

At COP30, new guidebook empowers cities to make climate action more equitable

Belém, 11 November 2025 – At COP30 in Belem, Brazil, ICLEI has launched a new guidebook helping cities put social equity at the heart of their climate work. Presented at the German Pavilion on 11 November 2025, [“From Incentivizing to Empowering: A Practitioner’s Guide to Equitable Climate Action in Cities”](#) brings together the key findings of the [INCLU:DE project](#), showcasing how cities can turn inclusion from a goal into a daily practice.

Drawing on best-practice examples from collaboration with German cities such as Bonn, Dortmund, Essen, Heidelberg, and Ludwigsburg, as well as with international frontrunners in equitable climate action, the guidebook calls for a fundamental shift in approach: from merely incentivizing climate-friendly behaviour to actively enabling communities to shape and lead the transition.

Structured around three key challenges, the guide provides practical pathways to:

- Understand structural barriers faced by disadvantaged groups;
- Improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of climate programmes through thoughtful design; and
- Embed equity-driven approaches across all areas of city administration.

The launch was part of the [ICLEI session on social equity in climate action](#) at the German Pavilion, which explored how cities can advance a *people-centered just transition* under the UNFCCC’s Just Transition Work Programme. Drawing on insights from the INCLU:DE policy paper [“Towards a People-Centered Just Transition”](#), the session highlighted the critical role of local governments in ensuring that climate action benefits all, particularly those most vulnerable to climate impacts. The discussion emphasized that fairness and inclusion are not secondary goals but key enablers of ambition, resilience, and long-term success in implementing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

“Equity is not an add-on – it’s what makes climate action work,” said **Gökşen Şahin**, Policy and Advocacy Lead at ICLEI Europe. **“This guidebook is about empowering cities to make inclusion a standard part of how climate action is planned and delivered, so no one is left behind in the transition.”**

By combining practical guidance with policy insights, *From Incentivizing to Empowering* aims to inspire municipalities worldwide to mainstream social justice into their climate strategies. It

proves that socially just climate action is not only fairer but also more effective, strengthening trust, participation, and public support for transformative climate measures.

Access the Practitioner's Guide [here](#).

About INCLU:DE - Just and inclusive climate action in German cities

Cities' climate initiatives and ambitions need to be [socially just](#) and consider vulnerable populations, to ensure that no-one is left behind. INCLU:DE aims to support local inclusive transformations and foster dialogue exchanges to generate positive equity outcomes for all citizens involved.

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