



Peer Learning Programme - 2022/23 Call for municipalities

The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy is offering municipalities - including towns, villages, and those located in rural areas - across Europe the opportunity to take part in peer learning exchanges that aim to increase local authorities' capacity and knowledge to mitigate and adapt to climate change, tackle energy poverty, and develop and implement ambitious long-term strategies. Applications are open until **Friday 25 March 2022, 17.00 CET**.

1. What is the Covenant of Mayors Peer Learning Programme?

The Covenant of Mayors peer learning programme offers local authorities the possibility to participate in exchanges that aim to increase their capacities to mitigate and adapt to climate change, to develop and implement ambitious long-term strategies as well as address energy poverty.

Small signatories, including towns, villages and municipalities located in metropolitan or rural areas are particularly encouraged to apply to all our programmes.

We offer tailored support according to the different needs and experience of signatories through four distinct programmes: twinning, expert mission, peer review, and technical assistance. Each programme has been designed to cater to the differing needs of our CoMmunity, targeting cities at various stages of their climate adaptation and mitigation journey:

Twinning

The twinning programme supports the transfer of knowledge between two local authorities with the aim to increase their capacities and knowledge to *mitigate and adapt to climate change*. We particularly encourage small and rural municipalities to apply. Local authorities will be connected with a peer with similar interests or challenges and will have the opportunity to learn from each other during a site visit. The twinning programme is open to Covenant signatories of the 2030 commitment (ie. at least 40% reduction by 2030) or to the 2050 commitment (ie. climate neutrality by 2050). Up to 8 twinings will focus primarily on climate adaptation. If climate adaptation is your main topic of interest, please indicate this in your application, and let us know more about your adaptation challenges and good practices (these twinings will be part of the Policy Support Facility on Climate Adaptation, more details will be available on the Covenant website). Activities undertaken in the twinning could include:

- Exchanging ideas on how to adapt to climate change through nature-based solutions
- Exploring strategies for alternative transport systems.



Expert Mission

The Expert Mission supports *cities working towards climate adaptation and climate neutrality before 2050*. It partners local authorities matched on an expert - learner basis to work together on rolling out ambitious strategies for climate neutrality. We particularly encourage small and rural municipalities to apply. Local authorities will work together on one specific aspect of long-term planning for climate neutrality – to be defined by applicants – and have the chance to learn from each other on a range of topics of interest during a speed capitalisation session. Up to three Expert Missions will focus specifically on climate adaptation; if long-term planning for climate adaptation is your main topic of interest, let us know in your application, and provide information about your adaptation challenges and good practices (these Expert Missions will be part of the Policy Support Facility on Climate Adaptation, more details will be available on the Covenant website). In addition, local authorities participating in the Expert Missions will have a chance to network and learn from other advanced cities during an exclusive workshop on strategies for climate neutrality. Selected learner and expert municipalities to the Expert Mission will work together on long-term strategies and activities such as:

- Learning how to co-create a climate pact with citizens and business or to develop a climate neutrality strategy
- Exploring how to create renewable energy communities
- Focusing on strategies to pilot zero emissions public transport

Selected expert municipalities will:

- Showcase good practices and support learner municipalities in their long-term strategies;
- Additionally, exchange on a peer basis with learner municipalities with an opportunity to learn on a topic of interest through a capitalisation session;
- Exchange and network with Expert Mission learner and expert municipalities as part of a workshop exclusive to those selected to be part of the programme.

Peer Review

The peer-review programme allows selected signatories of the Covenant of Mayors to benefit from an in depth-review of their SECAPs carried out by experts who have participated in the development and the implementation of plans, and who can thus provide advice and feedback. We particularly encourage small and rural municipalities to apply. Peer review exchanges aim to increase local authorities' capacity to plan their actions in reaching climate and energy objectives for 2030 and beyond. Beneficiaries of the programme will have their SECAP documents reviewed by 2 municipalities and/or coordinators. To guarantee efficient and targeted feedback, each beneficiary's plan will be reviewed by multiple peers based on questions from the learner municipality.



Selected learner municipalities will:

- Get tailored advice and feedback on a draft or returned SECAP
- Get targeted advice from experts responding to specific questions and needs

Selected expert municipalities will:

- Have the opportunity to promote their expertise through a final online session open to CoM signatories presenting results of the Peer Review
- Be invited to take part in the final Group of Practitioners workshop open only for experts to further exchange between municipalities and regions that are recognized as frontrunners in their climate and energy actions.

Technical Assistance

The Technical Assistance programme supports small municipalities (less than 50,000 inhabitants) in the preparation of selected projects included in their SECAP. We particularly encourage small and rural municipalities to apply. Selected applicants will take part in 3 day-long (online) workshops with other small municipalities and will receive tailored advice and support from expert cities. Selected experts will also benefit from the exchanges and additional visibility will be offered.

Selected municipalities will:

- Develop a climate and/or energy-related project through 6 months of accompaniment;
- Obtain insights on good practices from relevant experts
- Have three opportunities to receive tailored advice from expert cities, following progress and helping to shape the project plan;
- Exchange with other small municipalities with similar challenges;
- Receive targeted advice on specific funding sources and on addressing financing during project design
- Hear from experts on how to successfully apply to competitive funding opportunities

Selected expert municipalities will:

- Showcase good practices and give advice to peers based on experiences
- Be part of the technical assistance programme as participants and privileged experts
- Exchange with other experts who are invited on a needs-basis as guests to the sessions
- Take part in an additional workshop with experts from the other programmes.

2. Who can apply?

The 2022/23 peer learning programme for signatories is open to:

- All Covenant of Mayors signatories – Europe (i.e. municipalities) at *any stage* in their mitigation and adaptation journey
- All Covenant of Mayors – Europe signatories (i.e. municipalities) from the Horizon 2020



associated countries ([list here](#)), except those covered by another regional covenant (for example, [Covenant of Mayors East](#) and the [Covenant of Mayors in the Western Balkans](#) and Turkey - including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia, and Turkey; for more information please contact: sibylle.strahl@giz.de). UK signatories are invited to participate, however, in case of physical travel their costs would not be reimbursed by the Covenant of Mayors – Europe Office, the city administration must cover this.

- Participation in the 2022/23 peer learning programme is under the condition that participating signatories take the necessary steps before their first programme activity to commit to either the Covenant of Mayors 2030 or 2050 targets ([details here](#)). Non-Covenant of Mayors signatories to the Covenant of Mayors – Europe Office are required to complete their formal adhesion to the Covenant of Mayors before the start of the peer learning programme in September 2022. If you are already a 2020 signatory, you are required to update your commitment to the latest CoM targets and objectives. If you are already a 2030 signatory, you are eligible to participate in the peer learning programme, but you are invited to commit to the latest CoM targets and objectives.
- Applicants that have not participated in previous twinning/peer learning programmes will be given priority

If you are a Covenant of Mayors Coordinator or Supporter, please apply to the [Call for Coordinators and Supporters](#).

3. What do you commit to?

As each learning programme is different, your commitment as a participant varies depending on the programme:

Twinning

As part of the Twinning programme, local authorities commit to join 2 online meetings as well as a physical site visit of two days between September and December 2022. Participants commit to engage and involve relevant stakeholder in the meetings. An impact and transferability assessment document should also be filled-in by participants at the end of the exchange.

Expert Mission

As part of the Expert Mission, local authorities commit to join three short online meetings as well as a physical visit of two days between September 2022 – December 2022. Participants commit to engage and involve relevant stakeholders – both internal and external – in the meetings, as well as completing a simple transferability assessment of topics discussed. Specific commitments for learner cities include the willingness to travel, while expert cities commit to host their 'learner' partner.



Peer Review

As part of the Peer Review, municipalities are in the final phase of their SECAP submission and must have a near-final draft of their SECAP document ready for external review by the start of the program. Municipalities should ask specific questions to the reviewers on their documents and will participate in two calls to clarify questions and responses.

Reviewers are selected among a pool of experts composed by cities at an advanced step of their SECAP and covenant coordinators. Commitments for experts are to respond to questions on a specific parts of a municipality's SECAP, through review of the document. Reviewers should participate in two calls with the learner municipality to allow clarification of questions and responses.

Technical Assistance

As part of the Technical Assistance commitment, local authorities commit to join three day-long online meetings between September and December 2022. Selected participants will also commit to work on their project in between sessions and will be encouraged to bring updated progress and evolving questions to the sessions.

Please note, all our exchanges require you to invite relevant departments of your local administration, policy makers, neighbouring cities, and other relevant stakeholders, and define and implement concrete actions through the course of the programme. Additional commitments include:

- ✓ Preparing jointly the visits by co-designing the agenda, identifying topics, and arranging the practical modalities
- ✓ Making a transferability assessment of measures discussed
- ✓ Participating in online meetings

Please note that due to the ongoing pandemic, programmes that include a physical visit may need to be transferred online. Unfortunately, owing to specific deadlines, we will be unable to delay planned visits.

4. Why join the peer learning programme?

The Covenant of Mayors peer learning programme has been designed to cater for the various learning needs of our signatories. While each programme is slightly different, the benefits of participating for mentors and mentees may include:

- Participants will build their capacity to address challenges through tailored discussions;
- Opportunity to network with other cities through a focused learning programme and learn from your peers
- Promotion on Covenant of Mayors channels as city committed to peer-learning exchange;
- Possibility to be offered speaker slots at Covenant of Mayors events;
- Chance to share best practices and be promoted within the CoMmunity as such



- The opportunity to disseminate your projects and local measures through the Covenant communication tools

5. Enabling Resources

To ensure that participants gain the most and ensure a successful journey through the peer learning programme, certain conditions are necessary. All participants are required to have at least level B1 command of English to ensure effective learning. Additional requirements include having appropriate financial and human resources to be actively engaged in the learning process. Those programmes that require travel will be reimbursed up to a certain amount¹. Further information will be made available to successful applicants upon contact to offer a place on a peer learning programme.

6. How to apply?

Interested local authorities simply need to fill in an online application form available here: https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/CoM_SIG_peer_learning_application_form_2022

After submission, you will receive a confirmation email to the email-address provided in the application. In case you do not receive such confirmation, please contact heather.brooks@eumayors.eu.

Applications are open until Friday 25 March 2022, with all learning programmes starting in September 2022.

For this round of the peer learning programme, up to 73 cities will be selected and matched. Selection results will be announced in June 2022.

7. Data and privacy policy

The Covenant of Mayors Office will store the application forms for 5 years after the termination of the current service contract with the European Commission. After those 5 years (December 2028), the application forms will be deleted. Please note that during this period, the application forms might be shared with the European Commission.

8. More information

- General: heather.brooks@eumayors.eu (+44 7840 369 558)
- Twinning: thibaut.maraquin@eumayors.eu
- Expert Mission: heather.brooks@eumayors.eu
- Peer Review: davide.cassanmagnago@eumayors.eu
- Technical Assistance: thibaut.maraquin@eumayors.eu

¹ *Twinning: both partners travel once and receive reimbursement of up to EUR 750 for travel and EUR 650 for hosting. Expert Mission: learner cities travel and receive up to EUR 750 for travel, while expert cities receive up to EUR 650 for hosting. The Peer Review and Technical Assistance programmes are held entirely online.*