



MAYORS IN ACTION

FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



Guidelines for coaching activities for Covenant and Supporters

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1 Executive Summary

The Covenant of Mayors is an ambitious initiative through which cities and towns committing to go beyond the EU's climate and energy objectives are supported in their actions by a vast multitude of actors. However, lack of knowledge and staff with necessary skills and funding prevents LGs from realizing the actions agreed in the Plan and from facilitating private companies and citizens to participate in its implementation.

To overcome these barriers, Supporting Structures of CoM, which include Provinces and Regions as Territorial Coordinators, national energy agencies and networks of local and regional authorities, play a pivotal role in providing municipalities with the financial, technical and strategic support to fulfil their commitments. Nevertheless, C&S often do not have adequate means or the internal structure to be effective in this task.

The **MAYORS in ACTION** project starts from the consideration that C&S are very much necessary for a successful development of the CoM initiative and that they need to improve their capacities and prepare instruments for consolidating their role of efficient and effective support to small towns in the concrete realization phase. New signatories of CoM now pledge to reduce CO₂ emissions by at least 40% by 2030 and to adopt an integrated approach to tackling mitigation and adaptation to climate change. This is a demanding goal which requires total engagement of all stakeholders included in any segment of the process and therefore the role of the C&S is ever more important in the implementation of the EU energy policy.

In order for the C&S to be able to provide the necessary support for LGs, it is extremely important for them to cooperate and consult each other but also to have qualitative communication with key stakeholders.

These specific guidelines provide answers to the question ***“How to provide support for the C&S through the form of coaching schemes aimed at their activities?”*** in the aim to provide essential information about key stakeholders and their important role in the process of the implementation energy and climate policy on local level as well as the tools and mechanisms that can be used in related activities.

1.1 Σύνοψη

Το Σύμφωνο των Δημάρχων είναι μια φιλόδοξη πρωτοβουλία μέσω της οποίας οι δήμοι, που δεσμεύονται να υπερβούν τους Ευρωπαϊκούς ενεργειακούς και κλιματικούς στόχους, υποστηρίζονται από πληθώρα φορέων. Ωστόσο, η έλλειψη τεχνογνωσίας, χρηματοδοτικών μηχανισμών και δεξιοτήτων του προσωπικού, αποτρέπει τους Οργανισμούς Τοπικής Αυτοδιοίκησης (ΟΤΑ) να υλοποιήσουν τις προβλεπόμενες δράσεις του Σχεδίου Δράσης για την Αειφόρο Ενέργεια (ΣΔΑΕ), δυσχεραίνοντας τη συμμετοχή του ιδιωτικού τομέα και των πολιτών στην εφαρμογή τους.

Για να ξεπεραστούν αυτά τα εμπόδια, οι Υποστηρικτικές Δομές του Συμφώνου, όπως οι Επαρχίες και οι Περιφέρειες ως εδαφικοί συντονιστές, οι εθνικοί οργανισμοί ενέργειας και τα δίκτυα των τοπικών και των περιφερειακών αρχών, διαδραματίζουν καίριο ρόλο στην παροχή οικονομικής, τεχνικής και στρατηγικής στήριξης προς τους Δήμους, ώστε να εκπληρώσουν τις δεσμεύσεις τους. Παρ' όλα αυτά, (οι Συντονιστές και οι Υποστηρικτές (Σ&Υ)) συχνά δεν διαθέτουν τα κατάλληλα μέσα ή την κατάλληλη εσωτερική δομή για να είναι αποτελεσματικοί σε αυτό το έργο.

Το έργο «**Mayors in Action**» ξεκινά από τη θεώρηση ότι οι Συντονιστές και οι Υποστηρικτές (Σ&Υ) διαδραματίζουν πρωταγωνιστικό ρόλο για την επιτυχή ανάπτυξη της πρωτοβουλίας του Συμφώνου των Δημάρχων και είναι απαραίτητο να βελτιώσουν τις ικανότητές τους και να προετοιμάσουν τα μέσα εκείνα για την εδραίωση του ρόλου τους στην αποδοτική και αποτελεσματική υποστήριξη ιδίως των μικρών πόλεων, στη φάση της υλοποίησης του ΣΔΑΕ τους. Οι νέοι υπογράφωντες το Σύμφωνο των Δημάρχων δεσμεύονται πλέον να μειώσουν τις εκπομπές CO₂ κατά τουλάχιστον 40% έως το 2030 και να υιοθετήσουν μια ολοκληρωμένη προσέγγιση για τον μετριασμό της κλιματικής αλλαγής και την προσαρμογή σε αυτήν. Πρόκειται για έναν απαιτητικό στόχο, που προϋποθέτει τη συνολική δέσμευση όλων των ενδιαφερομένων, σε κάθε τμήμα της διαδικασίας και, επομένως, ο ρόλος των Σ&Υ είναι ολοένα και πιο σημαντικός για την εφαρμογή της ενεργειακής πολιτικής της ΕΕ.

Για να είναι οι Συντονιστές και οι Υποστηρικτές του Συμφώνου των Δημάρχων (Σ&Υ) σε θέση να παράσχουν την απαραίτητη υποστήριξη στους ΟΤΑ, είναι εξαιρετικά σημαντικό για αυτούς να συνεργάζονται και να αλληλεπιδρούν μεταξύ τους, αλλά και να έχουν ουσιαστική επικοινωνία με τους άμεσα εμπλεκόμενους φορείς της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης.

Οι συγκεκριμένες κατευθυντήριες γραμμές απαντούν στην ερώτηση: «Πώς θα παρέχεται υποστήριξη στους Σ&Υ, μέσω εκπαιδευτικής διαδικασίας, με στόχο την ανάπτυξη των ικανοτήτων τους;» παρέχοντας αφενός βασικές πληροφορίες για τους άμεσα εμπλεκόμενους φορείς της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης και το σημαντικό ρόλο τους στην πολιτική για την ενέργεια και το κλίμα σε τοπικό επίπεδο, και αφετέρου ενημερώνοντας για τα εργαλεία και τους μηχανισμούς που μπορούν να χρησιμοποιηθούν σε σχετικές δραστηριότητες.

2 Key stakeholders

A stakeholder could be a person, group or organization who can affect or is affected by the achievement climate and energy policy. Stakeholders are crucial to the success of implementation of measures. Cooperate with them well and they will actively contribute to the success of the action. However, not all stakeholders are equal. The first step is to identify your stakeholders and recognize their key role.

No less important is multilevel connection between stakeholders and their qualitative communication, cooperation, mutual assistance and joint action. It contributes to the achievement of common interests for the benefit of the cities through the organization of conferences, workshops, seminars, working groups as well as through the implementation of activities on European, national and local level.

Responding to the complex nature of the climate and energy issues and to the changing role of climate change in the international climate policy process, the C&S have to cooperate with a wide range of stakeholders. Below you will find a selection of stakeholders we would like to recommend, as we believe that with their contribution they could represent an appreciable help in supporting C&S activities.

Here follows the list of stakeholders with their respective characteristic that can be helpful in selecting the key stakeholders and how can they contribute in the implementation of climate and energy policy.

2.1 Covenant of Mayors Office

The Covenant of Mayors Office was set up by the European Commission in order to ensure qualitative coordination of the CoM initiative and to provide administrative and technical support to the Coordinators and Supporters.

This valuable support enables the Coordinators and Supporters to disseminate useful data, information and knowledge as well as informative and educational material to the signatories. Furthermore, the support contributes to the achievement of the CoM objectives.

The CoM Office is led by European networks which are representing local and regional authorities.

2.2 Cities

Cities possess a variety of possibilities, such as human, financial and natural resources, which can significantly contribute to the achievement of the set energy policy goals. High responsibility of the local authorities, with emphasis on the responsibility towards its citizens, presents the key initiator of their active involvement in the sustainable energy development process.

Accordingly, cities who are committed to the implementation of energy efficient measures, embraced the development of the Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP).

The SEAP presents a key document of the city that comprises guidelines for fulfilment of the obligations defined in the CoM initiative. The local authorities are obligated to follow the legal and administrative procedures within the scope of their work.

Active involvement of the cities will contribute to reduction of the CO₂ gas emission, achievement of financial and energy savings, raising awareness on the rational use of energy as well as other natural resources, renewable energy sources and environmentally friendly fuels.

2.3 Legislative bodies (European, national and local level)

Legislative bodies are responsible for making decisions on developing relevant laws and strategic documents. Also, they are active in involvement of the key stakeholders in the process of preparation of the crucial acts.

European, national and local legislative bodies give support and create opportunities for co-financing the energy projects.

2.4 Scientific institutions

Scientific institutions are bodies which provide new solutions by using adequate knowledge in order to fight against everyday challenges.

By making new discoveries, inventing new ideas and developing innovative technologies, scientific institutions are helping cities to find adequate solutions to their problems (concerning the environment protection), applicable for their conditions and area.

Development of scientific materials ensure dissemination of relevant information and key data which present important tools that are crucial in the process of providing sustainable urban development.

2.5 Educational institutions

Educational institutions make the expansion of existing and the inclusion of new programs that are dealing with the energy issues such as global warming and negative climate change. Developed programs provide the possibility of maintaining the variety of lectures and workshops with the aim of presenting the significance of using renewable energy sources, environmentally friendly fuels as well as implementation of energy efficient measures which will reduce the negative impact on the environment.

Along with the scientific institutions, educational institutions are also developing valuable materials in order to educate readers about the certain topics. Materials and programs that are developed by such institutions serve to numerous of different target groups and stakeholders as a tool for implementation of a gained knowledge in their own surroundings.

2.6 Financial institutions

Financial institutions, on the European, national and local level, include a wide range of fund, banks, etc. With the role of providing various financial models for the implementation of energy projects, financial institutions present the key investors that are, along with the mentioned, continuously giving advices in order to encourage selection of the most adequate financial mechanism by taking into consideration the stakeholder needs and opportunities.

Financial institutions aim to direct financial resources to the critical areas that require fast changes in order to achieve the set energy and environmental goals.

2.7 Energy agencies

Energy agencies are a group of experts who act in the field of energy and environmental protection. With professional and ambitious employees, energy agencies contribute changing bad energy situation in the country and its cities.

Their activities are focused on continuous and active work on the development of the strategic documents, plans and programs. Furthermore, energy agencies provide relevant information as well as required technical support in order to ensure successful implementation of the SEAP measures.

2.8 Professional associations

Professional associations carry out activities for its members in order to raise awareness and spread knowledge about the implementation of energy efficient measures in accordance with the set goals on ensuring sustainable urban development. Also, they provide support for finding the adequate solutions concerning the effective and high quality implementation of the SEAP measures.

2.9 Civil associations active in the field of energy and climate protection

Civil associations represent interests of citizens. Within the implementation of their activities, civil associations active in the field of energy and climate protection develop studies, collect data, develop and implement projects of common interests, values and goals in order to encourage others to act according to determined energy and environmental objectives.

Withal, civil associations provide educational workshops, consulting service, etc. They seek to establish connection with institutions and other relevant stakeholders, that are active in the same field, with the aim of achieving the common goals.

2.10 Private investors

Private investors show interest in energy project investments within the private and public sector by providing financial resources that are crucial for its implementation. When they recognize the significances of a specific project, in order to establish the desired cooperation, it is important to prepare required investment and technical documentation.

2.11 Entrepreneurs and craftsmen

Entrepreneurs and craftsmen are people who take the initiative to open and manage businesses throughout which they offer specific products and services. As they are interested in strengthening markets which cover their products and services as well as in strengthening their overall business, entrepreneurs and craftsmen will seek to demonstrate the best examples of their products and services by providing donations as well as promotion in the fairs, catalogues, etc.

3 Information sources on good practices and developed tools

A lot of good practices are already known as well as the tools that are available and can assist in the implementation of the obligations under the Covenant of Mayors. It is crucial to be familiar with this information, to choose and apply the best solutions for specific actions. The information can come from various sources and should be used as much as possible. The information sources and the key recommendations, are listed hereunder:

1. **Cooperation with stakeholders** presents a useful method of project implementation as it allows face-to-face cooperation and mutual exchange of key knowledge. The main features of this approach include:
 - continuous work and communication with the stakeholders,
 - constant collection of data related to the implementation of measures carried out by the stakeholders,
 - stakeholders networking.

2. **Conferences and seminars** gather numerous of experts, professionals, decision makers, local authorities etc. That allows the expansion of knowledge through the presentation of useful information and examples of good practices which can be applied to other cities with the aim of combating negative influence on the environment. Also, conferences and seminars is a great opportunity to create new connections that can potentially turn into successful cooperation.

3. **Energy projects co-financed by the EU funds** – Co-financing from EU funds can be obtained for projects dealing with the issue of energy. This is a facilitating factor for the implementation, yet some conditions need to be met. In order to obtain help from EU funds, it is necessary for the project to be able to show results – positive or negative – and the project partners need to meet project goals, provide data and develop promotional, informational and educational materials available to all interested public through the official websites or other acceptable media. The key activities include:
 - active inclusion into the implementation of the EU project as a partner
 - project materials developed from the project activities

4. **Inclusion into the working groups of experts on the specific issues** provide the following benefits:
 - opportunity for presenting the city interests,
 - professional advice (feedback),

- useful data and information,
 - new partnerships and connections.
5. **Networking** presents the most effective method of connecting people on all levels - international, national and local level. Networking is activity that connects people with common goals and vision in order to exchange new ideas and innovative solutions as well as to create new partnerships. With the enhanced technology, networking is easier and more accessible than ever before.
6. **Media** is a source of communication and tool that enables access to required information at any time. Numerous of different media types, which can be very important in this process, are listed below:
- Internet (web sites, social networks, online meetings and conferences, e-newsletters),
 - TV and radio shows,
 - brochures, manuals, professional literature.

4 Tools for coaching activities

This chapter elaborates the methods and tools in order to provide help with the use of best tools for the good quality implementation of coaching activities. This Guideline singled out the following tools:

1. Communication and networking
2. Training sessions
3. Tutoring and peer support activities
4. Examples of best practices and study visits
5. Educational and promotional materials
6. Monitoring of events

In the following are specified main characteristic of the abovementioned tools.

4.1 Communication and networking

Communication between relevant stakeholders is the most effective and significant tool used in the coaching process. On the other hand, networking, as well as the 'communication', enables easy and valuable connection with other stakeholders (Supporting Structures).

This tools, along with many of its positive effects, emphasizes the upgrade of knowledge and skills as well as the involvement of key stakeholders in the coaching activities.

4.2 Training sessions

Training sessions bring together experts and professionals with the aim of spreading knowledge, information and data to the interested public by integrating new modern methods and innovative technologies. Numerous of advantages provided by this tool are visible through gaining new skills that can be applicable with the purpose of achieving the set goals.

Here follows detailed description of two training session types - workshop and online meeting:

1. Workshops - tips for the organization:

- determine type of the workshop (round table, working groups, 'games')
- determine competent speakers
- define main topic and program

- send invitations to the experts and organizations in order to actively contribute to the successful implementation of the event (workshop)
- define place of a venue, technical support, catering etc.
- send invitation letters to the target groups
- prepare working material
- ensure high quality promotion of the event (announcements, reports)
- provide proper evaluation

2. Online meetings (webinar, skype, WebEx, etc.) - tips for the organization:
possession of the software (authorization) for holding the online meeting

- determine main topics
- determine program and potential speakers
- send invitations to the potential speakers
- collect presentations
- verify the technical equipment
- inform target groups about the event
- ensure high quality promotion of the event (announcements, reports)
- provide evaluation

4.3 Tutoring and peer support activities

Tutoring activities are focused on transferring knowledge by providing professional instructions that intend to help others with finding best solution for current as well as upcoming challenges.

Peer support activities allow exchange of experiences and knowledge through direct communication. Despite of the equality of the participants (experts) in this process, peer support presents the quickest way of networking, consulting, gaining new ideas, learning how to face challenges and how to change identified disadvantages.

4.4 Examples of best practices and study visits

Examples of best practices are the most optimal tool for presenting the results of implemented measures that can serve others to evaluate their targets and future activities. Therefore, benchmarking, as a systematic process for identifying and implementing best or better practices, is very helpful in determining which practices are to be recommended. Examples of best practices can be shown by participation in the EU project, organisation of study visits, energy days, fairs and exhibitions.

4.5 Educational and promotional materials

The use of educational and promotional material helps the readers to learn more about things that interest them. It provides necessary information that creates the opportunity to improve existing situation and create new value.

Some of the recommended educational and promotional material tools are:

- guidelines, brochures developed by European commission and CoM Office,
- guidelines, brochures developed within the European projects,
- professional articles,
- e-newsletters (e-materials).

4.6 Monitoring of events

Event monitoring is a process of continuously analysing implemented activities through the organisation of specific events. Monitoring also considers collecting data that shows, at the end of the process, strengths and weaknesses of the integrated measures, which is the main goal of using this tool.

Event evaluation helps the organizers to determine necessary improvements in order to enhance the organization of future events by, for example, choosing more modern and interesting topics, gathering professional speakers, etc.

5 Conclusion and recommendations

The **MAYORS in ACTION** project starts from the consideration that C&S are very much necessary for a successful development of the CoM initiative and that they need to improve their capacities and prepare instruments for consolidating their role of efficient and effective support to small towns in the concrete realization phase.

New signatories of CoM now pledge to reduce CO₂ emissions by at least 40% by 2030 and to adopt an integrated approach to tackle mitigation and adaptation to climate change. This is a demanding goal which requires total engagement of all stakeholders included in any segment of the process and therefore **the role of the C&S is ever more important** in the implementation of the EU energy policy.

In order for the C&S to be able to provide the necessary support for LGs, it is extremely important for them **to cooperate and consult each other** but also to have qualitative communication with key stakeholders.

The C&S need to regularly follow the **guidelines of the EU energy policy** and be in touch with the relevant institutions and organizations that are included in the processes of implementing the set energy goals. It is especially necessary to develop a **quality cooperation with the Covenant of Mayors Office**, which provides Signatories with administrative support and technical guidance, facilities networking between Covenant stakeholders while ensuring the promotion of their activities.

To assist cities in meeting the obligations under the Covenant of Mayors, **many tools have been developed and are available on the internet**. Therefore, the first step is to be aware on what is already been developed and what is applicable to our needs. It is useful to review the existing good methodologies, practices, promotional and educational materials, etc., and according to local needs and conditions, consider the possibility of replicating them.

In order to achieve the objectives of EU energy policy, **networking and development of cooperation between all stakeholders** is key. Sharing knowledge and experience allows faster and more efficient operations and achieving better results with less investments. In addition, the experiences of others can help us avoid mistakes and overcome barriers.

The level of support that C&S can provide to local administration depends on their own competences and capacities. Therefore, **the C&S must continuously upgrade their capacities and strengthen their own forces** in order to provide the best possible support to local governments in the implementation of sustainable energy development.

6 Useful links

The websites of institutions, organizations, associations and European projects operating in the field of energy, environment and climate, feature the available user data, information, news, guides, educational and promotional materials and more.

Here are some useful links:

www.mayorsinaction.eu

www.energyformayors.eu

www.ec.europa.eu/energy

www.ec.europa.eu/jrc

www.covenantofmayors.eu

www.energy-cities.eu

www.iclei-europe.eu

www.eurocities.eu

www.climatealliance.org

www.ccre.org

www.federane.org

www.managenergy.net

CONSORTIUM:

METROPOLITAN CITY OF GENOVA (Coordinator) - www.cittametropolitana.genova.it

PROVINCE OF BARCELONA - www.diba.cat

CRES - www.cres.gr

CITY OF ZAGREB - www.zagreb.hr

PNEC - www.pnec.org.pl

VENETO Region - www.regione.veneto.it

SOGESCA - www.sogesca.it

INTERLEUVEN - www.interleuven.be

ICLEI EUROPE - www.iclei-europe.org

