

Cities, States and Regions Essential Criteria 2026

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Introduction

CDP recognizes the importance of environmental transparency in incentivizing positive and effective actions to mitigate climate risks. To establish a consistent reporting baseline across CDP scores, essential criteria are applied across multiple scoring levels to ensure that critical gaps in disclosure are addressed. By combining the application of these essential criteria with a requirement for organizations to achieve a minimum score at each level, CDP recognizes organizations that provide key data points vital for understanding how they assess and respond to environmental challenges.

The CDP essential criteria consist of several levels of criteria for organizations responding to the cities, states and regions questionnaire. Criteria may be applied across Awareness, Management, Leadership and A List levels, whereby all criteria must be met to progress a score to the next level. Essential criteria both set a consistent reporting baseline at each scoring level and ensure that high scoring organizations are comprehensively disclosing on the critical data points that sufficiently demonstrate commitment towards holistic transparency in their environmental disclosure.

The essential criteria document outlines all the essential criteria across all scoring levels. The essential criteria are also highlighted at the relevant question numbers in the full cities, states and regions scoring methodology to ensure organizations are aware of the specific essential criteria associated with modules as they complete their disclosure.

All essential criteria apply to **both** Cities **and** States and Regions.

Awareness Essential Criteria

Scoring Level	Environmental issue(s)	Question Number	Criteria	Change in 2026
Awareness	Climate Risk and Vulnerability	3.2	Column 'Climate-related hazards' completed	None

Management Essential Criteria

Scoring Level	Environmental issue(s)	Question Number	Criteria	Change in 2026
Management	Climate Risk and Vulnerability	3.1	i) Any of the following selected: - 'Yes, a climate risk and vulnerability assessment has been undertaken' - 'No, but we are currently undertaking one and it will be complete in the next year' - 'No, but we are intending to undertake one in the next two years'	None
Management	Emissions Inventory	4.1	'Yes' selected	None

Management	Emissions Inventory	4.1.1	'i) Any of the following selected in column 'Status of main community-wide inventory attachment and/or direct link': - 'The emissions inventory has been attached' - 'The emissions inventory can be accessed (unrestricted) on the link provided' - 'The emissions inventory has been attached and can be accessed (unrestricted) on the link provided'	None
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Management	Climate Action Plan	9.1	'Yes, our jurisdiction has a climate action plan or strategy' selected	None
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Management	Climate Action Plan	9.1.1	Any option selected excluding 'Standalone energy-related plan' in column 'Climate action plan type' Any of the following selected in column 'Confirm attachment/link provided to plan': - 'The plan has been attached' - 'The plan can be accessed (unrestricted) on the link provided' - 'The plan has been attached and can be accessed (unrestricted) on the link provided'	None
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Management	Adaptation and Mitigation Actions	10.1	Either of the following options selected in column 'Primary climate focus of action' in question 10.1: - 'Adaptation' AND 'Mitigation/low carbon development' OR - 'Both Adaptation and mitigation/low carbon development equally'	None
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Leadership Essential Criteria

Scoring Level	Environmental issue(s)	Question Number	Criteria	Change in 2026
Leadership	Climate Risk and Vulnerability	3.1	'Yes, a climate risk and vulnerability assessment has been undertaken' selected	None
Leadership	Climate Risk and Vulnerability	3.1.1	Any of the following selected in column 'Confirm attachment/link provided to assessment' - 'The assessment has been attached' - 'The assessment can be accessed (unrestricted) on the link provided' - 'The assessment has been attached and can be accessed (unrestricted) on the link provided'	None
Leadership	Adaptation Goals	6.1	Yes, our jurisdiction has an adaptation goal(s)' selected	None

Leadership	Adaptation Goals	6.1.1	<p>All of the following columns complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Adaptation goal' - 'Climate hazards that goal addresses' - 'Target year of goal' <p>'2026' or later reported in column 'Target year of goal'</p>	None
Leadership	Emissions Targets	7.1	'Yes, our jurisdiction has an active greenhouse gas emissions reduction target(s) selected	None
Leadership	Emissions Targets	7.1.1	<p>ROUTE A)</p> <p>Any of the following options selected in column 'Target type':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Base year emissions (absolute) targets' - 'Base year intensity target based on emissions per capita' - 'Base year intensity target based on emissions per unit GDP' - 'Baseline scenario targets' <p>All of the following columns complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - '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' - 'Net emissions in target year' <p>2026 or later reported in column 'Target year'</p>	None

Any of the following options selected in column 'Boundary of target relative to jurisdiction boundary'

- 'Same - covers entire jurisdiction and nothing else'
- 'Larger in column 'Boundary of target relative to jurisdiction boundary'

ROUTE B)
'Fixed-level target' selected in column 'Target type'

All of the following columns complete:

- 'Boundary of target relative to jurisdiction boundary'
- 'Are carbon credits currently used or planned to be used to achieve this target'
- 'Target year'
- 'Net emissions in target year' are complete

2026 or later reported in column 'Target year'

Any of the following options selected in column 'Boundary of target relative to jurisdiction boundary'

- 'Same - covers entire jurisdiction and nothing else'
- 'Larger in column 'Boundary of target relative to jurisdiction boundary'

Leadership	Climate Action Plans	9.1.1	ROUTE A) Any of the following selected in column 'Climate action plan type': - 'Integrated climate plan (addressing mitigation,	None
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adaptation and energy-related issues)
- 'Integrated climate plan (addressing mitigation and adaptation)

Any of the following selected in column 'Confirm attachment/link provided to plan':

- 'The plan has been attached'
- 'The plan can be accessed (unrestricted) on the link provided'
- 'The plan has been attached and can be accessed (unrestricted) on the link provided'

OR

ROUTE B)
'Standalone mitigation plan' AND 'Standalone adaptation plan' selected in column 'Climate action plan type'

OR
'Integrated climate plan (addressing adaptation and energy)' AND 'Integrated climate plan (addressing mitigation and energy)' selected in column 'Climate action plan type'

Any of the following selected in at least one row where 'Standalone mitigation plan' is selected AND at least one row where 'Standalone adaptation plan' is selected:

- 'The plan has been attached'
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- 'The plan can be accessed (unrestricted) on the link provided'

- 'The plan has been attached and can be accessed (unrestricted) on the link provided'

A List Essential Criteria

Please note that all A list cities will have their attachments manually reviewed by the scoring team. If an attachment is found to be invalid they will be removed out of the A list and will receive a final score of A-.

Scoring Level	Environmental issue(s)	Question Number	Criteria	Change in 2026
A List	Climate Risk and Vulnerability Attachment	3.1.1	CRVA attached assesses all potential climate risks impacting the jurisdiction and is not a CRVA limited to assessing one climate risk (i.e. A CRVA only covering flood risk and not evaluating other risks within the jurisdiction would not pass this essential criteria)	Year check added to ensure attachment is recent
			2015 or later selected in column 'Year of publication or approval'	
A List	Emissions Inventory Attachment	4.1.1	Emissions Inventory provides a clear breakdown of emissions within the community and their respective sources	Year check added to ensure attachment is recent
			2020 or later in column 'Latest year covered by main inventory'	
A List	SBT Check	7.1.1	SBT is validated as 'Fully Aligned'	None

A List	Climate Action Plan Check	9.1.1	It is clear that the Climate Action Plan covers both an adaptation and mitigation plan	Year check added to ensure attachment is recent
			2015 or later selected in column 'Year of formal approval of plan'	Plan status and progress made criteria added to ensure the
			Any of the following options selected in column 'Plan status and progress made towards plan':	jurisdiction has ongoing plans and progress is being made
			- 'Underway - moderate progress made'	
			- 'Underway - significant progress made'	