



MCA Awards 2018 Highly Commended

Best Use of Thought Leadership

Arup with C40 - Deadline 2020: the path to a sustainable future

On December 1 2016, Arup and the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40) launched Deadline 2020. Deadline 2020 spelt out, for the first time, the urgency of climate action required by cities if the Paris Agreement is to be realised; to keep the world within a 1.5°C temperature rise. The study behind the report was carried out by Arup.

On 12 December 2015, the world's first comprehensive agreement on action to limit global warming was sealed and adopted. The Paris Agreement, negotiated at the 21st Conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, committed 195 countries to its key aims:

- to hold the increase in global average temperature to below 2°C
- pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C
- to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change.

The agreement was hailed as an extraordinary diplomatic achievement. Barack Obama called it “the best chance we have to save the one planet we've got”.

As the world was still digesting the Paris Agreement, the Arup-C40 Partnership identified their next major project in a brainstorm session.

It would address the questions that many in C40 were already considering: what reductions in emissions should individual cities be aiming for? And what practical measures should they take to achieve them?

If C40 cities carry on as usual they will use up their entire carbon budget for the rest of the century – estimated at 387 gigatons of carbon dioxide, equivalent to 19.4 billion London buses in weight – in just ten years. To get on track towards achieving the Paris target, Deadline 2020 calls on C40 cities to initiate 14,000 new climate actions by 2020; 25% more than the previous ten years and in less than half the time.

The impact was instant. Deadline 2020 was recognised as the world's first roadmap relating the Paris Agreement ambitions to action on-the-ground. Furnished with clear climate action pathways bespoke to their cities, C40 leaders had a startlingly clear picture, for the first time, of what needs to happen to get their cities on track.



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There wasn't a mayor in the room at the launch event in Mexico City who wasn't surprised by the findings of Deadline 2020. Until then, few people had been able to grasp what the 1.5°C Paris target meant. Reaching net zero emissions by 2050 was a shock. The immediate and radical action required by 2020 was equally startling.

In no other area of scientific research are methods and findings more hotly disputed than climate change. Other influential groups in climate change research immediately welcomed the methods developed by Arup, which were future-proofed to allow C40 and Arup to update the analysis as new data becomes available. More than 300 press articles and blogs reported on the research.

C40 and Arup are now at the heart of international efforts to deliver on the Paris Agreement.