The Zero Waste Cities Certification

Introduction for ZWNW and Derry & Strabane Council

ZERO WASTE EUROPE

zerowasteeurope.eu

Background & context

- The Zero Waste Cities programme is <u>currently</u> based upon a mentoring & recognition system

- We (Zero Waste Europe) work with nearly 400 municipalities who have committed to, at the very least, <u>6 of our key zero waste requirements</u>

- The need for a more robust, detailed and legitimate certification came from 2 reasons:

    - In order to avoid greenwashing and the 'watering down' of the zero waste space

    - Championing the best zero waste performers in Europe and creating a system that encourages/attracts further ambition from other European municipalities

Purpose of the Certification – What we're trying to achieve

- The Zero Waste Cities certification system is **an independent, third party assessment** and certification standard based on the established Zero Waste methodology, designed to **promote and protect the true definition of zero waste** against increased greenwashing and corporate takeover of its meaning
- Some similar certification schemes already exist and are implemented by ZWE members, our plan is to design a system that **harmonises practices** across Europe whilst **maintaining a certain level of flexibility and adaptability** for the local context
- The certification is **part of a process** whereby a municipality can work with ZWE throughout their journey **to ensure their zero waste strategy is effective and impactful**
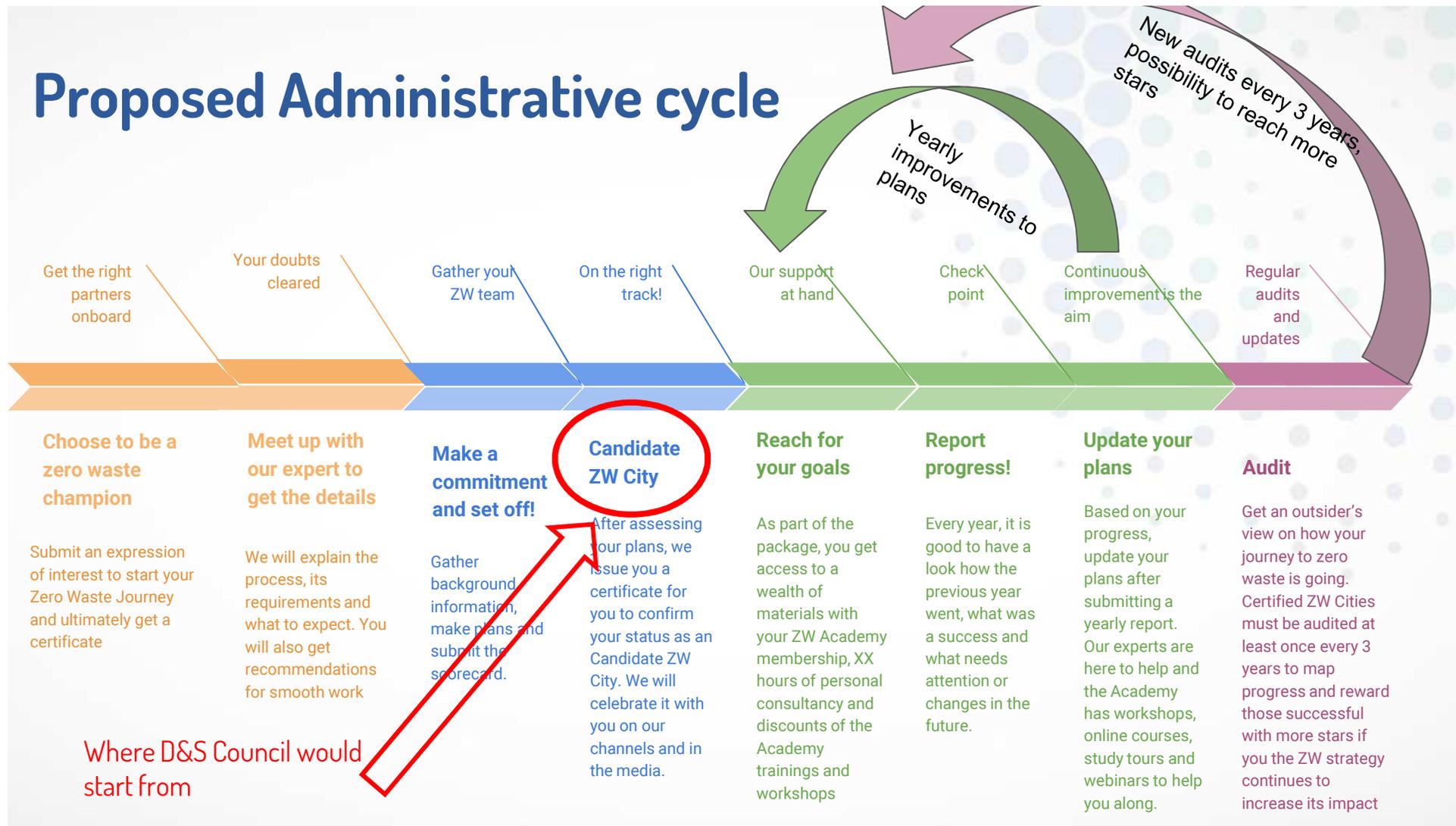
How it is going to work – overview

2 step certification

EOI	Commitment	Implementation	Certification

'Candidate' Zero Waste City

'Certified' Zero Waste City
★ ★ ★ ★

Expression of interest submitted by city to local ZWE member or Mission Zero Academy directly

Short phase focused on commitment & preparation

Municipality has 2 years to complete scorecard and submit evidence to formal auditor

Certification given based on level of performance & impact

The Cities Certification Scorecard

- There will be a harmonised [template scorecard/criteria](#) that will be used by all municipalities (different versions in different languages though)
- The scorecard includes a mix of mandatory and points-based criteria
  - Mandatory criteria forms the minimum requirements of a zero waste city
  - Points-based criteria will be scored depending on the ambition and impact of each policy. The combination of these points together will decide the level of certification a municipality receives
- Supporting documents and templates will be provided (E.G. yearly reporting and waste composition assessments)
- Only available in English, Spanish and Italian currently – will work to get translated versions ready as soon as we can

Proposed Administrative cycle

New audits every 3 years, possibility to reach more stars

Yearly improvements to plans

Get the right partners onboard

Your doubts cleared

Gather your ZW team

On the right track!

Our support at hand

Check point

Continuous improvement is the aim

Regular audits and updates

Choose to be a zero waste champion

Submit an expression of interest to start your Zero Waste Journey and ultimately get a certificate

Meet up with our expert to get the details

We will explain the process, its requirements and what to expect. You will also get recommendations for smooth work

Make a commitment and set off!

Gather background information, make plans and submit the scorecard.

Candidate ZW City

After assessing your plans, we issue you a certificate for you to confirm your status as an Candidate ZW City. We will celebrate it with you on our channels and in the media.

Reach for your goals

As part of the package, you get access to a wealth of materials with your ZW Academy membership, XX hours of personal consultancy and discounts of the Academy trainings and workshops

Report progress!

Every year, it is good to have a look how the previous year went, what was a success and what needs attention or changes in the future.

Update your plans

Based on your progress, update your plans after submitting a yearly report. Our experts are here to help and the Academy has workshops, online courses, study tours and webinars to help you along.

Audit

Get an outsider's view on how your journey to zero waste is going. Certified ZW Cities must be audited at least once every 3 years to map progress and reward those successful with more stars if you the ZW strategy continues to increase its impact

Where D&S Council would start from

Characteristics of a Zero Waste Certified City

Curiosity to challenge accepted norms and behaviour, to see where new policies and ideas can take a community

Courage to break from traditional thinking and begin to take those decisive first steps on their path to zero waste

Confidence in the support and expertise provided by the ZWE network

Benefits of certification (1)

➔ Once a Candidate ZW City, municipalities will be given **greater access to zero waste expertise**, helping to ensure your plans are effective & impactful
➔ In many contexts, **zero waste strategies can immediately save costs** and continue doing so for years (lower gate fees, more recycling revenue, thriving local economy)
➔ **Environmental & health reasons** – directly helping to reduce pollution & emissions
➔ Certification is just one part of a longer journey where municipalities will be **continually supported** to design, implement, monitor and optimise their zero waste strategies

Benefits of certification (2)

➔ Access to several **opportunities to showcase a municipality's work** to a European and global audience, positive image and to be seen as a leader on this issue for the municipality (Webinars, Study Tours etc)

➔ **Compliance with current EU requirements**, future trends point towards more ambitious goals being set by Brussels… therefore there is an opportunity to get ahead of the curve (also related to saving costs!)

➔ The fee paid by municipalities will go directly to helping fund zero waste work across Europe, therefore **playing a further role in supporting Europe's transition**

➔ **Positive image** for the town/city or even political status, together with the **credibility** such a certification will have

Supporting role played by the Mission Zero Academy

- The Academy will be a **connection point** between municipalities and different solutions and services to further accelerate the fulfillment of the Zero Waste commitments
- It will also provide **training and educational materials** to help keeping the municipality officials' knowledge up to date in an easy way
- The Academy will **provide tools,** such as a CO_2 calculator to make evaluating the efficiency of the actions easy and to provide tangible data to track progress and support planning
- It will celebrate the achievements of the municipalities and **provide recognition** for a job well done in its communications and provide possibilities to network with other municipalities

Part of the journey towards certification – 'how a certification becomes more than just a certificate'

Current stage:
Piloting the Certification

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# Purpose of the testing & piloting phase

- To ensure that the certification is **strong and verified through robust testing** with different municipalities in a wide range of European contexts

- To **receive feedback on the key processes/aspects** of the certification
    - Structure & language of criteria, points system, auditing/reporting and fee structure

- To see how Europe's best performing municipalities score with the points system

- To understand more about the process from the viewpoint of a municipality, **so that we can design the system to be as accessible, smooth and performance enhancing as possible**

- To help us prepare the right supporting documents to guide municipalities through each stage of the certification

What do we want to test?

- **The layout of the criteria**
  - We want to find out how to organize the criteria in a way that is is the most understandable and least scary for the municipality. We don't want them to be scared away before they even start
- **The language of the criteria**
  - To avoid confusion and misunderstandings when completing the scorecard
- **The suitability of the criteria**
  - To make sure that the criteria is not or does not seem to be at odds with national regulations or policies.
- **The process of becoming a certified ZW City**
  - To be able to communicate and market the certification correctly
  - Basis to develop other supporting materials
- **What activities & services should the Academy provide**
  - What would be most beneficial for a municipality?
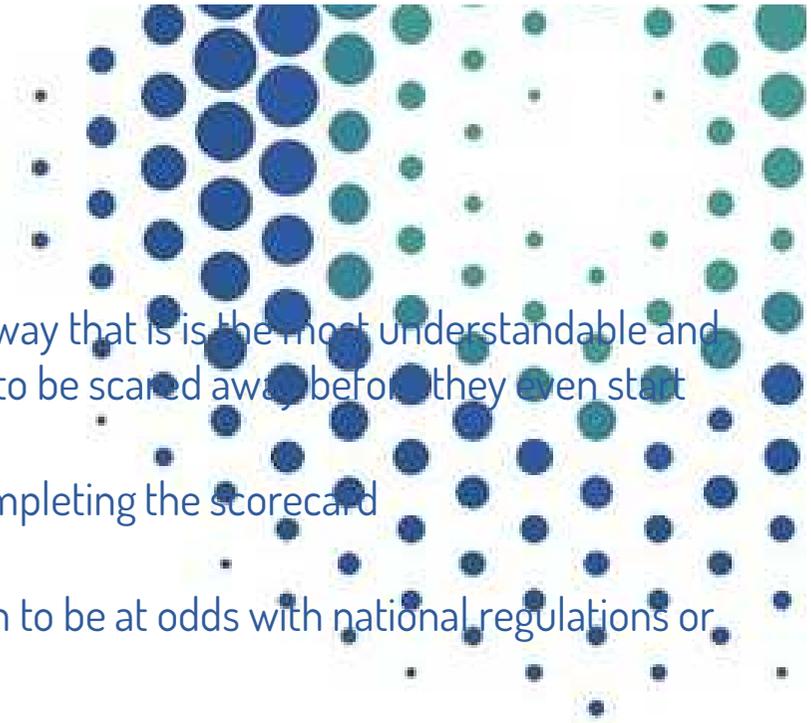
Suggestion for pilot timeline

Month 1   Month 2   Month 3   Month 4
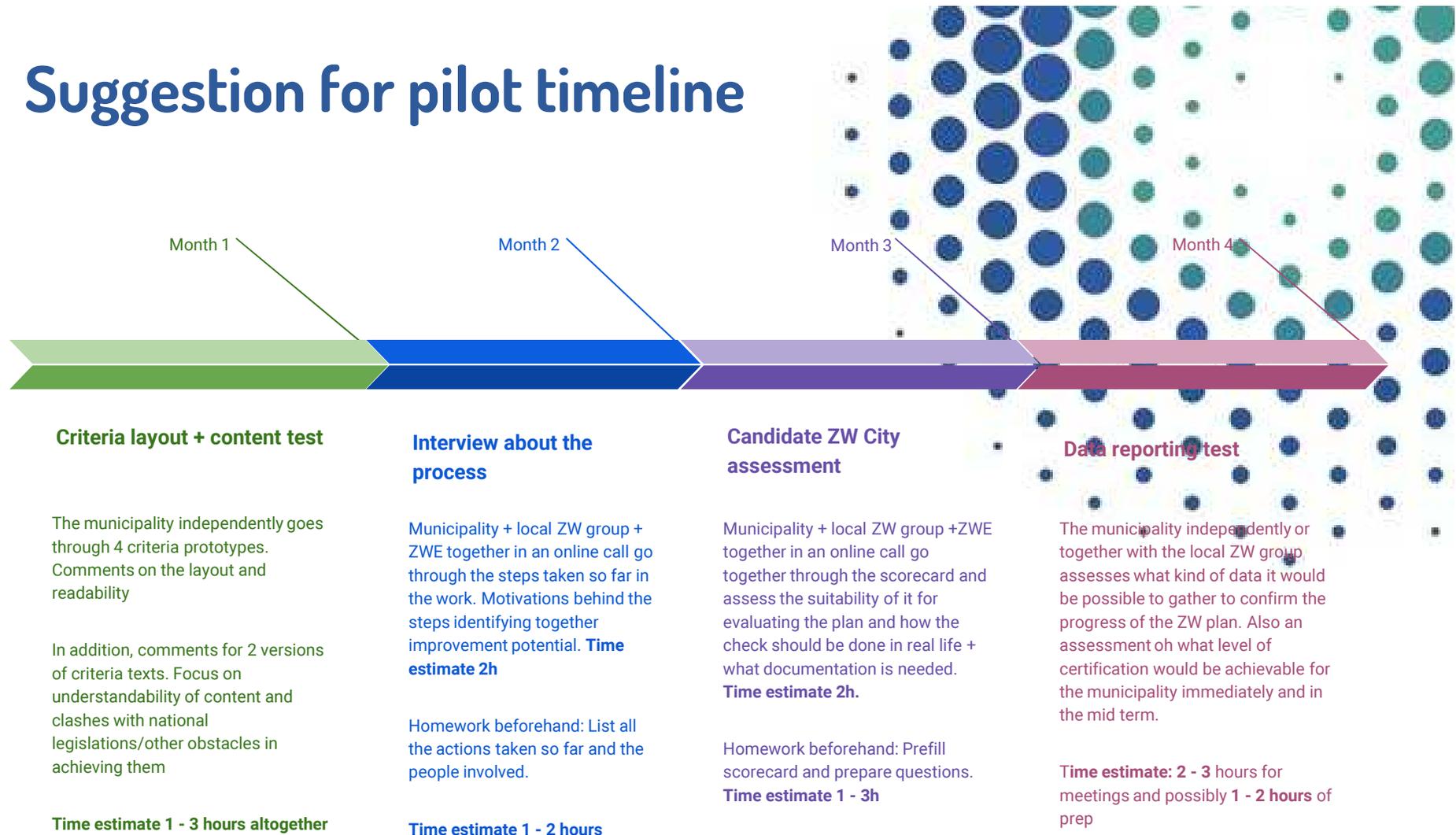
Criteria layout + content test

The municipality independently goes through 4 criteria prototypes. Comments on the layout and readability

In addition, comments for 2 versions of criteria texts. Focus on understandability of content and clashes with national legislations/other obstacles in achieving them

Time estimate 1 - 3 hours altogether

Interview about the process

Municipality + local ZW group + ZWE together in an online call go through the steps taken so far in the work. Motivations behind the steps identifying together improvement potential. **Time estimate 2h**

Homework beforehand: List all the actions taken so far and the people involved.

Time estimate 1 - 2 hours

Candidate ZW City assessment

Municipality + local ZW group +ZWE together in an online call go together through the scorecard and assess the suitability of it for evaluating the plan and how the check should be done in real life + what documentation is needed. **Time estimate 2h.**

Homework beforehand: Prefill scorecard and prepare questions. **Time estimate 1 - 3h**

Data reporting test

The municipality independently or together with the local ZW group assesses what kind of data it would be possible to gather to confirm the progress of the ZW plan. Also an assessment oh what level of certification would be achievable for the municipality immediately and in the mid term.

Time estimate: 2 - 3 hours for meetings and possibly **1 - 2 hours** of prep