



Scalable Cities Action Grant

2nd Call for proposals

Systemic changes in governance
Education, training, and capacity building
Data and digitalization

Written by Energy Cities
February 2023

Funded by the



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1. Introduction and background

Scalable Cities Action Grant is part of the service contract on 'Support for the Smart Cities and Communities Lighthouse project group'¹ for the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). The service contract is implemented by a consortium of seven partners led by SPL Lyon Confluence, including Energy Cities, who is responsible for this call for proposal.

This is a call for proposals for action grants to support the replication of Smart Cities and Communities measures implemented through Smart Cities and Communities (SCC) projects. The European Commission has set out a clear aim for SCC projects to deploy wide-scale, innovative, replicable and integrated solutions in the areas of energy, transport, sustainability, inclusion, citizens, and ICT.

Scalable Cities represents 18 Smart Cities and Communities projects funded by Horizon 2020 (H2020) and their 120 cities piloting innovative approaches and solutions to create more inclusive, resilient, and smart cities. Scalable Cities aims to accelerate and intensify the collaboration among SCC projects and promotes the replication of best practices and innovative technologies and services.

The **Scalable Cities Action Grant** financially supports cities and ad-hoc partnerships that seek to replicate measures that have been successfully implemented through Horizon 2020 SCC projects.

2. About the Scalable Cities Action Grant

2.1 Objective

The objective of the **Scalable Cities Action Grants** is to promote the replication of innovative approaches and solutions tested in Smart Cities and Communities (SCC) projects funded under Horizon 2020 in other cities and to stimulate the sharing of the knowledge gained in these projects. It provides financial support to cities and ad-hoc partnerships that wish to replicate approaches and solutions that were successfully implemented in the SCC projects².

Cities and ad-hoc-partnerships can apply for Action **Grants** which are organised from 2022 to 2024 in **four calls for proposals**, each covering different topics.

This current second call for proposals addresses the following three priority topics: a) Systemic Changes in Governance; b) Education, training and capacity building; c) Data and digitalization.

This call seek to:

- improve and optimise internal city governance structures, and/or;
- support the transfer of knowledge from SCC projects to cities through the development and/or implementation of educational activities and programmes, and/or;
- accelerate the digitalization of the energy sector which can help municipalities to lower their energy consumption, stimulate investments in renewable energy and ultimately lower energy bills.

This call targets cities and related partners (e.g. local energy agencies, construction agencies, civil society organisations, research institutes, NGOs, SMEs) from consortia involved in completed

¹ Contract Number: 300002306

²<https://smart-cities-marketplace.ec.europa.eu/projects-and-sites/projects?f%5B0%5D=lighthouse%3ALighthouse%20projects>



Horizon 2020 SCC Lighthouse projects, and/or external cities interested in replicating specific actions from Horizon 2020 SCC Lighthouse projects.

2.2. Conditions and scope

2.1.1. Eligibility criteria

Proposals can be submitted both by individual legal entities³ or by consortia. To be eligible for the Scalable Cities Action Grants, lead applicants **and**, where applicable, co-applicants must comply with all the following conditions:

- **Political commitment:** A letter of commitment signed by an authorized political representative of the municipality benefiting from the Action Grant needs to be attached to prove support for the application. In case the applicant is not a municipality itself, the letter should still be signed by the municipality to demonstrate their commitment for a close cooperation with the applicant.
- **Type of eligible applicants:** local authorities or municipalities as well as other legal entities who support local authorities with the implementation of the actions (i.e. civil society organisations, municipal owned companies, municipal agencies, private companies, universities and other non-profit organisations).
- **Country of eligible applicants:** Be located in the European Union or in a country eligible for the Horizon 2020 SCC projects (described in [Annex A](#) of the Work Programme of the H2020 Programme);
- **Existence of energy and climate plans:** the applicant local authority or the city represented by the applicant (in case the applicant is not a local authority) must be a signatory of the Covenant of Mayors, with a current SECAP or SEAP accepted by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre. Alternatively, the city needs to demonstrate the existence of a similar plan with targets as ambitious as the 2020 European Energy and Climate targets.

Additionally, the Scalable Cities Action Grant welcomes and will prioritise applications including small (up to 100.000 inhabitants) and medium (up to 300.000 inhabitants) sized cities.

A demonstrated link to an existing measure developed through an Horizon 2020 Smart City and Communities (SCC) project should be highlighted in the application.

2.1.2. Exclusion criteria

Applicants **MUST NOT** participate if they are subject to an EU exclusion decision or in one of the following exclusion situations that bar them from receiving EU funding:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)

³ A 'legal entity' means any natural or legal person created and recognised as such under national law, EU law or international law, which has legal personality and which may, acting in its own name, exercise rights and be subject to obligations, or an entity without legal personality.



- guilty of grave professional misconduct⁴ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95 (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that⁵:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).
- the activity to be supported is already funded by another EU programme.

2.1.3. Eligible activities

Through the present Call for Proposals, the Scalable Cities Action Grant is seeking to fund actions in line with the following three strands:

Strand 1– Preparation of replication actions in the field of systemic change of local governance structures

To succeed in climate neutrality, local authorities within European cities and regions need to undergo a profound organisational transformation to dramatically accelerate the pace of implementation. The required technologies needed to support the transformation are mostly there, and their adoption grows exponentially. The crucial factor will be shifting from a sectoral thinking to mission-driven and integrated approaches.

Most of the technologies needed for the climate neutral cities have already been successfully tested in pilot projects. However, upscaling these pilot projects in the local market, and replicating them in other cities has often turned out to be very difficult as this requires:

⁴ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

⁵ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32018R1046&qid=15350460240120>)



- a profound change of mind-set among all stakeholders, starting with local authorities and their administrations.
- a different way of working to develop integrated and multi-level governance solutions, for which most cities are not equipped.
- increased municipal organisational flexibility to enable greater experimentation with innovative approaches initiated or identified by citizens and communities (prior to or during project implementation) allowing local stakeholders to play a stronger role in mitigating climate change.

The type of activities that can be supported under this strand are aimed at preparing the ground for internal re-organisation of cities, with the final goal to facilitate the transition to climate neutrality and scale up technologies and solutions.

The following activities represent a non exhaustive list of examples that could be funded under this strand:

- *Development of new concepts/strategies for governance: Pre-analysis, SWOT-analysis, risk assessment, stakeholder mapping, drafting of a vision document.*
- *Drafting, planning and/or implementing participatory processes to carry out a new, innovative governance supporting energy transition.*
- *Applying knowledge gained from a neighbourhood or district scale smart city solution pilot to upscale innovative governance.*
- *Actions to implement a dedicated and agile company (a "Special Purpose Vehicle" - SPV) for implementing efficiently innovative solutions, replication and scaling-up. Such a company should enable to accelerate the transition to climate neutrality.*
- *Other activities relevant for replicating actions in the field of systemic change of local governance.*

This strand targets **follower/fellow cities** from the H2020 Smart Cities and Communities (SCC) projects **or other cities** interested in replicating Scalable Cities solutions. Lighthouse Cities are not eligible under this Strand.

Useful Resources

! Find out more about the solutions tested in 18 Lighthouse projects [HERE](#).

! See an overview of best practices and lessons learnt in the Scalable Cities report on Systemic Changes in Governance ([LINK](#))

Strand 2 – Education, training and capacity building

To accelerate the energy transition, local knowledge and capabilities are crucial. Local governments need human resources able to carry out climate and energy related tasks. Many barriers such as limited operating budgets, strict rules on local government debt and the attractiveness of employment at a local government are impacting recruitment. A vital mechanism for supporting the energy transition is training and reskilling people to perform new jobs required by a low-carbon society.

The type of activities that can be supported under this strand are aimed at transferring knowledge from SCC projects to cities through the development and/or implementation of educational activities and programmes. Moreover, this strand aims to strengthen the skills of local government staff enabling them to carry out necessary work for the energy transition.



The following activities represent a non exhaustive list of examples that could be funded under this strand:

- Development of new education, certification and vocational training programs related to replication of solutions tested in Smart Cities and Communities projects (SCC).
- Delivery of trainings, seminars, workshops, certification of staff members in the field of climate and energy, for example, to use new tools and methodologies related to the energy transition.
- Implementation of educational and learning platforms aimed at transferring knowledge from Smart Cities and Communities (SCC) projects to municipal staff members.
- Adapting a municipality's existing education and training programs / capacity building plans / human resources strategies to meet the demands of the energy transition.
- Other capacity development activities for municipal staff working with environmental and climate change issues.

This strand targets **follower/fellow cities and lighthouse cities** from the H2020 Smart Cities and Communities (SCC) projects **or other cities** interested in replicating Scalable Cities solutions.

Useful resources

! Find out more about the solutions tested in 18 Lighthouse projects [HERE](#).

Strand 3 – Data and Digitalization:

Digitalization can improve the efficiency and liveability of cities in multiple ways. In a context of the current spike in energy prices in particular, **accelerating the digitalization of the energy sector can help citizens and municipalities lower their energy consumption, stimulate investments in renewable energy and ultimately reduce energy bills.** Smart buildings, smart meters and building management systems can provide key information for monitoring and managing energy consumption. Various types of design, engineering and management software can help integrate RES in the city fabric and advance near-zero urban developments. Moreover, innovative data services, apps, and energy management systems have a large untapped potential for citizens and communities. Local authorities can lead by example by introducing such tools first.

SCC projects have piloted a range of innovative technical solutions in both small and medium-sized towns as well as large metropolises with the shared goal of accelerating the energy transition. The report on **Digitalization in Urban Energy Systems**⁶ provides insights on the specific digital technologies, tools, and processes tested, such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, machine learning, advanced data analytics, internet-of-things (IoT), big data, cloud computing, sensors, automation, 3D printing, robotics, data platforms, etc. These technologies can be applied in different sectors and allow to improve processes (in terms of energy efficiency, logistics, etc.), which ultimately can reduce energy needs and decarbonize urban energy systems.

The type of activities that can be supported under this strand are aimed at replication of the innovations and technologies, tools, and processes tested in SCC projects.

The following activities represent a non-exhaustive list of examples that could be funded under this strand:

- Replication of any of the Scalable Cities project solutions that relate to data and digitalization or preparatory work for such replication (for example, smart grids, P2P energy trading platform, Positive Energy Districts, lighting control systems and intelligent lighting, sensor integration for monitoring indoor air quality).

⁶ <https://smart-cities-marketplace.ec.europa.eu/node/3664>



- *Activities related to setting up a city-wide energy and climate data repository, incl. drafting procurement documentation, assessing needs, developing a methodology for data gathering, etc.*
- *Activities related to setting up a digital twin of urban energy systems, incl. drafting procurement documentation, performing a preliminary study, etc.*
- *Activities for improving already existing digital tools applied to urban energy systems, including ensuring cybersecurity and privacy.*
- *Activities for automatizing or digitising city processes, for example, setting up a system for virtual meetings for the citizens, setting up a process for virtual voting, etc.*
- *Activities related to setting up energy communities in districts (technical assistance, governance, business models, software development tender or specificities.*

This strand targets **follower/fellow cities and lighthouse cities** from the H2020 Smart Cities and Communities (SCC) projects **or other cities** interested in replicating Scalable Cities solutions.

Useful resources

! Please refer to the full report on **Digitalization in Urban Energy Systems** for a detailed analysis of the replicable digital technologies and tools with the related business models and citizen engagement strategies that drive the urban energy transition. The report can be viewed [HERE](#).
! Find out more about the solutions tested in 18 Lighthouse projects [HERE](#).

2.1.4. Duration

Projects should have a maximum duration of up to 12 months (extensions will only be possible in duly justified cases through an amendment of the agreement).

2.2. Deadline and available budget

The deadline for submitting an application for this call for proposals **is 31st May 2023, at 23.00 Brussels time.**

The total envelope available for the present call for proposal is **336.000 EUR**. Ideally, this funding will be allocated to different funding categories:

Small projects – Below to 15.000 EUR each;
Medium projects -Between 15.000 - 30.000 EUR each; and
Large projects - between 30.000 and 50.000 EUR.

A project's budget will be granted according to the principle of efficient use of resources. Eligible costs will be daily fees, subcontracting or other costs within the lump sum of EUR 450.

Lumps sums offer beneficiaries the flexibility to use them for any expense aimed at achieving the Call's objectives and the project's expected results. In the application process, applicants will describe the deliverables they plan to produce with the requested grant.

3. Application Process

The applications will be assessed following a one step-application process. The evaluation period is expected to last approximately two months. The evaluation will start immediately after each deadline.



3.1 How to submit an application

All proposals (both concept notes and full applications) must be submitted online using the Scalable Cities Grant platform⁷. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Applications include:

1. Administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries and requested amount, budget overview including the amount of days).
2. Descriptive part of the technical content of the proposal.
3. Annexes (to be uploaded as PDF files), including:
 - Letter of support signed by a political representative of the city where the activity is to be implemented, and
 - A copy of the SECAP or SEAP accepted by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre;

3.2 The award criteria

Applications will be evaluated according to the following grid of criteria.

Scope, objectives, impact		
Problem analysis and quality of the approach to address the described problem	List of barriers and link to the actions and the way they tackle the barriers are clear and reasonable	15 points
Identification of the target groups	The definition of target groups is clear and in line with the need of the action, as well as the engagement strategy	10 points
Expected impact (e.g. outreach)	Outreach (e.g., no. of people/departments engaged in an active way – number of workshops etc.) Energy impact (energy savings, RES)	20 points
Link to existing SCC projects Initiative	Clear and proved connection to an existing measure developed through an Horizon 2020 Smart City and Communities (SCC) projects	10 points
Size of the city	Small and medium size cities (< 300.000) = 5 Points Large (> 300 000 in habitants) = 0 point	5 points
Actions		
Is the action clearly described?	A scale from 0 to 4. 0 = the action is not clear and not relevant. All descriptions of the action are either missing or not at all relevant for the purpose of the present call for proposals. 1 = the action is not very clear, several descriptions of milestones, deliverables, timeline and targets are missing.	20 points: 0 = 0 points 1 = 5 points 2 = 10 points 3 = 15 points 4 = 20 points

⁷<https://grants.scalable-cities.eu/login>



	<p>2 = the action is understandable, but the description is inconsistent and not clear.</p> <p>3 = the action is well described in all parts but it is not concrete enough.</p> <p>4 = everything is clear, timeline, main milestones indicated, deliverables included, baseline and target value clearly stated.</p>	
Grant requested	Efficient use of resources	max 20 points
	All costs included in the budget are eligible: Yes: 5 points, NO: 0 points	5 points
	The justification provided per the expenditure of each activity (budget file) is reasonable. Yes: 5 points, NO: 0 points	5 points
	The grant requested and the costs of planned activities can be considered efficient versus the comparative price levels of applicants respective country. Yes: 5 points, NO: 0 points	5 points
	The goals of activities described are realistic (thus, making the grant likely to be spent efficiently and providing value). Yes: 5 points, NO: 0 points	5 points

3.3 The evaluation process

The evaluation of submitted applications will start immediately after each deadline and it will take approximately two months.

For the present call for proposals, applications will be evaluated by AIT - Austrian Institute of Technology (AT) and Twenty Communications (TC) and Blue Sight Conseil in accordance with the above-described award criteria.

Successful applicants will be notified of the results and asked to proceed to the preparation of the grant agreement phase.

Non-selected applicants will be notified by email.

4. Legal and Financial Set-up of the Grant Agreement

Selected applicants will have to sign a sub-contract, which will set the framework for the grant and its terms and conditions, particularly concerning deliverables, reporting and payments. The sub-contract will include information regarding:

- The project starting date and duration.
- Milestones and deliverables
- Grant amount
- Payment arrangements



- Reporting and payment arrangements

4.1. Payment arrangements

Payment will follow the signature of the grant agreement by the beneficiary(ies) and the representative of Energy Cities.

Payments for project will be arranged in two tranches:

- A pre-financing of 30% with the signature of the partnership agreement
- The remaining 70% will be provided upon approval of the final report and all deliverables

4.2. Reporting

A **mid-term online meeting** will be organised with the Scalable Cities Secretariat representative.

All projects will have to submit a **final report** within 30 days after the last day of the project. Final reports will be filled in and submitted online using the Scalable Cities Action Grant platform (see Annex 4).

4.3. Communication obligations

Successful applicants who produce studies or publications with the financial support of the Scalable Cities action grant apply their own visual identity. However, the successful applicant have to display the Commission logo on the cover page as a "sign-off" with the words "With the support of the" or "Supported by the" + Commission [logo](#).



A **disclaimer** shall be added to the inner pages of any study or publication: "The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."

All projects must liaise with the Scalable Cities Secretariat on communication matters, guidelines and templates to ensure coherency in outreach. In particular, they need to inform the Secretariat about their public events and promote them via the Scalable Cities communication channels (ad-hoc news about each event will be published on Scalable Cities website and channels). A representative from the Scalable Cities consortium may attend public events on an ad-hoc basis.

5. Contact

In case of any questions or issues with the application procedure, please contact the Scalable Cities Secretariat Action Grant coordinators: Sofia Corsi, e-mail: Sofia.corsi@energy-cities.eu and Elina Sergejeva, e-mail: Elina.Sergejeva@energy-cities.eu



6. Annexes

Annex 1 – Letter of political commitment

[Draft text, please insert headed paper of the applicant local authority or the city represented by the applicant (in case the applicant is not a local authority)]

Letter of Political Commitment referred to Scalable Cities Action Grant 2nd Call for proposals

Project name:

Dear Sir or Madam,

[Name of the Municipality that will benefit from the project] supports the application of [**project name**] project within the framework of the call for proposals "**Scalable Cities Action Grant - 2nd Call for Proposal**".

The [*Name of the Municipality that will benefit from the project*] commits to work closely with the lead applicant in order to benefit and make the most by the implementation of the action. *Only applicable if lead applicant is different from the Municipality*]

We support this project as it will bring the following impact to our city [*short description of the impact - max 3 lines*].

Our Municipality has a current SECAP or SEAP accepted by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (or alternative equivalent plan) that we are sending attached to the present application.

Signature

Role



Annex 2 – Application form template

For information only – application form has to be completed online on using the Scalable Cities Grant platform.

Project Overview	
Project title	max 500 characters
Project duration [in months]	Drop down list 6-7-8-9-10-11-12
Type of organisation [municipality, civil society organisation, public agency, university]	Combo box
Lead organisation [name]	max 500 characters
Size of the main city where the project will be implemented	Combo box <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● < 100.000 inhabitants ● between 100.000 - 300.000 inhabitants ● > 300.000 inhabitants
Project partners	Button - Add lines for name of the partners
Type of organisation [municipality, civil society organisation, public agency, university]	Combo box
Letter of support [attach the signed LoS]	
Country/countries of implementation	List of countries (drop down list)
Link to existing SCC initiative [briefly explain how your project is connected to a SCC project]	max 1000 characters
Strand	window button (combo box)
Grant amount you are applying for (result of the total number of lump sums requested to implement the action, e.g. 450 * 50 = 22.500 euros)	Amount in Euros
Budget category	Automatically prefilled (small, medium, large)



Project abstract [describe in one paragraph the objective of your proposal, emphasising the context, the connection with an SCC project, the target group and the expected results]	max 1000 characters
Administrative data of the Lead applicant	
Contact person	
Telephone	
Email	
Address	
Website	
Description of the project	
Justification [briefly describe the need behind this grant request, describe the context, the partners involved and the main expected results]	max 2000 characters
Stakeholder engagement analysis [describe your target group and your strategy to engage them]	max 1500 characters
Deliverables and outputs:	
Action 1 [description of the action]	max 1000 characters
Baseline [description of the situation at the start of the project]: max 300 characters	Impact achieved [description of the situation at the end of the project]: max 300 characters
Deliverables and outputs: max 1000 characters	
Additional actions if needed (plus button) - maximum 20 actions	
Upload button for Annexes	
Budget form – Annex 3 [download from the system and complete it]	excel or pdf



<p>Letter of Support – Annex 1 [attach the letter of support of the municipality in which the action(s) are taking place]</p>	<p>pdf</p>
<p>Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) developed within the Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy initiative, formally approved both by the local council (or equivalent decision-making body) and Joint Research Centre of the European Commission</p>	<p>pdf max 50 mb or link</p>



Annex 3 – Budget Table

For information only – download Excel Table from the Scalable Cities Grant platform and fill in before submission.

Scalable Cities - Action Grant			
Annex 3 - budget			
Project title			
Lead applicant			
Actions	Number of working days /unit	Lump sum (450,00 EUR)	Total
1.....			
1.1			0
			0
2.....			0
2.1			0
2.2			0
			0
			0
			0
Total	0		0

Actions	Unit/ number of working days	Justification
1.....		
1.1		
2.....		
2.1		
2.2		
Total		



Annex 4 – Final reporting

Report will be filled in directly on the platform.

Please describe the main outcomes of your project, providing both qualitative and quantitative data. Include information regarding your partners, if there is a scalability plan, how did your project contributed to scale up SCC solutions? Please provide information regarding the local impact and possible follow up plan to maximise the project's results. (max 8000 characters)

Attachments – pdf (not compulsory)

