

Covenant Coordinators:

Crucial contributors to the Covenant of Mayors success

Covenant Coordinators are public administrations or authorities which provide strategic guidance, technical and financial support to Covenant of Mayors (CoM) signatories and municipalities willing to sign up to it.

The data presented here is representative of the responses of a survey launched in Summer 2018, involving the 190 Covenant Coordinators which had joined the CoM before July 2017 (at least one year of activity)¹.

This report provides an overview of the activities performed by Covenant Coordinators in the framework of the Commitment Statement they have signed laying out the support they will provide to municipalities.

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.

Provinces, regions and other Covenant Coordinators are key to the success of the initiative, notably in terms of:

- the promotion they do of the Covenant in their territories
- increasing the Covenant of mayors Office capacities by providing decentralised support on the ground and ensuring tailored interaction with thousands of signatories.
- the support provided to signatories including technical assistance, for example, through the organisation of dedicated workshops, or the development of action plan-related tools and methodologies.
- mobilising other stakeholders - such as energy agencies, private companies and universities - which can bring customised expertise to local authorities.

Signatories' access to funding sources is also facilitated by Coordinators. Provinces and regions often earmark funds to implement energy efficiency projects in signatory municipalities, or they bundle small projects to help municipalities reach the threshold required by investors. Regions often act as Managing Authorities of EU Structural and Investment Funds and can thus decide to allocate EU funding to Covenant-related activities.

Likewise, Coordinators are the relevant interface to relay Covenant Signatories' funding and legislative priorities to the European Institutions, thus influencing policy development from the bottom-up. Coordinators are often asked to comment on the barriers and needs to the European Commission (through the periodic survey among others) which helps shape the future of the initiative.

More info: <https://eumayors.eu/about/covenant-community/coordinators.html>

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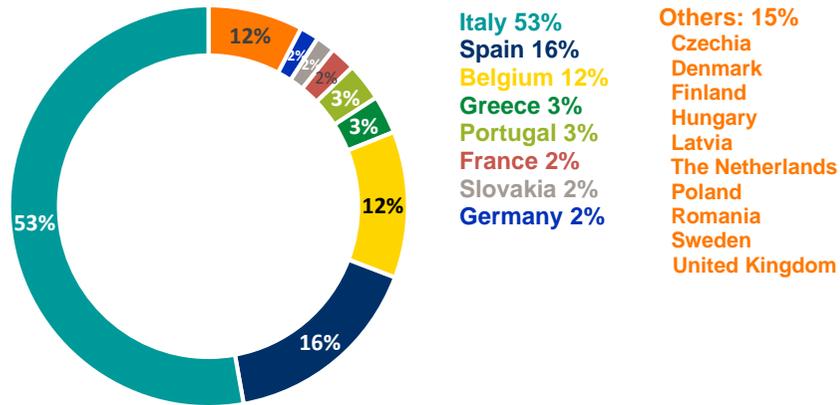
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¹ As of December 2018, 195 Coordinators from 18 countries are participating in the Covenant, 9 of which are Covenant National Coordinators



Key numbers

185 Covenant Coordinators - **9%** increase since the 2016 report



Promotion of the Covenant of Mayors

Promotion has a key role within the Covenant of Mayors Community, it drives the dissemination of the actions and supports the engagement of all the relevant stakeholders. The importance of promotion is demonstrated by the strong commitment of the Covenant Territorial and National Coordinators. The graph below shows the many ways through which Covenant Coordinators implement promotional activities. The two most frequent options, with respectively 81% and 79% of the preferences, are the organisation of events (such as workshops and conferences) and face to face meetings. Another frequent option, 71% of preferences, is the publication of news through own communication channels (such as newsletters and social media).



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

Province of Valencia, ES organised 12 information days, between April and July 2018 to discuss climate change and topics for actions on the Covenant of Mayors (energy self-consumption, energy efficiency, e-mobility, etc.) for local stakeholders.

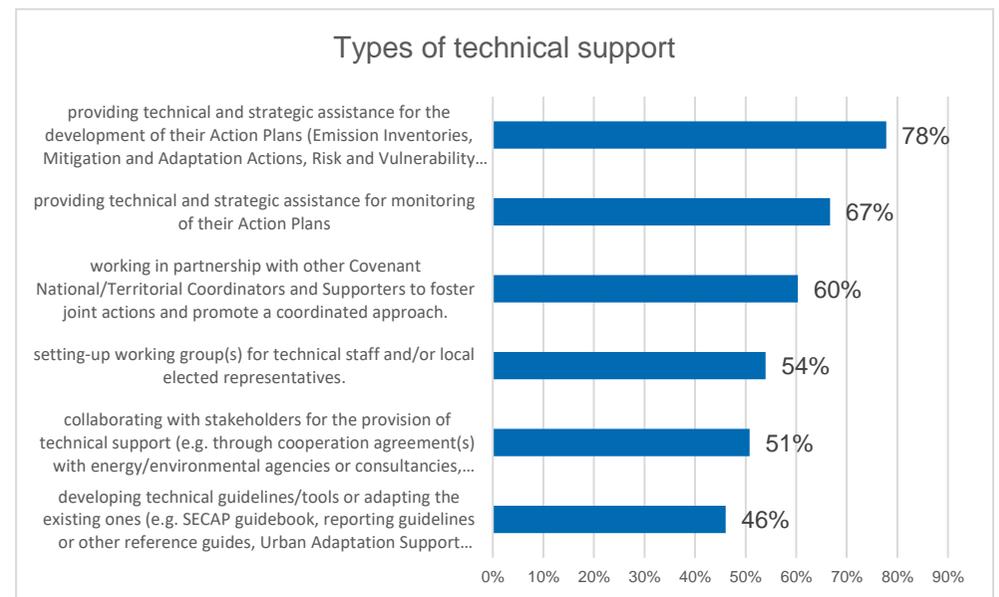
The **Comunita' della Val di Non, IT** directed its promotion activities towards a particular target audience: younger generations. They have engaged students from secondary schools to raise awareness around the Covenant of Mayors themes and to stimulate a reflection about the impact of their daily habits.

Technical support



Coordinators primarily help compensate for the lack of technical skills of small and medium sized local authorities. A large majority indeed indicate direct actions and technical support to municipalities. The technical support to signatories can be implemented at any stage throughout the development, monitoring or and implementation of the action plan. The level of involvement by Coordinators depends primarily on the technical skills and the availability of qualified staff and resources to be allocated to support municipalities.

78% of respondents indicated that as a Coordinator they provide technical and strategic assistance for the development of the action plans of their associated signatories and **67%** of respondents assist in the monitoring.



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

Collaboration and actions aiming at mutualising resources and knowledge are also widely used by Covenant Coordinators (working groups, technical collaboration, partnerships...)

The **Insular Council of Mallorca ES** dedicated 2 staff members to offer technical assistance to the municipalities. They are helping signatories in the development of their Baseline Emission Inventory (BEI). The council provided financial support for the drafting of the action plans and for the implementation of municipal accounting and energy management systems. They also coordinated meetings with the Government of Balearic Islands to work on a regional approach.

The **Province of Flemish Brabant BE** developed an online platform on which municipalities can find all relevant information and documents (guidelines, tools) and where they can share information with each other. They set up working groups on the implementation of plans. They organised 6 training sessions on the monitoring of action plans. Training guidelines in Dutch were issued on these occasions. They collaborated with the four other Flemish provinces East Flanders, West Flanders, Antwerp, Flemish Brabant and Limburg, to develop a monitoring tool through which municipalities can estimate the CO₂-impact of their climate actions and which provides reports on climate figures for Covenant monitoring and reporting requirements. (*provincie in cijfers*).

Adaptation to climate change

 Even though the adaptation pillar has been added to the Covenant end 2015, adaptation to climate change remains a challenging area of work for municipalities and Coordinators need to take specific actions to support them. More than half reported activities in this sector.

The **Bratislava Region, SK** developed a handbook for cities that lists all the possible measures aimed at adapting to climate change. This guidebook for climate change adaptation in the urbanised environment is designed mainly for the local public administrations but can also be used by public or private stakeholders operating in the territory.

Province of Barcelona, ES has developed a specific methodology and tools to assess the vulnerability of the territory to climate change that municipalities can use. They have also developed a list of adaptation actions to guide municipalities in the process. They are working toward a more developed tool for municipalities.

Region of Murcia, ES LIFE Adaptate project aims to increase the commitment of European municipalities to the Covenant by developing local adaptation plans that will be integrated into previous plans of several municipalities, giving a comprehensive approach to the fight against climate change.

The **Government of Balearic Islands ES** has commissioned a “Study on sectoral vulnerability and risks to the impacts of climate change, territorialised by municipalities” which aims to be the reference document for indicators on vulnerability and risks for the municipalities of the Balearic Islands.

Energy poverty

In the 2030 framework of the Covenant of Mayors, alongside with taking action on mitigating climate change and adapting to its unavoidable effects, signatories commit to providing access to secure, sustainable and affordable energy for all. This means taking action to alleviate energy poverty. By alleviating energy poverty, Covenant signatories can enhance the quality of life of their citizens and create a more just and inclusive society.

Within the territory of the **province of Tarragona ES** several activities have been carried out to raise awareness of the local stakeholders about energy poverty. They have organised workshops in municipalities, targeting both the general public and users of social services, to show participants how to do a critical reading of their energy bills and to give them tips for their daily consumption. Spreading knowledge about energy poverty triggered a virtuous circle and all the city councils have started implementing similar initiatives as well.

The **province of Girona ES** has put in place a programme giving tools and resources to the local authorities in the province to promote direct actions to raise public awareness about the cost and energy efficiency of homes and act in cases of energy poverty in the most vulnerable households. They have also developed specific action fiches on actions addressing energy poverty to be integrated in local action plans and monitoring.

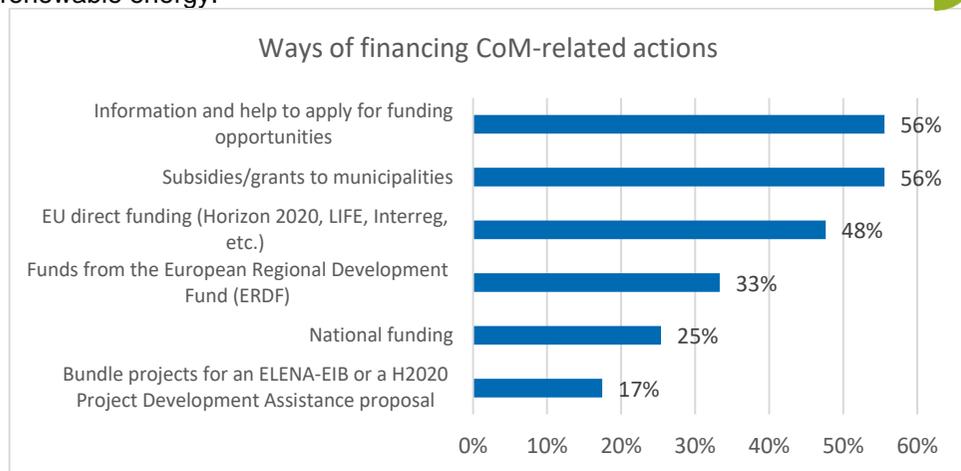
Financing Action plans- related projects of associated municipalities

Financing is a critical aspect to address when planning and implementing measures to face climate change. Lack of funds, material resources and staff can have a negative impact on the programming process and decrease the quality of the final outputs. Once again Covenant Territorial Coordinators, in this case through their economic support and guidance, can provide a crucial help to Covenant Signatories with their energy and climate action plans. In this context, it is not surprising that more than half of Covenant Coordinators provided at least a form of economic assistance to their signatories. As suggested by the responses, there are many ways in which a Covenant Coordinator can help to finance action plans' related projects.

Particularly, **56%** of respondents assist in **finding financing sources for local authorities** in the first place e.g. by providing information and helping them to apply for funds.

The majority **56%** of respondents directly provides financial resources themselves through **subsidies and grants** to municipalities.

The Basque Country (Ente Vasco de la Energia), ES has been providing in total 5 million EUR grants to municipalities every year since 2014 to finance energy efficiency measures in public lighting and buildings, audits in public lighting and buildings, development of action plans and promotion of renewable energy.



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

EU direct funding is still a major opportunity for financing actions plans' related projects with almost **48%** of Covenant Coordinators indicating as a source of funding. It is interesting to see that with the inclusion of adaptation to climate change into the Covenant of Mayors framework, there are more and more LIFE projects supporting the Covenant community.

INTERREG-MED Project: STEPPING project aims to increase the adoption of EPC investment schemes for the implementation of energy efficiency plans in public buildings in the Mediterranean area. **Region of Piemonte IT** and **Province of Huelva ES** are involved together with several energy agencies (Covenant Supporters)

H2020 SIMPLA Project is focusing on the harmonisation of Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans. Partners include the **Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia IT, Region Toscana IT, Province of Huelva ES, Alba County Council RO** together with several Covenant Supporters

H2020 Empowering project contributes to the shift of six EU regions towards low-carbon societies by enhancing the capacities of municipalities and regional representatives to shape integrated energy strategies and plans. The project contributes to bridging the gap of skills needed to plan energy measures in the new 2030 framework for Climate and Energy Policy in terms of greenhouse gas emission reduction, renewable energy and energy efficiency. More than 60 municipalities have been supported with the development or upgrade of their 2030 action plans in the 6 regions, some being Covenant Coordinators: **Region Marche IT, Region Central Macedonia GR, National Coordinator CRES GR.**

Region Midtjylland/Central Denmark DK leads a **LIFE IP project Coast to Coast Climate Challenge (C2C CC)** aiming at creating a climate resilient region by formulating a joint long-term strategy among local stakeholders, implementing climate adaptation plans in the municipalities as the necessary analyses and activities have been coordinated, and by identifying and improving resources and capacities among citizens and municipalities as well as among utilities and companies in water trading.

Metropolitan City of Rome IT with the **INTERREG EUROPE project - SUPPORT** - which aims to aims at earmarking regional ERDF funds with bonus points for the Covenant of Mayors signatory municipalities.

ERDF funds and **national funding** form a crucial part of both action plan development and implementation with respectively **33%** and **25%** of respondents indicating this use of funds.

The National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, PL funded 76 energy advisors to support all Covenant and potential signatories in developing their emission inventories/action plans and assist for monitoring. The "Energy Advisory Project" in Poland is financed from the **Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment 2014 - 2020** with about 30 million EUR.

In **Region Piemonte, IT** funding was provided through the POR ERDF to public authorities for the energy efficiency of public installations and buildings, bonus points were allocated to projects presented by municipalities with an approved action plan uploaded on the portal of the Covenant of Mayors or to organisations that are Covenant Territorial Coordinators.

Province of Cáceres ES has a budget of 6.7 million EUR (80% from ERDF, 20% from own provincial funds) to allocate to municipalities through grants. The grants will support projects aiming at the transition to a low-carbon economy: specifically, projects reducing CO2 emissions by improving energy efficiency in public buildings,

infrastructure and services; sustainable urban mobility, and the use of renewable energy for thermal uses and electric self-consumption.

Funds were also acquired by **co-ordinating joint projects**, for example, by submitting an ELENA-EIB proposal or a H2020 Project Development Assistance proposal which bundles small projects together. **17%** of the respondents identified the use of these financial schemes.

H2020 PDA BEenerGI, Province of Girona ES: BEenerGI will mobilise 6.48 million EUR of investments to increase the energy efficiency of the street lighting in 65 municipalities and 9.40 million EUR to carry out energy efficiency investments in 85 public buildings. BEenerGI is innovative both for the organisational aspects and for its financial engineering. The project bundles investments in at least 15 packages in order to make them bankable.

Prešov Region SK has set up a project implementation unit thanks to the EIB-ELENA programme which developed an energy efficiency and renewable energy investment programme for the regional buildings and for buildings and public lighting of 14 associated municipalities.

Multi-level governance and cooperation with other stakeholders



There are numerous **interactions between Coordinators and other sub-national public authorities or stakeholders** regarding the implementation of the Covenant in their territory and this has always been a key to the success of the initiative.



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

The **Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic (MoE)** collaborates with “Healthy Cities”. This association, born from an initiative promoted by the World Health Organisation, aims to guide cities in the Czech Republic towards sustainable development. Within this context, numerous engagement activities have been jointly launched, such as campaigns on energy savings, promotion of best practices and workshops. Besides that, the two organisations also launched a survey on the Covenant of Mayors and municipalities experience with the initiative: interest for the initiative, motivations and barriers to join, challenges and results that would help MoE to shape the next call from the National Environment Programme.

In Flanders the cooperation is active at all organisational levels. Earlier in this report, there was mention of the provincial network of coordinators, the intermunicipal organisations (most or all of them Coordinators) do also meet 2 or 3 times a year, to exchange on topics concerning environment, climate, energy and nature. Covenant of Mayors and all related actions within the framework are an important part of the agenda

The **Intermunicipal Development Agency for the Kempen IOK BE** has many activities:

- periodical strategic meeting 'Kempen2020' with all key stakeholders in their region (grid operators Eandis and Infrax, province of Antwerp, research institution VITO, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, rural organisation).
- regular exchanges with the other coordinators through existing local/ regional networks like the provincial climate meeting with other intermunicipal organisations 'VLINTER' environment, Flemish network Covenant of Mayors.

WVI – West Flanders Intermunicipal reports similar activities:

- they have a core team per area of the WVI working area (4 areas), set up with a political and technical representative per municipality to follow the local action plans and their implementation.
- together with the province of West-Flanders and Leiedal (both Coordinators) they organise several knowledge platforms meetings per year on local climate policies for the municipalities of West-Flanders.
- they have a cooperation agreement with the province, the intermunicipal organisations and the grid operators (Eandis and Infrax, in West-Flanders, specifically set up for the Covenant of Mayors process
- they participate in the network of the Flemish association of municipalities.

The Catalan Coordinators have created the **Catalan Club of the Covenant of Mayors** gathering the **provinces of Barcelona, Girona, Lleida and Tarragona and the Barcelona metropolitan area**. They coordinate their work, support each other and learn from the experience of the organisations that have been in the Covenant for a long time.