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C40 launches VISIBLE to create a cities-focussed roadmap for just and inclusive built environment decarbonisation

The two-year initiative will support city leaders in London, Madrid and Oslo to pilot equitable and viable construction and renovation models

21 November 2023 (LONDON) — Today, [C40 Cities](#) launches **VISIBLE**, a project that will harness the power of cities to decarbonise their built environments in a way that is both [just](#) and economically viable.

The two-year project will bring city leaders and officials in London, Madrid and Oslo together with representatives from workers unions, housing providers, construction industry actors, asset managers and finance and development stakeholders to explore how social equity and inclusion can be embedded into our urban decarbonisation journey. It will reimagine the construction, renovation and operation of our buildings in a way that includes and benefits city residents and workers, and considers the social value of our built environment.

Our built environment contributes [close to 40%](#) of our global greenhouse gas emissions and 35% of our total waste generation. The sector is [Europe's largest industrial employer](#): 15 million people work directly in the supply chain, and a further 33 million migrant workers are estimated to be indirectly employed. Buildings are symbolic of our cities – from the way they look, to the opportunities they offer for prosperity, and the quality of homes and workplaces they provide. Yet residents and workers are currently absent from transition thinking.

C40 will bring together building stakeholders to propose new, inclusive and economically viable business models for development, renovation and regeneration, convene multi-stakeholder dialogues, conduct research and support demonstrative pilot projects in each city, laying the groundwork for policy measures the three pilot cities may adopt to decarbonise their built environment. C40 will share the project's outcomes across its global network of cities.

The project will help the pilot cities mainstream the delivery of affordable low-carbon housing; mandating measurement of whole life cycle carbon in new developments; scaling up retrofitting; and reuse of materials – in ways that are

both socially equitable and economically viable. The project will build a robust consensus among stakeholders within each city of how social equity and workers' rights can be embedded in the sector's transition. The wider network of C40 city leaders and officials advocating for policy change will be equipped with practical examples of a fairer and lower-carbon sector, one that leaves nobody behind and has the backing of the diversity of stakeholders that will deliver and be impacted by the transition.

Kevin Austin, C40's Deputy Executive Director, said: "Project VISIBLE addresses the built environment's combined crises of climate impact, housing unaffordability and job insecurity in a holistic way that brings to light the multi-faceted opportunities an inclusive transition will bring. Over the last five years, C40's cities have been moving at pace towards net zero, with policy and processes to support the decarbonisation of buildings; but the voice of those who live in and work on our buildings has been absent. We are excited to collaborate with mayors and city leaders from London, Madrid and Oslo to create opportunities for those previously unheard voices from resident and labour rights groups, alongside the more traditionally-recognised industry actors, to jointly chart the way forward."

Cristina Gamboa, CEO of the World Green Building Council, said: "This project is an important moment for the sector to broaden its lens on the future and to understand the way its transition must support and benefit the end users it serves. We will be supporting C40's work to empower cities to set clear trajectories and enabling conditions for decarbonising the construction industry in areas from procurement to construction, ownership and operation that, importantly, work within market and viability constraints."

Project VISIBLE is supported by Laudes Foundation. Laudes works with partners to inspire and challenge industry to harness its power for good in response to the dual crises of inequality and climate breakdown.

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About C40 Cities

C40 is a network of nearly 100 mayors of the world's leading cities working to deliver the urgent action needed right now to confront the climate crisis and create a future where everyone, everywhere, can thrive. Mayors of C40 cities are committed to using a **science-based and people-focused approach** to help the world limit global heating to 1.5°C and build healthy, equitable and resilient communities. We work alongside a broad coalition of representatives from labour, business, the youth climate movement and civil society to support mayors to

halve emissions by 2030 and help phase out fossil use while increasing urban climate resilience and equity.

The current co-chairs of C40 are Mayor Sadiq Khan of London, United Kingdom, and Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr of Freetown, Sierra Leone; three-term Mayor of New York City Michael R. Bloomberg serves as President of the Board. C40's work is made possible by our three strategic funders: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Children's Investment Fund Foundation and Realdania.

To learn more about the work of C40 and our cities, please visit [our website](#) or follow us on [X](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).