C40 CITIES

Students Reinventing Cities

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A global competition for universities and students to share their vision for green & thriving neighbourhoods

Competition Regulations

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Foreword

Climate breakdown and rising global temperatures present an existential threat to the human race. They require a unified global response across all levels of society. Scientists estimate that we are currently on a trajectory that will increase average global temperatures by two degrees above pre-industrial levels by 2100. If these emissions are not appropriately addressed the world will become increasingly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Cities are where we must focus our efforts for a transition to a green and just future. We know that the majority of GHG emissions come from cities and their built environment. As urban populations increase, compact, well-connected communities are our best and only way to preserve global resources and fragile biodiversity.

Now more than ever, we must harness a model for low-carbon urban development that promotes a thriving and inclusive future for all our citizens. The C40 Students Reinventing Cities programme provides an opportunity for academics and students to collaborate with global cities. Together they will imagine a more sustainable and inclusive vision for cities everywhere, by rethinking city neighbourhoods.

This competition comes at a key moment. We are at a possible turning point in the global fight against climate change. Across the world, cities are strengthening their climate commitments and actions as we work towards a Global Green New Deal. They are developing an ambitious agenda for a green and just future and building a broad coalition with youth climate activists, and representatives from labour, business, academia and civil society.

We are ready to take bold action in this vital revolution for a greener and more equitable future. Are you ready to join us?

Mark Watts, Executive Director of C40 Cities

Objectives

With the Students Reinventing Cities initiative, participating global cities have identified small neighbourhoods, blocks or main streets they intend to transform and revive. Together with C40, they invite multidisciplinary teams of students from around the world to imagine a pathway to decarbonise these urban areas and improve the quality of life for local communities, following the 15-minute city model. Students Reinventing Cities will:

- actively drive collaboration between students and city governments to deliver new approaches for low-carbon urbanisation
- support the development of new ideas and innovative solutions that can be rolled out on a global scale. Create a space for academics and students to contribute to addressing the climate crisis and shaping a future that has climate and social justice at its heart
- strengthen students' knowledge of the leading policies, solutions and technologies on sustainability

Structure of the competition

Participants are required to select one of the sites from the participating cities to reimagine. Participants do not need to choose the site from the city they reside or study in. Participants will develop a design response and comprehensive action plan for the site, to regenerate the area with green solutions.

A Site Form is provided for each city. This is prepared by the city and will summarise the context of the site and detail the objectives and specifications for the project. The Site Form may provide further information regarding submission requirements such as language requirements as well as potential additional awards given by the city. This should be read in conjunction with the details and requirements outlined in this document. An online folder ("*Dataroom*") is also available and contains relevant documentation related to the site.

The site page dedicated to the C40 Students Reinventing Cities competition is '*www.c40reinventingcities.org/en/students/*'.

Calendar

The competition consists of two key phases: 1) registration, and 2) project submission. The timeline of the competition is outlined below. Some cities may propose a slightly different timeline, which will be specified in the Site Form.

- **Competition kick-off**
    - Competition launch and site announcements: **Wednesday**, **29 October 2025.**
    - Information about all sites will be available online: **end of November 2025.**
    - Global webinar to present the competition: **December 2025 (date will be announced).**
    - Each city hosts a webinar to present its site: **January–February 2026 (date will be announced).**
- **Phase 1 – Registration**
    - Teams interested must register by the deadline (mandatory): **Wednesday, 18 March 2026 (5 PM UTC)**, unless otherwise specified on a specific city's site page.
- **Phase 2 – Project Proposal Submission**
    - Technical workshops support the teams in shaping their projects: **April 2026 (date will be announced).**
    - Project Proposal submission deadline (mandatory): **Thursday, 28 May 2026 (5 PM UTC).**
- **Evaluation and Results**
    - Jury review and selection (one jury per site): **June–July 2026.**

- Announcement of winning projects: **August–September 2026.**

Details about Q&A and Webinars

For a limited duration, one month prior to both the deadline for registration and the project proposal submissions, inquiries relating either to the site or to the competition may be asked through the question box on the page dedicated to the site. The questions received will be addressed by the city and C40.

Webinars will be organised by C40 and the cities at different stages of the competition. The objectives of these webinars are to share information about the competition and the sites as well as to provide training to the students on urban sustainability and decarbonization, to help them to shape their project. Further information on these webinars will be posted on the website and sent directly to the visitors who have shared their contact details through the website (using the tab 'Keep me informed about this site').

Team Composition

Throughout this document, the term "University(ies)" refers to research institutions, schools, colleges and the entire academic community in higher education, above the high school level.

Teams must at least comprise one current university student, enrolled during the **2025-2026 (or 2026) academic year.** Teams may also include **youth under the age of 28** who are not enrolled in university, as well as additional students.

It is expected that in developing a response, students will draw on knowledge from a wide range of disciplines. To support this, teams may include participants from multiple departments such as architecture, urbanism, environment, engineering, real estate development, sociology, economy, and the arts, among other fields.

The Students Reinventing Cities competition encourages international collaboration between universities. Teams may combine members from the same university or different universities.

It is recommended (but not required) to:

- appoint a member in charge of the project design such as a student in architecture or urbanism, and a member with environmental knowledge
- have a faculty advisor who may offer support and resources. Students may also consult other external experts. Advisors and external experts cannot directly develop the project or any of the required documents

Each team must designate one member to receive official communication and to be the main point of contact for the group throughout the competition, this member should be a current university student.

Teams can alter their composition (size and members) throughout the competition, however, after the Registration phase, it is expected that the main point of contact will

remain the same.

The 10 Principles for a Green & Thriving Neighbourhood

The Students Reinventing Cities competition aims to harness new models for **green** and **thriving** neighbourhoods, that embrace two imperatives:

- **'Green': emissions reduction and climate resilience**

  Teams are invited to consider operational emissions, embodied emissions from any project construction and consumption-based emissions linked to the consumption of residents and their way of living. Teams should also explore resilience by designing adaptable spaces that allow individuals, communities and cities to recover quickly and bounce back efficiently when shocks and climate-related stresses occur.

- **'Thriving': people-centered place**

  Teams are invited to integrate the 15-minute city model, which is increasingly adopted as a valuable urban planning principle. Teams should design spaces that consider the needs of people, promote quality of life and foster connectivity and social cohesion as well as healthy and sustainable lifestyles. Projects should promote active mobility such as walking and cycling and create a safe and accessible environment for all people.

The two main objectives outlined above are linked and must be approached in an integrated way. The competition defines 10 Principles that teams are invited to consider while developing their project. Further information on the following 10 Principles can be found in the document **Guidance to Design a Green and Thriving Neighbourhood**, which is available on the competition website.

Teams are invited to consider all 10 Principles while developing their project. However, it is important for teams to focus on the principles that are most appropriate for the site, i.e. emphasise those which will enable the city and the local communities to catalyse change. Each city has indicated in its Site Form specific environmental priorities and objectives for its site.

Submission

Registration

Participating teams will be provided with a template ("**Team Form**") to register for the competition. This is available within the D*ataroom*. Within this form, teams will specify the expertise each member brings to the team and the university program they are enrolled in. The main point of contact should also be identified.

Content of the Project Proposals

The proposals should include the following main documents:

1. **Completed Team Form**
2. **Presentation of the project**
3. **Graphic presentation**
4. **Implementation plan**

All submissions must be written in English or the language indicated on the Site Form and must use local measurement units and currency where applicable.

1. **Completed Team Form**

Teams must submit a new Team Form that replaces the one submitted during the Registration phase. Within this form, participants must report any changes in the composition of the team. They must also detail how they worked together to prepare the project (in a specific document of max. 1 page). For example, the team may indicate if the team worked with an advisor; if they engaged with specific stakeholders such as experts, local associations, actors and citizens; or whether they conducted specific research works. In this 1-page document, the team should not mention the names of the team members, the universities they are part of or the name of their advisor.

2. **Presentation of the project**

The Presentation of the Project is a comprehensive action plan that consists of a **maximum of 10 pages** (A4 or US Letter) made up of text as well as illustrations such as pictures, drawings and sketches. This document should present the actions/solutions proposed by the team to regenerate the area according to the 10 Principles and the priorities outlined by the city in the Site Form. It is recommended to include:

- **Design concept** to specify how the project is integrated into its urban environment and to outline the design choice. Teams are expected to include drawings, site plans and sketches.
- **Environmental assessment of the project** to evaluate the environmental benefits of the projects, especially in terms of reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Teams are expected to provide a summary in the main 10-page document.
- **Evaluation of the community benefits** of the project to specify the broader impacts their project will have on the quality of life of communities.

Teams may include an **additional 5 pages maximum** for a dedicated appendix (e.g. calculation, justifications etc.) and/or cover page.

3. **Graphic presentation**, consisting of:

- **One digital illustration board** (A3 or tabloid format) to present their project. The board should indicate the project's title and the name of the city. It should comprise

plans, drawings, and any additional graphics. Short text can also be embedded. The board must be set in Landscape orientation.

- **Three high-resolution images/drawings** (1600 x 900 px minimum), that clearly reflect the main ideas for the project (without any text embedded). They may be identical or similar to those used on the digital boards. These will be used for communication purposes, therefore please select images that you believe will best meet this purpose. At least two of the three images submitted must be in Landscape 16:9 format (format .jpg).

4. **Implementation Plan**

The Implementation Plan should consist of **a maximum of 3 pages** (A4 or US Letter). It should outline the budget, timeframes and phasing, compliance with the planning rules, specific technical challenges, key actors and responsibilities.

Submission requirements

All documents required for the two phases – Registration and the Project Proposal – must be submitted electronically through the site page on the website.

All four of the "Project Proposal" documents must be uploaded in a single .zip compressed file that must not exceed 1.5 GB. The city and C40 reserve the right to use documents submitted by the teams for public communication purposes.

Evaluation criteria and juries

For each site, the project proposals will be judged and selected based on the following criteria:

1. **Quality of the team and of their approach to developing the project**. The jury will assess the different expertise included in the team and the approach used to develop the project. They will specifically value multidisciplinary teams and teams that engage with stakeholders or undertake an innovative approach to collaboration in the development of their project. The competition complies with principles of anonymity, transparency, equal treatment, and non-discrimination. The jury will therefore not have access to the following information: the name of the team members and of the Universities they are part of and, if applicable, the name of the advisor.
2. **Quality of design and relevance of the project to the specifics of the site**. The jury will assess the team's understanding and response to the local context and the city's expectations and objectives. The quality of the design proposed will be evaluated against the extent to which it responds to the site-specific context.

3. **Proposed solutions to respond to the 10 Principles.** The jury will assess the quality and the innovative nature of the proposed solutions in delivering on the principles. Solutions will also be considered in terms of their replicability across the city and the world.
4. **Feasibility of the project.** The jury will assess the team's Implementation Plan and evaluate the feasibility of the project, against city-specific considerations, such as cost, technical elements, compliance with local rules and broader project timelines.

For each site, the project proposals are evaluated by a jury that will be composed of representatives from the city, C40 and may include external international experts. The composition of the juries will be made public. A winner is selected for each site, special mentions may be identified as well.

Awards

For each site, the winning team will:

- Receive public recognition by both the city and C40. This will include the receipt of an official certificate signed by the Mayor and the Executive Director of C40.
- Receive coverage in local and global communication campaigns (including social media, press releases, and featuring on the C40 Reinventing Cities website).

Additional awards may be given at the city's discretion. Further information about city-specific awards can be found within the city-specific Site Form.