

Report on good practices and interactive good practices map

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About this report

This report investigates the existing multi-level governance (MLG) initiatives being implemented in Europe (particularly in the six participating Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Italy, Portugal, Romania) and in the rest of the World. The objective of the document is twofold: i) assess the administrative levels present in the six participating Member States and ii) map the existing initiatives to establish a reference database and analyse them to understand what the success factors and the obstacles encountered are, in order to issue recommendations for the national partners who are in charge of shaping Climate and Energy Dialogues in the six participating Member States, in order to support them in complying with Article 11 of the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action (1999/2018).

Therefore, the present document contains:

- A detailed presentation of governance levels in the six participating Member States;
- An analysis of 21 MLG initiatives considered as best practices;
- A presentation of the resulting MLG best practices on the online map.

About the Project

Local and regional authorities (LRAs) have the potential of becoming a real driving force of the energy transition, helping Europe achieve its goals of climate neutrality and energy independence. What's more, the EU has clearly designated cities and regions as leaders of Europe's energy transition, through EU urban initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors and the Mission 100 climate-neutral and smart cities.

However, **this is not so clearly reflected on the national level**. Not only do national climate and energy policies rarely tap into this potential, but they also offer little support to these transition efforts at the local level.

These shortcomings have shown through in the first versions of EU Member States' **National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs)**, submitted in 2020 as part of the Energy Union governance process. The European Commission pointed out this discrepancy in the first assessment of the plans. They signalled that the NECPs had not involved LRAs and stakeholders as they should have.

Article 11 of the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action mandates Member States to set up a proper multilevel climate and energy dialogues. For the next version of the NECPs, which are due to be updated, the EU insists that Member States properly implement Article 11. In the latest Guidance to Member States for the updates of their NECPs, published in December 2022, the European Commission emphasizes the need to provide a platform *"to discuss with stakeholders the different scenarios envisaged for energy and climate policies and achieving the EU's climate-neutrality objective set out in the Climate Law"*¹, mentioning the NECPlatform Project.

¹ Commission Notice: Guidance to Member States for the update of the 2021-2030 national energy and climate plans, December 15th, 2022, page 21.

The updated NECPs are currently underway: the first draft is due no later than June 2023 and the final one year later, in June 2024. Over this period, **the NECPlatform project will contribute to making sure that EU Member States bridge the gap** that has been highlighted by the EU Commission's first assessment of the Plans.

How so? **The NECPlatform project will support six EU Member States** (Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Italy, Portugal, and Romania) **in setting up and managing permanent multi-level Climate and Energy Dialogue (CED) Platforms**, as mandated by Article 11 of the Climate and Energy Governance Regulation. These dialogues will help foster vertical and horizontal integration of energy and climate policies.

The Consortium behind NECPlatform

The project is led and coordinated by **Energy Cities**, working tightly with **IEECP**. The platforms are then to be implemented and managed on a national level by organisations in each country: **EnEffect** (Bulgaria), **REG EA** (Croatia), **Agenda Coordinamento 21** (Italy), **Energy Cities** (France), **OER** (Romania), **ZERO** (Portugal).



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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
ANCI	Association of Italian Municipalities
CED	Climate and Energy Dialogue
EE	Energy Efficiency
ETS	Emissions Trading System
GHG	Greenhouse gases
LRA	Local and Regional Authority
MLG	Multi-level governance
NECP	National Energy and Climate Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RES	Renewable energy source
SEDA	Sustainable Energy Development Agency

Executive summary

This report serves as a founding basis for the NECPlatform project, which objective is to develop Climate and Energy Dialogue (CED) platforms in six Member States (Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Italy, Portugal and Romania) as required by Article 11 of the European Regulation on Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action (1999/2018). These platforms aim at bringing together all relevant national stakeholders around the same table to discuss and elaborate the National Energy and Climate Plan. The ultimate objective at the end of this 30-month project, is that Member States take ownership of the platforms and integrate them to their overall energy and climate planning processes.

This report is divided in four parts. The first part gives a short introduction on the concept of multi-level governance (MLG) and of its evolution in recent years. The second part investigates the governance structure of each participating Member State: the different administrative levels present in each of the six countries are thoroughly presented. In the third part, 21 MLG initiatives, which have been selected following a clear and detailed methodology, are described in detail. Members of 17 of these best practices have been interviewed, in order to better understand success factors and obstacles encountered. This analysis leads to recommendations that will serve as a basis to shape the CED platforms in each of the participating Member States (recommendations for additional member states willing to set up such structures will be provided in another report towards the end of the project). Finally, the report's last part introduces the digital map of MLG best practices, which displays the best practices on NECPlatform's website. This map is evolutive and will regularly be updated over the project's lifetime and beyond.

The final set of recommendations for the national partners are summarised below:

- **Be as independent as possible;**
- **Be perceived as a legitimate actor;**
- **Be patient and spend time on the process;**
- **Keep a balance between vertical and horizontal components;**
- **Keep it flexible;**
- **Exchange with peers;**
- **Reduce local and regional authorities' administrative load;**
- **Make the commitment contractual;**
- **Adapt to the local context;**
- **Keep the process flowing.**

All the results presented in this report will be used in the peer-learning workshops organised amongst partners to support them in implementing the CED platforms in their respective country.

1 Multi-Level Governance: An Introduction

Multi-level governance (MLG) is a term used to describe how different actors participate in the exercise of power and how these actors share such power amongst themselves.

In the context of the **NECPlatform project** we are looking at MLG from a political perspective, and therefore at how different administrative levels of a political body (being it the European Union or one of its Member States) concur in delivering policies, actions and strategies.

In this framework, the concept of MLG has been circulating since the early nineties, when it was first proposed by Gary Marks² as a model to understand some of the decision-making dynamics within the European Union.

Since then, the concept has been long studied and debated, both in academia and in studies published by a number of international organisations. Amongst many, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) issued multiple studies looking into better understanding its dynamics, closely linked to the ongoing decentralisation process in many of the world's countries³.

MLG has two main components (or axes):

- A **vertical one**, which refers to the linkages between higher and lower levels of government (e.g. central government, regions, provinces, communities, cities, etc.) including their institutional, financial, and informational aspects.
- A **horizontal one**, which refers to co-operation arrangements between actors sitting at the same level (e.g. amongst regions or between municipalities) and to the participation in the policy process of other actors and relevant stakeholders from the same level as the correspondent administrative levels, such as NGOs, civil society, academia, industry, financial sector, etc.

In the European scene, the concept has made its debut in the Committee of the Regions' White Paper on Multi-Level Governance⁴, where MLG is defined as *a **coordinated action** by the European Union, the Member States and LRAs, based on partnership... to create and implement EU policies (...) leading to responsibility being shared between the different tiers of government.*

More recently the term has been introduced in the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action Regulation (1999/2018)⁵. In Article 11 of the legislation, the European Commission is asking Member States to establish a *permanent multi-level energy dialogue, bringing together local authorities, civil society organisations, the business community, investors and other relevant stakeholders to discuss the different options envisaged for energy and climate policies. It should be possible for the Member State's integrated national energy and climate plan as well as its long-term strategy to be discussed within the framework of that dialogue.*

² Marks, G. 1992. Structural policy in the European community. In Sbragia 1992, 191–225.

³ <https://www.oecd.org/regional/multi-level-governance/mlg.htm>

⁴ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/regi/dv/cdr89-2009_/cdr89-2009_en.pdf

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32018R1999&from=EN>

As mentioned before, the NECPlatform project aims at supporting six Member States in complying with Article 11, and therefore at establishing such multi-level dialogues, which include different administrative levels and relevant stakeholders.

This report has a fundamental role to set the framework of the project, and is divided in two main parts: in the first section the different governance levels in each of the six participating Member States will be analysed; in the second section a list of best practices on multi-level governance will be presented, which will serve as a basis to shape the Climate and Energy Dialogues (CED) in each of the NECPlatform participating countries.

The origins of Multi-Level Governance

Multi-level Governance was first proposed by Gary Marks in 1992¹ as a useful concept to understand some of the decision-making dynamics within the European Union. Until then, the field of EU studies had been dominated by the theories of neo-functionalism and inter-governmentalism, which purported to explain not only how the EU had come about, but also how it functioned².

Since it was first introduced in 1992, the new concept generated a lively debate in academia, where more and more articles were written on the topic, to arrive to the following definition of the MLG approach which Marks himself wrote in 1996:

The point of departure for this multi-level governance approach is the existence of overlapping competencies among multiple levels of governments and the interaction of political actors across those levels. (...) Instead of the two-level game assumptions adopted by state centrists, MLG theorists posit a set of overarching, multi-level policy networks. (...) The presumption of multi-level governance is that these actors participate in diverse policy networks and this may involve subnational actors — interest groups and subnational governments — dealing directly with supranational actors³.

¹ Gary Marks (1992) *Structural policy in the European community*. In Sbragia 1992, 191–225.

² Simona Piattoni (2009) *Multi-level Governance: a Historical and Conceptual Analysis*, *Journal of European Integration*, 31:2, 163-180, DOI: 10.1080/07036330802642755

³ Gary Marks, Nielsen, Ray, and Salk (1996) *Competencies, cracks and conflicts: regional mobilization in the European Union*. *Comparative Political Studies* 29, no. 2: 164–92.

2 Governance levels in partner countries

This section will draw a picture of the different governance levels present in each of the NECPlatform Member States and define their competences.

2.1 Bulgaria

Bulgaria had 6.5 million inhabitants in 2021⁶. The territory's administrative management is structured as follows (Figure 1):

- National level
- Regions (6)
- Districts (28)
- Municipalities (265)



Figure 1: Administrative map of Bulgaria⁷

The Central State has legislative power in all areas, carries out State policy, manages the State budget and maintains law and order.

Bulgaria is a parliamentary representative democratic republic with a multi-party system, whereby the Prime minister is the head of the Council of Ministers (the Government). Executive

⁶ <https://www.nsi.bg/en>

⁷ https://www.worldometers.info/img/maps/bulgaria_political_map.gif

power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in the National Assembly (the Parliament) as the legislative initiative belongs to the deputies and the Council of Ministers. The Government develops and adopts secondary regulatory documents. The Judiciary power is independent of the executive and the legislative powers. The president is directly elected. He is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and Chairman of the National Security Advisory Council. The President can return laws to the Parliament for revision by exercising his veto power. In a moment of parliamentary crisis, when the Parliament is unable to elect a regular Government, the President appoints a caretaker government and sets the date for parliamentary elections.

The National Assembly is a unicameral parliament and legislative body of the Republic of Bulgaria. The Assembly is responsible for enactment of laws, approval of the budget, scheduling of presidential elections, selection and dismissal of the Prime Minister and other ministers, and ratification of international treaties and agreements.

The National Assembly is the main legislative body relating to the energy sector and is also responsible for adoption of the Strategy for Sustainable Energy Development of Bulgaria.

The Council of Ministers adopts national plans and long-term programmes in the energy sector in coordination with the Minister of Energy. The Minister of Energy develops and adopts the secondary regulations in the energy sector.

The national policy in the energy and climate sector of Bulgaria is mostly determined by the EU legislative framework. The national energy policy is implemented by the Minister of Energy.

The main departments responsible for energy and climate policy development and implementation are the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Environment and Water. The Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works is responsible for the energy efficiency policy development and implementation in the residential building sector.

The political upheavals in the country (Bulgaria has been without a regular government for more than two years since 2021) caused delay in the approval of a national strategy for sustainable energy development, which should cover planning in the energy sector in the period 2020–2030, with a horizon up to 2050. The document was published for public consultations but afterward the work on it was stopped without any public explanation.

In implementing the European decarbonisation policy, the Bulgarian government has taken steps to gradually reduce the use of coal in electricity production. In this regard, it should be said that the deadline that Bulgaria has set for closing coal-fired power plants is 2038, though there are expectations that this could happen even earlier. The engagement for this is set in the Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP), but in January 2023 the Parliament voted to assign the caretaker government to renegotiate the schedule with EC.

According to the normative basis in Bulgaria, there are several laws that set the framework for the energy sector. Such legislation is the **Energy Law**⁸, **Law on Energy from Renewable Sources**⁹, **Law on the Safe Use of Nuclear Energy**¹⁰, **Law on Energy Efficiency**¹¹ and the

⁸ <https://www.me.government.bg/en/library/energy-act-256-c25-m1515-1.html>

⁹ <https://seea.government.bg/documents/LERS.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.me.government.bg/en/library/safe-use-of-nuclear-energy-act-313-c25-m1515-1.html>

¹¹ https://seea.government.bg/documents/ZEE_12.03.2021_ENG.pdf

Rules for Trading of Electric Energy¹², as well as the acts in force at European Union level (the relevant sector regulations and directives).

The European Renewable Energy Directive (REDII) has not yet been transposed in Bulgaria. This poses some issues defining the rights of the citizens in the field of energy.

Competence for Energy

The Ministry of Energy adopts the main by-laws (regulations) in the energy sector. It is responsible for conducting the national strategy and policy in the energy sector. The Ministry provides statistics and analyses on renewable energy and energy efficiency goals at state level.

The activities for the implementation of the state energy efficiency improvement policy and promotion of RES are carried out by the Executive Director of Agency for Sustainable Energy Development (SEDA) which has got a status of an executive agency subordinated to the Minister of Energy.

The Bulgarian integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) sets out how to reach national targets for energy and climate, including the binding national target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions that are not covered by the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS). Overall, the aims of the plan are far from ambitious. The document establishes a goal aiming at a 27% share of renewable energy in the total energy mix and 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030. Bulgaria intends to go beyond the 3% annual renovation target incorporated in EU laws and make it at least 5% of the total.

Bulgaria's strategy is to replace energy produced by high-carbon coal plants with energy produced from renewable sources. In fulfilment of this idea, the government has foreseen the construction of 1.4 GW of low-carbon capacities under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Republic of Bulgaria. Meanwhile in January 2023 the care-taker government presented a new draft *Strategical vision for the development of the electrical power sector, 2021-2 Republic of Bulgaria, 2023 – 2053*¹³ where the deadlines for phasing out the coal thermal power plants presented one year earlier in the RRP are shifted in front of time and construction of new nuclear power capacities are planed based on a forecast for an increasing final energy consumption in the country. This document was not voted in the Parliament, before the official conclusion of its mandate and the scheduling of new elections on 2nd April 2023. The document was not announced for public consultations.

Competence for climate

The Ministry of Environment and Water develops and implements the state environmental policy, as its main aspects are related to: legislative initiative – preparation of legislative documents; strategic planning – elaboration of national plans and strategies; implementation of sector policies – water, waste, climate, air, nature, soils, noise, radiation; prevention activities – regulatory and control functions for prevention of pollution of environment; management of programs and projects, financed by the funds of EU and other international funding organisations.

¹² https://www.dker.bg/files/DOWNLOAD/rules_el_en4.pdf

¹³ https://www.me.government.bg/uploads/manager/source/NRRP/%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%8F_2023-2053_1.pdf

2.1.1 Planning region

The territory of Bulgaria is divided into six planning regions (*Райони за планиране* in Bulgarian), each covering several areas: Southwest, Northeast, South central, North Central, Southeast, Northwest. These are areas designated with the main purpose of statistical reporting of territorial units, according to the requirements of Eurostat and do not have any separate administrative governance. They are important for shaping the policies that would be backed with EU funding.

Each region has a regional development council in charge of adopting strategies, plans and programmes for the future development of Bulgaria (e.g. implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Plan).

Competence for Energy

The integrated territorial strategies for the development of the regions include and implement the policy of the State in the field of energy and climate as well as related funding instruments.

2.1.2 District/Region¹⁴

There are 28 District/Regions in Bulgaria (*Област* in Bulgarian). The region is an administrative territorial unit for the conduct of a regional policy, the implementation of state governance on a local level, and the ensuring the convergence of national and local interests (Constitution, Art. 142).

The State authorities and their territorial sub-divisions exercise a control of legality over the acts of local government units - municipalities (Article 144, Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria). The district/region is governed by a district/regional governor appointed by the Council of Ministers and is aided by a district/regional administration who ensures the implementation of the State's policy, the safeguarding of the national interests, law and public order, and exercises administrative control (Constitution, Art. 143).

Administrative Districts/Regions are devolved divisions of the central Government and are not directly elected. Bulgaria is a highly centralised State, as the national Council of Ministers directly appoints district governors and all districts are fully dependent on the State's budget, whereas Municipalities have their own incomes (e.g. from local taxes and fees and services) but still are very dependent on the State's budget. District administrations can set up expert boards to support province governors and mayors in the management of energy efficiency in State or municipal buildings (Art. 64 ZEE).

Competence for Energy

State policies in the field of energy efficiency are implemented by all governmental and local bodies. In the field of energy efficiency and RES district/regional governors exercise annual control on the local energy efficiency and RES plans and programs. In the beginning of every year district/regional governors send reports on the progress in the field of EE and RES to the Executive Director of Agency for Sustainable Energy Development.

¹⁴ The English version of the Constitution of Bulgaria translates both NUTS-2 and NUTS-3 levels as regions, thus the term district appears only once in the translation.

2.1.3 Municipalities

The Municipality (*Община* in Bulgarian) constitutes the only level at which self-government is exercised. There are 265 municipalities in Bulgaria.

According to the Local Government and Local Administration Act¹⁵ (Article 17), the local government is expressed in the right and real possibility for the citizens, and the bodies elected by them, to decide independently all issues of local importance, which has been vested by the law to their competences, which include:

- the structure and the development of the territory of the municipality and of the settlements in it;
- protection of environment and rational use of the natural resources;
- the maintenance and the preservation of cultural, historic and architectural monuments;
- disaster protection.

Competence for Energy

Local governments implement the State policy related to energy efficiency, RES, climate, sustainable development etc. According to Article 12 of the Law on Energy Efficiency, local government and bodies in Bulgaria draw and adopt energy efficiency programmes. Government and local bodies submit reports on the implementation of the programmes to the Executive Director of SEDA on an annual basis. This measure is directly related to the requirements of Law on Energy Efficiency Article 63, under which the owners of public buildings (owned by either the state or by municipalities) are under the obligation to engage in energy efficiency management. Energy efficiency management involves arranging the implementation of EE programmes, along with other measures leading to energy savings. Energy efficiency management is reported to SEDA by the 1st March every year with the submission of the reports on EE programmes. Reports are submitted in a template form produced and endorsed by SEDA.

According to Article 9 of the Law on Energy from Renewable Sources local authorities implement short-term and long-term programmes for promotion of RES. The progress of these programs is reported annually to SEDA.

¹⁵<https://www.mrrb.bg/en/local-government-and-local-administration-act/>

Existing dialogue framework/entity between levels

SEDA

The Sustainable Energy Development Agency (SEDA) carries out functions in connection with the promotion and provision of various incentives for renewable energy production and increasing energy efficiency. The Agency often is a main mediator between district and local administrations as well as a significant messenger for the central level.

District administrations

District administrations can set up expert boards to support district governors and mayors in the management of energy efficiency in State or municipal buildings (Art. 64 Law on Energy Efficiency).

2.1.4 Summary

Table 1: Governance levels and competences in Bulgaria

Governance Body	Competence in Energy	Competence in Climate
NATIONAL Ministry of Energy (ME) Ministry of Environment and Waters (MOEW) Ministry of Economy (MEC) Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW) Ministry of Transport Sustainable Energy Development Agency (SEDA)	ME adopts the main laws in the energy sector. ME is responsible for conducting the national strategy and policy in the energy sector (including NECP and energy targets) MRDPW is responsible for implementation of national policies in the field of development and introduction of technical rules and norms on energy performance of buildings and, the implementation of energy efficiency renovation projects in residential buildings. - SEDA is responsible for implementation of EE and RES policy. MEC is responsible for implementation of national policies related to energy efficiency in SMEs and to energy consumption in the industrial sector. MoT is responsible for the implementation of the energy efficiency national policies in the transport sector.	MOEW develops and implements the state environmental policy, MOEW manages of programs and projects, financed by the funds of EU and other international funding organizations.
DISTRICT/REGIONS	The integrated territorial strategies for the development of the regions include and implement the policy of the state in the field of energy and climate as well as related funding instruments. Regional governments develop energy efficiency programs and programs for promotion the use of renewable energy and biofuels and report to SEDA on the implementation on annual basis.	
MUNICIPALITIES	The integrated local development plans, energy efficiency programs and programs for promotion of the use of renewable energy and biofuels, include and implement of state policy in the field of energy and climate as well as related funding instruments.	

2.2 Croatia

Croatia has 3.9 million inhabitants in 2021¹⁶. The territory is divided in counties (20 plus the City of Zagreb which is both a city and a county) and then by municipalities and cities, which are subdivided in districts and villages.



Figure 2: Administrative map of Croatia¹⁷

The Government proposes laws and other acts to the Croatian Parliament as well as the state budget and final accounts. It implements laws and other decisions of the Croatian Parliament, passes decrees for the execution of laws, conducts foreign and domestic policy, directs, and supervises the work of the state administration, takes care of the country's economic development, directs activities and the development of public services, and performs other tasks determined by the Constitution and the law.

In the Republic of Croatia, state power is organised on the principle of division of power into legislative, executive, and judicial powers. The Prime Minister heads the Government and is, together with its members, responsible for the decisions made by the Government, who is in turn responsible to the Croatian Parliament.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia exercises executive power in accordance with the Constitution and the law. In the exercise of executive power, the Government determines, directs, and coordinates the implementation of policies and programs, and for this purpose

¹⁶ <https://podaci.dzs.hr/2022/en/29031>

¹⁷ <https://www.worldometers.info/maps/croatia-political-map/>

proposes and adopts strategies, gives guidelines, adopts acts, and undertakes other measures necessary to regulate relations in the area of its competence.

Competence in Energy

The field of energy and climate are under the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development in Croatia. Some of the main laws in the field of energy in the Republic of Croatia are the Law on Energy, the Law on Energy Efficiency, the Law on Renewable Energy Sources and High-Efficiency Cogeneration, the Law on Regulation of Energy Activities, and the Law on the Electricity Market, as well as others. The scope of work of the Ministry is outlined in the following paragraph.

The **Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development** determines strategic directions, develops programs and plans for the sustainable development of society based on the principle of a green and circular economy with the aim of transforming into a just and prosperous society with a resource-efficient and competitive economy, ensuring climate neutrality, preservation, and sustainable use of natural resources. The scope of the Ministry includes tasks related to the protection and preservation of the environment and nature in accordance with the sustainable development policy of the Republic of Croatia; tasks related to waste management and environmental impact assessments; jobs related to mitigation of climate change and adaptation to climate change; jobs related to water management and administrative and other jobs in the field of energy.

Competence in Climate

Climate aspects are covered in the **Integrated national energy and climate plan** for the period from 2021 to 2030, as well as in the Climate change adaptation strategy of the Republic of Croatia for the period up to 2040 with a view to 2070.

2.2.1 County

The Republic of Croatia is divided into four statistical regions (*statističke regije* in Croatian), namely: Pannonian Croatia, Northern Croatia, Adriatic Croatia, and the City of Zagreb. Croatian regions however do not have administrative power, which belongs to counties (*županija* in Croatian). There are 21 counties in Croatia.

Counties perform tasks of regional importance, which are not assigned to state bodies by the Constitution and laws, as a self-governing and entrusted (state administration affairs) body. Within its self-governing scope, the county performs tasks related to education, health care, spatial and urban planning, economic development, traffic and transport infrastructure, maintenance of public roads, planning and development of a network of educational, health, social and cultural institutions, issuance of building and location permits, other acts related to construction and the implementation of spatial planning documents for the county area outside the area of the big city, and other jobs in accordance with special laws.

The representative body is the county assembly. The executive body is the county governor. County governor and deputies are elected in direct elections in accordance with a special law.

Competence in Energy

Counties in Croatia implement the national energy policy. Their energy actions are most often defined by the **Energy Efficiency Action Plan** at the county level. The Energy Efficiency Action Plan is an obligation according to the **Law on Energy Efficiency of the Republic of Croatia**

and is a planning document for the implementation of the policy for improving energy efficiency in the regional self-government unit, i.e. in the area of a large city, and is adopted for a period of 3 years. Energy Efficiency Action Plan is a basic document that, based on collected data on the current energy situation, identifies and provides precise and clear guidelines for the implementation of energy saving projects, for the application of energy efficiency measures and for the use of renewable energy sources and environmentally friendly fuels at the county or city level, which will result in a reduction of CO2 emissions.

Also, there are 5 regional energy agencies in Croatia, with activities at the level of the county/counties in which they are located, but also beyond. Their role is to promote and encourage regional sustainable development in the field of energy and environmental protection. One of the most important activities of regional agencies is the creation of local energy efficiency programs and action plans according to and in line with the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan. Additionally, there are many development agencies in the Republic of Croatia. All of them were founded with the aim of improving the socio-economic development of different cities, municipalities, and counties. Development agencies can also contribute to the field of energy and climate, but this depends on their capacity and staff expertise.

When it comes to energy management, ISGE, an information system for energy management is used at the county level. ISGE is an online application for monitoring and analysing energy and water consumption in public sector buildings and is an inevitable tool for systematic energy management in buildings owned or used by cities, counties, the Government of the Republic of Croatia, as well as in buildings of other governmental users as well as those of public authorities.

Competence in Climate

At the county level, as far as the climate is concerned, it is mandatory for counties to adopt the Program for Air Protection, Ozone Layer, Mitigation of Climate Change and Adaptation to Climate Change. Climate activities at county level are mostly supported by the energy agencies.

2.2.2 Municipality / City

There are 428 municipalities (*općina* in Croatian) and 127 cities (*grad* in Croatian) in Croatia. Municipalities and cities in their self-governing scope perform tasks of local significance that directly meet the needs of citizens, and which are not assigned to state bodies by the Constitution or law, and in particular tasks related to: development of settlements and housing, spatial and urban planning, protection and improvement of the natural environment, fire protection and civil protection and traffic in its area amongst others.

The representative body is the municipal/city council, and the executive body is the municipal/city leader (mayor).

Competence in Energy

Energy competences in cities and municipalities (with the exceptions of big cities, e.g. Zagreb) are mainly supported by the regional energy agencies, and in some cases, by the development agencies. Cities in particular need additional help and guidance with energy and climate issues, and on top of the energy agencies rely also on external consultants.

Many cities and some municipalities are part of the Covenant of Mayors and have developed a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP), which has mitigation and adaptation measures defined for the city/municipal level. Additionally, in accordance with the provisions of

the Energy Efficiency Act, cities also develop an Energy Efficiency Action Plan for a three-year period. As mentioned before, the information system ISGE is also used on the city level to collect and manage data regarding energy and water consumption.

Additionally, spatial plans also have a role in terms of climate and energy planning, but for now most spatial plans have only a minimum of requirements related to energy and climate in Croatia.

Competence in Climate

In municipalities, climate activities are mainly supported by the regional energy agencies, and in some cases, by the development agencies. On the city level, climate competences are in general limited. Climate aspects are included in SECAP's and Adaptation plans for cities.

In general, there are very limited in-house competencies regarding energy and climate (except in larger cities). Cities need additional help and guidance with energy and climate issues, for example support of energy agencies, development agencies and external consultants.

Climate competences are in general limited on the city level but are included in SECAP's and Adaptation plans for cities.

2.2.3 District and Village

There are 6755 districts (*naselje* in Croatian) in Croatia. Districts do not have administrative authority but are part of the city territory and administration. However, there may be active local committees in the districts that advocate for the interests of the residents. However, their competences in energy and climate are minimal.

Villages (*selo* in Croatian) do not have administrative authority but are part of a city or municipality territory and administration. However, within villages there may be local committees advocating for the residents' interests. Their competences in energy and climate are limited.

Existing dialogue framework/entity between levels

Association of Cities

The Association of Cities is a national, non-partisan and impartial community of cities founded in 2002 with the aim of encouraging the cooperation of local self-government units and promoting the common interests of cities in the Republic of Croatia. The association has 127 members, and each member city in the association is represented by a mayor.

Croatian Association of Counties

The Croatian Association of Counties cooperates with national associations of local self-government, is a member of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the Committee of Regions of the European Union and has achieved bilateral cooperation with the French Association of Councils of European Municipalities and Regions and with the Union of Voivodeships of the Republic of Poland.

Island Movement

An active community among Croatian islands, with a vision to become a connected, self-sufficient island community with a continuous active contribution to energy independence, diversification of the economy and agriculture, and general strengthening of the Croatian islands' resistance to environmental and economic challenges.

Local Committees

The local committee is a form of direct participation of citizens in deciding on issues of their daily and immediate interest in life and work.

2.2.4 Summary

Table 2: Governance levels and competences in Croatia

Governance Body	Competence in Energy	Competence in Climate
NATIONAL Ministry of Environmental Protection and Energy Ministry of Economy and Sustainable development	Law on Energy, the Law on Energy Efficiency, Environmental Protection Act (and others) National Energy Efficiency Action Plan Integrated national energy and climate plan for the period from 2021 to 2030 The Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund	Integrated national energy and climate plan for the period from 2021 to 2030 Climate change adaptation strategy for the period up to 2040 with a view to 2070 The Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund
COUNTIES	Energy Efficiency Action Plan Support from the regional energy agencies as well as development agencies Using the ISGE information tool for monitoring energy consumption	Counties are responsible for adopting the Program for Air Protection, Ozone Layer, Mitigation of Climate Change and Adaptation to Climate Change. Energy Efficiency Action Plan Support from the energy agencies

MUNICIPALITIES / CITIES	Sustainable Energy and Climate Plan (SECAP) Responsible for using the ISGE at municipal level	Sustainable Energy and Climate Plan (SECAP) Climate Adaptation plans
VILLAGE/DISTRICTS	Very limited	Very limited

2.3 France

France has 68 million inhabitants in 2021¹⁸. The territory's administrative management is structured as follows:

- Region (18)
- Department (101)
- Intercommunality (1254)
- Commune (34968)



Figure 3: Administrative map of France¹⁹

The Central State is responsible for defining and implementing the nation's policy. The Government (executive power) has exclusive responsibility in all matters relating to national

¹⁸ <https://www.insee.fr/en/accueil>

¹⁹ <https://francemap360.com/france-map>

sovereignty. It is composed of a Prime Minister, heading a government composed of 17 Ministers and 10 Secretary of State. The French Parliament is the bicameral legislative body of the French Republic, consisting of the Senate and the National Assembly (349 and 577 members).

Competence for Energy and Climate

Major energy and climate policy directions are defined at national level and translated through plans and strategies: **Energy and Climate Planning Law**²⁰, **Multi-annual Energy Plan**²¹, the **National Low-Carbon Strategy**²², the **Housing Energy Renovation Plan**²³.

2.3.1 Region

There are 18 regions (*région* in French) in France (13 continental ones and 5 overseas regions). Each has an elected Regional Council, which is the deliberative assembly of the Region. The President of the Regional Council is the executive body and is elected by regional councillors. The Region's main competences include (amongst others):

- Economic development;
- Regional transport including regional transport plans, civil airports, non-autonomous harbours;
- Departmental transport including school transport, interurban transports, passenger transport, roads, commercial and fisheries ports (shared competency with Departments);
- Management of European funds;
- Regional planning and environmental management (SRADDET - Regional Layout, Sustainable Development and Territorial Equality Plans).

Competence in Energy

The Region is the planning body of the energy transition in France. This role is translated through various tools and plans:

- Regional Layout, Sustainable Development and Territorial Equality Plans (SRADDET): strategic document defining mid and long-term objectives related to urban planning, housing, transport, pollution, energy, biodiversity and waste management (to be updated every 6 years);
- Regional Plan for the Connection of Renewable Energies to the Grid;
- Regional Programme for Energy Efficiency;

²⁰<https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/loi-energie-climat#:~:text=Adopter%20le%208%20novembre%202019,%C3%A0%20l'Accord%20de%20Paris>

²¹<https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/programmations-pluriannuelles-lenergie-ppe>

²²<https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/strategie-nationale-bas-carbone-snbc>

²³<https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/plan-renovation-energetique-des-batiments#:~:text=Le%20plan%20de%20r%C3%A9novation%20%C3%A9nerg%C3%A9tique,lutte%20contre%20la%20pr%C3%A9carit%C3%A9%20%C3%A9nerg%C3%A9tique>

Competence in Climate

Regarding competences in Climate, the Regions are the managing authorities for the Cohesion Fund²⁴.

2.3.2 Department

There are 101 departments (*département* in French) in France - 96 continental ones plus the 5 overseas regions: French Guyana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte and Réunion. Their main competences include (amongst others):

- Departmental transport, including school transport, interurban transports, passenger transport, roads, commercial and fisheries ports, civil airports, non-autonomous harbours and railways;
- Planning, including aid programme, in cooperation with the Regions;
- Economic development (complementary to that of the Region);
- Environment protection, in particular waste management and water plans;
- Rural development and agriculture aid.

The Departmental Council is the elected and deliberative assembly of the Department. Departmental councillors are elected for 6 years. The president of the Departmental Council is the executive body, assisted by a permanent commission.

Competence in Energy

With the “Notre” law (Nouvelle Organisation Territoriale de la République – New Territorial Organisation of the Republic)²⁵, departments have very limited competences related to energy and climate, while their action shifted towards social policies.

2.3.3 Intercommunality

There are 1254 intercommunalities (*Intercommunalité* in French) in France. Intercommunalities form a framework within which local tasks are carried out together under the form of an EPCI (Public Body of Intercommunal Cooperation). There are different categories of EPCI: *syndicat de communes*, *communautés de communes* (unlike other forms of EPCI, the *communautés de communes* are not subject to a minimum threshold of population to come into existence; the only constraint is the geographical continuity), *communautés urbaines*, *communautés d'agglomération*, et *métropoles*.

An intercommunality is administered by a council (*conseil communautaire*) made up of delegates from the municipal councils of each member commune (municipality). The number of seats allocated to each commune reflects the size of the commune.

Intercommunalities have a number of functions, amongst which:

- Urban planning (SCoT - Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale & PLU - Plan Local d'Urbanisme);
- Economic development;
- Environment protection, specifically water and waste management;

²⁴ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/96/le-fonds-de-cohesion>

²⁵ <https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/loi-portant-sur-nouvelle-organisation-territoriale-republique-notre#>

- Local traffic.

Competence in Energy

Intercommunalities are in charge of planning and coordination the energy transition at local level through various strategies and policies:

- **Territorial Climate, Air and Energy Plan (PCAET)** mandatory for ECPI over 20,000 inhabitants including GHG inventory (covering only scope 1 - to be updated every 3 years), local objectives (in terms of GHG reduction, renewable energy production, etc.), policies & actions translating objectives into operational measures and a monitoring scheme (PCAET to be updated every 6 years)
- Creation and exploitation of district heating network
- Measures & policies for energy management and renewable energy production
- Communes below 20,000 inhabitants can voluntarily elaborate PCAET.

Competence in Climate

Local Urban Plan (PLU): climate and energy topics are now better taken into account through:

- PADD (Sustainable Layout Development Plan) defining main trends for energy networks (gas, electricity, and heat)
- PLU can define sectors imposing minimum renewable energy production in new constructions and urban projects.

2.3.4 Municipalities

There are 34968 municipalities (*commune* in French) in France. The municipality is composed of a deliberative assembly, directly elected with extensive powers to administer it. The council elects the mayor, who exercise the executive power.

The main competences - if not transferred to an intercommunality – are social welfare, education, town planning, housing, culture & heritage, tourism & sport.

They have minimum competences in energy and climate policy.

Existing dialogue framework/entity between levels

Regional Energy Committee

Regional Energy Committees are still in the construction phase. These committees have been created by the Citizen Convention Law. They will be co-chaired by the Presidents of Regional Councils and Regional Prefects. They are places for debate and consultation on energy matters with the objective to set out regional objectives for renewable energy production. Members will be representatives of the State, region, local authorities, companies of the energy sector including distribution system operators and civil society.

National Council for Ecological Transition

It is the dialogue forum bringing 50 members representing civil society, local authorities, parliamentaries, trade unions, employers' organizations, the General Committee for Sustainable Development and the Economic, Social and Environmental Council together. The Council is consulted on draft legislation related to energy and climate issues and the low-carbon strategy. The council meets once every two months in plenaries.

2.3.5 Summary

Table 3: Governance levels and competences in France

Governance Body	Competence in Energy	Competence in Climate
NATIONAL LEVEL	Major policy directions are defined at national level and translated through plans and strategies: Loi de Programmation sur l'Énergie et le Climat (LPEC) – Energy and Climate Planning Law Programmation Pluriannuelle de l'Énergie (PPE) – Multiannual Energy Plan	Stratégie Nationale Bas-Carbone (SNBC) – National Low-Carbon Strategy National Climate Change Adaptation Plan
REGION	Regional plan for the territory's equality, management, and sustainable development (SRADDET); Regional plan for the connection to the renewable energy networks; Regional programme for energy efficiency (PREE)	Managing Authorities for the Cohesion Funds
DEPARTMENT		
INTERCOMMUNALITY	Climate/Air/Energy Territorial Plan (PCAET) mandatory for ECPI over 20,000 inhabitants	Climate/Air/Energy Territorial Plan (PCAET) mandatory for ECPI over 20 000 inhabitants PLU (Local Urban Plan)

2.4 Italy

Italy had 59.03 million inhabitants in January 2022. The territory's administrative management is structured as follows:

- Regions (20);
- Provinces (76), Metropolitan cities (14) and other sub-regional bodies;
- Municipalities (7901).



Figure 4: Administrative map of Italy²⁶

²⁶<https://www.worldometers.info/maps/italy-political-map/>

The central Government is responsible for all main areas of policy, including the protection of the environment and the ecosystem, in particular legislation implementing Community obligations, thus playing the role of a uniform level of protection that is imposed on the entire national territory, while in competition with other areas of regional competence.

The Executive power is exerted by the Government, whose leader is the Prime Minister. Legislative power is primarily vested in the Parliament, which is composed of two chambers – the senate and the chamber of deputies – although the government is also able to legislate on certain matters. It is up to the national level to legislate on a number of sectors, including the protection of the environment and the ecosystems and preserving the cultural heritage. This is particularly important in the Italian case: Italy is a country with a high number of sites with historical interest. These sites do not only include important monuments, but also the old centres of most cities, municipalities, and villages in the country. This implies that very often, when it comes to energy efficiency measures or installation of renewable energy sources, there is a conflict between the local level (in charge of the energy measures) and the government (in charge of preserving the historical heritage).

Competence in Energy

- NECP (National Energy and Climate Plan);
- Fiscal measures for incentivising energy efficiency measures in buildings and renewable energy production (e.g. ecobonus);
- Energy communities

Competence in Climate

- National strategy for adaptation to climate change;
- National climate change adaptation plan;
- National strategy for sustainable development.

2.4.1 Region

The regions (*regioni* in Italian) constitute the first level of territorial subdivision of Italy, as well as public bodies endowed with political and administrative autonomy described in the Italian constitution (articles 114-133). There are formally 20 Regions in Italy, of which 5 have a special status (Sicilia, Sardegna, Valle d'Aosta, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Trentino-Alto Adige). For one of these, Trentino-Alto Adige, the two autonomous provinces are endowed with legislative powers.

Regions operate according to the Italian constitution following the principle of subsidiarity (art. 118 of the Constitution), which requires administrative functions to be assigned to bodies closest to the citizens, except where the competence of a higher level is necessary to associate the unitary exercise.

Except for the matters that are for exclusive regulation of the national level, there are domains in which regions and the national level are requested to cooperate. These include: international relations and relations with the EU; foreign trade; labour protection and safety; education, without prejudice to the autonomy of educational institutions and with the exclusion of vocational education and training; professions; scientific and technological research and support for innovation in the productive sectors; health protection; food; sports regulations; civil protection; territorial government; ports and civil airports; major transport and navigation networks; communication regulations; national energy production, transport and distribution; supplementary and supplementary pensions; coordination of public finance and the tax

system; valorisation of the cultural and environmental heritage and promotion and organisation of cultural activities; savings banks, rural banks, regional credit companies; regional land and agricultural credit institutions.

In matters of concurrent legislation, the regions have legislative powers, except for the determination of fundamental principles, which are reserved for State legislation.

Elections and functioning of the regions differ amongst regions. However, all regions have a regional assembly, which is directly elected by citizens. Regions have presidents, who are also directly elected by citizens (and who are for this reason referred to as “governors”, similarly to the US). The executive body is the Regional Council.

Competence in Energy and Climate:

- Regional Sustainable Development Strategy;
- Regional Energy Plan;
- Management of funds of Regional Operational Programme – ERDF;
- Regional Strategy and Adaptation Plan.

2.4.2 Provinces, Metropolitan cities and other sub-regional bodies

Italian regions are subdivided into lower administrative levels:

- Provinces or other bodies, including:
 - 76 ordinary provinces (*province*, in Italian);
 - The 2 autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano (*province autonome*, in Italian - where the region is only a formality as power is exercised directly at provincial level);
 - 4 regional decentralisation entities (*enti regionali decentralizzati* in Italian) in Friuli Venezia Giulia;
 - 6 consortia of municipality (*consorzi di comuni* in Italian) in Sicily;
 - Valle d’Aosta, where the province coincides with the region.
- 14 metropolitan cities (*città metropolitane* in Italian): Bari, Bologna, Cagliari, Catania, Firenze, Genova, Messina, Milano, Napoli, Palermo, Reggio-Calabria, Roma, Sassari, Torino and Venezia. They cover about 1/3 of the Italian population. The territory of metropolitan cities coincides with that of the province of the same name that has been abolished.

According to the most recent legislation (Law 56/2014), the council and presidents of the 76 provinces of ordinary statute regions are elected by restricted suffrage by the mayors and councillors of the municipalities in the province, while in the 14 metropolitan cities the equivalent of the president of the province is the (elective) mayor of the capital, known as the metropolitan mayor.

Regarding the types of entities similar to provinces in the special statute regions, as of August 2022 the six free municipal consortia in Sicily and the four Sardinian provinces are governed by extraordinary commissioners appointed by the respective regional administrations, the two autonomous provinces of Trentino-Alto Adige each elect their own president, and finally in Valle d’Aosta the functions of the province are performed by the regional administration (whose president is elected by the regional council).

The main competences of the above-mentioned bodies are:

- a) Provincial spatial planning for coordination, as well as protection and enhancement of the environment, for matters of competence;
- b) planning of provincial transport services, authorisation and control of private transport, as well as construction and management of provincial roads;
- c) provincial planning of the school network;
- d) data collection and processing and technical and administrative assistance to local authorities;
- e) school building management;
- f) control of discriminatory phenomena in the field of employment and promotion of equal opportunities in the province.

These bodies have mainly management powers, rather than legislative or regulatory powers.

2.4.3 Municipalities

There are 7901 municipalities (*comuni* in Italian) in Italy. Municipalities shall have all the administrative functions relating to the population and the municipal territory, the general organisation of administration, financial and accounting management and control, town planning and building planning at municipal level and participation in spatial planning at supra-municipal level.

At the head of the municipality is the mayor, democratically elected through municipal elections, who shares executive powers together with the municipal board, a collegial body composed of a variable number of assessors, appointed by him to represent the political forces that support him. Overseeing everything is the municipal council, a collegiate body composed of municipal elected councillors with the function of approving the municipal budget, resolutions and measures issued by the mayor/administration (e.g. ordinances).

Often the municipalities belong to unions of municipalities such as hill, mountain, island or valley communities.

The municipality (either alone or in associated form) is in charge of the municipal police, housing policies, social policies, urban planning, risk prevention, protection, emergency management and the definitive restoration of damage caused by public disasters; water cycle; waste cycle; local transport; energy distribution.

Competence in Energy and Climate:

- Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP);
- Green Plans;
- Urban Plans ;
- Building codes²⁷.

²⁷ Building codes (*regolamenti edilizi* in Italian) are technical documents which regulate the technical-aesthetic, sanitation, safety and liveability aspects of buildings, and within which it is possible to include many obligations concerning sustainability. They are considered priority actions for both climate change mitigation and adaptation

Existing dialogue framework/entity between levels

State - Regions Conference

The State-Regions Conference (more precisely, the Permanent Conference for relations between the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano) represents the main forum for coordination between the State and the Regions and is the expression of the 'principle of loyal cooperation'. It has duties of information, consultation, and liaison, in relation to general policy guidelines likely to affect matters of regional competence, with a meeting at least every six months.

Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI)

Association of Italian Municipalities, which has 7 134 member municipalities representing 94.7% of the population. The fundamental objective of ANCI's activities is to represent and protect the interests of municipalities before Parliament, the government, the regions, public administration bodies, EU bodies, the Committee of the Regions, and any other institution that performs public functions of local interest.

Table 4: Governance levels and competences in Italy

Governance Body	Competence in Energy	Competence in Climate
NATIONAL LEVEL	NECP (National Energy and Climate Plan); Fiscal measures for incentivising energy efficiency measures in buildings and renewable energy production (e.g. ecobonus); Energy communities	National strategy for adaptation to climate change; National climate change adaptation plan; National strategy for sustainable development.
REGION	- Regional Energy Plan; - Management of funds of the Regional Operational Programme (ERDF).	Regional Sustainable Development Strategy; Regional Strategy and Adaptation Plan; Management of funds of the Regional Operational Programme (ERDF).
DEPARTMENT		
AREE METROPOLITANE RAGGRUPPAMENTI DI COMUNI AREE VASTE	Sustainable Energy and Climate Plan (SECAP) Urban Plans; Energy Regulations.	Sustainable Energy and Climate Plan (SECAP); Green Plans.

2.5 Portugal

Portugal had 10.3 million inhabitants in 2021²⁸. The territory's administrative management is structured as follows:

- Regions (7)
- Intermunicipal entities (23)
- Municipalities (308)
- Parishes (3091)



²⁸ https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpgid=ine_main&xpid=INE

Figure 5: Administrative map of Portugal²⁹

The central Government is responsible for all main areas of policy. The Executive power is exercised by the Government, whose leader is the Prime Minister. Legislative power is primarily vested in the Assembly of the Republic, although the government is also able to legislate on certain matters.

Competence in Energy

- Plano Nacional de Energia e Clima (PNEC or NECP)
- Lei de Bases do Clima (Climate Law)
- Roteiro para a Neutralidade Carbónica 2050 (RNC2050)

Competence in Climate

- Programa de Ação para a Adaptação às Alterações Climáticas (P-3AC)

2.5.1 Region

There are 7 regions (*regiões* in Portuguese) in Portugal. The Regional Commission for Coordination and Development has competencies in the domains of coordination and articulation of the various sectorial policies of regional scope, of execution of the environmental and land and city planning policies, technical support to local authorities and their associations, and management of European funds programs. Each region has a presidency appointed by resolution of the Council of Ministers, following electoral procedures. They have minimal competences in energy and climate.

2.5.2 Subregions / Intermunicipal Community

There are 25 subregions (*sub-regiões* in Portuguese) in Portugal, of which 2 are autonomous regions (Azores and Madeira), 2 metropolitan areas (Lisbon and Porto) and 21 are intermunicipal communities (*comunidade intermunicipal* or *CIM* in Portuguese). The main organs of the CIM are the inter-municipal assembly and the executive council. The former is the deliberative body of the CIM, composed of representatives of the member municipalities (minimum 3, maximum 9 per municipality), depending on the respective number of voters, who are elected proportionally among the members directly elected from each municipal assembly. The latter is the CIM's governing body and is made up of the mayors of each of the member municipalities.

The main competences of these supra-municipal structures are:

- Elaboration of public investment plans and programs affecting the metropolitan area;
- Definition of service and equipment networks of metropolitan scope;
- Participation in public entities of metropolitan scope, namely in the fields of transport, water, energy and solid waste treatment;
- Planning promotion and management of the economic, social and environmental development strategy of the territory covered;
- Articulation of municipal investments of a metropolitan/intermunicipal nature;
- Participation in the management of support programs for regional development;

²⁹ <https://www.worldometers.info/maps/portugal-political-map/>

- Plan the action of public entities of a metropolitan/intermunicipal nature.

Competence in Energy and Climate

- Development of energy and climate plans and strategies;
- Coordination of projects and initiatives;
- Promotion of environmental education and awareness;
- Energy equipment and infrastructure management;
- Monitoring and evaluation of energy and climate indicators.

2.5.3 Municipality

There are 308 municipalities in Portugal (Municípios in Portuguese). Municipalities have a system composed of an executive body (the municipal chamber - composed of the president of the municipality and a number of councillors proportional to the municipality's population) and a deliberative body (the municipal assembly - composed of the presidents of all the parishes that compose the municipality, as well as by a number of directly elected deputies). Municipalities do not necessarily coincide with cities and towns. Municipalities have competencies in the following areas (amongst others): rural and urban equipment; energy; transportation and communications; housing; environment and basic sanitation; territorial planning and urbanism.

Competence in Energy and Climate

Regarding their competences in energy and climate, many municipalities have their own Sustainable Energy Action Plan and their own Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan.

Municipalities also have other competencies:

- Development of energy and climate plans and strategies
- Promotion of energy efficiency and energy conservation actions
- Encouraging the use of renewable energy sources
- Solid waste management
- Monitoring and evaluation of energy and climate indicators

2.5.4 Parish

There are 3091 parishes in Portugal (*Freguesia* in Portuguese). Parishes are subdivisions of municipalities. Six municipalities are composed of only one parish, and Barcelos, with 61 parishes, has the most. Corvo is, by law, the only municipality with no parishes. Parishes are ruled by a system composed by the parish board/council (executive body) and the parish assembly, which is the deliberative body, elected by universal, direct ballot of the citizens registered in the area of the parish. Amongst others, they have competencies in the following areas: rural and urban equipment; public supply; education; culture, leisure and sports; primary health care; social action; civil protection; environment and salubrity, etc.

Existing dialogue framework/entity between levels

Adapt.local – Network of municipalities for local adaptation to climate change

Created in December 2016, as a result of the ClimAdaPT.Local project, in which the municipalities benefiting from the project, by signing a Letter of Commitment, formalised the establishment of a partnership, led by municipalities, and involving other institutions, including higher education, research centers, non-governmental organizations and companies, in order to boost local adaptation to climate change in Portugal.

National Council of Environment and Sustainable Development

Created in 1997, National Council of Environment and Sustainable Development is an independent national body with consultative functions, which provides for the participation of the sensitivities of the various social, cultural, and economic forces in the search for broad consensus regarding environmental and sustainable development policies. It gathers representatives from academia, NGOs, local authorities.

2.5.5 Summary

Table 5: Governance levels and competences in Portugal

Governance Body	Competence in Energy	Competence in Climate
NATIONAL LEVEL	National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) Lei de Bases do Clima (Climate Law) Roadmap for Carbon Neutrality (Roteiro para a Neutralidade Carbónica 2050 - RNC2050)	Lei de Bases do Clima (Climate Law) Programme of Action for Adaptation to Climate Change (Programa de Ação para a Adaptação às Alterações Climáticas - P-3AC)
INTERMUNICIPAL ENTITIES		
MUNICIPALITIES	Sustainable Energy and Climate Plan (SECAP)	Sustainable Energy and Climate Plan (SECAP)
PARISHES		

2.6 Romania

Romania had 19 million inhabitants in 2021³⁰. The territory's administrative management is structured as follows:

- Regions (8)
- Counties (41)
- Municipalities (103) or Cities (217)
- Communes or villages (2861)



Figure 6: Administrative map of Romania - 2007³¹

The Romanian Government holds the executive power. It holds a vote of confidence with the Parliament which is directly elected and ensures the achievement of the country's domestic and foreign policy and that exercises the general leadership of the public administration. The Government is appointed by the President of Romania. The Government adopts decisions and ordinances which are signed by the Prime Minister, countersigned by the Ministers who are duty bound to implement them and are published in the Official Gazette.

The Government consists of Prime Minister and Ministers. Prime Minister leads the Government and coordinates the activities of its members, in compliance with their legal duties.

³⁰ <https://insse.ro/cms/en>

³¹ <https://www.worldometers.info/maps/romania-political-map/>

Competence in Energy

The Ministry of Energy is organised and functions as a specialised body of the public administration, subordinate to the Government, which implements the strategy and the Government Programme in the field of energy and energy resources, transmission, distribution and supply of electricity and heat. The Ministry of Energy of Romania is responsible for applying the government programme and strategy in the energy sector, representing the state and the government, at a national and international level in energy-related matters, monitoring the energy sector and the compliance with international treaties in the energy sector.

The National Authority for Energy Regulation (ANRE) is an autonomous administrative body under Parliamentary control, entirely self-financed and independent as regards its decision-making process, organisation and functioning, whose scope of activity is to issue, approve and monitor the implementation of the national-wide binding regulatory framework required for the proper functioning of the electricity, heat and natural gas sectors and markets in terms of efficiency, competition, transparency and consumer protection.

Competence in Climate

The Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests is organised and functions as a specialized body of the central public administration, with legal personality, under the Government.

The Ministry of Environment carries out the national policy in the fields of environmental protection, green economy, biodiversity, protected natural areas, climate change with regard to all sectors and sub-sectors it administers, elaborates the strategy and specific regulations for the development and harmonisation of these activities within the general policy of the Government, ensures and coordinates the implementation of the Government's strategy in its areas of competence, fulfilling the role of state authority, synthesis, coordination, regulation, monitoring, inspection and control in these fields. The ministry is also in charge of the implementation and coordination of the financial assistance granted by the EU in the field of environment and forests and of programmes financed from EU funds.

The National Environment Protection Agency (ANPM) is the regulator in terms of environmental protection, according to the Emergency Ordinance on environmental protection, as amended and supplemented. The National Environmental Protection Agency is the main regulatory permit authority, implements environmental rules and policies.

2.6.1 Region

Romania has 8 regions (*regiune* in Romanian). However, its administration is relatively centralised and administrative subdivisions are therefore fairly simplified, with regions existing mainly for statistical reasons. According to the Constitution of Romania, its territory is organised administratively into communes, cities and counties.

2.6.2 County

Romania has 41 counties (*județ* in Romanian), and one city with special status (Bucharest). The county council is composed of members elected by using a party list system for a four-year term. It monitors the implementation of provisions outlined in public administration legislation. The council is also responsible for the distribution of public funds, the county's economic, social and environmental development and the management of county property and certain public services.

The president heads the county council and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. He/she is in charge of the legal representation of the council *vis-à-vis* third parties. The president can delegate responsibilities to the two vice-presidents, who are appointed by the members of the county council.

Competence in Energy

The County Council provides, according to its competences and according to the law, the framework for ensuring public services of county interest regarding community services of public utility of county and gas supply.

Competence in Climate

County Environmental Protection Agencies are public institutions with legal personality, subordinated to the National Environmental Protection Agency, having the status of the decentralised public services, financed from the state budget. The County Environmental Protection Agency meets at the county level. The tasks of the National Agency for Environmental Protection are respectively: implementation of policies, strategies and legislation in the field of environmental protection at the county level, and also assessing the impact of certain public and private projects on the environment. The County Environmental Protection Agencies issues regulatory documents on environmental protection, in accordance with the powers conferred by the National Agency for Environmental Protection, under the legislation in force. Moreover, the County Council provides, according to its competences and according to the law, the framework for ensuring public services of county interest in the field of environment protection.

2.6.3 Territorial Administrative Units

In Romania, there are 103 municipalities (*municipiu* in Romanian), 217 cities (*oraş* in Romanian) and 2.816 communes (*comună* in Romanian) formed of 13.285 villages (*sate* in Romanian). The local council is the local authority's deliberative assembly. It is composed of councillors elected by voting for candidates via a party list system for a four-year term. The number of councillors is determined by order of the prefect based on the demographic size of the local authority. The local council's work revolves around economic, social and environmental development, public and private property and the management of public services. The mayor represents the local authority's executive body and is elected by direct universal suffrage for a period of four years. He/she is responsible for the local budget and public services. The mayor also represents the local authority *vis-à-vis* other authorities, represents the national government within the municipality, town, or city, and cooperates with the decentralised departments of national government ministries and specialised units present within its jurisdiction.

Main competences are the management of public and private domain of the State, of road infrastructure of local interest and of local cultural institutions, the administration of local public health units; the management of water supply, sewerage and treatment of wastewater and pluvial waters, public lighting, sanitation, social services and local public transport. Moreover, together with the central state, they are also in charge of managing the heat supply produced in a centralised system (district heating), the construction of social housing, public order and safety, social assistance and social services, and prevention and management of local emergencies.

Competence in Energy

Network of supply of heat produced by centralised systems is a shared competency between Municipalities, Cities and Communes and the central public administration authorities.

Local public administrations with a population of over 20.000 inhabitants are obliged to annually develop an **Energy Efficiency Improvement Programme** and to appoint a **Community Energy Manager**, certified according to the legislation (Energy Efficiency Law, with subsequent additions and amendments) and to conclude an energy management contract with a person certified or a legal entity providing energy services approved under the law.

Local Public Administrations with a population of over 5.000 inhabitants are only obliged to develop annually an **Energy Efficiency Improvement Programme**.

Competence in Climate

The Municipalities, Cities and Communes are responsible for water supply and sewerage and treatment of wastewater and pluvial waters.

Existing dialogue framework/entity between levels

Regional Development Agencies

There are 8 Regional Development Agencies, corresponding to the 8 regions. All the Regional Development Agencies have similar structures and function based on the same principles. As an example, the role of the Centre Regional Development Agency (Centre RDS) is to contribute to the sustainable and equitable development of the Centre Region by eliminating disparities and imbalances between the areas of the region, for the benefit of its inhabitants. Established by Law 151/1998, the Centre RDA operates under Law 315/2004 on regional development in Romania. The mission of the Centre RDA is to implement plans and strategies designed in partnership, to contribute and use efficiently financial and human resources in assisting communities in the Centre Region, and to attract new resources.

Regional Development Services

- Preparation of regional planning documents.
- Monitoring the implementation of development strategies.
- Consultancy for the development of regional investment projects.
- Management of partnership structures.
- Development and implementation of Centre RDA's own projects.
- Carrying out activities and presentations to promote the region as an investment and tourism destination.
- Management of cooperation relations/protocols (inter-institutional, inter-regional, European networks).

2.6.4 Summary

Table 6: Governance levels and competences in Romania

Governance Body	Competence in Energy	Competence in Climate
NATIONAL LEVEL Ministry of Energy (ME), National authority for Energy Regulation (ANRE), National Environment Protection Agency (ANPM), Ministry of Environment (MMAEP)	The ME is responsible for applying the government programme and strategy in the energy sector, including the NECP and to transpose European legislation. ANRE's mission is to create and implement the appropriate regulatory system.	MMAEP is responsible for the national strategy and policy. ANPM is the main regulatory permit authority, implementing environmental rules and policies.
REGION	Minimal competencies	Minimal competencies
COUNTY County Council County Environmental Protection Agency	The County Council provides, according to its competencies and according to the law, the framework for ensuring public services of county interest regarding community services of public utility of county and gas supply.	The County Environmental Protection Agency meets at the county level, the tasks of the National Agency for Environmental Protection.
MUNICIPALITY Local Public Administrations/ Administrative Territorial Units (Municipalities, Cities, Communes)	Sustainable Energy and Climate Plan (SECAP). (Local Public Administrations with a population of over 5.000 inhabitants are obliged to annually develop an Energy Efficiency Improvement Programme), while those having over 20.000 inhabitants have the obligation to develop the same programme and conclude an energy management contract with a person certified or a legal entity providing energy services approved under the law.	Sustainable Energy and Climate Plan (SECAP).

3 Multi-Level Governance Best Practices

As mentioned in the introduction, the purpose of this report is to serve as a founding basis for the NECPlatform project. In order to properly set up MLG processes in the six participating Member States, best examples of concrete MLG application in Europe and beyond have been mapped: existing processes to be taken as best practices examples to feed the next project phases have been assessed, in order to prepare a generic framework for the CED platforms in each of the six focus countries. The mapping led to the identification of the most relevant initiatives (see list below). Out of these, 17 have been selected for further investigation, and their representatives have been interviewed with the objective of deepening the understanding of those specific MLG processes. Interviews followed a structure (which can be found in the annex to this report) exploring the framework and the needs that resulted in the analysed process, who is involved and how the process works in practice. The transcripts of these interviews are not published with this report, however their main outcomes are integrated to our analysis (see Section 0).

3.1 Description of the work

The generic framework to be developed in the initial phase of NECPlatform includes guidelines to national partners to support them in the establishment and implementation of the CED platforms, as well as the templates for the participation agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding, which serves to secure the participation of relevant stakeholders and the sustainability of the platforms. It was therefore necessary to first define the type of initiatives that were relevant to our task. The CED platforms aim at gathering, in each partner country, representatives from the energy- and climate-related decision-makers for different levels of governance, as well as representatives of associations and research. In order to do this, selection criteria were defined (presented in Section 3.2).

Following these criteria, examples of MLG best practices were collected, through desk research and by setting up an online survey (see Chapter 4), which was promoted on the different project partners' channels, including websites and social networks. A first draft list of [52 examples](#) was established. From here, the examples presenting none of the selection criteria were removed. Exclusion criteria were also determined and are presented in Section 3.2.

The task proved more difficult than initially foreseen, as relevant examples derived both from the desktop research and collected through the survey have been more scarce than expected, notwithstanding the fact that the survey was disseminated in the wide network of project's partners (IEECP has more than 6k followers on LinkedIn, ENC more than 7k) and at relevant events, including those organised within the Covenant of Mayors community and by the European Commission, where CINEA's representatives promoted the project. However, only one relevant example was collected.

After further refining, a list of 21 MLG initiatives was established, for which interviews were requested. 17 of the identified initiatives were open to meet for a deeper understanding of their functioning through interviews. These interviews were led between mid-February and mid-March 2023 mostly by IEECP, except those located in partner countries, for which project partners performed the interviews in the local language. Geographically speaking, 13 European stakeholders were interviewed, whereas the remaining 4 were stakeholders from other continents: 1 in Africa, 1 in Latin America, 1 in Asia, 1 global initiative. Overall, 11 interviews

were performed by IEECP (Urban LEDS covering several examples), 2 by REGEA, 1 by Coordinamento Agenda 21, 1 by Energy Cities and 2 by OER. For each of these interviews a transcript was drafted, which was used to finalise the descriptions in the section below and to elaborate the outcomes in Section 0. This is the funding basis to provide NECPlatform a solid knowledge ground for the transfer of knowledge to the national project partners, whose main role is setting up and implement the CED dialogues.

On top of the analysis presented below, which will be used in the peer learning workshops organised amongst partners to support them throughout the project's implementation, the best practice examples are integrated in the project's website and described in Chapter 4.

3.2 Definition of best practices and assessment criteria

There is not a single, ideal case of multi-level governance initiative, since each one of these is strongly tied to the geographic area it covers and to the socio-political context existing in its context. Nevertheless, given the features the CED platforms should have, a set of criteria can be defined to help choosing examples to inspire their elaboration. It was therefore decided that relevant MLG best practices should present at least one of the following criteria:

- Related to one or more sectors (energy, climate, urban planning, mobility, social action, etc.);
- Involve at least two levels of governance (e.g. regional and local);
- Involve several entities (e.g. cities) at the same governance level;
- Involve a planning process towards long-term objective(s);
- Being an ongoing initiative or a finished initiative but can be reproduced in a similar context elsewhere;
- Being independent from political shifts at concerned levels;
- Having a concrete role in the policy-making process.

As excluding criteria, the initiatives that presented the following features were disregarded:

- Citizen and climate assemblies - although being a useful citizen discussion and concertation tool, they are mainly active on one level and are used for consulting reasons. Moreover, participants tend to be selected randomly and the initiatives tend to be tied to a specific objective, terminating once the objective has been reached.
- Local-only initiatives: many collected examples are truly interesting energy and climate initiatives, however, they do not embed a multi-level component (i.e. they are active within the boundaries of one city and have the development of that one city as their main aim).
- Initiatives that are inscribed in the regular law-making process (and listed in Chapter 2 at the end of the section for each member state).

3.3 Summary of collected best practices

In this section, the 21 selected Best Practices are described below.

Table 7: List of selected best practices for multi-level governance initiatives

No	Policy process	Continent	Country
1	Urban LEDS initiative	Global	
2	Flemish Climate Pact	Europe	Belgium
3	Croatian National Adaptation Strategy	Europe	Croatia
4	Use of PENTAHHELIX approach for SECAP	Europe	Croatia
5	DK2020	Europe	Denmark
6	National Council for the Ecological Transition	Europe	France
7	River's contracts	Europe	Italy
8	Climate planning - DELTA programme	Europe	Netherlands
9	Natural Gas Phase Out Strategy	Europe	Netherlands
10	Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 and 2021-2027	Europe	Romania
11	Sustainable Romania	Europe	Romania
12	RO National Recovery & Resilience Plan	Europe	Romania
13	Covenant of Mayors project in Galicia	Europe	Spain
14	CitiES2030	Europe	Spain
15	Viable Cities	Europe	Sweden
16	London Recovery Board	Europe	UK
17	Jiha Tinou Programme	Africa	Morocco
18	Metropolitan Environmental Commission (MEC)	North America	Peru
19	RAN-GRK - Indonesia's national action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Asia	Indonesia
20	Regional Decarbonisation Roadmap	Asia	Japan
21	Sam-sang	Asia	Laos PDR

1 - Urban LEDS initiative

Region – Country: **Global**

Website: <https://urban-leds.org>

Levels involved: **National, Regional, Local**

Description

URBAN LEDS is an initiative funded by European Commission and run by ICLEI and UNHABITAT. The project had two phases: phase I ran between 2013 and 2015 and phase II between April 2017 to the end of 2021. Phase III is under consideration. The main goal of the project was to accelerate low emission development with focus on mitigation, although phase II also included adaptation. In each of the participating countries (Phase I: Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia, India; Phase II: Colombia, Rwanda, Bangladesh and Lao PDR) the project set up a multi-level governance process following the procedure described below:

1. Map **data availability and data needs** (e.g. GHG inventory, climate risk and vulnerability assessment, low emission development (LED) strategy) and set up the needed partnership. According to available data, risk areas were selected for low emission development strategies.
2. **Build capacity in Cities** to take care of the data collection and e.g. through peer exchange, technical workshops, etc. This process had an intraregional but also a global dimension (exchange programmes to Europe).
3. **Support in the implementation of some projects** (e.g. access to finance).
4. **Connection with the national level** in order to create an enabling framework.
5. **International sharing of good practices**, also through Global Covenant of Mayors.

In all countries where URBAN LEDS was operating, the established processes of multi-level governance are still running.

2 - Flemish Climate Pact

Region – Country: **Europe - Belgium**

Website: <https://lokaalbestuur.vlaanderen.be/lekp>

Levels involved: **National, Regional, Local**

Description

Flanders' regional government in collaboration with Flemish municipalities established the Flemish Climate Pact in 2019 (in force in 2020) to ensure effective links with the regions regarding local needs on four key pillars: **nature-based solutions, energy mitigation policies, mobility and water management**. In order to join the initiative, municipalities are invited to sign the Covenant of Mayors - Europe and commit to 16 pre-defined target points, on top of pledging to a small list of other actions (e.g. developing a heatmap, banning taxes on windmills, etc.). **Nearly 300 municipalities are participating so far** (more than 95% of the total) choosing between **3 possible levels of engagement**: the standard one - aligned with 2030 targets before the fit-for-55 package; the more ambitious one, aligned with the fit-for-55 package; or the most ambitious one, aligned with the fit-for-55 package and including social measures to alleviate energy poverty. One very important component of the Flemish Climate Pact is the **change of narrative**, using a multiple benefit approach and not only focusing on the fight to climate change, in order not to polarise or politicise the model. Moreover, **common objectives are made easy** so that everybody can understand and are proportionate to the size of the municipalities e.g. objective to plant 1 tree per inhabitant. **Monitoring is also a collective action** and is **publicly**

visible on the initiative's platform. Reports are automatically generated bi-monthly by the platform. These serve as a basis to **compare performance against identified objectives**, also during meetings dedicated to such discussions among involved actors. Dialogues with the National Belgian Government occur every two years to assess progress and implementation. These dialogues encourage both interactions between public authorities and other actors (including ordinary citizens) to provide input and identify concrete contributions to achieve local/regional goals, highlighting co-creation and citizens' involvement.

3 - Croatian National Adaptation Strategy

Region – Country: **Europe - Croatia**

Website: <https://prilagodba-klimi.hr/hrvatska/>

Levels involved: **National, Local**

Description

The Croatian Ministry of Sustainable Development and Economy is in charge for the development of the national climate change adaptation strategy (NAS). Since Croatia is a centralized country, **the national level has the role to create the right framework to allow changes on the ground**, which can be a challenge. In order to align the ambition of the NAS and the potentials at the local level, a **national hub** was put into place to gather the feedback, inputs and opinions of all key stakeholders. The lead of the process is the Croatian Ministry of Sustainable Development and Economy and it involves a range of other stakeholders such as **academics, scientists, civil servants, representatives of the media and various experts as well as the general public**. The stakeholders provided the feedback either in their own name or in the name of the institution they represented. The Ministry drafted the NAS and published it in its draft form allowing for anyone interested in it to provide comments, feedback and criticisms. The process resulted in the collection of valuable feedback and inputs from key stakeholders which was the **basis to draft a strategy more aligned with the actual needs and potentials from the local level and all relevant sectors**. The developed platform is still online and operational.

4 - Use of PENTAHILIX approach for SECAP

Region – Country: **Europe - Croatia**

Website: <https://pentahelix.eu/>

Levels involved: **Regional, Local**

Description

The approach was originally developed to support the drafting of SECAPs. It was developed by external consultants (private or public entities or regional agencies) with very little interaction with the local authority, often resulting in generic documents not fully aligned with the needs on the local level. The idea behind **PentaHelix** was to **include the 5 key pillars of society** (public, private, academic and NGO sectors as well as citizens) **in the process of developing the plan from the start**. All stakeholders are generally happy to participate and contribute, but ensuring their willingness to contribute long-term can sometimes be challenging. Initially, the process has been tested on the development of two SECAPs (in Croatia) and was later replicated to other member states. The method is now also used for the development of other local and regional level strategic documents. In practice, the initiative works thanks to **a task force established around the specific topic of discussion**. The task force is the central entity providing feedback and cooperating with

the developer of the plan. The communication is implemented virtually and through physical meetings. Virtual communication revolves around the sharing of documents and the collection of immediate reactions and feedback. The physical meetings are organised every 3-4 months and are set up as a roundtable discussion on the relevant topic. The topics were adapted to the specific documents, stakeholders, and progress of the overall process. **The approach is used to generate concrete strategic documents but is intended to also follow up on implementation and monitoring.**

5 - DK2020

Region – Country: **Europe - Denmark**

Website: <https://concito.dk/en/projekter/dk2020-klimaplaner-hele-danmark>

Levels involved: **National, Local**

Description

The idea behind DK2020 was first to adapt the Climate Action Planning Framework developed by the **C40 cities** network to the Danish context, with smaller cities and municipalities, from 20,000 to 500,000 inhabitants. This framework aims at achieving net CO₂ neutrality by 2050. In Denmark, municipalities are the main entity in charge when it comes to energy and climate measures implementation; they are entitled to define climate actions as mandatory on their territory upon democratic decision.

DK2020 succeeded in bringing together **96 municipalities out of 98 in Denmark** in a two-step process:

1. Adapt and apply the C40 methodology in 20 pilot municipalities;
2. Disseminating the developed model in other interested municipalities.

Concito coordinates the effort at national level, however action takes place locally, recruiting experts and academics at local level, working with the municipality and providing them with guidance. Another key success factor is the **development of peer-to-peer training and advising between municipal staff** and mayors from like-sized cities convincing each other to take action. DK2020 marks the first time this ambitious international standard is adapted and applied for use in smaller cities and municipalities.

6 - National Council for the Ecological Transition

Region – Country: **Europe - France**

Website: <https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/cnte>

Levels involved: **National, Regional, Local**

Description

The National Council for the Ecological Transition (CNTE) is an entity emanating from the Ministry of Ecological Transition, whose goal is to **strengthen environmental and social dialogue**. Since 2013, the council is **mandatorily consulted on all legislative bills related to energy, environment and strategies related to sustainable development**, biodiversity and decarbonisation. Based upon the draft bill under discussion, the CNTE gives an opinion;

this opinion is discussed and voted among the council members before the parliamentary debate, possibly **shedding new light on the text to be debated**.

The CNTE meets every two months in plenary session and can create specialised committees. Both the plenary and the committees are composed of representatives from six “colleges”:

- Local and regional authorities (elected representatives with a running mandate)
- Labour unions
- Employers
- Associations and foundations for environmental preservation
- Associations representing civil society (e.g. the National Union of Family Associations)
- The Parliament (National Assembly and Senate)

7 - River's Contracts

Region – Country: **Europe - Italy**

Website: <https://www.contrattidifiume.it/it/>

Levels involved: **Regional, Local**

Description

A River Contract (RC, generally referred to as the River Contract, but also of lake, coast or groundwater, wetland...) is a **voluntary, technical, and financial agreement between the public and private partners** concerned for global management, concerted and sustainable on the scale of a coherent hydrographic unit.

The first RCs were born in France in the 1980s, and then spread to Belgium and many other European and non-European countries. They are **signed by all the partners concerned and willing to improve the management of the river territories**, Ministries, District Basin Authorities, Regions, Municipalities, Universities, Associations, but also individual local communities, professionals, entrepreneurs and citizens. They **collaborate within the Board in a horizontal manner, without the need for protocols or formal commitments**, bringing in just over a decade RCs to become one of the most interesting opportunities in the participatory management of Italian river basins.

What makes River Contracts popular locally is the perspective of acquiring a greater «awareness of place» through citizen participation; enhanced awareness and responsibility lead inhabitants and producers to care for the territory as «common good». This helps to concretely **revitalise the relations between citizenship and local institutions**, helping to activate more effective models of self-sustainable local development. In this sense they can become bottom-up implementers of various integrated environmental strategies, such as the National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change.

To date, 200 RCs are active, of which 64 are already underwritten and under construction.

8 - Climate planning - DELTA programme

Region – Country: **Europe - The Netherlands**

Website: <https://www.government.nl/topics/delta-programme>

Levels involved: **National, Regional, Local**

Description

The DELTA programme started in 1953, when dramatic sea floods in the Netherlands destroyed much of the north shores. A commission was installed to prevent such natural disasters in the future. Its work resulted in a world-known dam system preventing floods on the north shore and in one governance structure bringing together the national government, water boards, provinces, and municipalities and allowing them to work together innovatively, with inputs from knowledge institutions, social organisations, businesses, and citizens. The DELTA programme has three main areas of work: **flood risk management, freshwater supply and spatial adaptation**.

The programme is structured into decisions (6 years periods), which are themselves translated into plans, that are concrete measures for implementation. DELTA is not a top-down approach, but a cooperation between different administrative levels and other relevant stakeholders. **The programme has its own DELTA commissioner** and is structured in 40 work regions in the Netherlands. These actors can identify vulnerabilities to weather extremes, act as pilots for stress tests, and set out ambitions and policies to take necessary measures. They also work together with other supra-regions. The 40 work regions are mostly based on a **structure based on water basins and rivers**. Work regions are groups of a few municipalities who sit together to deal with challenges by meeting regularly. If challenges are similar in different work regions, then two or more work regions can decide to work together in order to exchange knowledge. There is also an interconnection between work regions through the waterboards.

9 - Natural Gas Phase Out Strategy

Region – Country: **Europe - The Netherlands**

Website: https://ce.nl/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/CE_Delft_210381_The_natural_gas_phase-out_in_the_Netherlands_DEF.pdf

Levels involved: **National, Local**

Description

Phasing out gas in the Netherlands is necessary to meet Paris Agreement's goals. Over 90% of Dutch residential and commercial buildings currently use gas or fossil fuel oil for heating and cooking. Therefore, gas and electricity grid operators play a key role in the transition, as their gas grids lose their purpose, and their electricity grids need to accommodate higher load due to electrifying part of the heat supply (e.g. with heat pumps) and to the integration of renewable power production capacity.

This Strategy is based **on two principles: affordability and feasibility**. For the former, the strategy does not focus on the higher 10% of the population who can easily afford switching to a decarbonized heat source (district heating, heat pumps, biomass and biogas in rural areas), but rather on the lower 20%, in an **integrated, neighbourhood-after-neighbourhood approach, as opposed to an individualistic approach**. In particular, the strategy highlights the importance of fitting the existing social construction (people, social context, built environment, financial structure), which is hardly feasible at any scale other than the district/neighbourhood level. The Strategy also established a maximum price on district heating indexed on gas prices, so that it can never cost more than gas heating.

Although the initiative is national, each neighbourhood is different, hence there is **not one single pre-determined modus operandi to implement the strategy; each local entity has its own ad-hoc structure**. It is acknowledged that this implementation method is more time-consuming compared to higher-level, streamlined processes, however the Strategy considers that it is the most efficient way to implement sustainable, citizen-backed change.

10 - Regional Development Plan 2021-2027 - Centre Development Region

Region – Country: Europe - Romania
Website: http://www.adrcentru.ro/dezvoltare-regionala-cat/pdr-centru-2021-2027/
Levels involved: National, Regional (development agencies), Local
<p>Description</p> <p>The elaboration of the Regional Development Plan for the Centre Region (RDP) was coordinated by the Centre Regional Development Agency. As a legal condition, the process required the establishment and implementation of regional consultative structures.</p> <p>The governance of the Centre Regional Development Plan is ensured by the Regional Development Agency, which is the strategic decision-making organ, within which the Regional Planning Committee (RPC) acts as the strategic consultative level, with the role of endorsing the Plan. The RPC is composed of 43 organisations representing each of the four sectors of society (public administration, economy, academia and civil society). This structure is completed by thematic working groups/county groups bringing technical expertise.</p> <p>The stakeholder involvement is based on the quadruple helix model: i) local and county public authorities, ii) businesses, iii) universities and research structures, iv) civil society. Consultations aimed to validate the priorities included in the RDP include new actions and improvement of the planning document before its approval. Most improvement proposals submitted by partners have been included in the final draft of the Plan.</p> <p>The operating model of the RPC was a source of inspiration for the establishment of the Central Regional Innovation Consortium – a consultative and governance structure in the field of innovation, adapted to the specific needs of this regional body.</p>

11 - Sustainable Romania

Region – Country: Europe - Romania
Website: http://romania-durabila.gov.ro/
Levels involved: National, Local
<p>Description</p> <p>The Department for Sustainable Development (DSD, inside the General Secretariat of the Government) developed the <i>National Strategy for the 2030 Sustainable Development of Romania</i>. In order to develop the necessary tools for coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy, the DSD obtained a funding for the project "Sustainable Romania" - Development of the strategic and institutional framework for the implementation of the <i>National Strategy for the 2030 Sustainable Development of Romania</i>.</p> <p>The aim of the project was to ensure the appropriate implementation framework, increasing the institutional capacity of central authorities, streamlining inter-institutional communication and collaboration, ensuring consistency of implementation by monitoring progress and presenting Romania's development trends, enabling evidence-based public decisions in a projective manner, and anticipating systematic developments and risks.</p> <p>The initiative addressed representatives from local public administration, business, civil society, research institutes, and youth organisations. Following the consultations organised in the project, recommendations from stakeholders were taken into account and integrated where needed.</p> <p>The project led to the completion of the institutional framework for the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy.</p>

12 – Romanian Recovery and Resilience Plan

Region – Country: **Europe - Romania**

Website: <https://mfe.gov.ro/pnrr/>

Levels involved: **National, Local**

Description

The Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration organised, at national level, consultations to determine priorities, needs, planned projects and selection criteria for allowing financing support through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan. The consultations included national authorities, municipalities, associations of local authorities, experts, private sector representatives, scientists, academia, media and civil society.

Multi-level governance is envisaged for the implementation and monitoring of the Recovery and Resilience Plan. The coordination is ensured by the **Inter-ministerial Committee for the Coordination of the Plan**, responsible for examining progress in the implementation of the Plan, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Investment and European Projects (MIEP). MIEP is appointed as the national coordinator for the preparation, negotiation and approval of the Plan, assisted by the Ministry of Public Finances. Throughout the implementation, appropriate coordination between the Recovery and Resilience Plan and the programs co-financed by the Cohesion and Regional funds as well as other funds, such as the Innovation Fund and Modernisation Fund under the EU Emissions Trading System will be ensured.

13 – Pact of Mayors (Covenant of Mayors)

Region – Country: **Europe - Spain**

Website: <https://pactodosalcaldes.gal/>

Levels involved: **Regional, Local**

Description

The Centre for Assistance to City Councils (CAC) is a small interdisciplinary office that links different levels, from the European Commission to local authorities. In its functions, the CAC:

1. Guarantees the transmission of the contents, objectives, and verification criteria of the project, to the 313 local authorities of the region, through **permanent channels of advice, resolution of doubts and incidents**.
2. **Trains municipal technicians** in the use of tools for establishing the starting point for local climate policies, and designing adaptation, mitigation and energy poverty measures.
3. **Helps LRAs to align with EU/national policies** by advising them in designing their SECAPs.
4. **Supports the financing of the local climate initiative**, through a map of calls, at regional, state and European level, oriented to local climate policy and permanently updated.

From the regional level to EU level, the **CAC supports JRC in the process of validating SECAPs approved in the region**, with the definition of a roadmap designed according to the methodology used in each case. The CAC also develops transversal actions aiming at involving citizens and the private sector. For example by communicating project outcomes on regional social networks, in order to accustom the public opinion to climate policies, and by involving local private consultancies in the overall SECAP design and lifecycle.

In four years, **285 city councils out of 313 joined the Pact of Mayors** to place the challenges of climate change at the centre of local policy making; non-signatories are mostly small cities under 20 000 inhabitants, which are not required to develop a SECAP.

14 - CitiES2030

Region – Country: **Europe - Spain**

Website: cities2030@climate-kic.org (no website yet)

Levels involved: **National, Regional, Local**

Description

CitiES2030 is a multilevel governance initiative that brings together the seven mission cities in Spain, the Ministry of the Ecological Transition, Fundacion Biodiversidad, and a number of other cities, entities and stakeholders, lead by the Technical University of Madrid and Climate KIC. It builds on Viable Cities, a similar initiative which was launched in Sweden in 2017 and that was later used as a pilot of the Mission Cities approach. Similarly to Viable Cities, actors involved in CitiES2030 are bound to a contracting process which is iterated every 2 years.

The initiative has three dimensions: a **meeting space** which was originally born during the covid pandemic *el dia despues*, which brings together around 100 organisations and serves as a dialogue platform, where important topics linked to urban development and transformation are discussed; a **training space**, where cities wanting to draft their climate city contract are supported; an **implementation space**, a service offered to cities as part of the mission that want to implement multi-city projects in different areas (e.g., on building retrofits).

15 - Viable Cities

Region – Country: **Europe - Sweden**

Website: <https://en.viablecities.se/>

Levels involved: **National, Regional, Local**

Description

In 2017 Sweden launched **17 strategic innovation processes** (programmes with a mission-driven approach) of which one was Viable Cities. The programme got a **12 years mandate until 2030** with the idea to set **a common objective – neutrality by 2030** – and come up with **a comprehensive cross-sectoral, cross-area and multi-level methodology** to reach it. A call was launched in 2019 and 9 Swedish cities were selected. Three government Agencies decided to join the initiative in April 2020. As the pandemic had just started and times were uncertain, stakeholders decided to go for a contracting process rather than signing a single binding document to 2030. Therefore, each year in December Viable Cities members meet and sign a yearly contract. The first version of the contract (9 cities + national government) was signed in December 2020. Already in 2021 this initiative generated interest from other ambitious cities in Sweden, to the point that now 40% of the Swedish population lives in a signatory city (23). As the initiative grew, Cities started signalling that the government should come in as a player, not only as a funder, as many local policies (e.g. on transport) depend on national policies (e.g. infrastructures). **More and more governmental agencies joined the initiative**, which has been very positively received from the participating cities, **making the initiative more trustworthy**. Viable Cities has a budget of 8/10 million euros per year, co-funded by stakeholders. The budget covers capacity building, skills, and operational costs, not infrastructure. Having heard of the initiative and having a similar mission-driven approach in

mind, in 2019 the European Commission made the Swedish case the **official pilot for the next EU wide programme for climate neutral cities to be rolled out within Horizon Europe, started in 2020.**

16 - London Recovery Board

Region – Country: **Europe - United Kingdom**

Website: <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-mayor-does/priorities-london/londons-recovery-coronavirus-crisis/london-recovery-board>

Levels involved: **National, Local**

Description

The London Recovery Board, chaired jointly by the Mayor of London and the Chair of London Councils, aims to lead post-covid recovery of London. It brings together leaders from across London's government, business and civil society, as well as the health and education sectors, trade unions and the police, to oversee the long-term recovery effort.

Its aims are to:

- Reverse the pattern of rising unemployment and lost economic growth caused by the economic scarring of COVID-19;
- Support communities, including those most impacted by the virus;
- Help young people to flourish with access to support and opportunities;
- Narrow social, economic and health inequalities;
- Accelerate delivery of a cleaner, greener London.

The Board has committed to taking a **missions-based approach to the Recovery Programme**. The London Recovery Board is supported by the London Recovery Taskforce, which coordinates actions to meet the recovery challenges, working in partnership across London.

17 - Jiha Tinou programme

Region – Country: **Africa - Morocco**

Website: <https://www.amee.ma/fr/jiha-tinou>

Levels involved: **Regional, Local**

Description

Jiha Tinou (*my region* in Arabic and Amazigh) is the Moroccan Energy Efficiency Agency's (AMEE) territorial strategy on renewable energies and energy efficiency aiming at encouraging local initiatives, while promoting the implementation of the national energy strategy in Morocco's territories and communities. Launched in 2012 for an 8-year duration, the strategy sought to **optimise the capacity of three regions** (Agadir, Chefchaouen and Oujda) **to contribute, at their level, to Morocco's energy objectives for 2020**. The AMEE and its international partners (e.g. French ADEME) developed energy management tools (a *dashboard* for the management of energy, water and fuel) and trained municipal and regional energy teams to better monitor energy. **Jiha Tinou supported local decision-makers in their day-to-day energy management, their regional planning and in supervising of local steering structures**, through the creation of "energy teams". It contributed to **strengthen institutional and personal capacities**, with the aim of generating a local supply of continuing education, adapted to the needs of communities. It supported the access to information, awareness-raising and guidance for citizens through support for local communication strategies and actions, the

development of tools, the creation of networks and the establishment of “energy info spaces”. Finally, it **supported the implementation of investment projects**, through the development of institutional-financial schemes allowing communities to invest in technologies that allow them to **control the energy consumption of municipal buildings and infrastructures**. A follow-up initiative was considered, however the AMEE observed that **innovations from Jiha Tinou were progressively taken up by other Moroccan regions**, thus proving the success of the initiative.

18 - Metropolitan Environmental Committee (CAMET) Lima

Region – Country: **South America – Peru**

Website: <https://www.munlima.gob.pe/camet>

Levels involved: **National, Local**

Description

Peru’s National Law requires regional and local governments to establish a forum that facilitates efficient and effective environmental management. The Metropolitan Municipality of Lima has responded to this by creating a Metropolitan Environmental Commission (MEC). The MEC **promotes dialogue to coordinate environmental policy**, showcasing best practice in terms of inter-institutional arrangements, cross-department and vertical integration, communication and engagement, to **enable mainstreaming and institutionalisation of climate change issues across the city**. It engages stakeholders by using and valorising their knowledge and skills, devolving them activities through active participation in technical groups, as a way to build ownership and affiliation. **Initiative ownership outside of the city government helps to better mainstream climate action across the city**. Active stakeholders can make the difference between just having good plans, structures and processes, and having a successful, impactful implementation.

The MEC is the **centre of coordination and concertation for** the implementation of the Metropolitan Environmental Management Strategy, **the Peruvian equivalent of SECAPs**. The commission is composed of representatives from 40 institutions, from both the public authorities (e.g. Ministry of Water, different districts of Lima) and associations. Although its role is consultative, its works and opinion weigh on environmental policy making.

19 - RAN-GRK - Indonesia’s national action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Region – Country: **Asia – Indonesia**

Website: <https://lcdi-indonesia.id/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/20190828-FINAL-FIX-Buku-Laporan-RAN-GRK.pdf>

Levels involved: **National, Regional, Local**

Description

The National Action Plan for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions (RAN-GRK) is a follow up to Indonesia commitment to reduce GHG emission by 26% in 2020 from the BAU level with its own efforts and reaching 41% reduction with international support. RAN-GRK was developed to **provide a policy framework for the central government, local governments, private sectors, and other key stakeholders in** implementing actions related directly and indirectly to **GHG emission reduction efforts** during the period of 2010-2020 according to the Long-Term Development Plan (RPJP 2005-2025) and the Mid-Term Development Plan (RPJM). The RAN-GRK was approved in a Presidential Regulation No. 61 Year 2011. The RAN-GRK **proposes mitigation actions in five priority sectors** (Agriculture, Forestry and Peatland, Energy and Transport, Industry, Waste Management) as well as other supporting actions that are an integral part to the national development planning which **supports the principles of economic growth, poverty alleviation and sustainable development**.

20 - Regional Decarbonisation Roadmap

Region – Country: **Asia – Japan**

Website (report): <https://www.eu-japan.eu/sites/default/files/publications/docs/Emma%20Saraff%20report.pdf>

Levels involved: **National, Regional, Local**

Description

In June 2021, the Government of Japan developed the Regional Decarbonisation Roadmap (RDR) in cooperation with sub-regional governments, setting out priority measures and actions to achieve zero carbon such as the creation of at least 100 "leading decarbonised regions" by 2030. For this Roadmap, **each concerned ministry** - Energy, Trade and Industry) - Environment or Land - Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism - **provided their vision and guidelines** (see report p.64). Japanese prefectures are rather autonomous regarding their environmental policy (Autonomy Act); national law language is voluntarily vague, thus leaving freedom for Local Authorities to design policies that fit in the national legislative framework. In April 2022, **the Ministry of the Environment selected the first 26 Decarbonisation Leading Areas (DLAs) based on the RDR, which include a target to create more than 100 DLAs by 2025**. Additionally, **a side objective of the RDR is to improve quality of life in smaller cities/municipalities to incite young people to stay or come back**, as these areas are losing population due to rural exodus and ageing population, resulting in Local Authorities collecting less taxes. The selected cities/areas are expected to implement proposed actions to achieve net-zero target, share their experience with other cities, and pursue carbon neutrality at least by 2050.

21 - Sam-Sang

Region – Country: **Asia – Laos PDR**

Website: <https://unhabitat.org/urban-leds-country-factsheet-lao-pdr>

Levels involved: **National, Regional, Local**

Description

Laos PDR is in the process of piloting a devolution strategy called the Sam-Sang. It aims to **develop the provincial administrations as strategic units, the districts as comprehensive strengthening units and the villages as development units**. In the spirit of the Sam-Sang, the District Development Fund mechanism helped build the capacities of local authorities to better public administration and service delivery. With capital investment grants, various projects have been implemented in 53 of the country's 148 districts. The lessons learned and achievements from the process provided strong results and benefits to local communities. The mechanism **now offers an open opportunity for all development partners to engage at the subnational level**. This process was part of the URBAN-LEDS programme.

3.4 Analysis and main takeaways

In this section, all the information collected following the methodology presented in Section 3.2 is analysed to identify the key features and takeaways that characterise successful initiatives.

3.4.1 Type of initiatives and stakeholders

Three main categories of initiatives can be identified among the selected best practices:

- **Top-down initiatives** aiming at transferring high level (e.g. national or European) programmes to the local levels (e.g. Dutch Gas Phase-out Strategy, Sustainable Romania, Japanese Regional Decarbonisation Roadmap);
- **Consultative initiatives** aiming at involving stakeholders in both horizontal and vertical ways, from local to regional and national, in order to have a say on and influence broader energy and climate policy-making (e.g. Italian Rivers Contracts, French National Council for Ecological Transition, Peruvian Metropolitan Environmental Committee);
- **Bottom-up initiatives** aiming at implementing change at local level and, possibly, organising themselves as a network (e.g. DK2020, Swedish Viable Cities, Moroccan Jihla Tinou).

These three categories embed both **vertical and horizontal MLG components** and a variety of stakeholder groups, which normally include:

- Elected representatives from different levels, from mayors and members of the city council (local) to Members of the Parliament (national);
- Civil servants from different public administration levels (employees of LRAs, national government, ministries, national agencies, etc.) including planners (urbanism, energy, environment, mobility);
- Associations representing civil society (e.g. home owners, automobile associations, cyclist unions);
- Business and industry associations;
- Labour unions;
- Associations and foundations for sustainability and/or environmental preservation;
- Academia – researchers and PhD students;
- Consultants – at any level, they can be contracted when LRAs don't possess the required skills internally.

3.4.2 Success factors

The **features** presented below are traits that were observed in several best practices. Success factors analysis is based on the **interviews of stakeholders** involved in the selected examples, who shared concrete information about their field experience, notions and principles that helped them overcome barriers towards successful implementation.

Allowing time to set up the process and listen to its members

Successful initiatives generally involve a high number of actors, ranging from local stakeholders, LRAs, civil society, environmental and social associations, business, and labour unions, etc. Meaningfully involving all these actors can be time-consuming, however several interviewees

recognised that it was **worth investing a higher amount of time** in order to reach a result (project, plan, objective) on which the majority of participants can agree with and trigger long-term support and adhesion. The example of the **Dutch Natural Gas Phase-out Strategy** is striking as the national strategy, which is then taken locally to a rare degree of granularity that is the neighbourhood level; it is even taken down to the individual level in some very specific cases.

Involving and unburdening local and regional authorities

When processes have a national or super-national dimension, it is crucial to involve local stakeholders from the very beginning. They can provide useful insights from their experience on the ground, which allows the fine-tuning of the designed measures through capacity-building and experience-sharing sessions. When, after the initial planning sessions, responsibilities are transferred to LRAs, it is important to **avoid micro-management** and let LRAs find their own way, as they have the best knowledge of their local context and are the actors who will have to carry out the work on the long run.

Additionally, it is important to **unburden**, as much as possible, the local teams from extra administrative tasks: entering a new development programme or experience-sharing network can lead to increased workload and costs that some LRAs are not prepared to cover. Therefore, it is crucial to assess what is the current workforce, using tools and processes already in place to avoid duplicating tasks and allow teams to focus on their core work. Periodically, if necessary, it is possible for LRAs to contract consultants to help them perform tasks they do not have trained staff for.

Using “champions” via peer-to-peer experience sharing

These two notions might seem to go against each other, however when implemented together, they can truly help developing a local, tightly meshed experience-sharing and capacity building network. The “best-in-class” concept, which can be observed in the case of the Flemish Climate Pact where the “**champion**” is the municipality of Mechelen and its mayor (Mr. Bart Somers, member of the European Committee of Regions and member of the Flemish Parliament), is a powerful tool, and such a strong leadership can motivate others. However, in some cases, this can also generate some difficulties:

- The leader’s disappearance might result in a collapse in the federation they created and influence struggles that might put the success of the initiative in jeopardy;
- Mayors and representatives of LRAs tend to have a certain level of pride, linked to their role; they might therefore be reluctant to “ask for guidance” from the “best-in-class” actor, even if this person is a peer, thus resulting in a counter-productive situation where LRAs might close themselves and think that they already have the resources to succeed.

For these points, in order for MLG to be effective, it is important to **close the gap between the champion and the rest**, i.e. through a network-like organisation, so that the overall structure becomes more resilient to potential changes in political leadership that would decide to disregard energy and climate imperatives. Also, peer-to-peer capacity building can more easily occur if stakeholders behave in an experience-sharing approach rather than a “teacher-to-student” top-down approach, which can lead to a disrupted dialogue.

Favouring the peer perception

Another decisive factor is that in council-like initiatives (e.g. French CNTE, Peruvian MEC, Viable Cities, DELTA programme, etc.), the **different actors should perceive themselves like peers**, no matter what level they belong to. This means that local and regional administrators and representatives from other horizontal entities should feel as legitimised as the civil servants representing higher administrative levels (e.g. ministries) in the process.

Balancing between vertical and horizontal components

Generally, the vertical component of MLG processes can receive higher attention, without focusing too much on integrating external representatives from other stakeholder groups (as defined in sub-section 3.4.1) or consulting them only sporadically. Other groups such as associations or academia tend to display a similar approach. In all selected Best Practices, **vertical and horizontal structures are equally important**, meaning that all participating stakeholder groups have an equal weight in the decision and the voting process. This prevents any group to get a decisive advantage in the decision-making process only thanks to its nature (e.g. representatives from the central state invoking their representation of the executive power to impose a decision without validation by a democratic vote). Defining clear statutes and mandates for each group, agreed upon and signed by all participants is a strong asset to ensure the initiative's perennity.

Being led by a "neutral" stakeholder

In some cases, like Viable Cities or DK2020, an **independent organisation** is necessary to kickstart activities and ensure its development, as national and local levels do not always share the same interests or objectives. Therefore, an intermediary entity is helpful in balancing and mediating.

Involving the right actors

In initiatives set in countries where the national government has a centralistic role as (e.g. France, Sweden, Japan), involving the national level was a condition to success, as it is seen as proof of seriousness and commitment by many stakeholders. Moreover, the general public trusts more and commits more in the initiative. This might not work in countries with a federal structure.

3.4.3 Obstacles encountered

During the interviews, stakeholders shared the obstacles they met and/or are still meeting in implementing their MLG processes. The following sub-section highlights the main ones.

- Agenda misalignment(s) between governance levels

Policy and planning mismatch can occur between governance levels; for example, between the local/regional and the national level (SECAP vs. NECP). Moreover, there can be problems of

competences: for example in Belgium electricity production depends on national policy, however the NECP only covers the share that is not concerned by the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), whereas the entire demand (managed at local level) is included to the plan. Trying to identify and tackle such issues by establishing a MLG dialogue is one of NECPlatform's purposes.

- Process can be time-consuming and require investing in people

Setting up MLG processes requires a huge effort in terms of capacity building: there still is a large part of actors that needs to acquire more knowledge on how these processes work and on the different techniques to be used in order to moderate a session, treat others as peers, listen, etc. Such skills, and a cultural change in how to act collectively, are very much needed in MLG processes. Moreover, a high number of the so-called participatory tools³² are required to lead meetings (such as brainstorming techniques, moderating techniques, harvesting of results techniques), which need to be learnt and mastered.

- Retain stakeholders' attention

Several initiatives experienced difficulties in getting stakeholders to openly communicate with its promoters, especially when it comes to engaging the private sector and citizens. Once the attention is gained, another challenge is not to lose it. The team applying the Pentahelix method in Croatia, for example, dealt with this by tailoring the process to make it relevant and interesting to "difficult" stakeholders, trying not to overwhelm them with communication, tasks and meetings.

- Distributed decision-making process leading to difficulties to allocate responsibilities

Properly set up MLG process allows the different levels to play a comparable role and gives participants the possibility to sit at the decision-makers table, no matter how small the represented entity. A related challenge signalled in the Netherlands is when the process is too horizontal and decentralised, it is difficult to identify who is responsible for each task, which might result in a lack of ownership and not achieving a good result. It is, therefore, crucial to allocate responsibilities to members.

- Lack of cooperation between same level bodies facing similar issues

Some neighbouring LRAs could help each other by sharing experiences and best practices, as they can face similar difficulties. However, diverging political agendas, rivalry between political parties or personal antagonisms can hinder fruitful, mutually profitable exchanges amongst them. To prevent such situations as well as In the case of staff turnover, it is important to avoid having only one single point of contact between LRAs.

- Cyclicity in EU funding

³² Some examples can be found here: <https://www.user-participation.eu/>

If the MLG process relies on EU funding programs, time can become a barrier. EU funds have strict deadlines, both in terms of applying and reporting. At times deadlines for grants and other internal deadlines coincide, making it more difficult for small entities to manage.

- Lack of commitment and turnover

At times, commitment is linked to individuals who are either elected or employed in MLG processes members. If for any reason personnel changes (in case of election or retirement, for example) staff turnover can become a hindering factor.

3.4.4 Recommendations

Based on the success factors and obstacles previously presented, a list of recommendations for national partners of NECPlatform project was drafted. The list below is conceived as a group of tips which can inspire the process of setting up the Climate and Energy dialogues in the six participating countries, building them on solid ground and allowing them to last in the long term.

BE INDEPENDENT

Independence is a crucial feature when national and local levels are not aligned. Acting as a neutral third party is an advantage in order to properly moderate and mediate amongst different actors.

BE PERCEIVED AS LEGITIMATE

Legitimacy is an important feature of MLG processes. This can be provided by carefully selecting some of the stakeholders who should by all means participate in the process (these could be, for example, representatives of the national level).

BE PATIENT AND SPEND TIME ON DEVELOPING THE PROCESS

Comprehensive MLG processes involve a wide range of stakeholders from different levels that can represent up to millions of citizens and can come down to a high level of granularity (districts, neighbourhoods, individuals). Although it is urgent to integrate energy and climate action to all levels of administration, it is crucial to take the necessary time to build a robust, coherent structure, which can last in a long-term perspective.

KEEP A BALANCE BETWEEN VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL COMPONENTS

Unilateral, central decision-making is obsolete; energy and environmental challenges are so complex and intricate that a lot more expertise is required. This knowledge is brought by stakeholders who used to be consulted sporadically: researchers, civil society, associations, etc. Involving all of them early on and on equal terms increases the chances of relevance and overall success.

KEEP IT FLEXIBLE

"We only know that we don't know how complex processes work" (quote from one interview). Many interviewed stakeholders shared anecdotes about the difference between the starting point and the final result.

When designing the process, it is crucial to keep some leeway for adaptation, be it regarding time, staff, or budget; running short on one of these three resources could threaten the longevity of the initiative. It is equally important to expect the unexpected (e.g COVID-19 pandemic). Processes should therefore not be set in stone, as flexibility to a context that is in perpetual evolution will most probably be required.

EXCHANGE INFORMATION WITH OTHER MLG PROCESSES

MLG initiatives appear in different parts of the world. Some are very successful, some less, however all meet obstacles and make mistakes. There is a wealth of knowledge in learning from successes and even more from others' mistakes, so that they are not reproduced. Competition is healthy when it generates emulation, however it can become toxic when leading to information retention and misbehaviour. In the end, even if choices are made to act differently, sharing information is crucial: *your neighbour might hold the solution to your problem*, and vice-versa. Staff exchanges have been undergoing in several interviewed initiatives, with very positive results.

ALLEVIATE LRA'S ADMINISTRATIVE LOAD

When application time comes to obtain funding from EU, national, private philanthropy programmes or in daily activities, local administrations usually optimise their workforce to obtain the most outcome possible within the allowed budget, meaning that existing teams have no extra budget and little leeway to get involved in time-consuming MLG activities.

Therefore, initiatives that wish to involve public authorities should make their contribution blend in with their other activities and ensure the smallest possible budget. On the other hand, administrations should invest in their teams and allocate

MAKE THE COMMITMENT CONTRACTUAL

Although MLG initiatives should ideally be based on mutual trust, political, social and/or economic contexts can change. For example, in the case of a leadership change in a municipality leading to a revision of the political agenda, relegating energy and climate topics to secondary considerations. Establishing and signing a contract describing the role and power of each member and the conditions to amend or revoke participation modalities, allows for securing the overall process and provides participants with more clarity.

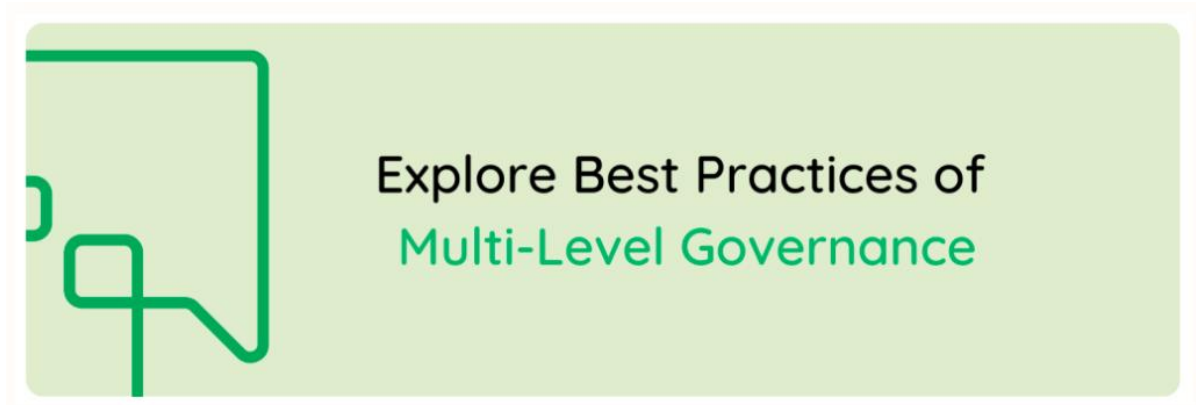
ALWAYS ADAPT TO LOCAL CONTEXT

There is no one-fits-all solution. It is important to map and involve stakeholders and analyse the context in the geographic area before deciding the best way to go.

KEEP THE PROCESS IN A FLOW

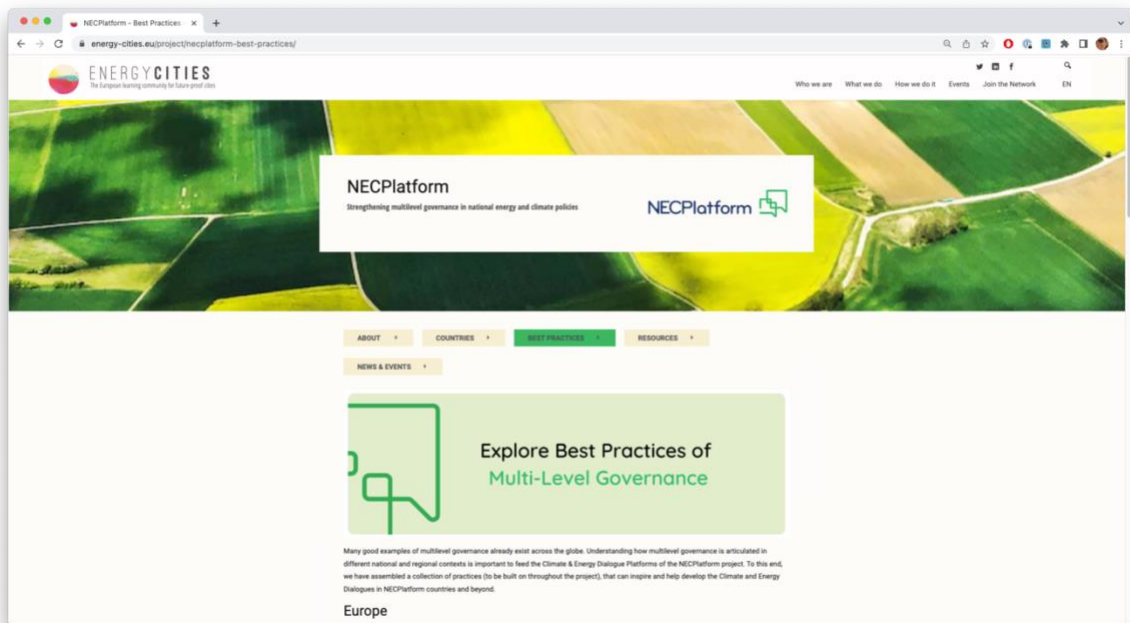
MLG is a virtuous circle which needs to be flowing continuously. If the stream is interrupted or stuck in either way, the whole process can be at risk.

4 Best practices interactive map



The results of the desk research described above are not only included in this report (which is publicly available and downloadable from the project's website) but also embedded directly on the project's website in a dedicated section called "best practices" and available via this link: <https://energy-cities.eu/project/necplatform-best-practices/>.

When clicking on the link above, the website opens on the section dedicated to the best practices, as shown below:



The section opens with an introductory paragraph introducing the best-practices and includes then 2 sub-sections: one European section and one global section (see below).

Europe

// BELGIUM	+
// CROATIA	+
// DENMARK	+
// FRANCE	+
// ITALY	+
// THE NETHERLANDS	+
// ROMANIA	+
// SPAIN	+
// SWEDEN	+
// UNITED KINGDOM	+

Global




// CROSS-NATIONAL INITIATIVES	+
// MOROCCO	+
// PERU	+
// INDONESIA	+
// JAPAN	+
// LAOS PDR	+

In the European section, when clicking on the name of the country, a new box opens with the description of the best practice(s) in the country:

// BELGIUM

The Flemish Pact

Levels involved: National, Regional, Local

Flanders' regional government in collaboration with Flemish municipalities established the Flemish Climate Pact in 2019 (in force in 2020) to ensure effective links with the regions regarding local needs on four key pillars: nature-based solutions, energy mitigation policies, mobility and water management. In order to join the initiative, municipalities are invited to sign the Covenant of Mayors – Europe and commit to 16 pre-defined target points, on top of pledging to a small list of other actions (e.g. developing a heat map, banning taxes on windmills, etc.).

Nearly 300 municipalities are participating so far (more than 95% of the total) choosing between 3 possible levels of engagement: the standard one – aligned with 2030 targets before the fit-for-55 package; the more ambitious one, aligned with the fit-for-55 package; or the most ambitious one, aligned with the fit-for-55 package and including social measures to alleviate energy poverty. One very important component of the Flemish Climate Pact is the change of narrative: using a multiple benefit approach and not only focusing on the fight to

The same situation materialises for the section on global practices:



Global

// CROSS-NATIONAL INITIATIVES +

// MOROCCO

Jiha Tinou Programme

Levels Involved: Regional, Local

Jiha Tinou (my region in Arabic and Amazigh) is the Moroccan Energy Efficiency Agency's (AMEE) territorial strategy in terms of renewable energies and energy efficiency aiming at encouraging local initiatives, while promoting the implementation of the national energy strategy in Morocco's territories and communities.

Launched in 2012 for an 8-year duration, the strategy sought to optimise the capacity of three regions (Agadir, Chefchaouen and Oujda) to contribute, at their level, to Morocco's energy objectives for 2020. The AMEE and its international partners (e.g. French ADEME) developed energy management tools (a dashboard for the management of energy, water and fuel) and trained municipal and regional energy teams to better monitor energy.

Jiha Tinou supported local decision-makers in their day-to-day energy management, their regional planning and in supervising of local steering structures, through the creation of "energy teams". It contributed to strengthen institutional and personal capacities, with the aim of generating a local supply of continuing education, adapted to the needs of communities. It supported the access to information, awareness raising and guidance for citizens through support for local communication strategies and actions, the development of tools, the

The last section of the page includes a summary of the methodology used to identify the best practices (see section 3.2) and the possibility to submit to the consortium other best practices.

Having seen the difficulties in identifying a high number of best practices, and seeing that a number of multi-level governance process are under development at present times (see for example the CapaCITIES project), the consortium decided to keep the collection of best practices open throughout the whole duration of the project, and set up a dedicated form to collect them directly via the project's website:

☒ Save a backup on your local computer (disable if you are using a public/shared computer)

Best practices on multi-level governance methods and models

Fields marked with * are mandatory. ✕

Disclaimer ✕

The European Commission is not responsible for the content of questionnaires created using the EUSurvey service - it remains the sole responsibility of the form creator and manager. The use of EUSurvey service does not imply a recommendation or endorsement, by the European Commission, of the views expressed within them.

Background

Energy Cities and IEECP have recently launched the NECPlatform project, supported by LIFE (Clean Energy Transition) Programme, aiming at enhancing multi-level governance in 6 EU Member States (MS) in order to support them to better comply with Article 11 of the Governance Regulation when updating their National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), as requested by the European Commission in the recently published [guidelines for the update of NECPs](#) (more info on the project below).

In this context, IEECP is carrying out a desk research to **identify good practices of multi-level governance from within and outside the EU** in order to collect information and better shape the dialogue platforms that we are going to implement within the project.

According to OECD's definition, multi-level governance is a framework that identifies vertical governance between different levels of government, as well as horizontal governance across multiple sectors at the same level of government, including engagement with non-governmental actors and governance across and between cities or territories ([source](#)).

The Committee of the Regions gave the following definition of Multi-Level Governance: *based on coordinated action by the EU, the Member States and regional and local authorities according to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and in partnership, taking the form of operational and institutionalised cooperation in the drawing-up and implementation of the European Union's policies* ([white paper](#)).

Multi-level governance therefore has two main components:

- **Vertical integration** to enhance higher-level decisions and align them to sub-national needs;
- **Horizontal integration** to engage peers at the same level to ensure synergies and avoid overlaps.

Within NECPlatform we are looking to set up six multi-level governance structures in six European Member States (BG, FR, HR, IT, PT, RO). In order to set them up in the best possible way, **we would greatly appreciate if you could support us** in identifying best practices that you are aware of in your country (or beyond) and **include a very short description of such practices** (and a link to where we can find more information) in the form below. The best practices can belong to any policy area, not limited to energy or climate.

If you are aware of more than one practice, please feel free to fill in the form as many times as you like! If you would like to know more about the project, feel free to reach out to us at the following address giulia@ieecp.org.

Thanks a lot!

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or CINEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



* Title and/or name of the process

* Main governance level

- ☐ National
- ☐ Regional
- ☐ Local

* Country

at most 1 choice(s)

- ☐ Bulgaria
- ☐ Croatia
- ☐ France
- ☐ Italy
- ☐ Portugal
- ☐ Romania
- ☐ EUROPE (please specify)*
- ☐ WORLD (please specify)*

* Short description

* Link to webpage and/or email of a contact person

Submit

Annex

GUIDELINES for interviews with best practises in MLG

WHY?

- What was the need or the circumstance that made it possible for your MLG process to be set up? (was there a political decision?, what was the special context leading to that?)
- What is the area of action?

WHO?

- Which stakeholders are part of the process?
- Who represent these stakeholders?

HOW?

- How does your initiative/system works in practice?
- How do you manage the practical aspects (e.g. alignment of agendas, how you set up the meetings, how often, do you have digital platforms you use, how often do you exchange with participants, how often do you meet, etc.)?
- Did you get inspired by other initiatives? If yes, did you meet with any of these?
- Did you come across any obstacles? If yes, what? (legal, organizational, technical, etc.)
- how you tackled them?
- did you succeed in overcoming them? if not, why?
- Is your model an ongoing process or did you use it to co-create a concrete outcome?
- What outcomes did you produce? (Negative outcomes are equally welcome, we can learn from them)

WHAT NEXT?

- Are you thinking of applying the same methodologies in other areas? If yes, where?
- Other initiatives you know of and that you could recommend to us to include in this exercise?
- Any final recommendation?