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# 1. Introduction

The Covenant of Mayors is an ambitious initiative through which cities and towns committing to go beyond the EU's climate and energy objectives are supported in their actions by a vast multitude of actors. However, lack of knowledge and staff with necessary skills and funding prevents LGs from realizing the actions agreed in the Plan and from facilitating private companies and citizens to participate in its implementation.

To overcome these barriers, Supporting Structures of CoM, which include Provinces and Regions as Territorial Coordinators, national energy agencies and networks of local and regional authorities, play a pivotal role in providing municipalities with the financial, technical and strategic support to fulfil their commitments. Nevertheless, C&S often do not have adequate means or the internal structure to be effective in this task.

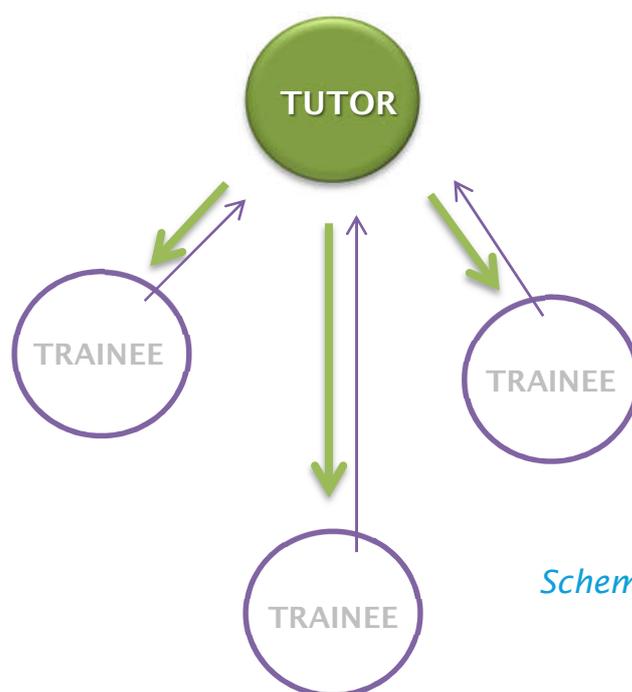
The **MAYORS in ACTION** project starts from the consideration that C&S are very much necessary for a successful development of the CoM initiative and that they need to improve their capacities and prepare instruments for consolidating their role of efficient and effective support to small towns in the concrete realization phase. New signatories of CoM now pledge to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by at least 40% by 2030 and to adopt an integrated approach to tackling mitigation and adaptation to climate change. This is a demanding goal which requires total engagement of all stakeholders included in any segment of the process and therefore the role of the C&S is ever more important in the implementation of the EU energy policy.

The Guidelines for tutoring and peer support activities is primarily intended for the C&S and LGs as aid in creating new partnerships in order to facilitate the sharing and learning experiences by focusing on the tools and mechanisms that can be used to foster their capacity building. A comprehensive assessment of the actual level of know-how and skills of the groups to be trained leads to the identification of the specific level of knowledge, skills and abilities required to reach the desired performance level.

These specific guidelines provide answers to the question ***“How to provide support for the C&S and LGs through the form of coaching schemes aimed at their capacity building?”*** in the aim of using a simple and understandable method to provide information on the training models whose application shall efficiently help raise the capacities of key stakeholders. The Guidelines describe the methodology, benefits and barriers for tutoring models and peer-to-peer methods in order to help the users select the appropriate methods.

## 2. Tutoring methods

Tutoring methods present a form of a mentorship that usually takes place between a partner who has a specific experience (tutor) and a partner who is new to that experience (trainee).



*Scheme of tutoring method*

### 2.1. Methodology

Tutoring is a partnership between two participants; generally, the Tutor has greater expertise than the Trainee regarding the topic that the tutoring is covering.

The tutor's role is to become aware of the current situation of the trainee and know the level of knowledge of the target audience about the subject of training. Through training, the tutor should provide advice, support and stimulation by sharing experience, knowledge and encouragement.

The trainee's role is to provide the tutor with necessary information in order to allow quality preparation of training. If sufficient attention is not paid to this, the training could be boring (if the information provided is mostly familiar) or too expert (if the existing level of knowledge is not taken into consideration). For the training to be successful, it is important for the trainee to be actively involved and ask questions or seek advice. This shall result in interaction, a deeper understanding of topics and raising new questions.

When using the tutoring method, it is important to consider all aspects that are important for reaching the set goals, such as:

#### Type of organization

It is necessary to consider all ways of communication which facilitate the exchange of useful information and raising the knowledge of the party involved. Depending on the complexity of the topic and the part which needs to be better explained, it is necessary to use tools, starting with the simplest such as internet (communication by e-mail and online meetings) as well as more sophisticated methods, such as working sessions and study visits. The benefits of communication on internet include the speed of information transfer without significant costs. On the other hand, the working sessions and study visits provide a better transfer of knowledge, skills and information and the communication can be interactive which allows for an easier establishing of capabilities for further cooperation.

#### Work program

In order to reach the desired results it is necessary to carefully set up the work program. First of all, it is necessary to analyze the capacities and needs of the target group in order to determine the realistic goals of the training. The work program is to be made based on the results of the implemented analysis and goals that need to be reached. In the production of the program, it is necessary to make decisions such as: topic and specific themes that are key for the fulfillment of the training goals, specific lectures and the time needed for the program as a whole and per lectures. In keeping with the planned lectures, the possibilities of tutor selection are carefully verified, as his/her role is key for good quality training.

#### Administrative, economical and technical aspects

When selecting the communication channels and type of training, it is necessary to view the administrative, economical and technical aspects and realistic possibilities for their fulfillment. In order to execute a quality preparation, depending on the selected training type, it is necessary to pay attention to the following:

- Administrative conditions (setting up organizational structures with defined responsibilities, implementation of procedures within the organization including appointing the organizational team, correspondence, public procurement procedure for the necessary goods and services, organizational capacities, preparation of necessary materials and documents, etc.);
- Technical aspects (venue, technical equipment, interpretation etc.);
- Economical aspects (cost structure including: employee engagement, rent costs, trip and accommodation costs, catering costs, equipment costs, external services costs, etc.).

## Recommendation

As in any organization, it is necessary to pay attention on all the elements, but in order to reach the aim as in the case of the tutoring methods, it is necessary to pay attention to the following:

- the involvement of relevant experts on both sides (tutor and trainee),
- collecting necessary information in advance in order to create good work program,
- providing and upgrading cooperation on different levels and ways that meet mutual interests,
- establishing a connection with other projects and/or events with the same theme in order to reduce costs of the organization,

In order for all the aspects to be taken into consideration, it is recommended to make a detailed plan of all activities and in that way to timely consider all the potential risks in the organization.

## 2.2. Advantage

Through raising skills and knowledge, the people become more aware of their actions, they have a better understanding of processes and technologies and can recognize problems and challenges in the implementation of their tasks.

The tutoring methods allow for the inclusion of a wider group of decision makers and stakeholders. Training allows for the exploration of new ideas, options and solutions that will progress the institutionalization and the delivery of sustainable energy policy in the localities. Due to all of the above, a favorable climate for further cooperation is developed.

The trainee shall have a possibility of direct contact with the tutor, but also the possibility to realize direct communication with all training participants.

The tutor also realizes benefits through the development of skills, opportunities to reflect on current issues as well as upgrading knowledge and organizational methods.

## 2.3. Barriers

Insufficient support from the key organizations

In order to realize good quality transfer of knowledge and experience, it is important to prepare all the participants about the subject which is the focus of the training. In order to achieve this, the key organization must provide support and real information on the realistic capacities and needs for the upgrade of the existing resources, as well as the goals set in connection with the sustainable development. If such data is

unaccessible or partial, the expected result will not be attained. Also, the key organizations need to approve the participation of employees as „trainees“ who need to be experts in their field, competent and able to apply the knowledge gained in everyday work as well as transfer the knowledge gained within their organization.

#### The lack of focus on common goals

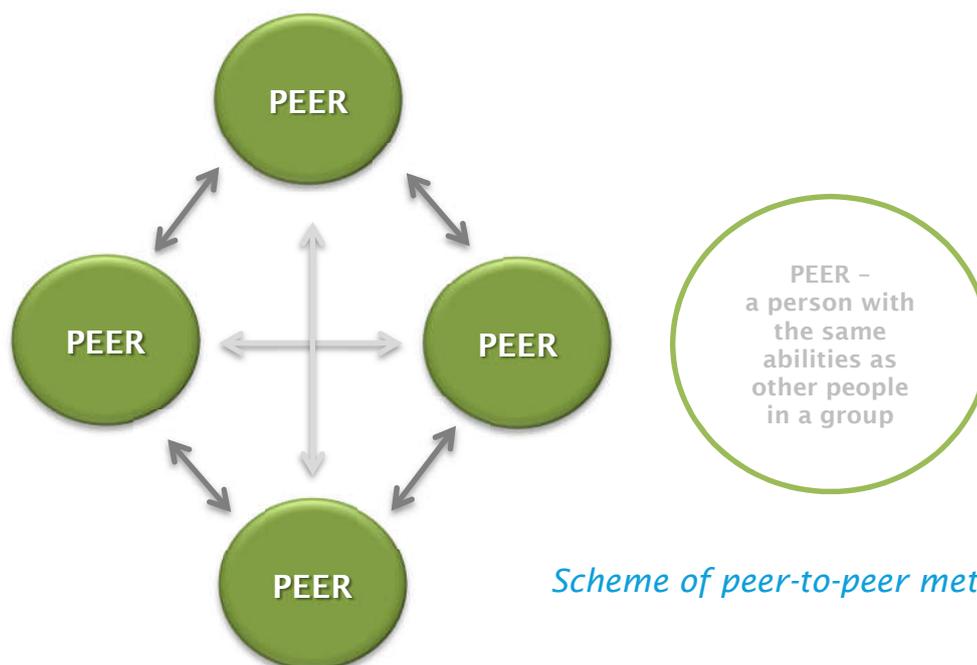
It is important to focus on encouraging and finding conditions for realizing interests of sides, tutor and trainee. If a bi-directional communication is not established, it is more difficult to realize longterm cooperation and improve interrelationships. The participants in the training should be focused at the benefits their active participation brings and use the opportunities provided them. Also, the tutor needs to adapt his/her lectures to the target group, i.e. find a way to make sure the lectures are not boring and/or tiresome as well as encourage bi-directional communication.

#### The lack of financial resources

If sufficient financial assets are not assured, it is not possible to reach the desired quality of training or the expected results. Therefore, it is necessary to perceive all the costs connected to the training organization in advance, as well as to assure financing sources. It is recommendable to view all the financing possibilities from other and not just own sources. This would allow for inclusion of more stakeholders and realization of additional synergy.

### 3. The peer-to-peer method

The peer-to-peer method is knowledge sharing approach based on the formation of supportive working groups. Within these working groups participants can provide mutual review and back up the work or methods that are being assessed.



#### 3.1. Methodology

The peer-to-peer concept affords a critical look at current structures.

To achieve results, it is essential to have a positive relationship based on mutual benefits. The peer-to-peer concept starts from the premise that ‘it doesn’t know where the needed resource will be located’, it assumes that ‘everybody’ can cooperate, and does not use formal rules in advance to determine its participating members. Participants are expected to self-select the module that corresponds best to their expertise.

The peer-to-peer is a specific form of relational dynamic, based on the assumed equipotency of its participants, organized through the free cooperation of equals in view of the performance of a common task and for the creation of a common good.

In order to achieve the objectives of the peer-to-peer support, it is essential to take into consideration the following:

- create effective and productive peer-to-peer groups among partners in order to ensure sharing experience and expertise between different Supporting Structures or LGs,
- Build partnership that will stimulate mutual understanding of each other's issues, situations and challenges in the aim of exploring new ideas, options and solutions that will make progress.

### Type of organization

The basic types of organization are workshops which include group work. The groups shouldn't be too big; 6-8 persons (experts) are optimal to realize good communication and cohesion of all participants. The selection of participants is also crucial for obtaining good quality group work so it is necessary to pay attention that the participants are experts as concerns the subject of the workshop and that they share common interests within their competence. The organization of a peer group could comprise experienced and less experienced participants or equally experienced ones. What matters is that a critical look from the other side is achieved which could stimulate new perspective.

It is also a good idea to link the workshops with study tours and use the examples to demonstrate the implementation of projects as well as point out the results achieved, but also the problems that have arisen and how they have been dealt with.

Good preparation of a workshop requires good communication between peers. The participants need to prepare and study the materials the group will be working on and so contribute to the constructive communication and creation of new ideas, options and/or solutions. The communication between peers can be done by e-mails, phones, online meetings etc.

### Work program

The programme should contain current topics in accordance with the requests, needs and expectations of the participants. It should be a result of joint interest for cooperation in a specific area.

The program should clarify the background context and an insight into each partner weakness and opportunities for all group participants. For example, an implementation of SWOT analysis provides a clear image of all important characteristics relevant for the analysis of the situation and development of new opportunities.

Furthermore, it is useful to include practical tasks in the Program. These tasks should be integral to the peer-to-peer working groups and provide a way for all the partners to benefit from each other.

Administrative, economical and technical aspects

The demands from the administrative, economical and technical aspects are just as important for the implementation of peer-to-peer support as in the case of tutoring support.

It is important to point out that the peer to peer support is efficient when implemented through several workshops that allow for a systematic and deeper analysis of the subject. This method demands for the experts to spend more time working in groups and to be actively involved in their peer's situation. Therefore, the technical and economical needs are more extensive than in the case of tutoring support.

Recommendation

As a whole, we can underline several basic elements to look out for when planning peer-to-peer support:

- a good networking between the partners to create productive peer-to-peer supporting groups is essential in order to obtain useful results from the process;
- a cooperation between peers must be free, not forced;
- the peers should take a deeper look into actions of the other peers;
- inclusion of key technical partners in the peer-to-peer process;
- providing and upgrading cooperation on different levels and ways that meets the mutual interests;
- establishing a connection with other projects and/or events with the same theme in order to reduce costs of the organization;
- Seeing potential risks and preparing solutions.

### 3.2. Advantage

There are many advantages for partners from the implementation of peer-to-peer methods, some thereof:

- the mutuality of the solutions provides a wide range of solutions applicable for other Supporting Structures and/or LGs
- opportunity to involve a wider group of decision makers and stakeholders
- opportunity for more in-depth understanding of the challenges and barriers faced in each country
- opportunity to learn from each other through work within supporting groups

- peer-to-peer boosting cooperation between Supporting Structures and/or LGs

### 3.3. Barriers

Insufficient support from the peers

Peers need to be fully open to each other as concerns the topics they are working on together. A lack of good will of the organisation's decision makers to open their resources brings the peer-to-peer method into question.

Profile of participants

In order to realize the results in peer working, it is crucial to include in groups the persons who are competent, expert, share common interests and have relatively equal situations concerning the subjects of cooperation. If good matching has not been realized, productive peer-to-peer support shall not be realized.

The lack of the focus on common goals

The participants should be interested in joining the expert analysis of the other side's situation. This is the only way that allows for gaining a critical insight into the current state that can result in new points of view and development of new solutions. A lack of the focus on common goals does not yield benefits that could be realized through discussion among partners.

The lack of financial resources

As for tutoring methods, a lack of adequate financial assets leads to a failure in reaching the desired level of quality of the peer-to-peer support.

## 4. Conclusion and recommendations

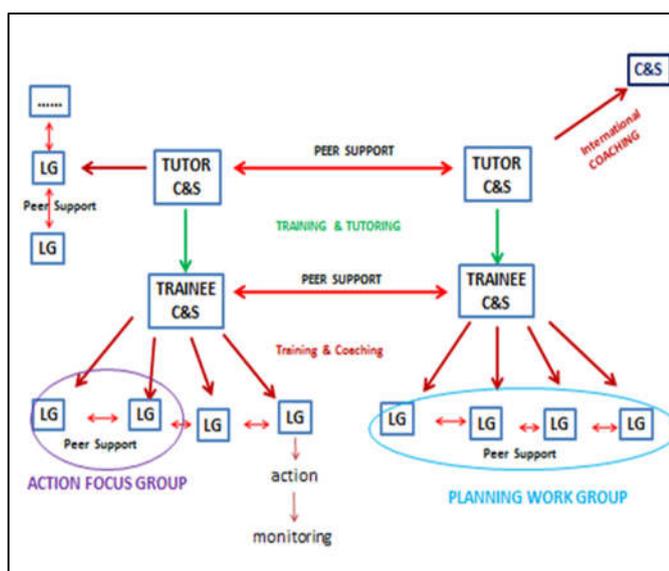
The MAYORS in ACTION project starts from the consideration that C&S are very much necessary for a successful development of the CoM initiative and that they need to improve their capacities and prepare instruments for consolidating their role of efficient and effective support to small towns in the concrete realization phase.

In order to achieve the objectives of EU energy policy, networking and development of cooperation between all stakeholders is key. Sharing of knowledge and experience allows for faster and more efficient operations and achieving better results with less investment. In addition, the experiences of others can help us avoid mistakes. Coordinators & Supporters as well as local governments around Europe can learn a lot from one another in relation to developing, implementing and improving their sustainable energy solutions.

The tutoring methods and peer-to-peer methods create new partnerships to facilitate the sharing of learning experiences and mechanisms that can be used to foster capacity building among C&S, LGs and stakeholders.

In order to know that the tutoring and peer-to-peer supports have been a success and managed to achieve the set objectives, it is necessary to evaluate the tutoring and peer-to-peer work. Methodological approaches to evaluation can differ depending on the importance of the workshop itself, but for the most part, the reaction of participants is monitored by way of questionnaires. By analyzing the responses of participants, it is possible to assess the success level of an event, but they can also be used to point to the need for future supports and cooperation.

The MAYORS in ACTION project starts from the consideration that C&S are very much necessary for a successful development of the CoM initiative and that they need to improve their capacities and prepare instruments for consolidating their role of efficient and effective support to small towns in the concrete realization phase. The tutoring scheme for C&S and LGs has been developed within the MinA project. The scheme illustrates the connections that clearly show a mutual link between the stakeholders and the methodology which has been implemented as part of the project with the purpose of raising their capacities.



## 5. Useful links

The LEAP and CONURBANT projects found that capacity building approaches such as peer to peer working, mentoring, work shadowing and training promote the sharing and exchange of lessons about how to create and deliver Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAPs) and reach targets for CO2 emissions reductions. As part of those projects, guidelines have been a guidance in order to provide practical advice about how local goals for sustainable energy action planning can be better achieved and strengthened through using experience exchange and active learning methodologies to develop working relationships between municipalities.

In those guidelines, the lessons from these two projects have also been complemented by experiences that have come out of the eReNeT, Covenant CapaCITY and CASCADE projects that have also used peer to peer and other active learning methodologies to promote capacity building through their IEE projects.

Here are the links for all of the above EU projects:



leadership for energy  
action and planning

[www.leap.eu](http://www.leap.eu)



[www.conurbant.eu](http://www.conurbant.eu)



[www.erenet.eu](http://www.erenet.eu)



[www.cascadecities.eu](http://www.cascadecities.eu)



[www.covenant-capacity.eu](http://www.covenant-capacity.eu)

## CONSORTIUM:

PROVINCE OF GENOVA (Coordinator) – [www.provincia.genova.it](http://www.provincia.genova.it)

PROVINCE OF BARCELONA – [www.diba.cat](http://www.diba.cat)

CRES – [www.cres.gr](http://www.cres.gr)

CITY OF ZAGREB – [www.zagreb.hr](http://www.zagreb.hr)

PNEC – [www.pnec.org.pl](http://www.pnec.org.pl)

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