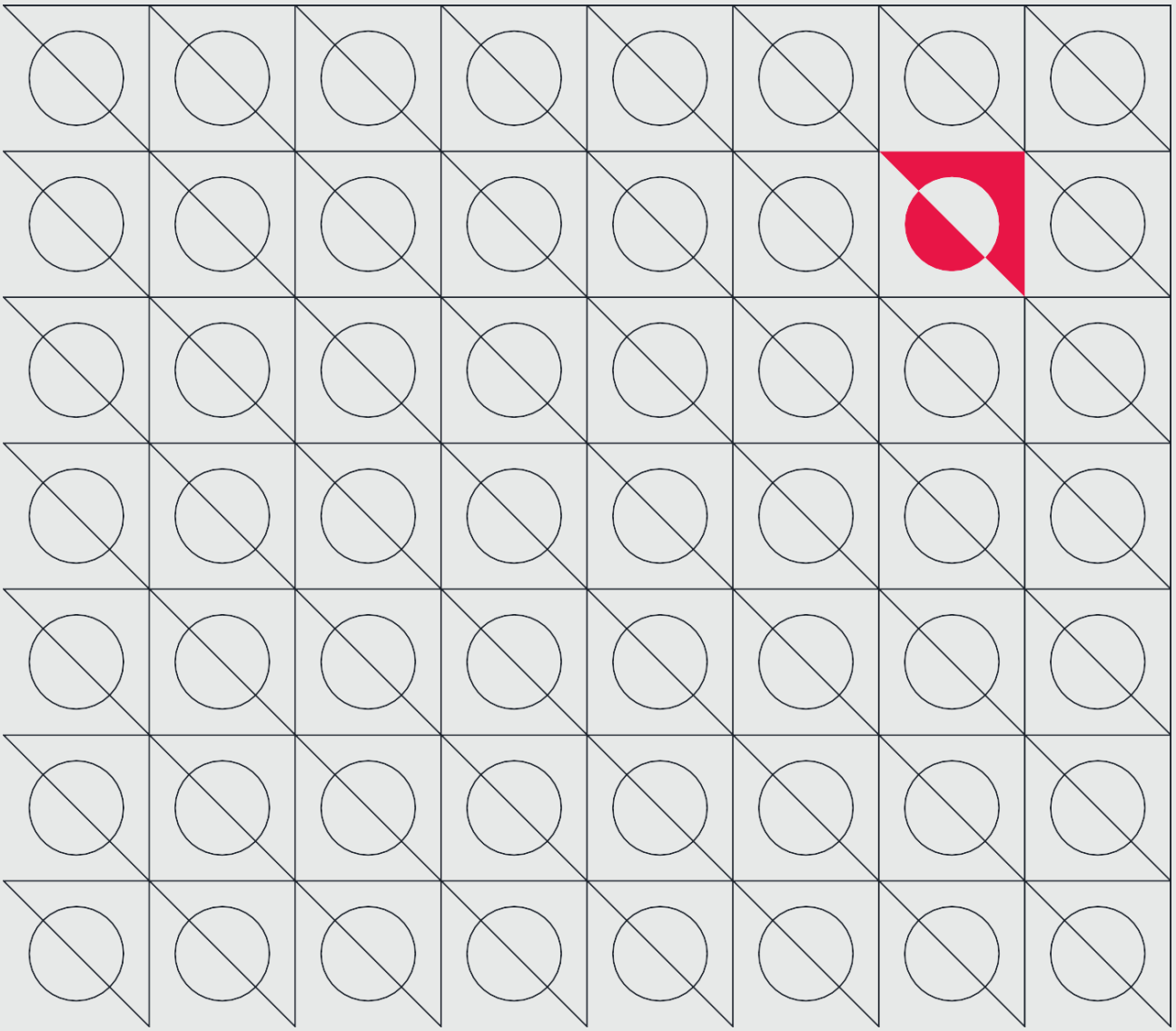
Glossary

CDP-ICLEI Track and States & Regions Questionnaires 2025



Version

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Glossary – General

This list includes a summary of terms used in the 2025 CDP-ICLEI Track and States & Regions Questionnaire. Please refer to the CDP Reporting Guidance for all terms.

Term	Definition	Source
Adaptation action	The result of the climate risk and vulnerability assessment, adaptation goals, and the strategic climate action plan. They are the interventions taken to achieve a given strategy, and include policies, projects, programmes, partnerships and other activities.	C40, How to identify adaptation goals and strategies
Adaptation goal	An adaptation goal is informed by the hazards identified in the climate risk and vulnerability assessment. Adaptation goals are usually qualitative, using terms like 'safer', 'better' or 'cooler', and alongside mitigation targets contribute to the identification and prioritization of actions in a jurisdiction's climate action plan. Quantitative metrics and/or indicators may also form part of an adaptation goal, but these are usually more action-specific and are therefore often decided later in the climate action planning process after action prioritization. An adaptation goal is not the same as a mitigation target or an adaptation action.	C40, How to identify adaptation goals and strategies
Agriculture, Forestry and Other land use (AFOLU) sector	The GHG protocol classifies "AFOLU" as one of the main sector sources of GHG emissions from city activities. Greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture, forestry, and other land use (see chapter 10 of the GHG Protocol for Cities for more information).	GHG Protocol for Cities, 2021
Base year	A historical datum (e.g., year) against which a city's emissions are tracked over time.	GHG Protocol for Cities, 2021

BASIC emissions	Includes scope 1 and scope 2 emissions from stationary energy and transportation, as well as scope 1 and scope 3 emissions from waste.	GHG Protocol for Cities, 2021
BASIC+ emissions	Includes BASIC emissions plus scope 3 emissions from stationary energy and transportation, as well as scope 1 emissions from IPPU and AFOLU.	GHG Protocol for Cities, 2021
Carbon credit	A carbon credit represents a metric ton of carbon dioxide-equivalent (CO2e) that is avoided or sequestered outside the GHG accounting boundary (or geographic boundary as a proxy for GHG accounting boundary) and can be used to compensate for a metric ton of residual GHG emissions occurring within the accounting boundary.	Defining carbon neutrality for cities & managing residual emissions, C40, 2019
Co-benefits (climate-related)	Climate co-benefits are beneficial outcomes from action that are not directly related to climate change mitigation. Such co-benefits include cleaner air, green job creation, public health benefits from active travel, and biodiversity improvement through expansion of green space. Planning climate action that also delivers co-benefits can enable cities to bolster support from key stakeholders, mobilize scarce resources across city departments, and maximize opportunities to address multiple social, environmental, and economic challenges.	The Co-Benefits of Climate Action - CDP, 2020

Conversion	Loss of a natural ecosystem as a result of its replacement with agriculture or another land use, or due to a profound and sustained change in a natural ecosystem's species composition, structure, or function. i) conversion to agriculture or other non-forest land use; ii) conversion to a plantation forest; or iii) severe and sustained degradation. • Deforestation is one form of conversion (conversion of natural forests). • Conversion includes severe and sustained degradation or the introduction of management practices that result in a profound and sustained change in the ecosystem's species composition, structure, or function. • Change to natural ecosystems that meets this definition is considered to be conversion regardless of whether or not it is legal.	AFi, 2024
Deforestation	Loss of natural forest as a result of: (i) conversion to agriculture or other non-forest land use; (ii) conversion to a tree plantation; or (iii) severe and sustained degradation. • This definition pertains to no-deforestation supply chains that generally focus on preventing the conversion of natural forests. • Severe and sustained degradation (scenario iii in the definition) constitutes deforestation even if the land is not subsequently used for a non-forest land use. • Loss of natural forest that meets this definition is considered to be deforestation regardless of whether or not it is legal. • The Accountability Framework's definition of deforestation signifies 'gross deforestation' of natural forest where 'gross' is used in the sense of "total; aggregate; without deduction for reforestation or other offset."	AFi, 2024

Deforestation and forest degradation-related risk	"Risk", as used in the Global Forest Watch's Jurisdictional Risk Assessment, captures only deforestation that is achieved in a manner that is not permitted (e.g., by use of fire), or which takes place where certain laws and policies prohibit deforestation or conversion. Assessing the degree to which deforestation occurs in these areas helps to illuminate where background conditions may contribute to deforestation risk.	WWF – Using Public Data Platforms To Assess Deforestation Risks Within Jurisdictions, 2017
Desalinated seawater	Sea water has a typical concentration of salts above 35,000mg/l total dissolved solids. Desalination is the process by which the salt content of water is reduced sufficiently to make the water fit for specified uses.	International Glossary of Hydrology, UNESCO, 2012
Emissions accounting protocol/framework	A standard or protocol that provides a framework and guidance on how to measure your city's emissions and/or report your emissions inventory. This usually includes recommendations on defining the inventory boundary, which GHGs are included, sector-specific emissions accounting, as well as understanding the scopes and how to report emissions.	Greenhouse Gas Emissions Tools and Datasets for Cities - CDP, 2024
Emissions accounting tool	Provides jurisdictions with the means to quantify their emissions. A tool usually performs calculations on input data provided by the city or on pre-populated data and provides output emissions data that can be used for reporting and informing policy. It typically comes in the form of a spreadsheet, an interactive online platform, or software.	Greenhouse Gas Emissions Tools and Datasets for Cities - CDP, 2024

Emissions inventory	An emissions inventory enables jurisdictions to understand the emissions sources and effects of different activities. It allows jurisdictions to determine where to best direct mitigation efforts, create a strategy to reduce emissions, and track their progress. Emissions inventories are critical for tracking changes in overall GHG emissions and removals.	Adapted from GHG Protocol for Cities, 2021
Food waste	Methods to quantify food waste range from quantification methods such as direct weighing to more complex methods as waste composition analysis where food waste must be separated from other material in order to be measured. Similarly, the data could be gathered in different ways. After data is collected from a sample of food waste producing units, and/or from physical samples, then they need to be scaled up to estimate the total amount of food waste generated.	Estimating food waste at the city level, 2017
Forest concession	The right to use land or other property to produce forest risk commodities, granted by a government, company, landholder or a controlling body.	CDP definition
Forest degradation	Changes within a natural ecosystem that significantly and negatively affect its species composition, structure, and/or function and reduce the ecosystem's capacity to supply products, support biodiversity, and/or deliver ecosystem services.	AFi, 2024
Forest Restoration	Restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed. Forest restoration is thought of as reversing forest degradation or loss of productivity of ecosystem goods and services such as food, wood, biodiversity, and water. It includes rehabilitation, reconstruction, reclamation and replacement.	FAO - Forest Restoration
Forest tenure	Forest tenure is concerned with who owns forestland and who uses, manages and makes decisions about forest resources. It determines who is allowed to use which resources, in what way, for how long, and under what conditions, as well as who is entitled to transfer those rights and how.	CIFOR - Forest tenure

Forests-related issues	This refers to deforestation and forest degradation as well as conversion and degradation of other natural ecosystems.	
Fresh surface water, including rainwater, water from wetlands, rivers and lakes	Water that is naturally occurring water on the Earth's surface in ice sheets, ice caps, glaciers, icebergs, bogs, ponds, lakes, rivers and streams, and has a low concentration of dissolved solids. Surface water includes collected or harvested rainwater.	GRI 303: Water and Effluents, 2018
Ground water (non-renewable)	Water which is being held in, and can be recovered from, an underground formation. Non-renewable groundwater has a negligible rate of natural recharge on the human timescale (more than 50 years) and is generally located at deeper depths than renewable groundwater. This is sometimes referred to as "fossil" water.	
Ground water (renewable)	Water which is being held in, and can be recovered from, an underground formation. Renewable groundwater sources can be replenished within 50 years and are usually located at shallow depths.	
High Carbon Stock forests	This is the High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) classification of forested areas that should be protected based on high carbon stock, importance to local communities or high biodiversity value. The HCSA distinguishes high carbon stock forests from degraded lands that may be developed.	HSCA
High Conservation Value (HCV)	Biological, ecological, social or cultural values which are considered outstandingly significant or critically important, at the national, regional or global level, as defined by the High Conservation Values (HCV) Resource Network.	HCV Approach | HCV Network
Impact	Impacts are the realized effects of climate hazards on lives; livelihoods; health and well-being; ecosystems and species; economic, social and cultural assets; services (including ecosystem services); and infrastructure. Impacts may be referred to as consequences or outcomes and can be adverse or beneficial.	IPCC, 2018

Incineration	Incineration is a thermal waste treatment technique that can be understood as a controlled combustion process with the primary objective of volume reduction and energy recovery from the waste stream.	Waste Treatment Processes for Energy Generation, 2019
Industrial Processes and Product use (IPPU) Sector	The GHG protocol classifies "IPPU" as one of the main sector sources of GHG emissions from city activities. Greenhouse gas emissions from industrial processes and product use (see chapter 9 of the GHG Protocol for Cities for more information).	GHG Protocol for Cities, 2021
Jurisdiction	All references to 'jurisdiction' throughout the questionnaire and guidance refer to the administrative boundary of the reporting government, and all residents, infrastructure, activities etc. within that boundary.	
Jurisdictional Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+)	Implementation of REDD+ projects at the jurisdictional or sub-national level. This signals a shift from individual REDD+ projects financed by the private sector to public administrative bodies such as federal states and sub-national governments (see definition of REDD+ for more information).	
Landfill	A landfill is defined as a discrete area of land or excavation that receives waste. A landfill may also receive other types of non-hazardous wastes, such as commercial solid waste, non-hazardous sludge, conditionally exempt small quantity generator waste, and industrial non-hazardous solid waste.	US EPA, 2024
Landscape and Jurisdictional Approach	A muti-stakeholder collaborative strategy to advance shared sustainability goals and build resilience at landscape scale. A jurisdictional approach is a landscape approach defined by administrative boundaries and with high level of government involvement.	

Life cycle costing	An important element of sustainable procurement is identifying the true cost or value of a purchase – i.e. the savings over its entire lifetime from purchase to end-of-life. This approach considers costs associated with acquisition, operation, maintenance/repair, and disposal costs, and can also consider 'externalities', which are the additional environmental and social costs borne by society rather than the organisation (e.g. greenhouse gases and other pollutant emissions, or other climate change mitigation costs).	Procura+ Manual, 2016
Mid-term target	A mid-term target is any interim or near-term target set between the reporting year and your net zero target.	
Mitigation targets	Are commitments to reduce, or limit the increase of, GHG emissions or emissions intensity by a specified quantity, to be achieved by a future date.	
Monitoring	An on-going function that used the systematic collection of data on specific indicators to assess and document the extent to which actions, progress, performance, and compliance are being carried out or achieved.	AFi, 2024
Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)	Includes waste originating from households, commerce and trade, small businesses, office buildings and institutions (schools, hospitals, government buildings). It also includes bulky waste (e.g., old furniture, mattresses) and waste from selected municipal services, e.g., waste from park and garden maintenance, waste from street cleaning services (street sweepings, the content of litter containers, market cleansing waste), if managed as waste.	UN SDG12 Indicator Guidance, 2024

Natural forest area	A forest that is a natural ecosystem, i.e., possesses most of the native species composition, structure, and ecological function as a forest native to the given site. This includes: • Primary forests that have not been subject to major anthropogenic human impacts in recent history; • Regenerated (second-growth) forests that were subject to major anthropogenic impacts in the past (e.g., by agriculture) but where the main causes of impact have ceased or greatly diminished, and the ecosystem has attained much of the species composition, structure and function of prior or other contemporary natural ecosystems • Managed natural forests where much of the ecosystem composition, structure, and ecological function exist in the presence of activities such as: (a) Harvesting of timber or other forest products, including management to promote high-value species, (b) Low intensity, small-scale cultivation within the forest, such as less-intensive forms of swidden agriculture in a forest mosaic; and; • Forests that have been partially degraded by anthropogenic or natural causes (e.g., harvesting, fire, invasive species) but where the land has not been converted to another use and where degradation does not result in sustained reduction of tree cover below the thresholds that define a forest, or sustained loss of other main elements of ecosystem composition, structure and ecological function.	Adapted from AFi, 2024
Nature	The natural world, with an emphasis on the diversity of living organisms (including people) and their interactions among themselves and with their environment. Adapted from Díaz, S et al. (2015) The IPBES Conceptual Framework – Connecting Nature and People.	TNFD Glossary of terms, 2024
Nature-based Solutions	Nature-based solutions are actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services and resilience and biodiversity benefits.	UNEA-5, 2022
Net zero	Describes a condition in which human-caused residual greenhouse gas emissions are balanced by human-led removals over a specified period and within specified boundaries.	ISO IWA 42:2022 Net Zero Guidelines

Partner	Partners are communities, organizations and other groups engaged, consulted, or partnered with, who are affected by or who can affect a decision or issue.	
Physical climate hazard	Physical climate hazards are short-, medium-, or long-term climate events that have the potential to cause damage or harm to humans and natural systems. These include meteorological, climatological, hydrological, geophysical or biological events.	C40, How to conduct a climate change risk assessment
Reducing emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+)	REDD+ is an accounting framework, created by the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP). It guides activities in the forest sector that reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, as well as the sustainable management of forests and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries/areas. The framework is aimed at the implementation of activities by national governments to reduce human pressure on forests that result in greenhouse gas emissions at the national level, but as an interim measure also recognizes subnational implementation. The implementation of REDD+ activities is voluntary and depends on the national circumstances, capacities and capabilities of each developing country/area and the level of support received.	UNFCCC: What is REDD+
Renewable energy/Renewable source	Energy that is derived from sunlight, wind, geothermal processes, biomass, and water (including hydropower, oceanic/tidal energy).	ICLEI, 2022
Reporting year	All references to 'reporting year' throughout the questionnaire, guidance and scoring methodology refer to the year in which the jurisdiction is reporting, i.e. 2024	
Residual emissions	Emissions whose abatement remains uneconomical or technically infeasible under the assumptions of a specific model and mitigation scenario. These emissions cannot be eliminated or reduced further either because there is no known mitigation technology or the technology is so cost prohibitive that it is considered economically unviable in any context.	Integrity Matters for Cities States and Regions

Resilience	The capacity of social, economic and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning and transformation.	IPCC, 2018
Science-based targets	Science-based targets (SBTs) are measurable and actionable environmental targets that allow cities, states and regions to align their actions with societal sustainability goals and the biophysical limits that define the safety and stability of earth systems.	Science-Based Climate Targets: A Guide for Cities, page 4
Science-based climate targets for cities	Aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement. It is an emission reduction target which is complete (covers jurisdiction-wide emissions), aligns with a 1.5˚C pathway and represents a fair share of global emission reduction, based on historic emissions or current development level.	Science-Based Climate Targets: A Guide for Cities, page 4
Science-based nature targets for cities	Science based targets that contribute positively to nature.	Nature Science-Based Targets for Cities – Science Based Targets Network
Scope 1	GHG emissions from sources located within the city boundary.	GHG Protocol for Cities, 2021
Scope 2	GHG emissions occurring as a consequence of the use of grid-supplied electricity, heat, steam and/or cooling within the city boundary.	GHG Protocol for Cities, 2021
Scope 3	All other GHG emissions that occur outside the city boundary as a result of activities taking place within the city boundary.	GHG Protocol for Cities, 2021

Source separation of municipal solid waste	The waste sorting at the generated place before transportation. Its purpose is to reduce waste generation, increase recovery of available resources, and perform hazardous waste disposal. One example of source separation (also called curb side separation) is separation done by individual citizens who collect newspapers, bottles, cans, and garbage separately and place them at the curb for collection.	Zhang et al., 2019
State/Region/Sub-national jurisdiction	Top level administrative subdivision of a country/area.	
Stationary energy sector	The GHG protocol classifies "Stationary energy" as one of the main sector sources of GHG emissions from city activities. Stationary energy is a source of emissions that come from the combustion of fuel in residential, commercial and institutional buildings and facilities and manufacturing industries and construction, as well as power plants to generate grid-supplied energy. This sector also includes fugitive emissions, which typically occur during extraction, transformation, and transportation of primary fossil fuels. (see chapter 6 of the GHG Protocol for Cities for more information).	GHG Protocol for Cities, 2021
Sustainable food production practices	The list below are some examples and is not exhaustive: • Regenerative agriculture: an inclusive agroecosystems approach for conserving land and soil, biodiversity, and improving ecosystem services within farming systems. It focuses on the regeneration of living soil, improved micro hydrology, and conserving biodiversity at all levels while enhancing inputs use efficiency and ecosystem system services. Practices include cover crops, reducing tilling, crop rotation, composting, organic farming, and natural fertilizer use in place of chemicals and herbicides. • Nature-positive production: Food production systems that provide beneficial impacts to nature (e.g. pollinator support, reforestation, improved biodiversity, etc) and avoid typical impacts to the environment such as deforestation. • Nature-based solutions may also be applied to sustainable food production.	FAO, 2021 UNEP, 2022
Sustainable forest management	The process of managing a forest for achieving the continuous production of desired forest products and services without reducing its inherent values, future productivity and avoiding undesirable social-environmental effects.	Modified from ITTO

Sustainable public procurement	Ensuring that the products and services your organisation buys achieve value for money on a life cycle cost basis and generate benefits not only for your organisation, but also for the environment, society and the economy. To procure in a sustainable way involves looking beyond short-term needs and considering the longer-term impacts of each purchase. Sustainable procurement is used by both public and private sector organisations to ensure that their purchasing reflects broader goals linked to e.g. resource efficiency, climate change, social responsibility, and economic resilience.	Procura+ Manual, 2016
Sustainable, healthy diet	While the exact definition of what constitutes a sustainable, healthy diet is subjective and may vary by city, the general principles are at a diet that prioritizes low-carbon, sustainably sourced health-positive foods, usually largely plant-based and with a reduction in meat consumption. Several frameworks define diets in this vein: • WRI's Cool Food initiative emphasize low-carbon footprint meals that meat nutritional safeguards • EAT, a partner of the Cool Food initiative, utilizes the "Planetary Healthy diet," a flexible set of guidelines for food groups that constitute an optimal diet for human health and environmental sustainability. It emphasizes a plant-forward diet where whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes comprise a greater proportion of foods consumed. Meat and dairy constitute important parts of the diet but in significantly smaller proportions than whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes. • The Milan Urban Food Pact defines a sustainable diet as one that is "healthy, safe, culturally appropriate, environmentally friendly, and rights-based."	
Target year	The year the target ends. For example, if the target is to reduce emissions by 20% by 2030, the target year is 2030.	
Transportation sector	The GHG protocol classifies “Transportation” as one of the main sector sources of GHG emissions from city activities. Transportation is a sector that covers all journeys by road, rail, water and air, including inter-city and international travel. GHG emissions are produced directly by the combustion of fuel or indirectly by the use of grid-supplied electricity (see chapter 7 of GHG Protocol for Cities for more information).	GHG Protocol for Cities, 2021

Waste sector	The GHG protocol classifies “Waste” as one of the main sector sources of GHG emissions from city activities. Waste disposal and treatment produces GHG emissions through aerobic or anaerobic decomposition, or incineration (see chapter 8 of GHG Protocol for Cities for more information).	GHG Protocol for Cities, 2021