

# Mapping of governance actors and core elements in core countries

## Deliverable D3.1

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In the Self-assessment report, carried out within WP4, CapaCITIES Core Countries have been asked to report information on their respective multi-level governance actors on urban climate neutrality, its existing core elements and instruments including, for example, key processes, networks, institutional infrastructure and financial instruments available to develop national networks or other support structures. The core countries have also been asked to report policy misalignment and gaps in governance structures, improvement needs and barriers to overcome.

Deliverable 3.1 summarises the mapping of multi-level governance approaches across core countries to support the EU Mission for 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030 (Cities Mission).



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## Executive Summary

CapaCITIES supports European countries in creating national structures to support the European Cities Mission at the national level. The ongoing activities and respective knowledge of the national actors that are part of the CapaCITIES consortium are at the heart of the project. CapaCITIES is there to support, connect, empower and inspire national authorities, national ministries, funding agencies and agencies responsible for urban transitions in their efforts to build up the necessary national change processes.

This deliverable builds on the self-assessments carried out by WP4 (Deliverable 4.1), which will inform the programme of activities in CapaCITIES Core Countries and help tailor support to their specific needs. In deliverable 4.1, the fifteen CapaCITIES Core Countries submitted individual self-assessments, in which they shared relevant information about the current state of the national support for cities to become climate-neutral in their countries as well as communicated their concrete needs to the CapaCITIES consortium. The overall results of the self-assessment will be presented in Deliverable 4.2.

Deliverable 3.1 summarises the self-assessment of multi-level governance approaches across core countries to support the EU Cities Mission. In this part of the Self-assessment, core countries were asked to report information on their respective multi-level governance actors on urban climate neutrality, its existing core elements and instruments including, for example, a) key processes, networks, institutional infrastructure and financial instruments available to develop national networks or other support structures, such as climate city contracts, etc. and b) policy misalignment and gaps in governance structures, improvement needs and barriers to overcome.

The mapping of the self-assessments suggests that a majority of CapaCITIES Core Countries either are about to develop different structures, functions or instruments to support cities or already have platforms or networks in place. However, there are still gaps in city and multi-level governance collaboration on climate issues. This is especially the case in smaller countries, in countries with complex political and administrative systems and in countries where political will and ambition for climate action is lacking. In some countries, national networks have started forming as a result of the EU Cities Mission, gathering national level representatives and cities, with the aim to collaborate on the national implementation of the Mission. In other countries, such as Sweden, Finland and Spain, city support structures were already in place prior to the launch of the Cities Mission. Other support structures, for example in the form of financial support, are also in place in some countries.

A variety of stakeholders are involved, ranging from local, regional and national to private actors and academia. While active national support structures (finance models, networks etc.) are more often in place, support from the regional level is generally more passive. In some countries, regional as well as national support is lacking, with core countries reporting low support for cities from the regional and/or national level. Following this, we see a need for core countries to further involve the national level (ministries, legislative, funding and policy



bodies etc.) as well as regional stakeholders in the work ahead.

Infrastructures to facilitate multi-level and multi-stakeholder collaboration are key. National Cities Mission Platforms may contribute to create mandate, legitimacy, (reframing) funding and collaborative reinforcement. For those countries where a national platform or network is missing or under development, assistance in setting up support structures that can be further developed should be prioritised.



## Introduction

### Self-assessment exercise

This deliverable is based on the self-assessment exercise that has been carried out by the fifteen CapaCITIES Core Countries. The assessment has a two-fold role: 1) to collect relevant information about the current state of the national support structures for climate-neutral cities in the core countries; 2) to learn more about the core countries' specific needs and address them adequately in activities developed by CapaCITIES. They should also evolve over time as countries advance in their work. Due to contractual requirements, the first version of the self-assessments was submitted by the core countries by 20 February 2023.

The Core Countries' self-assessments are developed based on the self-assessment template (D4.1) designed by ICLEI. The template was comprised of the following sections:

Part A: National platforms for climate neutral cities

Part B: Enabling and hindering factors for climate neutral cities

Section B1: Current national policy framework for climate neutral cities

Section B2: Quantitative impact measurement and GHG reporting for climate neutral cities

Section B3: Current financial and financing support for climate neutral cities

Part C: Support from CapaCITIES

Deliverable 3.1 is based on Part A and, to some extent, Part B of the self-assessment template, summarising the self-assessment of multi-level governance approaches across core countries to support the EU Cities Mission. In this part of the self-assessment, core countries were asked to report information on their respective multi-level governance actors on urban climate neutrality, its existing core elements and instruments including, for example, a) key processes, networks, institutional infrastructure and financial instruments available to develop national networks or other support structures, such as climate city contracts, etc. and b) policy misalignment and gaps in governance structures, improvement needs and barriers to overcome. The aim is to highlight the current state of play regarding multi-level support systems and mechanisms for climate neutral cities in each country as well as the current national framework.

At the time for submission of this deliverable, data in Section B of the Self-assessment was still incomplete with information from some Core Countries missing. Therefore, this topic will be further analysed in Deliverable 4.2.

For detailed information on the self-assessment exercise and a full report on the mapping, please see deliverable 4.2.



## National Mission Platforms: concept and main functions

### Towards a definition proposal

The basic conceptualization of a platform has different meanings. It can be understood as an organisational intermediation infrastructure to address 'Sustainable Development Goals challenges' with a systemic approach by

1. Placing the creation of public value and public policies at the heart of the co-creation processes;
2. Fostering stable and continuous collaboration between organisations of a diverse nature, public administrations, private sector, civil society organisations and academia;
3. Relying on continuous learning as a management mechanism and instrument to strengthen the alignment and commitment of a broad set of individuals and organisations (Moreno-Serna, 2022).

Aligned with this definition, a National Cities Mission Platform may be conceived as a coalition of multiple cities whose public officials and civil servants share with each other their work, learn from each other's experiences, and build a community of practice. The goal of such a platform is to empower the people working in municipalities in their day-to-day work and improve their collective capacity to work in line with the mission, and also to generate momentum at a national level towards systemic change. In particular, in the context of the EU Cities Mission launched in 2021, National Cities Mission Platforms aim to address issues revolving around deep urban transformations such as the decarbonization of cities.

In this report, we define a 'National Platform' as support structures provided by the national and regional governments to cities in order to help them reach their 2030 climate neutrality goal. While such support structures may take different forms, like concrete commitments, vertical and/or horizontal collaboration, partnerships between different stakeholders and many more, all of them will have a certain degree of formalisation. National platforms have a clear objective - climate neutral cities by 2030, and coordinate different actions to help local governments achieve this goal, such as conferences and meeting opportunities, services and (financial) support.

### European Cities Mission platforms

The European Mission on urban climate neutrality is grounded using a collaborative approach. The national platforms put emphasis on generating collaborative value through stable multi-stakeholder structures and guiding their actions through the generation of a shared purpose instead of a linear strategy. The national platforms support the development of public policies using a multi-stakeholder approach, fostering experimentation and learning, nurturing niches



and also supporting transformational initiatives at scale, which enable institutional and regulatory innovations. In addition, the alignment of different levels of stakeholders, local, national and international is promoted, as well as an explicit and continuous effort to map and encourage the most relevant actors in each country to join via specific initiatives.

### Rationale: why a National Cities Mission Platform?

The emergence of a National Cities Mission Platform, although springing from an evolution of dialogues and partnerships at a local and national level, has been underpinned and consolidated by a clear narrative: the need for radical collaboration between multiple stakeholders, national, regional and local, to solve complex problems. Traditionally, cities have been working individually at a territorial scale and competing with each other for support and funds from the regional, national and supranational levels. Each city has a relatively clear understanding of its extensive ecosystem of actors and stakeholders, as well as the issues that need to be tackled.

However, in today's globalised and interconnected world, the challenges of our civilization are highly complex and go beyond the ability of local ecosystems of actors to solve them. Challenges such as climate change, biodiversity collapse, pandemics, poverty and systemic injustice are often called "wicked problems", in the sense that they involve so many interdependent factors that they seem impossible to solve. In addition to being highly interdependent, these factors are also constantly changing and difficult to define. Cities, as places where human populations concentrate and develop, are the places where many of these wicked problems originate and manifest themselves.

Solving wicked problems requires innovative approaches to dealing with this complexity. Experience has been recurrently demonstrating that wicked problems are best approached through collaboration rather than competition. Indeed, a collaborative approach is much more effective than competition in achieving individual actors' objectives all while amplifying the capacities and reach of every collaborator.

The idea of collaborative city networks have been developing over the past decades. The emergence of multiple networks connecting cities, such as C40, ICLEI, Eurocities, etc., has shown that there is a demand for collaboration between cities across the world. But despite the value in these networks, each city still has a different national context that particularly influences the way it functions.

With that in mind, the idea of collaboration between cities within the same country is both innovative and highly needed in today's context. Cities within the same country share similar regulatory constraints and challenges, but also other similarities such as language and cultural



idiosyncrasies. National cross-city collaboration thus allows for cities to join forces and harness the power of shared knowledge within a similar culture and set of constraints.

There was probably no time before where multiple cities of the same country came together to create a community of practice and collaborate deeply with each other to achieve sustainable transitions at the scale and ambition of the EU Cities Mission. In that sense, National Cities Mission Platforms are a historical achievement that aim to change the way things are usually done in urban transformations and in transitioning towards climate neutrality.

For this transition to take place, the importance of National platforms to support cities throughout the EU Member States and associated countries can not be underestimated.

### Building capacity to foster transformation in cities

To assist cities and help them build and implement stable multi-stakeholder structures and local arenas etc, a sustained and strong facilitation function is essential. This further suggests the importance of a national platform anticipation capability and an evolutionary form of management that enables the combination of both traditional and emergent planification. To ensure continued multi-stakeholder interaction in cities, the platforms should work to connect the Mission goals and targets with those of the main local partners and develop specific activities to internalise the principles of the international agendas.

### The emergence of National Cities Mission Platforms

In the recent past, support structures that the regional and/or national levels offer cities for the implementation of the Cities Mission have emerged all around Europe.

However, a report conducted by ERRIN in 2022 within NetZeroCities (please see Mapping of national and regional city collaboration and support for Cities Mission implementation, deliverable 5.9 in the reference section) shows that there are still gaps in city collaboration and multi-level governance on climate issues within EU Member States and Associated Countries. This is especially the case in smaller countries, in countries with complex political and administrative systems and in countries where the political will and ambition for climate action is lacking. National cities mission networks have in some countries started forming as a result of the Cities Mission, gathering national level representatives and cities, with the aim to collaborate on the national implementation of the Mission. Other support structures, mainly in the form of financial support, have also been put in place in some countries.

Although each country has its own emerging structures, a common rationale can be appreciated. Therefore, WP3 has designed a sensemaking map with CapaCITIES Core



Countries arrangements, connected also to the European Cities Mission support ecosystem. Please note that these maps are not a fixed document, but will be developed during the project period.

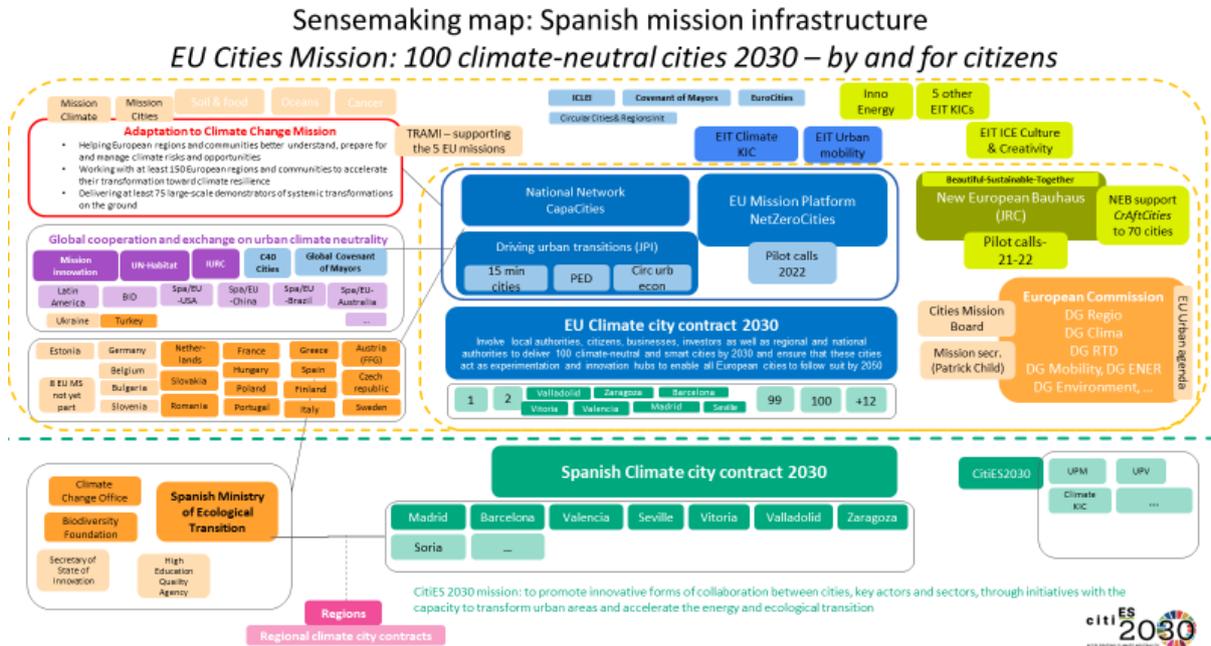


Figure 1. Example of sense-making map for Spanish Cities mission infrastructure (below green dotted line), and its three main elements; national stakeholders, cities and CitiES2030 as intermediary organisation, and (above green dotted line) connection with EU Cities mission support ecosystem.

### Sweden and Spain - the set up of a national mission infrastructure

Among existing national support structures to date, two platforms have a history of work prior to the launch of the Cities Mission, as well as a track record of mutual collaboration: Viable Cities in Sweden and CitiES2030 in Spain.

During the formation and consolidation of CitiES2030 and Viable Cities, some enabling factors can be identified.

For example, both platforms sprang from the work of an independent and legitimate organisation, which acted as the orchestrator between multiple cities with diverse needs and interests. In the case of CitiES2030, this intermediary organisation was the Center for Innovation in Technology for Human Development of the Technical University of Madrid (itdUPM) and a coalition of research and innovation institutions in the case of Viable Cities, namely the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE), the Stockholm Environmental Institute (SEI) and Lund University. The neutrality and the convening capacity of higher education institutions facilitated unifying the cities' work



towards the same goal without fragmentation based on political differences. In both the Spanish and the Swedish case, these intermediary actors were given a mandate from the national authorities, thus reinforcing its legitimacy and the explicit mandate, will and ambition of cities of working collaboratively, to compose the platform.

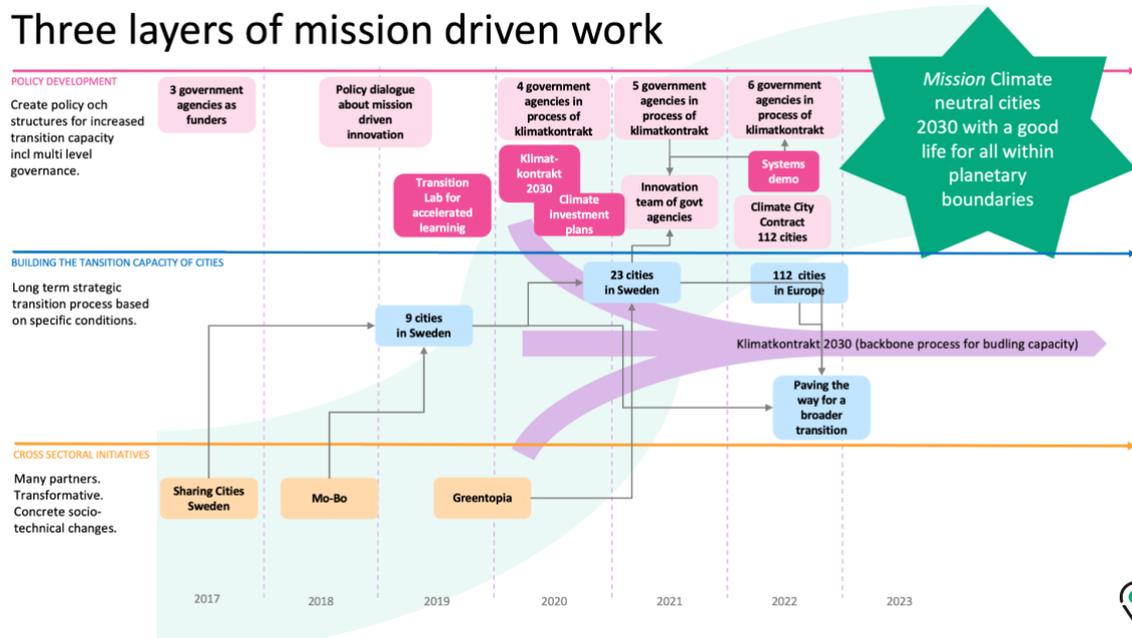


Figure 2. Overview and time-line of the development of Swedish Cities Mission infrastructure in three layers; Policy development, Building the transition capacity of cities, and Cross-sectoral initiatives

In addition to promoting the platform by a legitimate and politically neutral organisation, one of the most essential enablers was the trust that was built over time within it. The role of professionals dedicated to facilitation, to build trust and make real progress is extensive. The role of the facilitators is first and foremost to listen to the cities’ needs and put their perspectives at the forefront of the discussions. Having facilitators leading the conversations ensures that all cities find their place within a collaborative environment, and that every city gets the space to present its problems, discuss solutions and meet its needs. In addition, facilitators help translate complex and abstract concepts, such as climate neutrality or systems innovation, into more approachable ideas that are applicable in the municipality realm. Finally, facilitators accompany the conversation and bring clarity to it, providing summaries and clear steps forward, so that everyone is set and aligned on how to work towards their objectives. It is important to note that the facilitators are also trained professionals in fields that are related to the discussions that they are facilitating, such as climate action, social innovation and urban transformation, which brings an added layer of expertise to the conversation.



In conclusion, experience from the Spanish and Swedish Cities Mission Platforms indicates that offering stable and regular interaction spaces over time, supported by professional facilitators, is an effective way of building relationships between city officials and forming a stable coalition of cities working in the same direction.

### Creating a National platform- stages and recommendations

While it is possible to identify different stages in the creation and consolidation of National Cities Mission Platforms, the process is not linear; overlapping or several iterations of the different stages may occur. Below we provide some recommendations for the first steps based on CitiES2030 and Viable Cities experience, and on academic literature on multi-stakeholder collaboration.

<p><b>SCOPING</b></p>	<p><b>Making the contextual case for collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying national challenges as a first step, followed by the justification of the suitability of the collaborative approach</li> <li>• Contextual analysis and identification of opportunities</li> <li>• The need for a facilitating structure</li> </ul> <p><b>Identifying and selecting potential partners for the Platform</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of complementary nature of partners and linked interests. Analysis of risks and benefits, threats and opportunities of working together</li> <li>• Exploration of previous collaborative experiences</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessing drivers, barriers and enablers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed assessment of joint drivers, barriers and enablers and at the level of each participating institution</li> </ul>
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<p><b>INITIATING</b></p>	<p><b>Establishing principles and ground rules for collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A way of building respect and trust among partners and cementing relationships over time</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refining objectives, goal setting and confirming resource contributions</li> <li>• Consideration of scope and detailed objectives of the Platform</li> <li>• Obtaining funding and matching resources to proposed activities</li> </ul> <p><b>Setting up accountable structures and systems for working together</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing suitable decision-making structures, forums and procedures</li> <li>• Clarity around roles and responsibilities and clear and simple internal and external information channels</li> <li>• Signing a collaborative agreement</li> </ul>
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<b>LAUNCHING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking a specific initiative to remove forces that impede collaboration and assist in adopting an early scale-up strategy</li> <li>• New practices to be tested as a way of achieving meaningful results and building collaborative momentum</li> <li>• Cementing partner connections by producing early tangible impacts</li> </ul>
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### Key Findings- Mapping of governance actors and core elements in core countries

The mapping of the self-assessments suggests that a majority of CapaCITIES Core Countries either are about to develop different structures, functions or instruments to support cities or already have platforms or networks in place. A variety of stakeholders are involved, ranging from local, regional and national to private actors and academia. To some extent, regional actors are also engaged in setting up the Cities Mission infrastructure, for example related to the Cohesion Funds or European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). While active national support structures (finance models, networks etc) are more often in place, support from the regional level is generally more passive, with regional governments taking some action to support cities in reaching climate neutrality. In some countries, regional as well as national support is lacking, with core countries reporting low support for cities from the regional and/or national level.



Existing core elements and instruments available to develop national networks or other support structures

In **Austria**, two important national platforms/support structures for cities are the Smart Cities Network Austria and the national Climate-Neutral City Mission.

The Smart Cities Network Austria, funded by the Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, serves as the central city network for the support and acceleration of innovation processes in cities, especially in the work towards climate neutrality. Seven cities are involved (Vienna, Graz, Salzburg, Villach, Klagenfurt, Innsbruck and Linz) and the facilitator is Salzburg Institute for Regional Planning. Focus areas are: Spatial energy planning, climate protection, climate change adaptation, mobility, integrated planning, processes and governance, legal frameworks, participatory approaches and participation, urban quality of life and ICT. Activities/form of support are meetings, workshops, knowledge exchange, innovation talks and project development

The national Climate-Neutral City Mission, launched by The Federal Ministry for Climate Protection, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK), aims to support ten Austrian cities and municipalities in achieving the national climate and energy goals. The mission includes comprehensive research activities and accompanying measures, which will act as enablers to develop the path towards climate neutrality and to implement it.

The Climate-Neutral City Mission aims to complement the EU Cities Mission. Cooperation agreements have been signed between the BMK and the ten Austrian pioneer cities, which will secure additional resources for the necessary personnel capacity and competence development with up to €2 million per city. The aim is that this funding offer will be extended to additional cities in the future.

The national Mission follows on directly from the 'Fit4UrbanMission' initiative within the City of the Future-programme, which supported nine Austrian cities in developing and improving strategies for achieving climate neutrality by 2040 through a targeted funding scheme. Additionally, the initiative was set up to support Austrian cities in their applications for the EU Cities Mission. The cities received support from the Salzburg Institute for Regional Planning and Housing and AustriaTech. To enhance cities' transition towards climate neutrality, Austria saw that pioneers as frontrunners were needed, leading up to ten pioneer cities in long-term partnerships (4-5 years at least). Adding to this, the ambition is to involve 50-70 additional cities by 2030 (almost half of the Austrian population will then be involved in the mission). To date, 12 follower cities are in place, next to the pioneers. Intensive support processes exist to



work with both pioneers and follow up cities.

The structure of the Climate-Neutral City Mission is horizontal in the sense that the core team comprises people from different domains within the BMK, but also people from the Austrian climate funds as well as the Austrian research promotion agency. An extended team comprises members from other sections of the ministry: the mission is one of the newly established pillars that bring together different stakeholders from the existing units/activities within the ministry. In addition, pillars have their own agenda setting processes and were subsequently assigned their specific budgets. For 2024, a budget is specifically dedicated to the climate neutral cities mission.

BMK has also launched a Mission Cities Action Group with the relevant federal ministries, supporting agencies and key stakeholders in the Cities Mission. This internal group within the government administration aims to co-design and coordinate actions in innovation policy and beyond in other BMK policy domains (mobility, energy and environmental protection).

In the **Czech Republic**, there is no official platform but small work groups have been formed between relevant ministries (Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Technological Agency, Academy of Sciences). These stakeholders are also members of the Working Group on Smart Cities, an official platform consisting of about 50 (relevant) stakeholders from the national, regional and local level, academia and private sector. Furthermore, an internal informal work group has been established by the Ministry of Regional Development for the Horizon Europe Missions with several stakeholders working together on implementing the Horizon Europe Missions. The work group consists of stakeholders from the public and academic sector and most of the cooperation is done via contacts in this group. Cooperation with related associations (Association of Energy Managers, Buildings21) at the local level is being negotiated.

Cities can receive funding for energy savings/renewable energy sources from the Operational Programme Environment, the National Renewal Plan, or the Modernisation Fund. National investment banks have established Technical Assistance Programmes and financing facilities for climate-neutral cities. The National Development Bank, via ELENA, supports the preparation of EPC projects.

**Finland** has a long tradition of working with and through networks. This thinking is reflected in approaches of both the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry for Climate Change. There is a history of close discussions between the ministries, with the launch of a 'Cities Ecosystem Thinking-Network', consisting of 20 cities, including the six biggest cities.



Discussions have been initiated collaboratively, whereby cities engage and are encouraged to engage proactively.

In Finland, the six biggest cities are collaborating in the context of an ecosystem contract, which was established prior to the launch of the Cities Mission. Joint actions contain developing projects together and meet regularly. The Regional Council coordinates the work of the network (money from the EU is allocated to them and they distribute it). Various stakeholders are involved: the ministries, VTT (technological agency in Finland) and Climate Leadership Coalition.

The Climate Leadership Coalition (initiated by SITRA) is in place and active, working together with the EU but also with Canada and the US. It has brought companies into dialogue with the cities and ministries. Even before the launch of the Mission and Climate City Contracts, an agreement was in place with cities, different projects with the cities and (energy) companies were initiated and also boosted by Business Finland (Funding Agency). The University of Helsinki (Urbaria-Institute) still needs to be involved.

In addition to these existing networks, close ties exist to the EC concerning the Mission following the representation in the EU Cabinet of the Regions. To facilitate collaboration with the EU within existing networks, contact points for EU matters have been established. Furthermore, actors/cities must collaborate when deciding on the budgets. Since the Regional Council also receives budgets from the EU, it was naturally involved in the Mission realm.

**France:** In order to better monitor and support the European schemes related to sustainable cities (Cities Mission and the co-funded Driving Urban Transition partnership), the Ministry of Ecological Transition and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research have set up a 'Mirror Group' to bring together all stakeholders. This initially included the official partner organisations of these schemes (the two ministries, ADEME, the National Research Agency (ANR), the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT), the National Association for Research and Technology (ANRT), CEREMA, France Ville Durable, France Urbaine, and the PIN Ville of Gustave Eiffel University), which are very involved and active in leading the mirror group.

The mirror group has made it possible to associate national actors more widely with the approaches initiated by the European Commission, by organising actions adjusted to three target audiences: local authorities, companies and researchers.

This organisation was initiated to contribute to:

- A space for dialogue between the cities and stakeholders linked to the Cities Mission



to consolidate and formalise French expectations and make concerted proposals on the European work programs

- A basis for capitalising on and promoting the various approaches to build an overall vision of needs and facilitate the implementation of French actors in the field of ecological transition
- A place for reflection and debate between the different axes of European and French public policies

Also, the mirror group promotes both the calls for projects of the Cities Mission and the calls for projects of the Driving Urban Transition partnership.

Taking these objectives into account, three groups were set up to build an operational, adapted and flexible response, bringing together the various target audiences: local authorities, researchers and companies. Each of these groups are in charge of facilitating a strategy for a) the circulation of information on the European systems (for example the appropriation of climate related calls for projects by various stakeholders: public and private scientific community, local authorities, companies and private sector organisations), b) the visibility of links between national and EU policy in the field of sustainable cities and c) support for local authorities and research laboratories to take action.

In the future, a particular work is planned to link the cities future Climate City Contracts and work within NetZeroCities with the French system of contracts for recovery and ecological transition (CRTE) and territorial climate-air-energy plans (PCAET).

There is currently no financial support dedicated to the Mirror Group/Platform, and the human resources involved in the running of the platform are doing it on top of other missions. However, other support structures for cities include:

- Banque des territoires (loans, call for projects)
- Call for projects ADEME
- Call for projects at regional scale
- EU Just transition fund
- CRTE
- Green Fund

It can also be noted that the French mirror group, as well as the NetZeroCities platform, has foreseen that cities that have expressed their interest to join the Cities Mission, but were not selected, will need a certain amount of support and services in order not to discourage the



dynamics that have been put in place. For the moment, this mainly concerns proposals for links between French and European schemes and the promotion of the NZC-call for projects in the 30 pilot cities.

In **Greece**, a cooperation among different municipalities (through the Central Union of Greek Municipalities - KEDE) and the Ministry of Environment & Energy has been established. So far, this has led to the signature of an Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) among the ministry and 80 municipalities that are targeting climate neutrality and are committed to work towards this goal.

More specifically, the MoC includes the General Secretariat of Spatial Planning and Urban Environment (of the Ministry of Environment & Energy), the six municipalities selected in the EU Cities Mission (Athens, Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Kalamata, Kozani, Trikala) as well as other municipalities in Greece that will be able to receive know-how, good practices, etc through this cooperation.

The municipalities participating in this MoC are committed to implementing environmental and sustainable policies within the framework of the European Green Deal and to integrate local policies related to the Sustainable Development Goals with the aim of making cities more humane, inclusive, safe, resilient and viable.

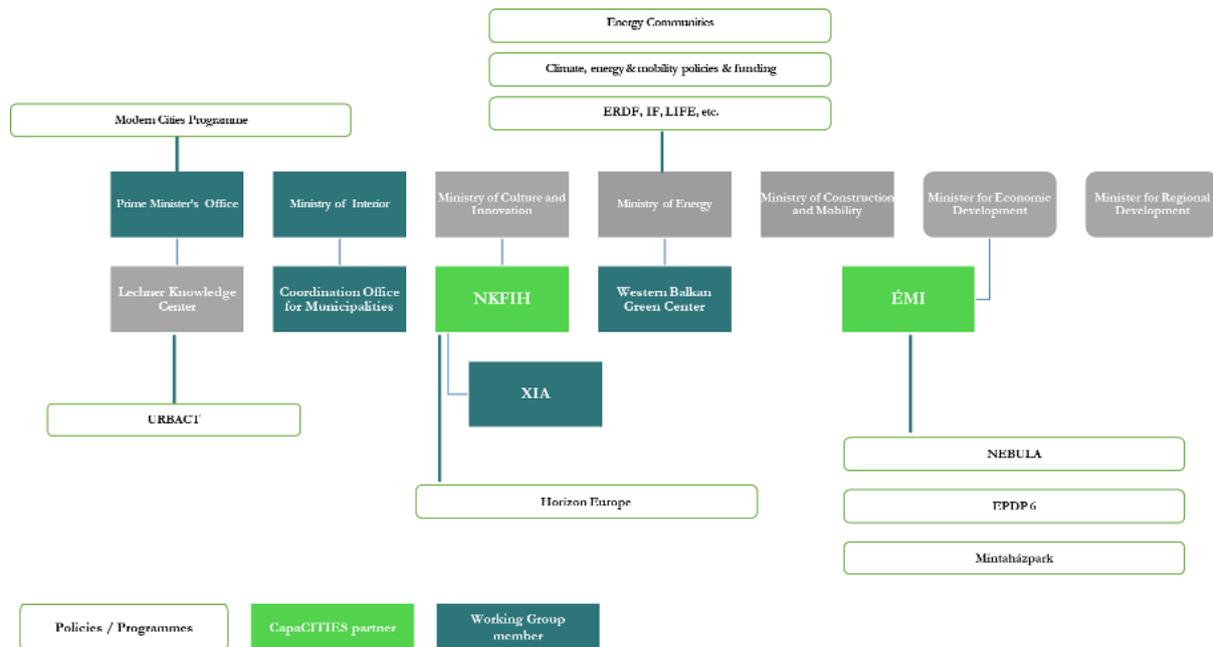
As described above, the stakeholders mainly involved in the cooperation are the Greek cities (municipalities through KEDE) and the Greek Government mainly through the Ministry of Environment & Energy. However, additional actions and concrete commitments have been made by additional actors such as the following:

- Ministry of Development & Investments (providing goals, priorities and funding)
- General Secretariat for Research & Innovation which falls under the Ministry of Development & Investments (providing goals, priorities and funding)
- Ministry of Infrastructure & Transport (providing goals, priorities and funding)
- Ministry of Digital Governance (providing funding)

Finally, the Centre for Research & Technology Hellas (CERTH) and more specifically, the Hellenic Institute of Transport (HIT) has an active role in the platform. Together with GSRI, they represent Greece in the DUT partnership and the CapaCITIES project. They have also worked closely with cities during their preparation for the EU Mission Call and they maintain a close collaboration, focusing on climate neutrality.



As for **Hungary**, there is currently no platform dedicated to climate neutral cities/Cities Mission, however the establishment of a Mission Platform is the final aim of the CapaCities project. As such, cooperation with selected Mission Cities is missing. However, the selected cities have started collaborating more actively with each other. The current support structure consists of governmental bodies who collaborate in the form of an informal working group as illustrated below:



The Government supports cities' climate-related investments mainly through calls from Operational Programmes, especially the Environment and Energy Efficiency Plus Operative Programme (EEEOP+). Furthermore, almost half of the efforts planned under the Recovery and Resilience Plan of Hungary aims at accelerating climate transition. The Hungarian Government provides financial support for (its own) contributions in climate-related projects supported by direct EU funding programmes, such as LIFE. A high share of the project beneficiaries are cities.

In **Italy**, the Ministry of University and Research (MUR) is responsible for the national coordination and support to the implementation of the Cities Mission. Other ministries are also involved in various support actions in favour of the Mission. For this reason, the form of support envisaged from MUR is the 'connection' of existing initiatives as well as information and guidance of stakeholders towards new aligned implementation measures.

To date, the governance structures are being set up based on the following building blocks:





Due to the new political cycle after the election round in September, resulting in a new government, the inter-ministerial coordination is currently on hold, pending new orientations to be defined and dialogue to be revamped. Thus, the governance structure of the Cities Mission at the national level is currently under development. For now, an important role is played by a set of RPOs (Research Performing Organisations) which have stable relations with the individual cities to cater for their needs and provide supporting tools.

The ministries for infrastructures (MIT), energy (MASE) and economic development (MIMIT) respectively, are key stakeholders to involve in the governance concerning regulatory and investment issues, as well as funding instruments for the implementation of the concrete actions in the cities' project portfolios.

Nevertheless, under the auspices of MUR National Representative for the Mission Cities, an important step in terms of coordination has been achieved, with the nine selected Mission Cities establishing internal coordination and nominating a Coordinator City.

At the operational level, the Mission Cities are currently supported by a working team set up by the Ministry of University and Research (as a result of the participation in the CapaCITIES). The working team involves experts from the University of Bologna (UniBO) and the University of Palermo (UniPA). This fosters a coordinated approach to the various actions close or complementary to the Cities Mission deployed at both national and EU level. Furthermore, Italy participates in the NetZero Cities (NCZ) network with Politecnico di Milano (Polytechnic University of Milan) as a project partner.

UniBO is also involved in the CRAFT (Creating Actionable Futures) project that is testing collaborative local models in the framework of the New European Bauhaus transformations



in three 'sandbox cities' (Amsterdam, Bologna and Prague). CRAFT is intended to provide guidance on collaborative local governance models to harness the value of inclusiveness, aesthetics and sustainability.

MUR is involved as a Funding Agency in the Driving Urban Transitions Partnership, opening up the opportunity to provide funding for mission-related projects, thus indirectly supporting the selected Mission Cities and cities that are piloting new solutions for sustainability and climate neutrality.

In **the Netherlands**, no specific support for cities exists, yet. However, the set up of a national support platform is discussed- and could be the first of its kind. Based on a recent analysis, based on the Dutch governance context, the advice is to set up a National Support Structure (NSS) that will provide support to the seven Dutch mission cities in their transition towards climate neutrality in 2030. Currently, the advice is being debated among the Dutch partners and cities. If the decision to start the development of a NSS is made, the Core Country Team will collaborate with various other Dutch partners to set up the platform. Given that the platform still needs to be founded, the currently known members (to the best of the respondents knowledge) are:

- The seven Dutch mission cities (+ possibly five non-selected Dutch cities – to be determined)
- RVO (Dutch Enterprise Agency)
- Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (Ministerie BZK)
- Regieorgaan SIA
- VNG
- Platform31

The national and regional (provincial) governments in the Netherlands are indirectly involved with the process towards climate neutrality at the urban level through various programs. For example, there is a dedicated program for the energy transition in the built environment (especially heating of houses; NPLW), one for the energy transition at the regional level (RES) and a third one for making residential housing and commercial real estate sustainable (energy supply and insulation; PVGO). Furthermore, there are several other developments that are indirectly relevant for urban sustainability, such as agreements between government, business and civil society groups for a sustainable economy (Klimaatakkoord) and the advancement of the circular economy (Uitvoeringsprogramma Circulaire Economie).



The process so far has followed a bottom-up approach: after having been selected, the seven Dutch mission cities discussed how they should go about the drafting and execution of the Climate City Contracts, after which they asked the national government to assist them in this process. The next step is to analyse and determine whether a National Support Platform would be a good model to provide the assistance that the cities ask for. If the establishment of the platform is realised, it will likely facilitate knowledge exchange and aim to incorporate the identification and removal of barriers to the Climate City Contracts. Currently, no financial resources seem to be allocated specifically for urban climate neutrality projects.

In **Poland** the process of establishing a national platform for Cities Mission is at the initial stage. So far, five Polish cities within the Cities Mission have initiated a mutual cooperation with their respective local stakeholders (in the form of a dialog towards achieving climate neutrality).

Furthermore, the cities have initiated a meeting with Polish ministers to informally discuss the need for enabling conditions in Poland and the need to jointly build support structures for climate neutrality. Parties that took part in discussions were representatives of the five mission cities (Warszawa, Wrocław, Kraków, Łódź, Rzeszów) and representatives of four ministries (Ministry of Climate and Environment; Ministry of Funds and Regional Development; Ministry of Education and Science; National Centre for Research and Development). The process started with cities expressing a request to the ministries, asking for support in enabling them to better engage/to invite regional governments such as Marshal Offices (that due to political matters are not willing to build a dialogue with cities). Representatives of CapaCITIES Poland (IEP-NRI) took part in the meeting between cities and the ministries. The general aims of the CapaCITIES project were introduced and the project team offered to help facilitate a national dialog.

The outcome of this meeting was the establishment of a Cities Working Group that aims to meet on a regular basis. Also, the CapaCITIES Poland team is initiating a dialogue with ministries to help them set up a mirror group (Ministries Working Group). All the initiatives undertaken by the CapaCITIES project team aims to help build a road map for the development of the Polish national platform as visualised below:



## ROAD MAP TO POLISH CLIMATE-NEUTRAL CITIES PLATFORM

### CITIES WORKING GROUP

**Goal:** establishment of the national platform

**Task 1:** to map existing collaborations with stakeholders and to identify missing key stakeholders.

**Task 2:** to develop effective mechanisms for stakeholders' engagement.

**Task 3:** Formal national discussion at the CapaCITIES National Event

### MINISTRIES WORKING GROUP

**Goal:** establishment of the national platform

**Task 1:** to map existing collaborations with stakeholders and to identify missing key stakeholders.

**Task 2:** to develop effective mechanisms for stakeholders' engagement.

**Task 3:** Formal national discussion at the CapaCITIES National Event

The current level of supporting policy and financial mechanisms is low. Actions taken are dispersed and need to be coordinated. NFOŚiGW has 16 Provincial Funds for Environmental Protection and Water Management (WFOŚiGW). WFOŚiGW often provides training on how to benefit from a given program and what the funds can be used for. The National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management announces calls for projects. However, the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management is unlikely to support cities in raising funds only as a transferring entity.

Most of the financial support for climate neutrality actions comes from the EU.

In **Portugal**, the process is similar to that of Poland, with Mission Cities creating a network (of cities) to share experience, know-how and learnings on how to achieve the goals of the Cities Mission. Other interested cities are also being invited to participate in the network. Also, the National Agency for Innovation (ANI) has started a process to create a 'Mission Hub Policy Group' involving relevant public organisations who deal with policy instruments that support the country and the cities in the Mission. Policy areas include Environment and Climate Action, Energy, Mobility, Territory, Innovation and Research and Development. A national platform with different stakeholders, such as smaller cities and universities, is being planned and expected to be run by DG Territory (PT). Other stakeholders, like universities, company associations, home owners associations, tenants associations and other NGOs are also expected to be engaged.

In 2020, the government approved the National Investment Program 2030, concerning large structuring projects including mobility, environment and energy (see <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc22/comunicacao/documento?i=apresentacao-do-programa-nacional-de-investimentos-para-2030>). The Program includes public and private investments. Most of the projects related to transports and mobility and some of the projects related to energy are based on national and local authorities investments.

As for support to climate policies, the Ministry for Environment and Climate Action is the



national level body mandated to assure financial instruments, via the Environmental Fund (<https://www.fundoambiental.pt/>). The Environmental Fund also manages the National Recovery and Resilience Plan concerning energy efficiency in buildings, hydrogen and renewables, and sustainable mobility. Support to R&D projects is provided by FCT – Foundation for Science and Technology (<https://www.fct.pt/en/concursos?tab=open&paged=1&type=2>).

Portugal 2030 (<https://portugal2030.pt/>) puts into practice the Partnership Agreement between Portugal and the European Commission to apply 23 billion euros of European funds in projects that stimulate and develop the Portuguese economy, between 2021 and 2027. The total amount available to finance projects will be distributed through programs, organized by themes and regions. Municipalities can apply to obtain support. The priorities of the regional programs include climate action, energy, and mobility.

In **Romania** a platform is currently being established and is expected to be launched in Q2 2023.

The platform - Mirror Mission Cities Hub Romania (M100) - is established by the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization, hosted by UEFISCDI, and created as a support tool to implement the 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030 Mission (Cities Mission). The Romanian government supports the partner cities in the Mission and aims to accelerate investments in climate transition, pollution reduction and climate neutrality by 2030, as set out in national strategies and plans.

M100 will offer support to the three cities and municipalities selected within the Cities Mission (Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca and Suceava) but, more importantly, to the candidate cities, as well as to other cities in Romania that have the ambition to achieve climate neutrality, following the principle "no city left behind". The goal is to spread the knowledge to as many cities in Romania as possible. M100 aims to become a platform for experimentation, facilitation and information, a hub of expertise for the benefit of cities that are engaged in the effort to achieve climate targets by 2030 or 2050, based on the principle of partnership, transparency and participatory governance.

The cities will be invited to join the platform and have access to informative, updated and useful materials published online. It will also showcase the Romanian cities efforts and commitment to achieve climate neutrality and help them establish partnerships and exchange good practices. The aim is to identify solutions and access to and use of resources to meet the challenges of transition. In addition, the M100 experience will contribute to public policy coherence in this field. M100 will also be connected to other platforms that target climate change, sustainable development, transition of cities to climate neutrality, etc.



The aim is also to connect the national and regional authorities that work to support the Mission Cities implementation at the national level. M100 will organize thematic working meetings between the central government, local public authorities and regional development agencies, facilitating the dialogue and exchange of experience with the other Mission hubs in Europe and seeking to create a space where relevant stakeholders work together to identify solutions. Adopting a hybrid-approach, the platform will integrate both top-down processes, initiated by central authorities and implemented at local level, and bottom-up, initiated at local level and scaled up/replicated by involving relevant central authorities. The Platform will provide information and links to materials, webinars, workshops and other sources that will help cities develop capacity and enhance networking collaborations.

Furthermore, the hub is aiming to reach out and facilitate the dialogue between authorities, academia and civil society that support cities in their efforts towards climate neutrality.

The target group of the platform are the cities selected in the Mission, (Bucharest - sector 2, Cluj-Napoca, Suceava), as well as other entities: key governmental actors, local administrations, other candidate cities, universities, business organizations, associative structures (e.g. clusters, professional associations), and other civil society actors.

Currently, through UEFISCDI and MCID, Romania is funding research & innovation solutions for sustainable urban development and urban transformation under the framework of the Driving Urban Transitions Partnership. However, the landscape of national and regional funding available linked to climate neutrality offers a huge potential of synergies that the Mirror Mission Cities Hub hopes to support together with other activities.

As for **Slovakia**, there is currently no platform in place or underway. The main challenge for Slovakia is that there is no single entity in charge of coordinating climate neutrality efforts at a national level. One key task is therefore to determine the pathway to create/formalise such an entity, taking into account governance barriers and enablers, including mapping of stakeholders already involved. Stakeholders identified so far are:

- The Slovak Ministry of the Environment, that is responsible for climate laws (national adaptation and mitigation strategies) and Fitfor55 legislation
- The Ministry of Economy, in charge of updating the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan for 2021-2030
- The Union of Towns and Cities, which is supporting climate and energy questions related to municipalities. The main focus is on education, communication, projects, legislations, supporting green transformation, energy communities, renewable energy, renovation of buildings, circular economy, climate law, etc.



- Climate Coalition: a platform of environmental organizations supporting the whole spectrum of the climate agenda
- The Interest Association of Cities and Municipalities for Sustainable Energy Efficiency
- Bratislava and Kosice, which are both part of the 100 climate neutral cities by 2030
- Nové Zámky, that has become a part of CapaCITIES as a first city of UTC

There is currently no financing capacity for climate neutral cities.

The **Spanish** National Platform CitiES2030 is an initiative designed to support all Spanish cities (over 20.000 inhabitants) committed to achieving climate neutrality, including those selected by the European Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities (Cities Mission), through:

- The development and facilitation of multi-stakeholder ecosystem aimed at the implementation of the Cities Mission
- The development and facilitation of spaces for dialogue and the co-creation of initiatives and multi-city programs
- A range of services adapted to the commitments that cities are making
- The alignment of public policies (especially the Horizon Europe program of the EU) and the interconnection of initiatives at different territorial levels (local, regional, national, EU)

The operation of the platform responds to a double strategy. On the one hand, the aim is to create strong institutional governance to ensure the representativeness and alignment of all the actors involved. On the other hand, it is complemented by networking spaces which favour creativity, collective interpretation and the interconnection of projects and actors involved.

The plan is to merge the network of cities (CitiesES2030) with a multi-stakeholder group (city transformation community, ministries) into one mirror group and also to prepare Climate City Contracts by creating dialogues with other stakeholders. City/university partnerships are also planned for.

In **Sweden**, Viable Cities is the National Cities Mission platform. It is set up as a national strategic innovation programme focusing on the transition to climate-neutral and sustainable cities. The programme's mission is “climate neutral cities 2030 with a good life for all within planetary boundaries.”, operating from 2017 to 2030. The programme is implemented with support in a concerted effort by Vinnova, the Swedish Energy Agency and Formas, where the Swedish Energy Agency is the responsible authority. Viable Cities aims to be a catalyst for new forms of cooperation between cities, industry, academia, research institutes and civil society. KTH is the host organisation for Viable Cities, working together with Lund University, RISE and



Stockholm Environment Institute. Viable Cities' 'Climate Neutral Cities 2030' initiative started in 2019 with nine Swedish municipalities. From autumn 2021, the initiative involves 23 municipalities (including the seven Swedish EU Cities Mission cities), which together account for 40% of Sweden's population. Each city has allocated €1million for their participation in the initiative 2021-2024, co-funded 50% through Viable cities. They have taken it upon themselves to test new ways of working and solutions, to learn from each other and to work for the mission: to create cities that work well for the people who live in them, that are good for the economy of citizens, businesses and society – and – that are good for the climate.

Using tools such as the Climate Contract 2030, the 23 municipalities, six national government authorities (also including the Swedish Transport Authority, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional growth) and Viable Cities are working together in an iterative and annually updated national contracting process to find new ways of working to accelerate the climate transition.

**Türkiye** has no platform for climate neutral cities yet but under the '2020-2023 National Smart Cities Strategy and Action Plan', a National Smart City Architecture and National Smart City Data Sharing Governance Platform will be developed. Its functionality and sustainability will be ensured by the second half of 2023.

Türkiye, being conscious of the fact that climate change is a multidimensional and complex challenge, recognizes the importance of international cooperation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to combat climate change. Therefore, a 'National Climate Change Strategy' in order to contribute to global efforts has been developed, taking into account its own special circumstances and capacity. The strategy includes a set of objectives to be implemented in the short term (within one year), the midterm (undertaken or completed within 1 to 3 years), and long term (undertaken over a 10 year period).

The Climate Change Strategy (2010-2023) includes control strategies for energy, transportation, industry, waste and land use, agriculture and forestry sectors that indirectly affects cities, but does not have a support platform or mechanism for climate neutral cities directly.

While Türkiye does not have a national platform for climate neutral cities yet, relevant stakeholders working with the target of climate neutral cities include the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change and the General Directorate of ILBANK. The bank provides all kinds of financial and investment banking services on various environmental



issues for municipalities. Priority is given to projects in the field of Renewable Energy and Climate Change. The objective of the bank is to meet the financing needs of provincial administrations and municipalities, including development of projects for local joint services, and mediate all kinds of fund transfers from the national government to local governments.

Other stakeholders are The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye – TÜBİTAK and Union of Municipalities of Türkiye (TBB).

**Policy misalignment and gaps in governance structures: Improvement needs and barriers to overcome**

Data in Section B of the Self-assessment is still incomplete, so this topic will be further analysed in Deliverable 4.2. However, from the answers received, some key points can be noted. Barriers, gaps and policy misalignments that were addressed in the Self-assessments include:

- A lack of national and/or regional financing and funding for climate neutrality (scarce or no financial programme or other support for cities' climate-neutrality programme at national level)
- Lack of financial resources and governmental leadership
- Climate projects are not given priority
- Lack of national and regional programmes for technical assistance to cities
- Lack of shared climate neutrality ambition at the local, regional and national level of government
- Lack of supporting policy framework
- Lack of political support and supportive regulation at national level/barriers and obstacles in current legislations
- Lack of multi-level governance framework (for example traditional administration offices with "silo" division of competences, resistance and barriers to overcoming strong centralization etc)
- Lack of alignment and recognition between ministries and limited resources/personnel capacity at ministries
- Misalignment of strategic documents/goals between the local (Cities Mission- Climate neutrality by 2030) and national level: lack of a common goal or measures to get there are barriers to support cities directly in the process
- Lack of a shared climate neutrality ambition at the local, regional and national level of government
- Lack of or hindering legal and regulatory framework



- Low level of national/regional support (lack of supporting policy and funding mechanisms)
- Lack of support for capacity development in cities
- Lack of experts on city level
- Other/additional stakeholders need to be involved
- Knowledge transfer to smaller cities is difficult
- Lack of a centralised contact point with the relevant information for cities
- Defining and assigning responsibilities among various partners a challenge
- Need for capacity building programmes for local administrators and public officers
- Information barrier at local level and low capacity to participate in supporting networks on EU-level (language barriers)
- Gap between theory and practice: aligning relevant stakeholders within policy, funding and financing, legal matters etc.
- Difficult to bring people who deal with methodological support and those who deal with financial support together to discuss the problem and come up with solutions that don't stay on the methodological level
- A challenge to engage a variety of stakeholders: associations of citizens in cities, services companies etc, as well as regional and national partners (academia etc): good communication requires planning
- Challenging to work with citizens and civil society (new forms of governance)
- Energy crisis and high inflation risk halting the efforts for innovation and transition
- Lack of competencies in individual institutions/levels and mandate setting/responsibilities (actions are sometimes dispersed and need to be coordinated)
- Insufficient networking and communication possibilities with ministries
- Legal and policy misalignment (spatial planning etc)
- Lack of a dedicated and transparent source of financing for the implementation of activities within the mission
- Some cities being sensitive to the changes in political cycles/leadership
- Lack of clear political direction
- Network connections and roles need to be developed

### The development of National platforms- a matter of context

As described above, a myriad of supporting structures and platforms are being developed across Europe. The platforms that may result from this evolution may, and most likely will, have different characteristics depending on the country specific context. Here, we would like to highlight some criteria that may provide clearness about different possible configurations of a Cities Mission National Platform.



Depending on the direction of development we may find:

- Bottom up initiatives resulted from the shared impulse of some municipalities
- Top-down structures fostered by national authorities
- A combination of bottom up and top down directions

Based on the organisational characteristics of the platform, we may find:

- A separate entity for this specific task
- An established national organisation for municipalities, with the task to support climate neutral cities as one of many assignments
- A part of one governmental agency/ministry
- A virtual organisation consisting of several partners

Depending on the scope of the platform, its efforts can be focused on:

- The cities pertaining the Cities Mission in a certain country
- The previous and the cities not participating in Cities Mission but are willing to commit to climate neutrality by 2030
- All cities in the country with a declared interest to become climate neutral

## **Conclusions and recommendations for the work ahead**

Infrastructures to facilitate multi-level and multi-stakeholder collaboration are essential to the success of the EU Cities Mission. Furthermore, national Cities Mission Platforms may contribute to create mandate, legitimacy, (reframing) funding and collaborative reinforcement. For those countries where a national platform or network is missing or under development, assistance in setting up support structures that can be further developed should be prioritised. Needless to say, setting up and implementing Cities Mission Platforms and networks should be the main focus for CapaCITIES and the core countries for the duration of the project period and beyond.

We also see a need for CapaCITIES Core Countries to further involve the national level (relevant ministries, legislative, funding and policy bodies etc) as well as regional governments and bodies (where applicable) in the work ahead. After all, the initiative to support cities to become climate neutral by 2030, the EU Cities Mission, is rather new. National, and regional, governments will likely need continued support to adapt to this new mission framework. So far, governments might have concentrated on national strategies, and therefore developed and implemented policies targeting national goals and indicators. The EU Cities Mission requires a new way of working.



While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, some general guidance when setting up a National Mission Platform can be highlighted. For example, the creation and consolidation of organisational infrastructures is a process that can be characterised by:

- **PEOPLE** centered process rather than a bureaucratic instrument. Thus, building trust and cultivating interpersonal relationships is essential
- **CO-DESIGNED** and **ITERATIVE** pathway rather than linear or vertical. It is critical to consolidate and share learnings with all the participants
- **RECIPROCAL** commitments between cities and national governments as well as promoting quadruple helix participation and coordination with regional and European levels. The platform may rely on specific tools (as Climate City Contracting process) to this end.

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