

What **you** need  
to know about the  
**Green City Action Plan**  
but your municipality  
won't tell you



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Imagine that your city has received millions of euros for making it greener. The [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development \(EBRD\)](#) will spend over **EUR 5 billion** in the cities in central and eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East on sustainable municipal infrastructure investments within the Green Cities programme.

**Whether these investments  
will help your city become greener  
largely depends on you**

# 1. WHAT is a Green City Action Plan?

**Green City** Action Plans (GCAPs) aim to help cities deal with environmental issues and adapt to climate change. The EBRD secures the funding for the plans and local municipalities implement them.

## Green City Action Plan structure

### Vision

**How should the city look in 15 years?**

For example: city improves air quality and reduces GHG emissions



### Strategic goals

**Which strategic directions will help to implement this vision?**

For example: reduce the use of cars by 60 per cent



### Action plan

**What actions should be implemented to reach the strategic goals?**

For example: improve connectivity of public transport; development of bicycle infrastructure



### Instruments, such as:

**Sustainable infrastructure investments**

For example: investments in low-carbon public transport



### Policy instruments

For example: pro-cycling infrastructure includes the introduction of segregated cycle lanes in traffic legislation; the introduction of convenient and theft-preventing parking facilities in construction bylaws, and bike-sharing facilities

Find out more about the process of GCAP development in the EBRD's [GCAP Methodology](#)

## 2. HOW can civil society be involved?

As a city resident and civil society representative, you should have the opportunity to be involved at all stages of the GCAP's development, namely in the following:

Here is how you can participate:

GCAP process stages	How civil society can participate
 <p><b>Assessment of city's environmental challenges – baseline analysis</b></p>	<p>Civil society can contribute data for the baseline analysis of the city's challenges, such as independent monitoring data on air quality, existing disaster risk analyses and mitigation plans, and data on the disappearance of green spaces.</p>
 <p><b>Prioritising the biggest challenges that need immediate response</b></p>	<p>Consultants will present the findings of the Green City baseline analysis on the data on environmental challenges. Civil society can advocate for prioritising certain issues, such as air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, etc.</p>
 <p><b>Developing a Green City vision and strategic goals</b></p>	<p>Based on the findings of the prioritisation of challenges, in the next round of public consultations you can contribute to formulating the strategic vision and goals for your city development for the next 15 years.</p>
 <p><b>Prioritising Green City actions</b></p>	<p>When the consultants present the long list of actions that could be included in the GCAP, you will have an opportunity to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>comment on the importance of each action and prevent solutions that are not environmentally friendly (e.g. additional bypass roads, waste-to-energy solutions, waste incinerators, etc.).</li><li>propose other actions that are important for the city based on the analysis of environmental challenges.</li></ol> <p>Note: You can use the <a href="#">EBRD's Green Cities Policy Tool</a> to find examples of solutions that have already been implemented.</p>
 <p><b>Finalising the GCAP</b></p>	<p>During the final GCAP workshop, the draft GCAP is presented for public feedback and approval. You will have a 30-day period for written comments on the draft GCAP. The city should disclose together with Draft GCAP the Project Plan and Stakeholder Engagement Plan and documents.</p>
 <p><b>Preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (if required by national legislation)</b></p>	<p>If an SEA is required, it should be conducted in line with local procedure. In this case, GCAP finalisation and SEA consultation processes are usually held together within one public consultation procedure.</p>
 <p><b>GCAP approval</b></p>	<p>GCAPs are submitted for approval to the city council or equivalent body. Civil society can help ensure that the GCAP meets all of the city or country's requirements for approval. This can include public disclosure, a commenting period, or consultation. The city should publish the final GCAP on its website and describe how the comments from the public disclosure period were taken into account.</p>
 <p><b>Implementation and monitoring</b></p>	<p>Civil society can submit public information requests to the city administration and monitor the implementation of GCAPs.</p>

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q1 Can I be a part of the working group to develop the GCAP?

Although there is no requirement for GCAP working groups to include representatives of civil society – usually only city administration representatives are included – the EBRD’s GCAP Stakeholder Engagement Guidance requires cities to hold **public consultations** at each stage of GCAP development.

### Q2 How should vulnerable groups be consulted?

Women and vulnerable and under-represented groups should be invited and included at all stages of GCAP development. Their distinct perspectives and interests should be reflected in the GCAP. Note that an **assessment of social and economic conditions** should be a part of the baseline analysis presented to the public as per the GCAP Methodology.

### Q3 What format does public participation take?

The format of public participation can take different forms, depending on existing practices and people’s convenience. Usually, the format is a workshop where there is a lot of interaction between participants, but often the events are invite-only and do not allow wide participation. You should request that workshops be announced publicly and all interested organisations, interest groups and individuals can have their say. Input provided during physical or online meetings, as well as written input, should be considered.

### Q4 How should city authorities interact with me?

The city authorities should provide you with regular updates on the GCAP development and on the status of provided comments. They should also disclose GCAP documents and contact details for obtaining more information.

### Q5 How should COVID-19 considerations be addressed?

GCAP consultations can take place online, but civil society should request that online meetings be designed to ensure meaningful participation and the same quality of engagement (see also the recommendations of the [Aarhus Convention](#) on Access to Information, Public Participation and Environmental Justice).

### Q6 How should the requirements of local legislation be addressed?

Understand the specifics of your local legislation on citizen engagement and public participation, adaptation and implementation of international legislation (such as the Aarhus Convention), as well as how the GCAP should be adopted in accordance with your legislation, and make sure that local authorities abide by these.

### Q7 What can I do if my municipality does not engage civil society properly?

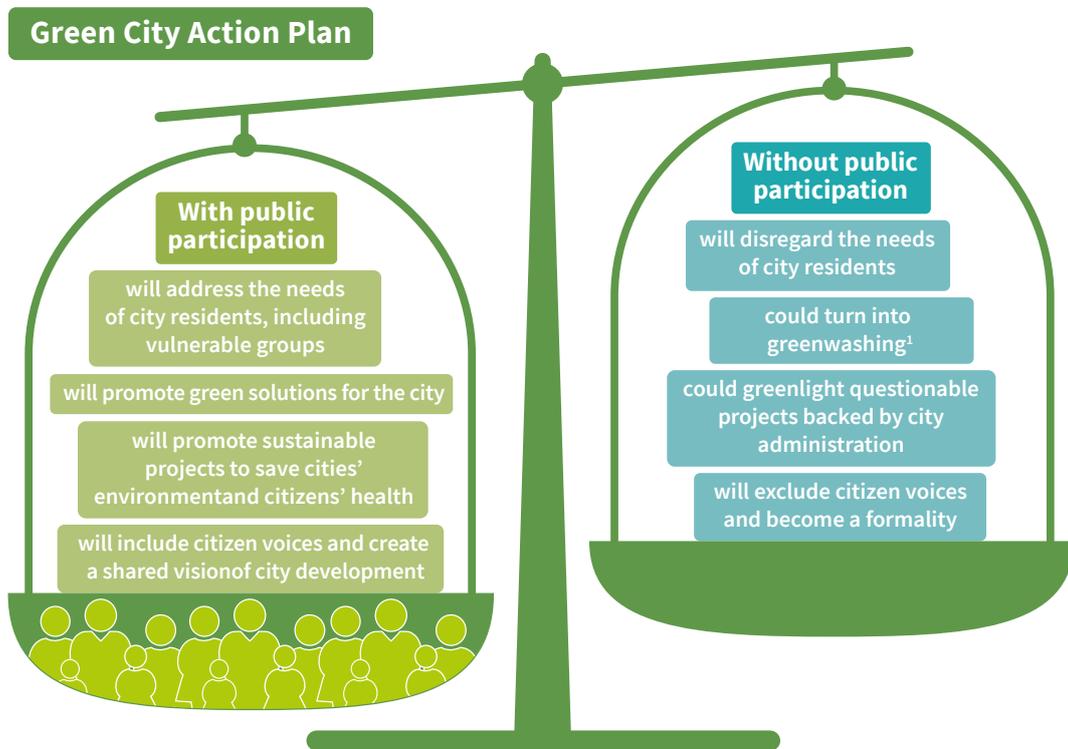
What can you do if your municipality does not engage civil society properly? Contact and report your concerns and demand transparency and proper engagement of civil society in the GCAP process to:

- Your city administration;
- The EBRD’s CSO sector via [cso@ebrd.com](mailto:cso@ebrd.com) and [greencities@ebrd.com](mailto:greenities@ebrd.com);
- Media, to increase public pressure;
- Bankwatch via [main@bankwatch.org](mailto:main@bankwatch.org).
- File a complaint through the EBRD’s [Independent Project Accountability Mechanism \(IPAM\)](#).

Find more on civil society engagement in the EBRD’s [GCAP Stakeholder Engagement Guidance](#).

### 3. WHY should civil society be involved?

There's a lot of money available, but with that comes the risk of greenwashing – the GCAP and the projects planned within it may claim to be eco-friendly when they are not. Here's what happens when citizens are involved, and what happens when they're not.



Participation in the GCAP is important for you in order to:



Have a say in the future of your city. Contribute to shaping a plan that addresses real circumstances and meets the real needs of residents.

Ensure transparent spending of public money on sustainable projects.



Make a plan that is a shared vision of a community and where the opinions of city residents and civil society are reflected.

<sup>1</sup> Greenwashing is when products give a false impression of being eco-friendly when they are not. For example, company A proclaims to 'go green' but in fact obtains only two per cent of its electricity from wind and solar resources.

## ACT – What can I do?

See these examples from cities where CSOs have already participated in the GCAP process:

- In Kyiv, Ukraine, the NGO ‘Ecopark Osokorky’ is using the GCAP process in their fight to [save a park](#) from illegal construction by proposing it as a Green City action.
- Activists participating in the GCAP development in Kyiv made sure the city committed to ambitious environmental targets (for example, coverage of bicycle lanes regarding the number of electric vehicles, share of personal vehicles).
- In Almaty, Kazakhstan, local NGO ‘Green Salvation’ monitors the GCAP development in order to ensure that the GCAP does not violate environmental legislation and human rights as well as the EBRD’s Environmental and Social Policy.
- In Skopje, North Macedonia, public participation in workshops ensured that the GCAP made clear that there are overarching issues that have to be taken into account in every sector instead of through a project-by-project approach.

Get involved, because:



there is a lot of  
money at stake



there is a better  
future at stake



and there is an  
opportunity for you  
to get involved!

# OUR CITY, OUR PLAN!

For more information,  
please contact [main@bankwatch.org](mailto:main@bankwatch.org).



This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida. The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of CEE Bankwatch Network and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the EU or Sida.