



Covenant Supporters:

Crucial contributors to the success of the Covenant of Mayors

Covenant Supporters are European, national and regional networks and associations of local and regional authorities which leverage their lobbying, communication and networking activities to promote the Covenant of Mayors initiative and support the commitments of their signatories.

They are crucial partners of the **Covenant of Mayors Office**, considering their ability to adapt to Covenant objectives and messages in a way that makes sense to the realities on the ground

The data presented here is representative of the responses of a survey launched in June 2016, involving 86 Covenant Supporters which had joined the initiative before June 2015 (at least one year of activity).¹

This report provides an overview of the activities performed by Covenant Coordinators in the framework of the partnership agreement they have signed with the European Commission. As of October 2016, in light of the new Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, a new process has been implemented, which involves the signing of a Commitment Statement.²

What can be drawn from the survey?

The Covenant of Mayors can be heralded as a ground-breaking movement, because not only has it fostered the emergence of wide-ranging cooperation platforms at local, regional and European levels, but also because of the substantial boost it has given to multi-level governance in Europe and beyond.

Covenant Supporters, among other stakeholders involved in the movement (the Covenant Community), are key to the success of the initiative, notably in terms of:

- promoting and advocating the initiative in their territory
- sharing the experience and success of their signatories
- providing support and sharing their expertise with their members
- promoting exchanges of knowledge and experiences

More info and list of Covenant Supporters:

http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/about/covenant-supporters_en.html

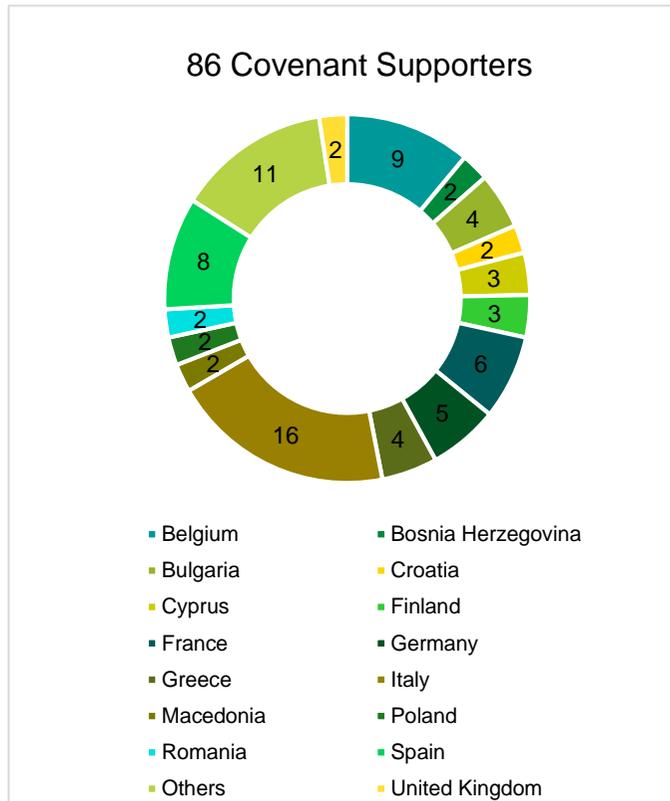
Contact: supporters@eumayors.eu

¹ As of December 2016, 91 Supporters are participating in the Covenant, of which 7 signed the new commitment aligning to the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. Covenant of Mayors Office, December 2016.

² Data are provided by the Supporters themselves



Key numbers



Human resources

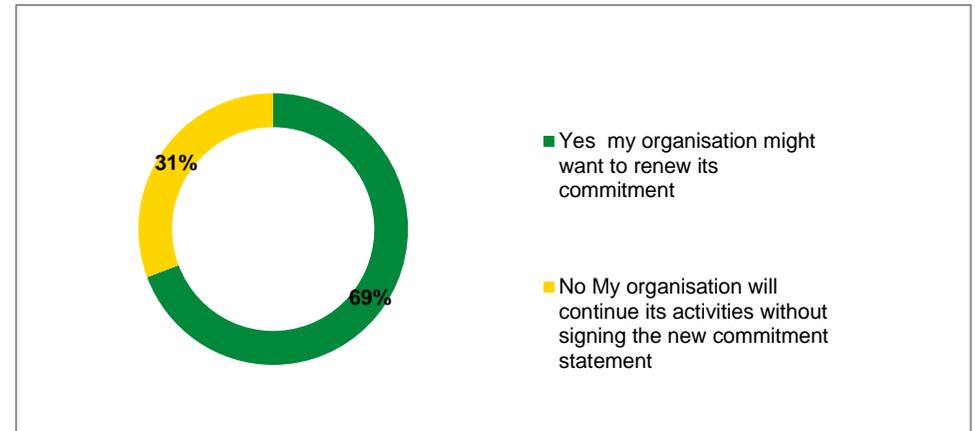
Internal Team

90% of the respondents allocate members of their internal team to Covenant of Mayors activities, accounting for a total of around 260 staff members mobilised.



Potential Developments under the New Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy

In line with the process of the New Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, existing Supporters were asked whether they would like to extend their activities to adaptation and help signatories achieve their objectives to 2030. **69%** of respondents answered positively to renewing their commitment according to the objectives of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.



Almost **50%** of respondents are already working on adaptation, raising awareness and supporting their members and local governments over their territory to implement adaptation measures. Such proactivity is very much encouraged within the Covenant as it creates an exemplary and sustainable pathway for others to follow, and in turn, reinforce the initiative as a whole.

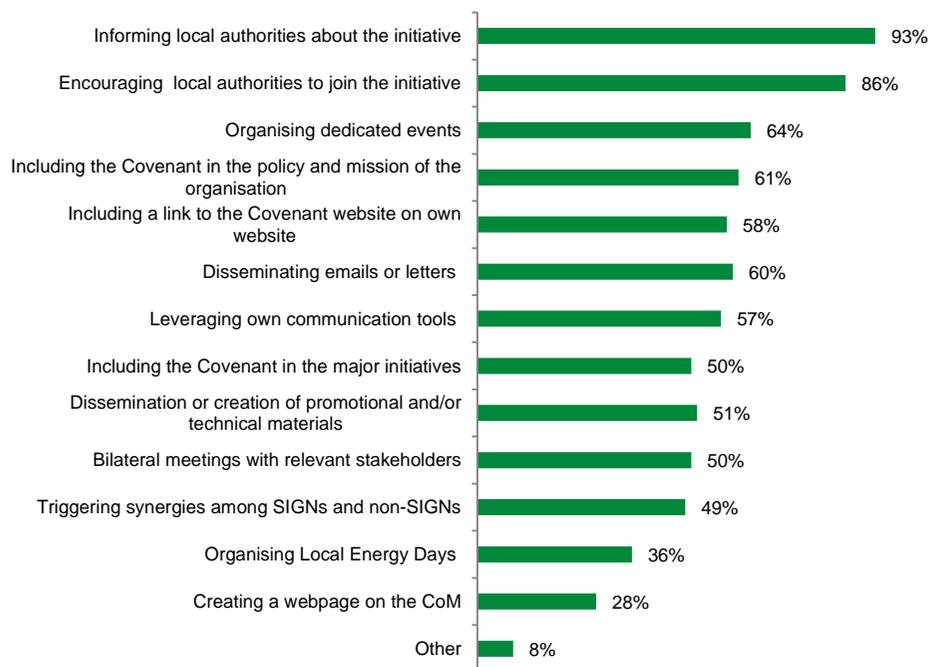
Examples

Coordinamento agende 21 locali italiane organises training and workshops on urban adaptation, and is involved in European co-funded LIFE projects with the objective to develop innovative tools and guidelines for the setting up of adaptation measures in cities (such as the DERRIS project that is testing an approach based on developing partnerships between insurers, Public Administrations and businesses to increase urban resilience).

Promotion of the Covenant of Mayors and advocacy activities



Covenant Supporters are very active in promoting the Covenant of Mayors among their members. **91%** of them carry out at least one of the following activities.



Multiple selection was allowed, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Increasing the visibility of the initiative is very important to obtain greater recognition and support, through cooperation with media to promote the initiative, organise or participate in events targeting the general public, meeting with different stakeholders within the framework of existing national Covenant Clubs, or organise bilateral meetings at regional/national level to obtain financial and political support for the Covenant of Mayors.

Examples

In Croatia, **the UNDP City of Zagreb, of Rijeka and the Association of Cities in the Republic of Croatia** organised the annual Zagreb Energy Week, at its 7th edition in 2016. In 2015, on “Joint implementation of the EU energy policy for energy security and sustainable development of urban areas“, the event included a session on cities and Covenant of Mayors Supporting Structures. Part of the Energy Week, in 2016 the international conference “Towards a Sustainable Energy Union” focused on how to best reach European energy targets, the challenges encountered along the way, and innovative financial instruments for the European Union’s energy transition.

The **Association AMORCE** (France) organised an event in June 2016 in the framework of the project “50.000&1 SEAPs” to discuss existing tools and approaches, to encourage the shift from SEAPs to SECAPs, and to better evaluate the impact of actions in other sectors on the energy and climate local dynamics.

Sweden Emilia Romagna Network (SE-IT) regularly offers opportunities for signatories to exchange best practices, and involve not-signatory municipalities to provide insights practical information on the Covenant. It also organises on a yearly basis a seminar on environmental policies open to all our 50 municipalities, in which signatories can share the progress of their SEAPs and witness the impact of the CoM. This seminar is arranged on the occasion of the networks' general assembly in order to ensure maximum visibility.

ZELS (Macedonia), **the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities** (Serbia), and **the Association of Municipalities and Cities and Association of municipalities and towns of Republic of Srpska** (Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina), in 2016, developed a road map of 21 steps adapted to the local context for municipalities from SEE wanting to join the initiative, thus providing assistance and advice to potential signatories about joining the Covenant of Mayors.

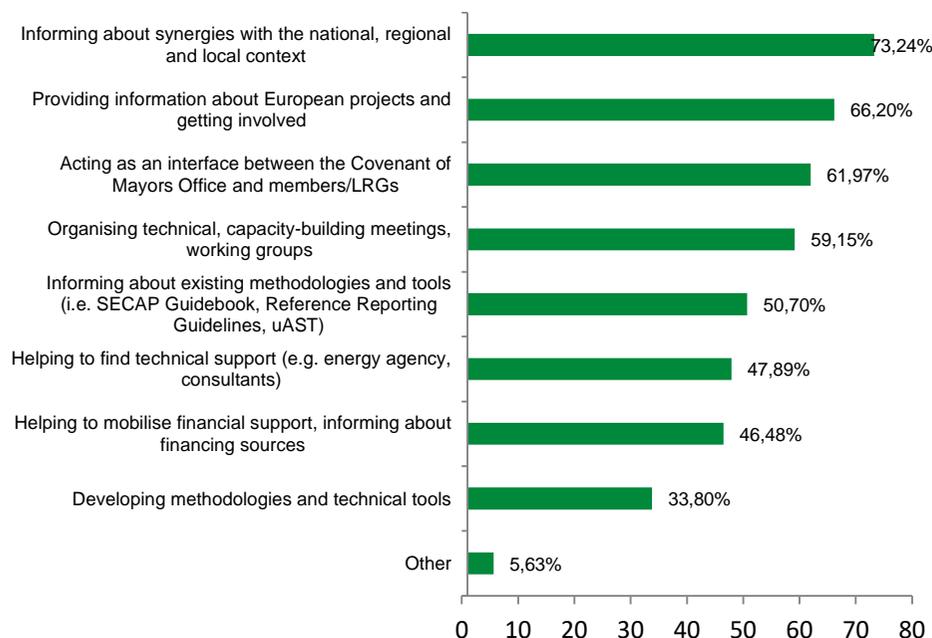
Union des Villes et Communes de Wallonie (BE) participates in the POLLEC Programme Committee promoted by the Walloon region to help municipalities in the elaboration and implementation of their action plans. The goal is to break down the barriers to the adhesion by giving technical and financial support to the candidates.

Providing support to Covenant of Mayors Signatories



Aside from promoting the initiative, Covenant Supporters can provide capacity building and technical support along the whole SEAP/SECAP design and implementation process, through various means including training, study tours, development or adaptation of guidelines and methodologies. The level of involvement depends on the technical skills and resources available, and it is often facilitated by EU projects related to the Covenant of Mayors. Several Covenant Supporters joined those projects and made sure their involvement would benefit their associated signatories.

90% of respondents provided some kind of technical support to Covenant Signatories in 2015 and 2016.



Multiple selections were allowed, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

The majority also highlighted the role they play in making the link between the local and other levels of governance, thus making available to signatories resources

developed at regional or national level, along with providing information about funding opportunities.

Respondents flagged the necessity to receive more insights and tips on how to sign up to the new commitments and help municipalities transform their SEAPs into SECAPs, thus reducing the human resources to be allocated. Small municipalities in particular would thus be able to make the most out of their SEAP process and engage in reaching more ambitious targets.

Examples

In May 2016, **Alleanza per il Clima Italia (IT)** organised a national conference with Climate Alliance Europe and Renovate Italy in Milan on Financing strategies for deep retrofit in the public building sector.

The Central Union of Municipalities (Greece) concluded a programmatic agreement with the Technical Chamber of Greece and other entities, with the objective of recording and processing energy data at municipal level thanks to creation of an *Energy Observatory*.

ANCI Emilia Romagna created a website dedicated to energy policies, which makes available useful tools for municipalities and citizens on energy efficiency, and to provide guidance on concrete actions to take. It has also developed a page dedicated to the procedures to undertake to implement signatories' own SEAPs, and how to involve relevant stakeholders, presenting some concrete examples of successful cooperation on the territory.

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The Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania established a permanent cooperation with local energy agencies to help signatories in finding technical support to develop and implement their action plans.

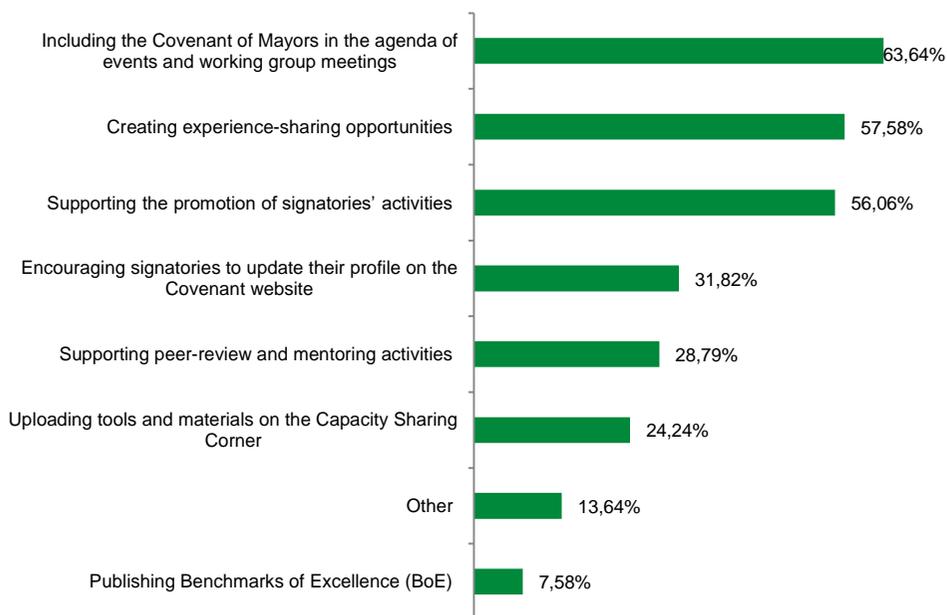
The Romanian Municipalities Association organised two training sessions for the representatives of 20 municipalities, in 2015, on GES emission inventories for local public administration within "Green Cities - Green Regions" Project developed by AMR.

OER (Romania) set up the network of sustainable urban mobility planning, in order to support CoM Signatories harmonise their SUMP with their SEAPs, as well as develop efficient transport measures in their Action Plans.

Facilitate sharing experience and transfer of knowledge

Communicate and organise networking activities to support experience and knowledge-sharing among members is one of the main roles of the Covenant Supporters. They can trigger synergies and common initiatives among municipalities involved in the Covenant, and with the ones which are not yet part of the initiative.

Approximately **84%** of respondents are carrying out activities to facilitate sharing experiences.



Multiple selections were allowed, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

In general, they mainly create experience sharing opportunities at the occasion of events, study visits and workshops. They also include the Covenant of Mayors in the agenda of their events and – sometimes with the support of the Covenant of Mayors Office – encourage local and regional governments to present their successful examples and exchange on the challenges they face.

In this respect, many Supporters highlighted the added-value of participating on a EU-funded project, as it provides a framework for interaction amongst different partners.



Examples

DAFNI (GR), the Network of Sustainable Greek Islands - organised local visits, workshops and meetings with local authorities to identify needs and funding opportunities at local, national and EU level, with a focus on addressing the challenges faced by islands and signatories in rural and geographically remote areas, in cooperation with the Aegean Energy Agency. In this context, they organised the *1st Smart Islands Forum* where island local and regional authorities across Europe had the chance to come together and discuss smart and sustainable projects and policies they are implementing at local level. In collaboration with the Aegean Energy Agency and FEDARENE, the Agency also organised a webinar and produced 3 case studies on successful local climate actions.

ANCI EMILIA ROMAGNA (IT) has initiated and manages a network of experts in energy policies from their associated municipalities, through a mailing list of informal and confidential discussion. They are in constant contact with the company's in-house and public agencies for energy with which they share strategies and actions.

Xarxa de Ciutats i Pobles cap a la Sostenibilitat (ESP) has set up internal working groups on sustainable energy and climate adaptation, creating a platform for local authorities to meet and exchange, as well as to explore the co-benefits of integrated climate action.

Cooperation with Covenant Coordinators, Supporters other stakeholders

The strength of the Covenant of Mayors also lies in its capacity to create and foster dynamics of cooperation on the territory. Covenant Supporters, thanks to their links with the local context, are well placed to engage in different forms of cooperation to the benefit of Covenant signatories, be it at the local, regional, national or European level.

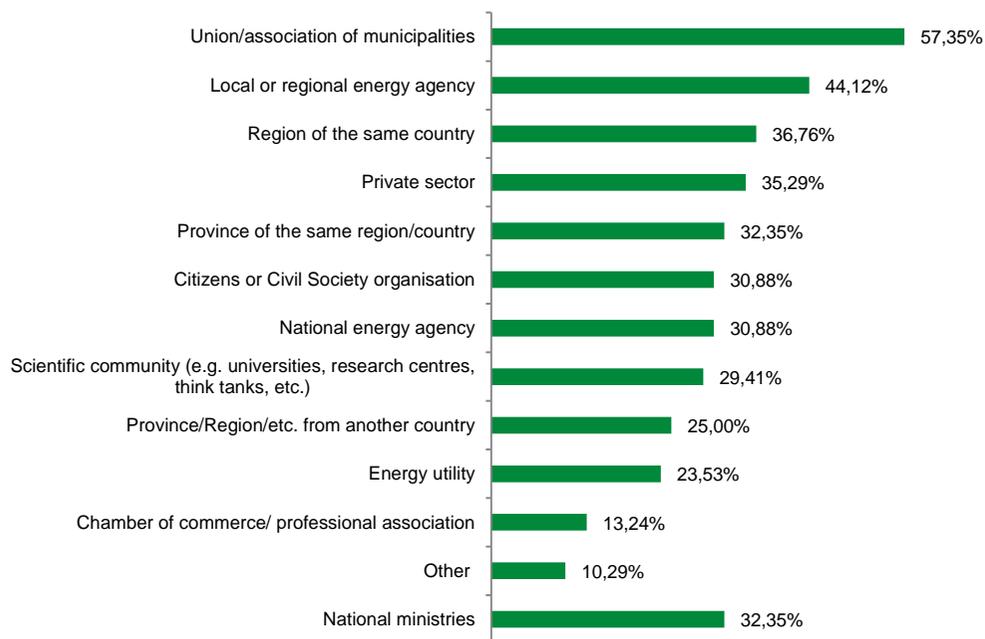
Respondents to the survey confirmed their strong link to the territory they operate in, with the highest percentage of Supporters working in partnership with other associations of municipalities, local and regional energy agencies, and regions and

provinces of the same country, which all concur to the development and the strengthening of the Covenant of Mayors.

Cooperation with the scientific community as well as the private sector confirms the crucial role that different kind of expertise have to place in the initiative, in providing technical support and helping signatories to achieve their objectives.

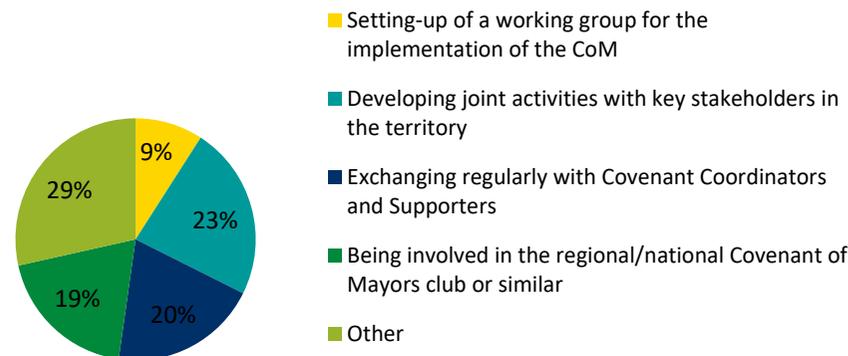
Respondents also stressed their cooperation with the national level, which is crucial to ensure consistency between local and national energy and climate policies. As European, national or regional associations of local and regional governments, Supporters are well aware of the legislative, regulatory and financial contexts in which they operate, and are well placed to identify how the Covenant can complement or input existing national initiatives.

Cooperation within the CoMmunity



Multiple selections were allowed, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Supporters carry out a wide range of activities, from the involvement in national and regional Covenant Clubs to the development of joint activities with local stakeholders:



Examples

Associazione Centro Sicilia (IT) was involved in a regional group on the Covenant of Mayors in Sicilia, set-up with the objective of helping municipalities to implement their SEAP activities.

ANCI EMILIA ROMAGNA is involved in the elaboration of the new regional energy plan – started in 2015 – which now includes an entire chapter on the role of municipalities, absent in the previous plan.

Covenant Clubs

23 respondents are also part of national or regional Covenant Club (in Austria, Catalonia, Romania, Flanders, etc.). Covenant Clubs were highlighted as very successful in providing a platform were to exchange on common challenges and coordinate with national policies and schemes. However, respondents are facing difficulties in terms of human and financial resources in keeping these Clubs alive.

Examples

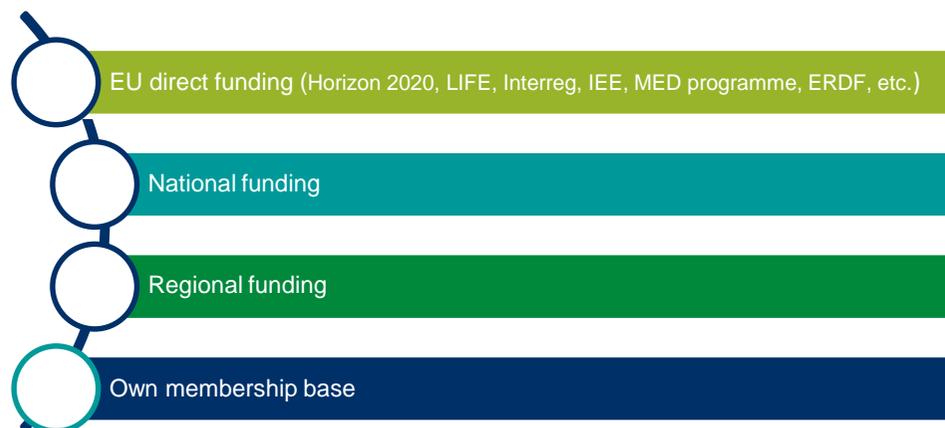
OER (Romania) created the Romanian Covenant Club through the NET-COM European Project. Taking into consideration the high number of CoM Signatories in Romania and the fact they have SEAPs under implementation, it works on correlating the different strategies and plans asked by the central authorities in order to make the SEAP respond to any requirements and help the Local Authorities to work with a unique instrument: SEAP/SECAP.

VVSG (Belgium) regularly organises energy and climate days with the participation of the Flemish Government, and would welcome meetings with other COM-clubs, in order to exchange on their strategy, tools and implementation of the COM, and in order to improve their capacity to sustain the work of the National Club

Mobilising financial support

Another crucial dimension of Covenant Supporters' assistance is the help provided to signatories in mobilising financing. Supporters are engaged in providing information about funding opportunities, and in some cases in assisting their members with the preparation of financial applications and tendering procedures.

Supporters can leverage from different sources to finance specific actions related to the Covenant of Mayors:



Examples

Climate Alliance makes use of funds from German Ministry of Environment for the tool “Klimaschutzplaner”, to support all German municipalities through access to data for developing baseline emission inventories according to CoM criteria.

The Climate Municipalities (SE) receive funds from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions for carrying out activities related to the Covenant of Mayors, such as organising an event to promote the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.

Union des Villes et Communes de Wallonie (BE) is funded by the region to run an Energy Office.

Energy Cities receive funds from ADEME, the French national energy agency, in the framework of a partnership to provide dedicated support to French Covenant of Mayors signatories.

Challenges and the way forward

Nevertheless, Covenant Supporters responding to the survey **share common challenges** and weaknesses as their members and local and regional governments, when applying and or implementation these financial schemes.

The human and financial resources to carry out **emissions inventories** were highlighted as one of the biggest challenges, sometimes due to the difficulty in gathering data. This is especially the case for **smaller municipalities**, which would also benefit from exchanges with similar realities but would need – together with their supporting structures – to be allocated the financial means for doing so (i.e. twinning programmes). Respondents highlighted the need for simplifying the SEAP framework, especially the reporting, and ensure **better harmonisation with national** local action plan frameworks. Moreover, signatories from candidate and potential candidate countries in **South Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans** feel the need to receive a more tailored support from the European level to implement their actions.