

Submission from Norway with views for the second global dialogue under the Mitigation Work Programme in 2024

September 2024

Norway welcomes the opportunity to submit our views on opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges, and barriers.

Views on the topic

Norway appreciates the topic of “Cities: buildings and urban systems”, selected for this year’s global dialogues, and the focus area and sub-topics for the second global dialogue of 2024. As with previous topics, we note the strong interlinkage between the topic of cities and other topics in mitigation, notably energy, but also transport, land-use, industry, and waste.

Relevant resources for the dialogues

The IPCC WGIII report

The WGIII report provides valuable starting points for the dialogues, naturally in chapter 8 Urban Systems and Other Settlements. As the chapters note, buildings and urban systems relate to climate mitigation through several factors and sectors, which are also relevant for this year’s topic and discussions.

Global Stocktake

As stated in the technical dialogue for the first global stocktake, cities account for 67–72 per cent of global emissions when using consumption-based accounting, and point to mitigation measures including smart urban planning to reduce and manage waste and making cities more compact, walkable and efficient, and increasing electrification and transitions to low-carbon energy sources.

The first global stocktake decision also includes several outcomes that are relevant for this global dialogue on urban systems. It is particularly relevant to consider how urban systems contribute to the GST paragraph 28 goals on energy efficiency, net zero energy systems, zero- and low-emission technologies, and road transport.

The UNFCCC Technology Executive Committee

Workstream 3 of the Technology Executive Committee’s workplan for 2023-2027 includes work on buildings and infrastructure.

The TEC has agreed to amend its rolling workplan, instead of organizing a stand-alone event in 2024, to engage in ongoing processes and initiatives such as global dialogues under the Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work programme and the Buildings Breakthrough campaign coordinated by the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction in order to identify areas of focus TEC’s policy work can add value, while maximizing synergies and avoiding duplication of efforts.

The Technology Executive Committee has recently published a report on [gender-responsive technology and infrastructure for sustainable urban mobility](#) that has relevance for the work of the program. A helpful policy framework to design sustainable low-carbon mobility systems is the Avoid–Shift–Improve framework, whereby especially measures under the Shift component (e.g. improvement of public transport, walking and cycling) have a strong potential to improve access and connectivity for women. A secondary, supportive framework is the 4A’s: availability, affordability, accessibility, and acceptability. The realization of gender-responsive sustainable low-carbon mobility systems will require a large number of often mutually supportive policies and measures that promote the realization of more and better urban transport infrastructure and systems and incentivize their

use while discouraging the use of unsustainable, private car-based transport. This includes the following Principles and respective measures:

1. Planning compact and accessible cities
2. Developing transit-oriented cities
3. Getting the urban mobility infrastructure right
4. Encouraging walking and cycling
5. Advancing smart mobility management
6. Enhancing public transport and shared mobility
7. Parking: prioritizing management, not supply
8. Electrifying all vehicles.
9. Winning the support of stakeholders and citizens, and
10. Empowering cities to avoid, shift and improve

IEA

The IEA is tracking progress towards the energy targets laid out in Paragraph 28 of the Global Stocktake outcome. This tracking is valuable input for considering progress and adjusting efforts.

Norway's examples and experiences

Norwegian urban areas have generally developed over hundreds of years. The infrastructure, buildings, and layout have often been decided or developed in very different contexts, and mitigation efforts must consider these existing systems. Norway's climate ambitions, as expressed through NDC, the Norwegian climate law, and specific political commitments, act as the guiding star for climate effort, including for urban areas.

Systemic mitigation approaches in buildings and urban systems

For mitigation in urban systems, like other mitigation areas, there are fundamental systematic challenges that need to be addressed to allow for the efficient reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The fundamental instruments of the Norwegian climate policy are taxes on greenhouse gas emissions and European emissions trading system.

Taxes on GHG-emissions were first introduced in 1991 and today GHG-taxes and emission allowances (EU ETS) cover close to 85% of greenhouse gas emissions in Norway. The Norwegian government has announced an intention to increase the GHG-tax on non ETS-emissions to NOK 2 000 in 2020-prices (around 205 EUR) per ton CO₂-eq. by 2030. GHG-taxes and the EU ETS give incentives to reduce emissions in buildings and urban systems from transport, heating, construction machinery, and materials use.

While broad measures like carbon pricing incentivize research, development and innovation, markets for new technologies might develop slowly due to a lack of network and scaling effects, as well as limited reach of information. Norway therefore has several innovation programs that cover the development chain from basic research, innovation, scale-up of new technologies, and early market introduction. This helps make new technologies commercially viable earlier than they otherwise would be.

For urban systems, examples of support areas include emissions-free construction, moveable charging stations for electrified construction machinery, remote (district) heating, flexible energy use including energy storage, and charging infrastructure for vehicles for commercial use.

National Expectation for regional and municipal planning

Every fourth year the Norwegian government sets out a document detailing national expectations for regional and municipal planning to further a sustainable development across the country. The regional and municipal authorities follow up these expectations in their planning and strategies. The expectations include several points pm transport development, densification, and development of sustainable cities and urban centres.

City-level climate efforts

There is significant opportunity for local governments to take climate efforts, using local knowledge to find good solutions, and ensure they are anchored at the local level. In Norway, several of the major cities have set city-level climate targets, climate strategies, and use climate budgets as management tools.

Regional and global efforts

Urban regions across different geographies have common challenges and barriers in mitigation. Cross-border, regional and global networks help share experiences, propagate solutions, and help scale efforts. Three Norwegian cities take part in the EU Mission on Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities. In this mission, 112 European cities work towards climate neutrality by 2030, communicating their plans across sectors including energy, buildings, waste management and transport, and including investment plans. Oslo is also a steering committee member of the global C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, where mayors of member cities are committed to using an inclusive, science-based and collaborative approach to cut their fair share of emissions in half by 2030.

Urban growth agreements

Urban growth agreements were introduced in 2017 as a tool for achieving zero growth in passenger car traffic in large urban areas, reducing both energy and resource use. The state, regions and municipalities agree to collaborate to finance more sustainable transport, and ensuring land use development stimulates shifting from car-usage to biking, walking and use of public transport.

Norwegian National Transport Plan

In the Norwegian National Transport Plan for 2025-2036, 88 billion NOK has been allocated to urban areas over this twelve-year period and will mainly go to the urban growth agreements. In this way, the state contributes to an increased investment in the operation of public transport and investments in measures for public transport, cycling and walking. Examples of investment measures are junctions, bus stops and pedestrian and cycle paths along national roads and local roads. In addition, the state contributes funds for station and hub development along the railway.

Outputs

Cities and urban systems have many areas of common ground on the topic of mitigation. The experiences of both Norwegian and other countries can provide a foundation for the global dialogue to identify opportunities, barriers, and key findings for city-relevant mitigation. These will be relevant for the global cooperation and countries' follow-up of the collective messages from the GST decision.

Norway notes the upcoming IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities. It could be considered whether the work of the Mitigation Work Programme could stimulate relevant research to be undertaken that can contribute to the special report.