

WATER SAFE CITIES ACCELERATOR

PREAMBLE

A Water Safe City offers an essential condition for people to survive and thrive in cities. Throughout history cities have been designed around water, many have prospered due to their relationship with water while others have dried up or drowned. Today, more than half of the world's population live in urban areas experiencing these extremes of too much or too little water made worse by a rapidly changing climate. Now is a critical time for us to transform our relationship with water in cities and adapt our urban water management practices to a changing climate.

Cities must prioritise building resilience to the impacts of floods and droughts to succeed, as water impacts (related to [90 percent](#) of global disasters) infiltrate numerous city support systems across housing, energy, transportation, healthcare and economic activity. If no action is taken, [C40 research predicts](#) that by 2050 more than 7.4 million people living in C40 cities will be in areas at risk from flooding costing C40 cities \$136 billion in GDP each year over the next three decades; more frequent and severe droughts are projected to broaden existing inequity and cost C40 cities a combined loss of US\$ 111 billion annually.

To address these challenges, C40 mayors are leading by taking action to transform cities and safeguard their communities against too much and too little water. Cities are implementing impactful solutions like water harvesting in informal settlements, restoring urban waterways and water conservation measures. However, mayors cannot increase urban resilience to droughts and floods alone. City governments need to collaborate with partners from public, private and civil society organisations to raise ambition and help speed up the implementation of climate solutions. Together, we can accelerate action and create water safe cities for all residents.

COMMITMENT & PATHWAYS

We commit to become a water safe city that is resilient in the face of flooding and drought by 2030.

Core Requirement: Protect the city's [most vulnerable](#) communities at high-risk of flooding and drought by **2027** by:

- Establishing early warning systems in **all** low-income areas where communities face a high-risk of flooding and drought.
- Developing emergency responses to protect **all** people during critical events with actions such as ensuring safe and accessible

shelters and provision of basic needs.

In addition, we city mayors each pledge to also achieve **at least one** of the following **Pathways**:

1. Achieve equitable universal access to clean water efficiently by **2030** by:
 - Reducing **at least 20%** of water demand.
 - Increasing **at least 15%** of water supply.

2. Safeguard people and the city's critical infrastructure from major flood events by **2030** by:
 - Increasing **at least 20%** of stormwater retention and infiltration to significantly reduce flood risk.
 - Restoring **at least 3** of the city's water bodies (such as rivers, creeks, and wetlands) to significantly reduce flood risks and improve water quality.

3. Achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in city water and wastewater systems by **2035**.
 - Meeting **100%** of total annual energy consumption of the water and wastewater system by renewable energy sources.
 - Capturing and utilising **at least 50%** of biogas from wastewater plants by 2035.

For the **core requirement** and **each pathway selected**, we will develop the following **implementation process for at least one target**:

- Develop a baseline of the current situation in our city or work with an established baseline to set up the target respecting the minimum proposed by the accelerator, **in one year**.
- Develop a step-by-step roadmap/action plan with clear governance structure, committed stakeholders, milestones and key performance indicators (KPIs) to implement actions to move towards the target, building on the commitments made in our city's climate action plan **in one year**.
- Develop the financial structure necessary to implement actions of the road map/action plan to move towards the target **in two years**.
- Publicly reporting on our progress **annually**.