Selection Criteria: Zero Waste Cities

Below are the criteria applied for selecting 20 Zero Waste Cities:

1. Impact, Sustainability and Resilience

- Demonstrable and measurable improvements in waste reduction, collection, recovery, resource efficiency, and circularity adoption.
- Tangible and measurable benefits for public health, environmental quality, economic opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged communities, and cost savings.
- Integration of social, economic, climate and environmental sustainability into zero waste initiatives and policies.
- Effective citizen participation and awareness empowering communities to take ownership of waste solutions.

2. City-Level Policies

- Existing policy(ies) on zero waste at the city level and demonstrated implementation thereof and city-level institutional mechanisms.
- Policy coverage over societal issues, including consumer behaviors, producer responsibilities, and poverty alleviation.

3. Zero Waste Communications & Outreach

- The city demonstrates effective strategies for raising awareness and engaging residents in zero waste practices. This includes evidence of impactful communication and outreach efforts that have fostered a local culture of zero waste.
- The city could provide at least one concrete example of a successful campaign or material that inspired community participation and broader behavioral change.

4. Partnership and Collaboration

- Demonstrated effective multi-sector platforms within local government departments, public institutions, private sector actors, community groups, and civil society organizations.
- Effective public-private partnerships, such as a deposit and return system, and extended producer responsibility.
- Active engagement with informal waste workers, cooperatives, and social enterprises.
- Effective citizen participation and awareness, empowering communities to take ownership of waste reduction.

5. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

- Promotion of social equity through fair labor practices and income security for informal waste sector workers.

6. Innovation and Technology Adoption

- Use of innovative technologies, smart waste management systems, and digital solutions to optimize collection, sorting, and recycling, prevent waste generation and extend life of materials, resources and products.
- Adoption of nature-based solutions, biodegradable materials, and alternative waste treatment methods.

7. Financial Sustainability and Resource Mobilization

- Functional sustainable financial mechanisms through diverse funding streams, e.g. cost-recovery mechanisms, private financing EPR fees, etc.

8. Transferability and Scalability

- Documented lessons learned, toolkits, or policy recommendations that facilitate adaptation by other municipalities.
- Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

9. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

- Data showing reduced waste generation, reduction of waste sent to disposal site, and an increase in collection and recovery rates.
- Establishment of systematic monitoring implementation with key performance indicators (KPIs) for waste reduction, recycling/reuse rates.
- Transparent reporting mechanisms involving regular public disclosure of achievements and challenges.
- Use of data-driven approaches for evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement.