya). Building on the Forum's business-to-city matchmaking outcomes, the Global Secretariat facilitated the engagement of the German company Ökobit GmbH — provider of the Homethane micro-biogas system — to co-develop a practical, community-level demonstration of circular waste and energy solutions across the three cities.

While the regional SSA team coordinated local government buy-in and city-level preparation, the Global Secretariat provided technical facilitation and mobilized travel support for Ökobit engineers, enabling hands-on installation, training, and community outreach in each location. Together, the teams ensured harmonized implementation plans, co-designed training modules for teachers, vocational trainees and municipal officers, and supported the cities in shaping scale-up pathways for medium and large-size biogas systems.

Thanks to this collaboration, the GCoM alliance advanced three parallel demonstrations of low-cost, decentralised biogas technology — each generating clean cooking gas, high-quality compost, and community awareness on waste segregation. The joint effort strengthened local technical capacity, contributed to energy-poverty mitigation, and provided a replicable blueprint for African secondary cities seeking climate-aligned waste and circular-economy solutions.

Source: Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa: [About Us](#)



Elevating the role of Regional Covenants with an emphasis on co-creation: Regional and National Covenants play an essential role in co-creating and contextualizing strategies, enabling the localization of tools, knowledge, and financial mechanisms. Establishing processes to encourage closer collaboration between the Global Secretariat and the Regional and National Covenants, will continue nurturing the alliance through collective knowledge and expertise. The following approaches could be considered:

● **Co-developing innovative support services, partnerships and funding opportunities**

the global Strategic Plan provides a common framework for the alliance rather than a one size fits all approach. The global plan is reciprocally informed by regional strategies, ensuring a two-way alignment of delivery pathways and contextual needs. The following approaches could be considered:

- Ensuring a long-term and sustainable approach to support is key for Regional and National Covenants so the engagement with cities can last beyond funding streams, through existing structures on the ground. To lay the groundwork for this forward thinking approach, co-developed targeted and regionally tailored support can address the main changes faced by our signatories over a prolonged period of time. The continuity of Regional/National Covenants is also critical in ensuring sustained support to cities on the ground.
- To achieve a stronger convergence, co-developing differentiated support pathways with Regional and National Covenants is facilitated through the current inclusion of action priorities in the global Strategic Plan. These will enable active collaboration throughout the implementation phase.
- GCoM signatories worldwide require access to all available support opportunities offered by the GCoM alliance. A closer engagement with Regional and National Covenants will identify opportunities to replicate regional activities, locally or globally.
- Multilevel governance is becoming an increasing area of work for the GCoM alliance. Engagement with Regional Covenants is key in this area, to be able to leverage existing engagement with various levels of government in each region/country. Supporting policy integration between local climate action plans and national NDCs/NAPs will be critical to bridging ambition and delivery.

GCoM LATIN AMERICA INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE CONFERENCE CASE STUDY

Following Board Member Mayor Basualdo's request, the GCoM Global and Latin American Secretariats joined forces to ensure an active engagement of the GCoM alliance as part of the International Climate Conference 2025 organized by the Province of Córdoba, Argentina. While the Latin American Secretariat focused on mobilizing the GCoM LATAM Mayors Forum and organizing an international field visit to Despeñaderos, the Global Secretariat team sponsored the participation of city representatives from South East Asia, Sub Saharan Africa, Europe, and Eastern Europe to add an international perspective to this regional event. Together, they also co-created GCoM-led sessions with the Latin American team on relevant topics such as Gender and Inclusion, Research and Innovation, Climate Finance and Artificial Intelligence. Thanks to this collaboration, the GCoM alliance was praised by the Provincial Government of Cordoba and partners in the region for leading over 7 sessions, mobilizing over 50 city representatives and experts and providing international support to subnational climate action in a country that faces resistance from the national government.



Global-Regional governance dynamics: In order to achieve the goals set for the alliance in the next three years, collaboration between and across global and regional levels can be further strengthened. The following approaches could be considered:

- **More efficient regional representation with the GCoM governance:**

- The ongoing governance review foresees a stronger role for Regional and National Covenant representatives within the GCoM Governance Framework so they can not only actively engage in the implementation and monitoring of the Strategic Plan, but also play a key role in mobilizing the Board Mayors, and partners in their respective regions/countries.

- **Closer communication and engagement:**










- Regular engagement between the Global Secretariat and the Regional and National Covenants is essential to keep an effective collaboration dynamic.

Measuring Success

To ensure effective implementation and tangible progress toward its strategic objectives, the GCoM alliance uses a robust framework of quantitative indicators to measure and communicate impact. These key performance indicators (KPIs) are essential for tracking progress, aligning actions, and maintaining transparency with stakeholders. These indicators are categorized by whether they monitor outcomes or outputs achieved within the strategic delivery framework.

Outcome Indicators

The alliance continues to rely on a set of nine outcome indicators, developed and refined during the 2023-2025 reporting period. These indicators are directly aligned with GCoM's three overarching strategic goals: Deepen, Accelerate, and Grow.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. # of new GCoM commitments by region (and # of new commitments in fast-growing, intermediate cities)  | 4. Increase in the projected emissions impact of the GCoM alliance in 2030 and 2050  | 7. % of global population represented by cities in the Global South  |
| 2. # of cities committing to enhanced ambition programs led by GCoM alliance partners  | 5. # of cities developing a CRF-compliant climate action plan through GCoM support  | 8. % of GCoM signatories with a target greater than respective country's NDC  |
| 3. # of projects receiving support for strategic planning, pre-feasibility, and feasibility requirements  | 6. # of cities meeting GCoM annual badging requirements  | 9. # of projects receiving support for implementation  |



The nine outcomes indicators serve three key purposes:

- **Assessing achievement:** provide a measurable means to track the realization of GCoM alliance's core goals, reflecting the collective impact of the alliance's efforts across member cities.
- **Communicating impact:** designed to be clear and accessible, the indicators enable GCoM to communicate its results and value to the broader public, partners, and stakeholders.
- **Guiding strategy:** the KPIs function as a strategic compass, helping guide the allocation of resources and refinement of activities as the alliance advances its Strategic Plan.

Output Indicators

The alliance foresees the use of output indicators to monitor the immediate deliverables and activities executed across the GCoM alliance. While outcomes indicators measure long-term change and overall impact, these output indicators focus on the direct products of the GCoM Secretariat, Regional Covenants, and partners. By capturing these activity-specific data points, the alliance can ensure accountability and operational efficiency at every level. These metrics serve to validate that the strategic delivery framework of the alliance is functioning as intended, providing the necessary evidence of high-level engagement and tactical progress before these efforts mature into broader strategic outcomes. Output indicators are not predefined but should be customized for each activity. To ensure consistency, the GCoM Strategic Plan provides this standardized approach for the alliance to follow when designing, implementing, and monitoring activities within the strategic delivery framework.

The output indicators should be designed considering three key purposes:

- **Operational tracking:** measures the accomplishment of specific activities — in their volume and frequencies — to ensure the Strategic Plan is being executed.
- **Ensuring accountability:** allows to track the ownership of activities enabling the Secretariat, Regional Covenants, and partners to provide a transparent record of their progress and contributions.
- **Aggregate impacts:** provides comprehensive overview of the alliance activities helping leverage collaboration, scalability, and capacity among Secretariat, Regional Covenants, and partners.

Alongside the above quantitative indicators, the GCoM alliance will continue to qualitatively measure the delivery of results through a strong narrative including key messages, tools, and case studies that showcase scalable and replicable success stories from cities around the world.

Focus Areas

To enhance the relevance, agility, and impact of the GCoM Strategic Plan, a new structural layer is being introduced to incorporate focus areas (*included in [Annex I](#)*). This addition is designed to steer decision making, help focus implementation, optimize resource allocation, and enable a plan that is responsive to evolving global and local priorities. Our current strategic delivery framework, organized from goals to actions via delivery pathways and Global-Regional Collaboration, provides a strong foundation for progress. Including this new layer further enriches the framework by offering clearer direction and focus. By adding specific focus areas, we can better align our work with both long-term goals and real-time opportunities for impact.

Focus Areas: Driving Targeted Implementation

Focus areas bring a more actionable dimension to the plan. These are high-impact activities or categories of intervention identified as particularly critical, because of alignment with key funder and partner agendas, urgency, or their proven effectiveness. A robust foundation for these priorities was established through the 2024-2025 update to the GRAA, a key outcome from the Innovate4Cities 2024 Conference in Montreal.

Focus areas provide a dynamic mechanism to ensure our strategy remains focused and flexible. This added layer promotes a more adaptive approach to implementation, where areas can be continuously prioritized and adjusted based on new evidence, shifts in the global landscape, and evolving partner and city needs. This approach ensures that the pathway to achieving GCoM's goals is marked by the most timely, necessary, and impactful interventions, maximizing our collective capacity to deliver climate actions.

To better reflect implementation progress, especially in terms of climate action on the ground in GCoM signatory cities, a new set of area-specific indicators (*included in [Annex II](#)*) have been developed. These focus on measuring local, tangible progress in focus areas and enhance overall tracking of cities' climate action plans implementation.

These area-specific indicators, grounded in focus areas, are intended to offer a more applied view of implementation and impact from and across cities. The structure of the indicator framework allows the alliance to adapt and respond to evolving priorities and emerging challenges later on during the three year plan period, if and as needed. As the global climate landscape shifts or new areas of opportunity arise, additional indicators could be introduced, to ensure that monitoring efforts remain relevant, targeted, and aligned with the most impactful areas of work. This adaptability will help GCoM continuously capture the full breadth of city climate implementation progress across the alliance.

While this list of area-specific indicators is already informed by current needs, it remains flexible and adaptive, open to the inclusion of additional indicators as new focus areas emerge throughout the Strategic Plan's lifecycle.

Annex I

This Annex outlines the focus areas identified by the GCoM Secretariat, Funders and partners for the period 2026-2028.

Focus Areas

Focus Areas bring a more specific, actionable dimension to the plan. These are high-impact areas or categories of intervention that have been identified as particularly critical, whether due to alignment with key funder and partner agendas, urgency of need, or their proven effectiveness. A robust foundation for these areas has been established through the 2024-2025 work to update the GRAA, a key outcome from the Innovate4Cities 2024 Conference in Montreal.

Core Focus Areas

Core Focus Areas directly address the three pillars of GCoM: Climate Mitigation, Climate Adaptation, and Energy Access and Poverty. These areas act as the primary monitoring and reporting framework for assessing the overall commitment and comprehensive progress of GCoM (Alliance and Cities) in terms of the overarching objectives of climate and energy action.

- **Climate Risks & Resilience**
Enhancing preparedness and adaptive capacity in response to escalating climate hazards.
- **Energy Transition & Renewables**
Accelerating the shift toward clean energy sources through infrastructure and regulatory frameworks.
- **Energy Poverty & Cost of Energy**
Delivering inclusive socio-economic programs that alleviate energy burdens and promote housing affordability.



Explorative Focus Areas

Explorative Focus Areas constitute a set of specific, sectoral, and highly targeted areas of intervention. These areas are designed to reinforce the Core Focus Areas by addressing specific urban challenges and high-impact sectors. They serve to provide detailed and granular metrics for monitoring sector-specific progress and to explore how and where GCoM presence could be more impactful.

- **Transport & Mobility**
Advancing sustainable and accessible mobility systems to reduce emissions and improve connectivity.
- **Urban Food Systems**
Promoting resilient and localized food networks that enhance food security and sustainability.
- **Air Quality**
Implementing cross-sectoral solutions to address pollution.
- **Biodiversity**
Implementing cross-sectoral solutions to address ecosystem degradation in urban environments.
- **Informal/Marginalized Settlements**
Integrating underserved communities through inclusive urban planning and service delivery.



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