

## **GCoM Submission to the Presidency Consultation on the COP30 Presidency Roadmap for Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in a Just, Orderly and Equitable Manner**

### **Urban Implementation Roadmap for the Global Energy Transition**

The [Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy](#) (GCoM), representing over 13,800 municipalities and 1.2 billion residents, appreciates the opportunity to provide technical input for the Roadmap on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels (TAFF Roadmap).

Geopolitical turbulence has fundamentally reframed the energy debate. Security and affordability have risen as primary political drivers, paradoxically strengthening the case for renewables now pursued as much for independence and price stability as for decarbonization. This is evidenced by the groundbreaking goals agreed at COP28 to triple renewable energy capacity and double efficiency by 2030.

Cities, which are responsible for 70% of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions, can be critical to the success of the TAFF Roadmap and the COP28 goals. They control the building stocks, procurement, land use, and local infrastructure through which national targets become real. Recent energy shocks have also broadened the agenda beyond deployment. Resilience, energy diversity, and protection of vulnerable households are now core concerns. This is precisely the terrain of alliances of local governments such as GCoM's, that provide guidance and support to thousands of cities and towns to deliver action at the intersection of energy access, affordability, and the just transition that national-level frameworks struggle to reach.

For these reasons, we firmly believe that: **the TAFF Roadmap should double down on the COP28 Renewable Energy and Efficiency goals, formally recognize cities as critical delivery partners, and strive to provide them the means to implement these shared global goals.**

Recognizing that a one size fits all approach is insufficient, GCoM offers a nuanced perspective on how the TAFF Roadmap should include urban energy priorities based on diverse city typologies:

- 1. TAFF Roadmap Recommendation 1: Recognize Diverse Urban Profiles**
- 2. TAFF Roadmap Recommendation 2: Recognize And Promote City Best Practice - The Energy Access And Poverty Pillar (EAPP)**
- 3. TAFF Roadmap recommendation 3: Creating the Policy and Financial Enablers for Urban Energy Transition**

## 1. Taff Roadmap Recommendation 1: Recognize Diverse Urban Profiles

To be successful, the TAFF Roadmap should consider that energy pathways vary significantly depending on a city's specific growth stage and existing infrastructure. For the rapidly growing municipalities that host the majority of new residents globally, the transition involves bypassing fossil fuel dependence during critical development phases. GCoM categorizes these challenges across diverse urban profiles:

- **Rapidly expanding cities:** Rapidly developing cities, primarily in emerging economies and the Global South, are at a critical juncture where new infrastructure is being built at an unprecedented pace. In these areas, it is vital that the build-out of urban systems is decoupled from fossil fuel reliance to prevent locking into high-emissions development pathways for decades. Integrating diverse renewable supply mixes and decentralized energy solutions is of critical importance for both climate and development in these regions. To illustrate, electricity demand in Africa could increase 400% this decade alone (IEA, 2024).
- **Established medium to high income municipalities:** Cities with existing large scale infrastructure face a different transition challenge focused on deep decarbonization of the built environment. Because building operations account for over a quarter of global energy-related emissions, these municipalities must prioritize systemic upgrades to transition away from fossil-fuel-based heating, cooling, and power. Shifting these systems toward cleaner energy sources not only meets climate goals but also shields households from cost increases, as consumers in high-transition scenarios could see commodity price shocks drive up costs by 30% less than in fossil-fuel-heavy scenarios (IEA, 2024).

It is also important to note that more than 2 billion people worldwide lack access to clean cooking. The Roadmap should explicitly address clean cooking as a core dimension of urban fossil fuel phase out. In many Global South cities, household reliance on charcoal, biomass, and kerosene for cooking represents the most direct and deadly use of fossil fuels. Current trajectories fall well short of universal clean cooking access by 2030 (IEA, 2024).

## 2. Taff Roadmap Recommendation 2: Recognize And Promote City Best Practice - The Energy Access And Poverty Pillar (EAPP)

The GCoM alliance offers a standardized methodology to help its 13,000+ signatory cities to monitor and accelerate the phase-out of fossil fuels, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. This methodology falls under the **Energy Access and Poverty Pillar (EAPP)** of the Common Reporting Framework.

In 2024, 1,575 cities representing 430 million people completed this process and successfully set goals, assessments, and/or plans to transition to renewables and address energy poverty.

The standardized methodology evaluates the transition across three essential benchmarks:

**Secure energy:** ensuring energy is accessible and/or reliable - enabling access to economic, social, cultural engagement. Example indicators include increased average duration of available electricity and percentage of households with electricity access

**Sustainable energy:** Energy is generated from renewable and non-pollutive resources - avoiding negative health, social, and gender consequences. Example indicators include tracking installed renewables capacity and transition source mix of energy for heating and cooling.

**Affordable energy:** Energy is affordable and/or building stock is energy efficient to maximize value of expenditure - enabling energy applications for economic, social, and cultural opportunities. Example indicators include monitoring the percentage of households that face energy poverty and building energy efficiency.

By integrating this framework, the TAFF Roadmap gains a standardized, subnational track to monitor the displacement of fossil fuels across diverse urban contexts. The EAPP transforms high-level national commitments into a measurable city-led implementation.

### **3. TAFF Roadmap Recommendation 3: Creating the Policy and Financial Enablers for Urban Energy Transition**

To move from ambition to delivery, the TAFF Roadmap must address the structural obstacles that currently stall local action. GCoM's research into the lived experience of energy deprivation identifies six critical areas where coordinated global and national support can unlock urban potential, especially through a multi-level cooperative approach:

#### **Financing of Solutions:**

- National governments should facilitate new business models such as Public Private Partnerships and Energy Service Companies (ESCOs). These models help municipalities de-risk initiatives like neighborhood scale grid projects to attract the private capital.
- Scaling technical assistance facilities like the City Climate Finance Gap Fund can help provide the expertise required to turn early-stage ideas into bankable projects.

#### **Institutional Capacity and Structure to Deliver:**

- Many small and medium-sized cities face a persistent capacity crisis, lacking the internal staff to develop complex energy plans or manage clean energy procurement.
- A shift toward aggregation and bundling, where national governments help smaller municipalities group their solar and efficiency projects to achieve the scale is necessary for international investment.

#### **Navigating Policy Landscapes:**

- Urban energy transitions are often hampered by jurisdictional mismatches, where roughly 46 percent of cities report having no direct legal powers over centralized power generation.
- National policy makers should align with local authorities to implement Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) and building codes.

#### **Multi-level and multi-stakeholder engagement and cooperation**

- The Roadmap should promote multilevel governance models that treat cities as primary implementation partners rather than just recipients. Local governments are uniquely positioned to bridge silos between utilities, the private sector, and civil society.

- The Roadmap should promote a people centered approach that combines regulatory mandates with information tools like energy performance certificates and financial incentives.

#### **Availability of Data and Physical/Human Context:**

- Data gaps remain a massive barrier, as standard datasets often ignore informal settlements.
- GCoM advocates for the use of AI-driven models and community-led proxy data to identify energy poverty hotspots without overwhelming local staff with a massive reporting burden.

#### **Lack of Political Leadership:**

- Fossil fuel phase-outs require long-term vision that goes beyond election cycles.
- By integrating urban energy targets into NDCs, cities can have the political coverage and legal mandate to stay the course.

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## **ANNEX: CASE STUDIES**

### **Integrating Renewable Energy in Contagem, Brazil**

Contagem, a city of over 650,000 people in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, is installing solar photovoltaic panels on public buildings, generating an estimated 1,205 Mwh annually and avoiding around 40 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year. The benefits range from lower emissions to increased climate resilience, reflecting a broader shift toward a more circular and inclusive urban economy. [Source](#)

### **Driving systemic change through local leadership, Zhytomyr, Ukraine**

In Zhytomyr, Ukraine, local leaders have led a comprehensive energy transformation to strengthen the city's resilience and reduce fossil fuel dependence. The city invested in solar panels, biomass-powered thermal plants, and energy-efficient retrofits for public buildings, significantly improving energy performance. These efforts, supported by decentralization reforms that empowered local financial decision-making, helped the city avoid winter blackouts. Since 2012, Zhytomyr has halved its gas use and aims to reduce it further through alternative fuels like waste, demonstrating how strong local leadership can drive systemic change. [Source](#)

### **Energy Access and Poverty in Cape Town, South Africa**

Cape Town faces complex energy-related challenges, and the city is advancing energy resilience through policy shifts and target local programs. As a founding partner of the Municipal Energy Resilience Initiative, the city has lobbied the national government to enable municipalities to procure renewable energy from private energy developers. Cape Town is also mitigating local energy poverty through a Low-income Energy Services unit and exploring a 'Free Basic Alternative Energy' coupon policy to increase service access in informal settlements. [Source](#)

### **Leading with Accountability and Ambition, Oslo, Norway**

Oslo's pioneering Climate Budget is an innovative tool that integrates climate targets directly into the city's financial planning. Developed and overseen by the city's finance department, the Climate Budget is fully embedded within Oslo's annual financial budgeting process. This ensures that all spending plans align with the city's climate goals, making emission reductions a core condition for investment and policy decisions. Oslo's approach is proving effective, with emissions declining even as the city continues to grow, and inspiring other cities to consider similar models. [Source](#)

**Zarqa, Jordan:** The municipality of Zarqa intends to replace public lighting units with energy efficient ones in 36 municipal buildings that include administrative buildings, warehouses, public transport stations and parks. This will align with Jordan's National Strategy 2020–2025 with a target to transition to green energy. The Gap Fund will provide a pre-feasibility study including the technical design and scope, energy audit, financial and economic analysis, ownership and operation and maintenance, estimation of GHG reduction and other environmental benefits and risk analysis. [Source](#)

**Shkodra, Albania:** The municipality of Shkodra aims to implement energy efficiency renovations in public buildings. Shkodra has identified several financing opportunities to scale up energy efficiency measures in public schools, however lack of adequate data and studies on financial and economic feasibility of energy efficiency in public buildings has hindered the municipality from accessing financing opportunities to implement these projects. The Gap Fund will support a study including energy audit, financial and economic analysis, operation, maintenance and technical designs, including GHG reductions, environmental benefits, and risk analysis. [Source](#)