



'City Climate Planner' Professional Certification Program

- CONCEPT NOTE -

Climate change a growing problem, and most cities are unprepared to act

As the evidence builds that climate change will have serious impacts on urban areas around the world, there is a growing movement to help cities cut local greenhouse (GHG) gas emissions and prepare for the consequences of climate change. Unfortunately, many cities lack the necessary information to do so in a strategic manner. Research by the World Bank has found that fewer than 200 cities around the world have comprehensive GHG inventories, which provide crucial information on where and how emissions are generated in a city. Even fewer cities have conducted climate risk studies and used the results to prepare climate resilience plans.

There are many reasons why cities are slow in tackling this issue. Tight budgets, other pressing agendas, and uncertainty over which department within city government should take charge of this issue are frequently cited explanations. We also know, however, that many local authorities lack staff with expertise on this issue. This expertise gap may be technical in nature – how do we conduct a climate impact study? – or it may be more process focused, lacking insights into how to get multiple stakeholders around the city to collaborate on this planning work.

Expanding the level of climate planning capacity in cities through professional certification

In January 2014, the World Bank and 16 other international organizations met in Korea to discuss how to improve climate planning capacity in cities. The focus of the conversation was on professional certification, where the experience or knowledge of an individual is verified by an organization qualified to assess their qualifications. There are many different types of professional certification programs around the world – for accountants, planners, electricians, and 'green' building experts – but to date, there is no certification that readily links to the skills relevant to climate planning in cities.

We believe that creating such a certification will improve the quality and consistency of the climate planning work carried out in cities, create new career paths for individuals, and signal to employers and business clients which individuals can provide the highest levels of support or leadership on urban climate planning matters.

What would the City Climate Planner Certification Program look like? What would a person need to know to qualify for a certification?

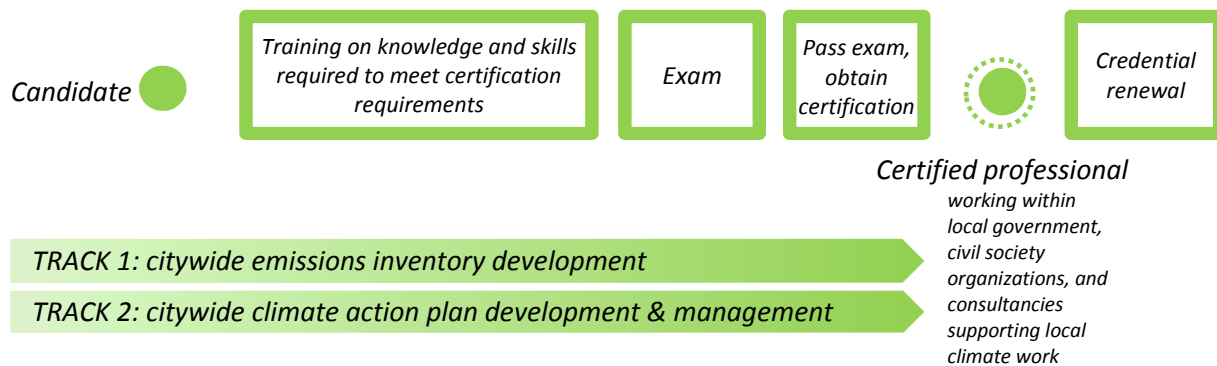
At our meeting in Korea, we had extended discussions about what someone should know to receive a city climate planner credential. Should they have detailed technical knowledge about certain sectors, such as buildings, energy systems or transport? Should someone be knowledgeable about how to make their city more climate resilient?

Moving forward, it will be important to get consensus by those involved in the field about this issue. Failure to achieve this consensus will mean a certification lacks credibility and will likely fail to attract much support among professionals working on these issues.

As a starting point, we are considering establishing a certification program that:

- Starts with a focus on climate mitigation (low carbon planning) efforts in cities, because there tends to be greater consensus about the data requirements and analytic and planning methods cities rely on for this work. Over time, as a similar consensus builds around the issue of urban climate adaptation and resilience, we'll begin to push for additional certifications (or a broader certification) that covers these issues too.
- Within the mitigation/low carbon planning realm, work will focus on two different certification pathways:
 - GHG mission inventories – individuals would become certified based on their knowledge/competency about how to conduct a rigorous GHG emission inventory for their city
 - Low carbon action plan/strategy – individuals would become certified based on their knowledge/competency at the process of crafting a citywide strategy.

In both cases, there are other professional certification models we can look to for inspiration and insight in crafting a new, multi-faceted city climate planner certification program.



Who else is involved* in this initiative?

A range of international organizations, city networks, technical experts, and local authority representatives participated in our kickoff meeting in Korea, while other organizations are providing information and advice along the way. These groups include:



*Note: organizations listed here have participated in the early stages of development of the certification program, but have yet to make an official endorsement of the certification program.