

CDP Cities Scoring Introduction 2025

CDP Cities Scoring Methodology



Version

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Introduction

Principles of scoring

Scoring is closely aligned with CDP's mission – CDP works with market forces to motivate organisations to disclose their impacts on the environment and natural resources and take action to reduce negative impacts, highlighting the business case to do so. The CDP Scoring Methodology is designed to incentivize jurisdictions' transition towards resilience and net-zero through equitable environmental action. The scoring process is a valuable opportunity for jurisdictions to get feedback on their climate and environmental planning. Jurisdictions can use their score to benchmark their progress against others and to identify areas to improve on.

CDP undertakes scoring by assessing responders against a scoring methodology, which details how each question in the questionnaire will be scored, evaluating the responder's progress towards environmental stewardship. The scoring methodology provides a roadmap to organisations to on how to achieve best practice, and by developing the scoring methodology each year to align with best practice, CDP aims to drive changes in behaviour to improve environmental performance.

The scoring methodology assesses the level of detail and comprehensiveness in a response, as well as the organization's awareness of environmental issues, its management methods, and progress towards environmental stewardship. CDP is committed to transparency and, as such, provides the full scoring methodology online.

Scoring of responses

The scoring of jurisdictions responses is conducted by the CDP scoring team, who carry out the scoring and run data quality checks and quality assurance processes to ensure scoring standards are upheld. To receive scores which accurately reflect a jurisdiction's climate and environmental actions, it is important that the questionnaire is answered as thoroughly as possible. CDP does not verify the information in any individual response by a jurisdiction – information outside of the CDP response is not considered as part of the scoring process, unless specified in the scoring methodology.

CDP produces scores based on the data in responses provided to CDP by those organizations. CDP does not verify the information in any individual organization's response. Information outside of the CDP response is not considered as part of the scoring process, unless specified in the scoring methodology. Any weblinks or attachments provided in the CDP response will also not be considered for scoring, unless specifically requested in the scoring methodology.

Responders are reminded that information in the CDP response may be made publicly available after scores are released and if the jurisdiction receives an A score. As such, responders are advised to provide information that is as complete, accurate and as reflective of the jurisdictions current situation as possible. Scores remain private to jurisdictions, but CDP recognizes leadership in climate action by highlighting those who receive an A score through an international media campaign.

CDP scores responses submitted in all languages. Responding in English is not a requirement to be on the A list and the language of submission will not impact a jurisdiction's score.

Other scoring resources

This document should be utilised in conjunction with the CDP Cities Scoring Methodology for 2025, CDP Cities questionnaire and reporting guidance and the Cities High Level Methodology. The reporting guidance explains the elements covered in answering the questionnaires. It is important to report data in line with the instructions provided in the reporting guidance, as the scoring methodology functions based on responders providing response data in line with this guidance.

Scoring of the CDP Cities Questionnaire

The questionnaire is aligned to a global network of initiatives including the Race to Zero, Race to Resilience, ICLEI initiatives, Global Covenant of Mayors, and NetZeroCities. By reporting to CDP-ICLEI Track, jurisdictions fulfil their commitments as part of these initiatives. Three questionnaire pathways are available to reflect the different contexts of local governments and to streamline reporting. This enables reporting to a core set of questions for all jurisdictions and additional questions only where relevant and valuable (Note C40 cities are presented with a standardized questionnaire. Therefore, questionnaire pathways are not applicable to C40 cities).

In 2025, the scoring methodology will only assess questions in Pathway 1. These include the data points requested by all partner organizations and therefore, all jurisdictions will be scored on the same data points and with the same scoring criteria. Any additional data points/questions presented in Pathway 2 or 3, or any project-specific data points/questions, will not be scored. The 2025 CDP Score will therefore reflect action on the core questions on climate change mitigation and adaptation in the areas of governance, assessment, planning and actions with some detail on sector metrics.

Increasing scoring ambition

Reflecting minimal changes in the questionnaire in 2025, the Scoring Methodology has been updated to reflect these changes, continuing to align with the imperative to limit global warming to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels to avoid the most devastating impacts of climate change. The Scoring Methodology in 2025 continues to highlight the importance of science-based targets, incentivizing jurisdictions to set goals addressing climate-related hazards and track their progress towards these goals and targets.

Approach to Scoring

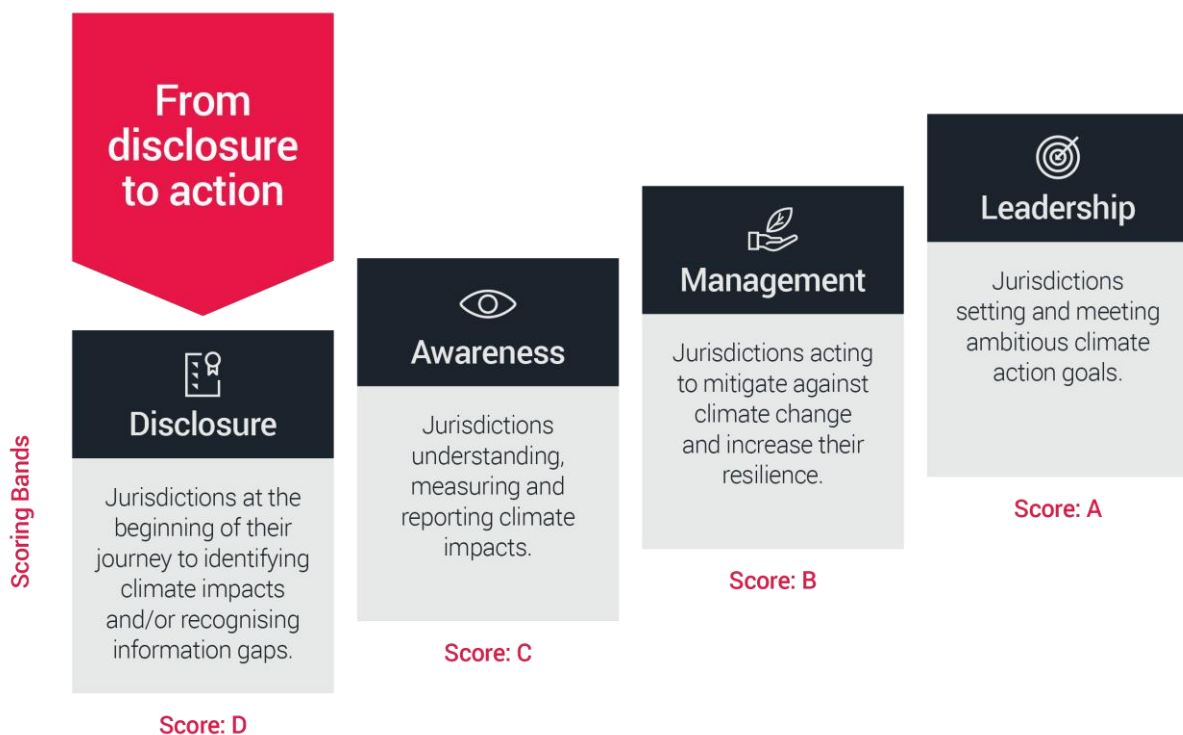
Scoring levels

Jurisdictions are assessed across four scoring bands which represent the steps jurisdictions move through as they progress towards climate leadership. The bands are:

- **Disclosure (D- or D):** A jurisdiction in the Disclosure scoring band has just started the journey of understanding and reporting on climate impacts. These jurisdictions understand the value of collecting data to drive climate action but may not have structures or resources in place to obtain the necessary information. Jurisdictions in the Disclosure band report on the degree to which climate impacts and risks have been measured.
- **Awareness (C- or C):** A jurisdiction in the Awareness scoring band is in the process of assessing the main risks and impacts of climate change. These jurisdictions have begun developing an assessment and measuring impacts to get a holistic

understanding of the main effects climate change has on their jurisdiction and are beginning to take action to reduce them.

- **Management (B- or B):** A jurisdiction in the Management band has managed to gather data on the main risks and impacts of climate change and is taking action to adapt to and reduce these effects. These jurisdictions have worked collaboratively with key stakeholders to understand their risks and impacts and now have plans in place to mitigate and/or adapt.
- **Leadership (A- or A):** A Leadership jurisdiction demonstrates best practice standards across adaptation and mitigation, has set ambitious goals and made progress towards achieving those goals. Jurisdictions in the Leadership band have strategic, holistic plans in place to ensure the actions they are taking will reduce climate impacts and vulnerabilities of the people, businesses, and organizations in their jurisdiction.



Final score allocation

Calculation of a final score

Once a responder has been assessed against the scoring methodology, a final percentage score will be calculated for each scoring level. Responders are allocated a final letter ranging from A to D-. Within each level, two separate scores are available, allocated based on the percentage of points achieved within the scoring level.

To incentivize complete reporting and consistent progress across all areas of the questionnaire, minimum requirements must be met at one scoring level before a responder can be given credit for the next scoring level. This is achieved through a system of thresholds, in which a minimum score is required in one level to move to the next scoring level above it. If the minimum score threshold is not

achieved, the organization’s final score will remain at the previous level. Isolated areas of excellence with poor performance in other areas are disincentivized through this approach.

CDP provisionally sets the thresholds required to move between scoring levels, and these thresholds are reviewed during the scoring period to ensure that the distribution of responses among scoring levels is representative of the current level of progress in the responding population. CDP reserves the right to adjust these thresholds at any point prior to the release of scores.

Level	Threshold	Score Level
Disclosure	1-44%	D-
	45-79%	D
Awareness	1-44%	C-
	45-79%	C
Management	1-44%	B-
	45-79%	B
Leadership	1-59%	A-
	60-100%	A

Essential criteria

As well as achieving a minimum score in a level to be able to move to the next level, CDP also utilizes a system of essential criteria. To be able to achieve a score within a given score level, these criteria must be met within the response. Even if a responder has passed the threshold to be scored within a scoring level, they will not be eligible to be scored for that level if they do not pass all of the essential criteria associated with it. Awareness, Management and Leadership bands have essential criteria which must be met to receive a score within those bands.

For example, regardless of whether all other criteria are met:

- To achieve an Awareness score, all Awareness essential criteria must be met;
- To achieve a Management score, all Awareness and Management essential criteria must be met;
- To achieve a Leadership score, all Awareness, Management and Leadership essential criteria must be met;
- To achieve an A score, all Awareness, Management, Leadership and the additional A List essential criteria must be met.

Jurisdictions should ensure they have attached all essential criteria documents before submitting their response to the 2025 questionnaire to receive a score which truly reflects their planning and actions. Please note that attachments do not copy forward from 2024 responses and therefore need to be reattached in order to be scored.

Essential criteria in 2025

There are no changes to the essential criteria this year.

Awareness essential criteria

To score at least a C- or C, jurisdictions must:

- Report a climate hazard in question 2.2

Management essential criteria

- To score at least a B- or B, jurisdictions must:
- At least be intending to undertake a climate risk and vulnerability assessment in the next two years in question 2.1
- Have a community-wide inventory and attach or provide a weblink to their inventory in question 3.1.1
- Have either an integrated climate plan addressing adaptation or mitigation OR a standalone mitigation plan OR a standalone adaptation plan and attach or provide a weblink to the plan in question 8.1.1
- Have at least one adaptation action in question 9.1 AND at least one mitigation action in question 9.2

Leadership essential criteria

To score at least an A-, jurisdictions must:

- Have a climate risk and vulnerability assessment and attach or provide a weblink to the assessment in question 2.1.
- Have a fully reported adaptation goal in question 5.1.1

- Fully reported means: adaptation goal, climate hazard that goal addresses, target year of goal are all complete and target year of goal is in the future.

- Have a fully reported emissions reduction target in question 6.1.1

If the target type is Base year emissions (absolute); Base year intensity; or Baseline scenario:

- Fully reported means: target type, boundary of target relative to jurisdiction boundary, are carbon credits currently used or planned to be used to achieve this target, base year, target year, percentage of emissions reduction, and net emissions in target year are all complete and target year is in the future and boundary of the target relative to the jurisdiction boundary must be "same" or "larger".

If the target type is Fixed-level:

- Fully reported means: target type, boundary of target relative to jurisdiction boundary, are carbon credits currently used or planned to be used to achieve this target, target year, and net emissions in target year are all complete and target year is in the future and boundary of the target relative to the jurisdiction must be "same" or "larger".

- Have either an integrated climate plan addressing both adaptation and mitigation, OR a standalone mitigation plan AND a standalone adaptation plan and attach or provide a weblink to the plan in question 8.1.1

A list essential criteria

To score an A, jurisdictions must:

- Demonstrate leadership in target setting by reporting targets aligned with the latest science on limiting the most harmful impacts of climate change. A science-based target should include EITHER both a long-term net-zero target (by 2050) and a mid-term target that is aligned with a fair share of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, or a net zero 2030 target.
- Ensure attached Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessments assess **all** potential climate risks impacting the jurisdiction and is not limited to assessing one climate risk.
- Ensure attached Emissions Inventories provide a clear breakdown of emissions within the community and their respective sources.
- Ensure attached Climate Action Plans clearly cover both an adaptation and mitigation plan
- Submit their response publicly

Note that stricter criteria for attachments may be introduced in future years.

Understanding the scoring methodology

Methodology structure

For each question, the scoring methodology provides the specific scoring criteria for each of the four scoring levels, and a table that details the point allocation for the question. The scoring criteria detail what conditions must be met to achieve points within a scoring level. The point allocation table indicates the maximum number of points that are attainable for each scoring level. Each scoring level has a separate 'numerator' and 'denominator' column. The denominator column indicates how many points are available at each scoring level.

The numerator column indicates the number of points that can be attained out of the number of points available at each scoring level. The numerator and denominator are usually identical, except for some instances where the numerator is less than the denominator, indicating that it is not possible for a responder to achieve all the points available, even if they meet all the criteria stipulated for that level.

Only information provided in response to a given question will be utilized for scoring each question. References made to answers provided in other questions will not be considered as part of the scoring process except where specified in the scoring methodology. Please note that any text added in 'Comment' columns cannot be scored.

Unanswered questions will be scored zero out of the maximum available points for that question or set of questions. In the instance of certain key data points, an unanswered question will be scored zero out of a denominator that is greater than the maximum available points for that question. These key data points will be highlighted in specific scoring criteria in the methodology.

Scoring approaches

The approach by which points are awarded varies on a question-by-question basis, and responders are advised to check the scoring methodology closely when preparing responses to understand how points will be allocated.

For some questions, points or fractions of points are awarded cumulatively – per each data point provided – up to the maximum points available for that question. Other questions require all data points requested to be provided for any points to be awarded. For the latter, leaving information blank or failing to provide a required data point will lead to zero points being awarded for that question. As a rule, 'Comment' columns are not considered in scoring, unless otherwise specified.

In instances where multiple datasets are required (such as multiple rows of data in a table), a variety of approaches to scoring are employed. All of the data provided may be scored, only certain rows may be scored, or only the best scoring row(s) may be scored.

Proportional scoring

In some instances, responses are scored in proportion to the amount of data that is disclosed. This scoring approach is used in questions in which the amount of information reported may vary between responders. Proportional scoring incentivizes complete reporting on all rows disclosed, by awarding points in proportion to the amount of information provided in a table. Points may be awarded in proportion to the number of individual cells complete within a table, or in proportion to the number of

complete rows within a table. In the Cities methodology, proportional scoring by cell is the only method used.

Type of proportional scoring	Scoring criteria
Proportional scoring by the number of cells completed in a table. Only one row might be scored, or multiple rows might be scored.	<p>Points will be awarded per completed cell in proportion to the number of cells displayed.</p> <p>A maximum of X points is available for this question.</p>

Best row scoring

In some instances, only one row of data from an organization's response is considered in the score. This scoring approach enables organizations to provide comprehensive responses to a question, even if their response is incomplete or if all actions detailed by the organization do not meet the best practice as set out in the scoring criteria. As such, best row scoring is typically used in questions where a single description of an action, process or target is sufficient to be assessed.

The best row scoring approach is denoted in the scoring criteria as 'Best row scored'. In these questions, points are awarded in accordance with the points achieved in the row that achieves the highest score across all scoring levels. Each scoring level is assessed consecutively – for example, a row that achieves full Disclosure and Awareness points but zero Management points is considered to have a better score than a row that achieves partial Disclosure points and full Awareness points.

Scoring routes

Not all responders to a given environmental issue areas will see the same questions, as the CDP questionnaire contains multiple routes. Selecting question routes impacts the number of questions presented to a responding jurisdiction, and therefore the denominator of their score. Jurisdictions that respond 'Yes' to most questions will generally have a higher denominator compared to those selecting 'No'. However, scores are calculated as a percentage to normalize the effect of different question routes. The final score is the number of points awarded divided by the total number of points available to the jurisdiction for the question routes selected. If a jurisdiction answers fewer questions because they are not relevant to that jurisdiction, they are not penalized.

Disclaimer Surrounding Scores

The CDP score is based on activities and positions disclosed in the CDP response. The score is not a comprehensive metric of an organization's level of sustainability or 'green-ness', or a specific metric on the environmental footprint, but rather an indication of the level of action taken by the organization to assess and manage its impacts on, and from, environmental related issues during the reporting year.

CDP's 2025 scoring methodologies have been published to indicate to responding organizations how scores will be awarded this year. CDP reserves the right to make adjustments to the criteria or weighting of questions before and throughout the scoring period, based on emerging risk management strategies and best practice, quality of response data or scoring outcomes.

Feedback and Support

If you would like information about receiving feedback on your score, make suggestions about CDP's scoring methodologies, or ask a general question, please contact the [CDP Help Center](#).

Annex I – Conflict of Interest Policy

Policy on conflicts of interest relating to the scoring of responses

Maintaining the independence, quality and integrity of the information that we offer is essential to CDP's mission. We have therefore adopted comprehensive measures to mitigate the risk of any potential conflicts of interest that might threaten the objectivity of our Scoring process.

Organization-wide controls

All CDP employees are required as a condition of employment to comply with CDP's Conflicts of Interest policy and those with any level of input in decision-making processes are required to submit an annual Conflicts of Interest declaration and subsequently ensure that this declaration is kept up to date. Appropriate mitigating controls are put in place to ensure that any potential conflicts identified through this process are effectively managed and do not pose any possible threat to the independence of the scores or wider datasets that CDP offers. If any Scoring employee or individual involved in the final review and approval of scores has a potential tie to or interest in any discloser, they are removed from the scoring process for this discloser.

The Scoring team, who are responsible for the scoring process, are entirely independent of CDP's Commercial teams, do not answer to any Commercial leaders and have no direct involvement in or sight of any relationships with organisations that either use CDP's data or disclose to CDP.

Any attempt by any CDP employee or member of CDP's Board of Trustees to influence scoring results or to in any way encourage anything less than entirely consistent and fair application of the scoring methodology in the calculation of scores will be treated as gross misconduct, resulting in immediate dismissal.

Scoring methodology development

CDP's Scoring and Disclosure Content teams are responsible for the development of CDP's scoring methodologies, with input from CDP's Thought Leadership team. The methodologies are based on robust environmental science and aligned with both relevant environmental standards/frameworks and CDP's mission of promoting the use of high-quality environmental data in decision-making. Following an extensive review process, involving scrutiny from relevant Thought Leadership subject matter experts, all methodologies are approved by the Head of Scoring before being made publicly available and subsequently used to score disclosures received. The Head of Scoring is ultimately accountable for ensuring that all required review steps are completed and approvals granted before release.

Scoring process

CDP's Scoring team is responsible for the scoring process, including training our Scoring Partner, Incite Insight, and performing validation checks before score release. Ultimate accountability for ensuring the fairness and reliability of the scoring process lies with the Head of Scoring. While the Scoring team may request specific input from other CDP teams where this is needed (e.g. translation of supporting evidence provided in a disclosure response), no other functions or individuals have any say in scoring decisions, which are based solely on the consistent and objective application of the publicly available scoring methodology to disclosure submissions. Only Scoring employees have access to CDP's scoring systems and unpublished scores, and have no ability to alter the disclosures submitted to CDP in any way.

A robust quality assurance process is in place to ensure that all scores are based solely on the objective and unbiased application of the scoring methodology to the disclosure submitted by the organization in question. All scores require final approval from the Head of Scoring before they are confirmed and released to disclosers and the general public, with the Scoring Governance Committee ultimately accountable for ensuring the integrity of all scores.

CDP engages an external organisation, Incite Insight, to act as a 'Scoring Partner', supporting the process of assessing disclosures received against the CDP scoring methodology. Incite Insight have been selected as a Scoring Partner following the completion of CDP's training programme and confirmation that an appropriate internal quality assurance process is in place to ensure consistency and objectivity in the application of the CDP scoring methodology. All scores prepared by Incite Insight are submitted to CDP's internal Scoring team for final quality assurance and approval before they are published.

As a Scoring Partner, Incite Insight are required (before the commencement of any scoring activities) to submit a conflicts of interest declaration to CDP, to disclose whether any of the organizations included in the proposed sample that they have been asked to score are also their customers or competitors, or otherwise have any ties to Incite Insight (or their senior management) that might present a potential conflict of interest. If any of the organizations within the sample initially proposed are subject to such a conflict, they will be removed from the sample of disclosures scored by Incite Insight and instead handled entirely by CDP's Scoring team.

In addition to the quality assurance controls mentioned above, the contract signed between CDP and Incite Insight explicitly prohibits anything other than entirely fair and objective application of the scoring methodology, with any failure to uphold these commitments grounds for legal action, in addition to immediate termination of contract without payment for any services rendered.