

Guidelines for Applicants

OCTOBER, 2026

Call 8, Version 1

Last update - 15/10/2026

EUCF
European City Facility

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1 About the European City Facility (EUCF)

1.1 EUCF at a glance

1.1.1 What is the EUCF?

Municipalities, local authorities and local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities play a key role in Europe's transition towards sustainable energy. They have tremendous potential to build comprehensive sustainable energy investment programmes and can encourage the pooling of smaller projects into larger investment portfolios to mobilise the significant financial resources required for the energy transition.

Although the potential is immense, there are fundamental barriers for sustainable energy investments, such as:

- the lack of financial and legal capacity of municipalities/ local authorities to transform their long-term energy and climate strategies into appropriate investment concepts;
- the reluctance to finance project preparation, as early-stage costs are rarely prioritised in municipal budgets and not typically covered by banks;
- the strong reliance on public funds, combined with limited financial literacy and limited familiarity with innovative financing instruments;
- the mismatch between short political cycles and long investment timelines;
- the lack of aggregation of fragmented smaller projects and thus lack of attractiveness of those for the financial sector.

In many cases, municipalities/ local authorities lack resources and internal capacities to develop credible, robust and sufficiently mature investment concepts that can mobilise financing for the realisation of their sustainable energy projects. These concepts are, however, essential for addressing potential investors and accessing different sources of funding.

In this context, the European City Facility (EUCF), first launched under the Horizon 2020 framework programme and later continued under the LIFE Programme of the European Union, provides **tailor-made, rapid and simplified financial support (grants of EUR 60,000) and capacity building services** to municipalities and local authorities, their groupings and local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities in 32 European countries in order to enable them to **develop sound investment concepts and mobilise finance in the field of sustainable energy**.

The investment concepts developed by EUCF beneficiaries will represent an important step towards a fully-fledged business and financial plan and in this way facilitate the subsequent mobilisation of investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy. Sources of funding for the investment projects may vary, coming from the private sector, own funds, but also from other EU-funded instruments such as the European Local Energy Assistance (ELENA) facility of the European Investment Bank (EIB), or other different national and local investment platforms.

Since 2019, the EUCF has shown that small grants and targeted support can unlock substantial investment: As of today (October, 2026) more than 400 beneficiaries has received support and 371 investment concepts has been validated, with investments secured by beneficiaries (own reporting) reaching beyond EUR 1.7 billion presented on the Impact Dashboard.

1.1.2 What are the objectives of the EUCF?

The overarching objective of the EUCF is to provide financial and technical support to municipalities/local authorities, their groupings and local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities in order to accelerate the implementation of their ambitious sustainable energy and climate plans. Building on the success and the lessons learned in the first seven calls for applications, the EUCF aims for an appropriate follow-up and upscale of its support, by continuing to be relevant to municipalities, local authorities and local public entities in structuring and increasing the maturity of their investment projects and supporting the European goals of increasing investments in energy efficiency, heating and cooling actions and sustainable energy overall.

The specific objectives of the EUCF include:

- To design, plan and manage three calls for applications for the selection of 185 municipalities/local authorities, their groupings or local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities, which will be provided with financial support and services to trigger investment in sustainable energy, with focus on energy efficiency and heating and cooling.
- To offer services at national/regional level to support cities and municipalities by setting up and managing a network of national hubs and raising capacity of internal municipal staff with the organisation of capacity building activities.
- To mobilise a network of private and public investors at national and EU level to facilitate the market uptake of the investment concepts developed within the EUCF and to connect beneficiaries to EU instruments such as ELENA.
- To promote and disseminate EUCF's impact to municipalities and local authorities fostering replication and exploitation by developing standardised products and processes.

1.1.3 What are the guiding principles of the EUCF?

The principles guiding the design and operation of the EUCF can be characterised as follows:

A) Demand-driven: *designed by cities for cities*

Different networks of European cities compose key parts of the Consortium responsible for the implementation and management of the EUCF in order to ensure that the offer takes into consideration and directly responds to the needs of municipalities and local authorities. Also contributing to this principle, the EUCF Strategic Board is composed also by representatives of EU municipalities and is responsible for the strategic steering of the EUCF, ensuring that the demands of local authorities are appropriately addressed.

B) Close to the local level: *mobilising a critical mass of cities*

To address national specificities and overcome language barriers, which are often a challenge for small and medium-sized municipalities to apply for financing opportunities, the work of the EUCF is supported by experts in each eligible country. National Hubs can provide support in national language to municipalities, local authorities and local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities and have extensive technical and financial expertise in the field of sustainable energy and climate, experience with municipalities and strong connections to national and regional city networks, contributing to position the EUCF very close to the local level and country-specific contexts.

C) Ambitious: *helping develop strategic and ambitious investment concepts*

The EUCF support is targeted towards strategic or transformational projects in the field of sustainable energy identified in the climate and energy plans or Heating and Cooling Plans, of the municipalities, local authorities and local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities. Besides the financial support, beneficiaries of the EUCF will receive hands-on guidance, as well as have access to European capacity building, to ensure the development of ambitious and sound investment concepts in line with the principles of the EUCF.

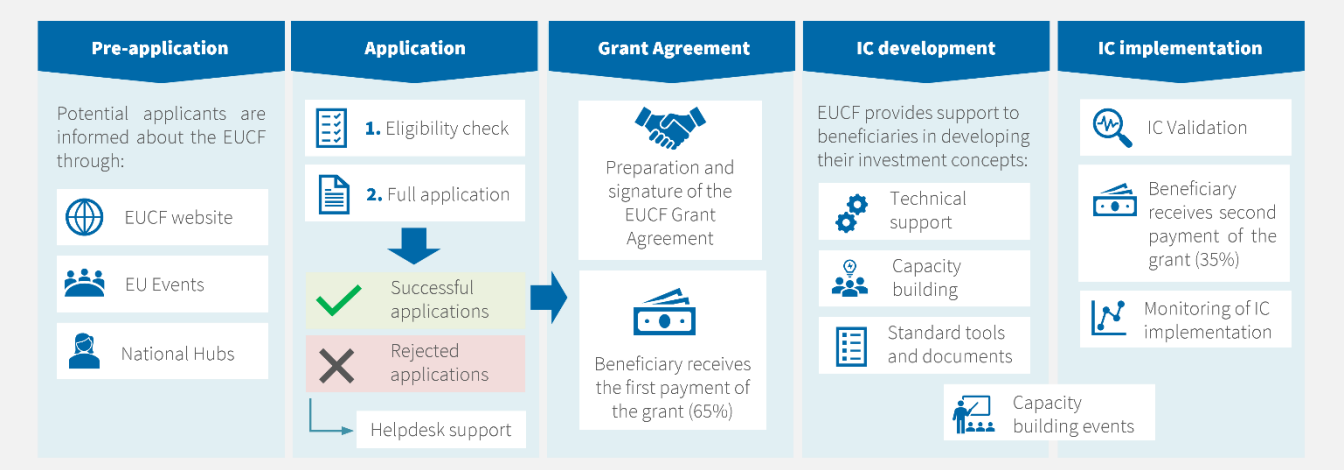
D) Supporting scaling: *capturing opportunities for standardisation and project aggregation*

The EUCF will ensure, where feasible, the integration of measures for scaling-up of investment packages in investment concepts through standardisation and project aggregation. Smaller communities are therefore encouraged to reinforce multi-level governance on their territories and implement projects jointly or under the umbrella of a larger public authority. All developed investment concepts will follow a standard structure and respect minimum quality requirements to facilitate matchmaking with future investors and financiers.

1.2 The EUCF journey

1.2.1 How does the EUCF journey look like?

The following figure summarises the journey that municipalities and local authorities, their groupings and local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities are able to take within the scope of the EUCF, from the pre-application phase, where potential applicants are informed about the EUCF through different channels, to the implementation of the investment concept by the beneficiaries of the EUCF. The application period for the eight EUCF call for applications will last from **26 October to 21 December 2026**.



1.2.2 What are the main steps in the EUCF journey?

1. Pre-application phase

At the beginning of the EUCF journey, potential applicants can receive information about the scope and the benefits of the EUCF by visiting the EUCF website, attending promotional events at EU and national level or by benefitting from the wide network of former beneficiaries to the EUCF.

2. Application phase

The EUCF application process comprises of two steps: i) the eligibility check and ii) the full application. The eligibility check is a simple, automated questionnaire, which can be answered online by the applicant on the EUCF website. To be eligible, applicants must be able to answer YES to all six questions of the eligibility check. Eligible applicants can register in the EUCF website user zone, where they can complete the application form and upload supporting documents. Applications can be submitted until the closing of the respective call and are then evaluated by a dedicated team. Successful applicants are selected and move to the next phase and become EUCF beneficiaries, while unsuccessful applications are redirected to the EUCF Helpdesk for support.

3. Grant Agreement phase

Successful applicants conclude Grant Agreements to benefit from the EUCF support. The Grant Agreement establishes the terms and conditions for EUCF support as well as the rights and obligations of both parties. 65% of the lump sum will be disbursed once the Grant Agreement enters into force; 35% of the lump sum after positive validation of the submitted investment concept.

4. Development of the investment concept

EUCF Beneficiaries must develop their investments concepts over a period of up to twelve months, during which the EUCF provides support through the technical and financial expertise from National Hubs and the EUCF team, the Investment Concept template and capacity building events, especially the EUCF Intensive Day(s) but also with regional options.

5. Implementation of the investment concept

After the finalisation of the investment concepts, these are validated by a dedicated evaluation team. If the IC meets the validation criteria, the IC is positively validated and the beneficiary receives the remaining 35% of the total grant amount. Beneficiaries may then proceed with the successful implementation of their investment concepts. The EUCF accompanies the process by organising matchmaking and other capacity building events as well as by monitoring the IC implementation for a 2-year period.

1.3 EUCF support

1.3.1 Who can apply to receive EUCF support?

Municipalities and local authorities, groupings of municipalities/local authorities as well as local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities located entirely in the European Union Member States (EU-27), in Iceland, Ukraine, Moldova, North Macedonia and Montenegro are eligible to apply to receive EUCF support.

Municipalities/local authorities, groupings of municipalities/local authorities, and local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities are able to benefit only once from the EUCF support. Thus, **beneficiaries from previous EUCF calls are not eligible to participate again in the calls for applications.**

1.3.2 What type of financial support is provided?

Successful applicants receive financial support of a **EUR 60,000 lump sum** in the form of a grant for the development of the investment concept.

1.3.3 Which activities can be funded by the EUCF grant?

The **EUR 60,000 grant** is provided to EUCF beneficiaries to **support the activities necessary for the development of their investment concepts**. The grant amount can be used for in-house staff - if internal capacities are sufficient - or for external experts, sub-contractors and other positions that are necessary for the investment concept development. Among the activities that can be funded are feasibility studies, engineering analyses, legal analyses, social studies, market studies, financial analyses, energy audits and further supporting tasks.

Participation in capacity building events, such as those organised by the EUCF, can also be funded.

1.3.4 Which types of investment projects does the EUCF support?

The EUCF provides support for investment projects within the field of sustainable energy, including all investments on the energy demand side, which contribute to the improvement of energy performance and the achievement of energy savings. Among the investment sectors targeted by the EUCF are public buildings (including social-rental and public housing), private residential and non-residential buildings, building integrated renewables, district heating and cooling networks, sustainable urban mobility, innovative energy infrastructure, renewable energy production infrastructure, public lighting and those included in the local heating and cooling plans. Nevertheless, it is also possible to implement projects in further sectors, as long as they are in the field of sustainable energy. Given the high relevance of **energy efficiency** for achieving the goals of European climate and energy policy, applications focused on the generation of energy savings are appreciated in the EUCF evaluation.

Please note that **the investment concept must be developed by EUCF beneficiaries for the same project described in the application form**. Deviations in the concept will be verified in the investment concept validation.

1.3.5 Which types of investment project are excluded from the EUCF?

The EUCF is aligned with the European Commission's European Green Deal, 2030 climate & energy framework, European Climate Law, 2050 long-term strategy and the EIB's energy lending policy. Thus, the EUCF has a clear position **not to support investments in energy projects reliant on unabated fossil fuels**, such as the production of oil and natural gas, traditional gas infrastructure, power generation technologies resulting in GHG emissions above 250 gCO_2 per kWh of electricity generated, and large-scale heat production infrastructure based on unabated oil, natural gas, coal or peat.

1.3.6 Which technical support activities does the EUCF offer?

The EUCF provides municipalities/local authorities, their groupings and local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities with different types of technical support activities along their journey within the EUCF:

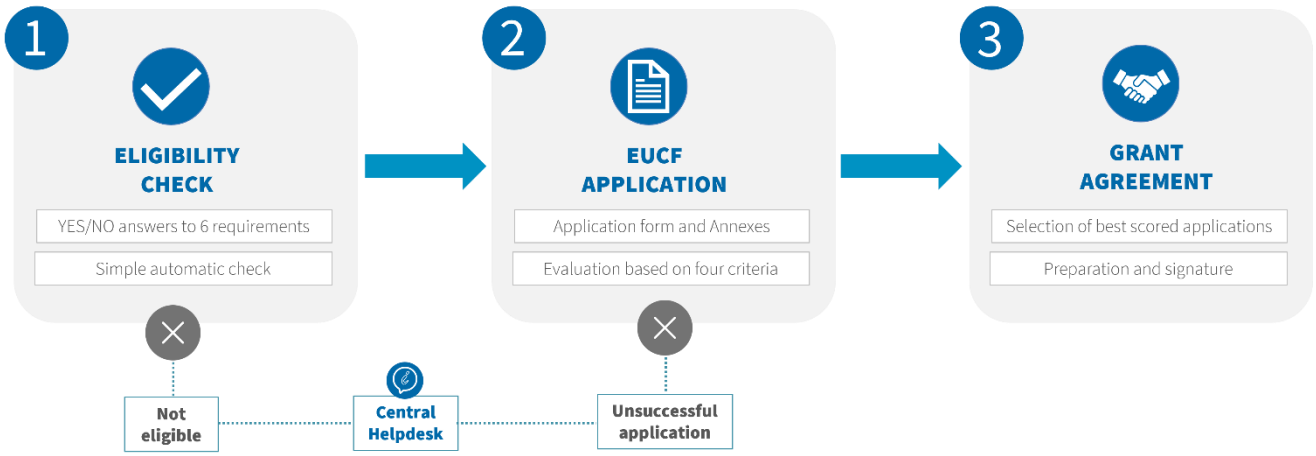
- **Support from national Hubs:** National Hubs assist beneficiaries of the EUCF in the application process and with technical and financial expertise in national language during the development of the investment concept. They do **not develop** applications or investment concepts themselves, or parts of them. For each eligible country, an National partner has been assigned, who can be contacted by the municipalities/local authorities and local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities of the respective country directly through the EUCF website user zone or per email for questions, clarifications and other requests. National Hubs also publish recordings and / or organise calls during the opening period of EUCF calls, to build the capacities of interested applicants on specific aspects of the EUCF application form, for instance focusing on the calculation of energy savings or investment size of project proposals.
- **Support from the EUCF Helpdesk:** Along the entire EUCF journey, the EUCF Helpdesk plays a fundamental role in providing technical support to potential applicants and interested parties as well as registered applicants and beneficiaries of the EUCF. The EUCF Helpdesk can be accessed through the EUCF website and EUCF website user zone, and allows users to easily communicate with the EUCF team and obtain support in case of questions, technical issues, etc.
- **Knowledge products and materials:** Various knowledge tools and documents are provided on the EUCF website to facilitate the application and development process of the investment concept, such as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), Investment Concept template, , information on beneficiaries of previous calls and their proposed investment concepts, etc.

2 EUCF Application

2.1 Application process

2.1.1 What is the application procedure for becoming an EUCF Beneficiary?

As presented in the figures below, the overall application process consists of two main steps: the eligibility check and the full application.



1. Eligibility check

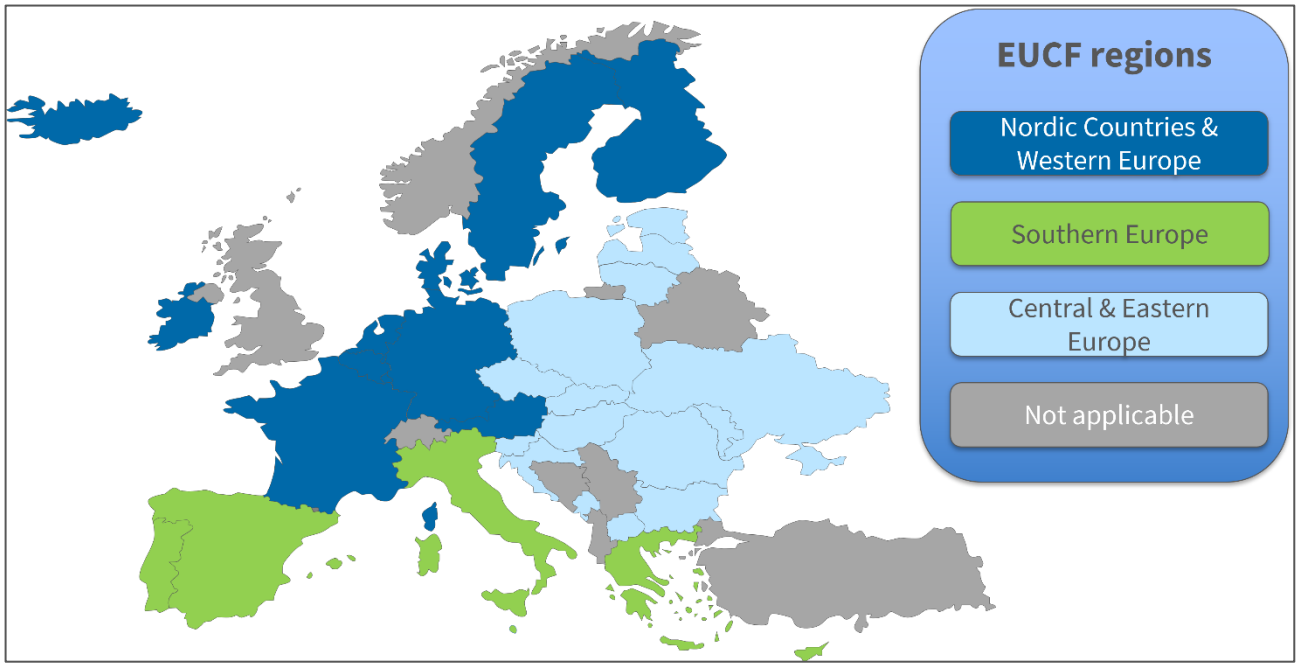
The eligibility check is a simple, automated questionnaire, which can be answered by the applicant directly online. It verifies whether an applicant is eligible to apply for financial support from the EUCF. To be eligible, applicants must be able to answer YES to all six requirements. Applicants receive the result of the eligibility check immediately after answering all questions. At this stage, supporting documents are not required.

2. Full application

After successfully passing the eligibility check, the applicant can register in the EUCF website user zone to complete the application form and upload the supporting documents. Once the call for applications is closed, the submitted applications are evaluated by a dedicated team. The best scored applications are selected and will conclude the Grant Agreement to receive EUCF support. Unsuccessful applications receive feedback on the evaluation and can seek support from the EUCF Helpdesk to participate again in the next call for applications.

2.1.2 How are the EUCF calls for applications organised?

Seven calls for applications with cut off dates were organised within the scope of the previous editions of the EUCF. Three more (Call 8, Call 9 and Call 10) will be organised in the ongoing EUCF. Each call is organised in parallel for three geographic regions, as displayed in the map below. For the 8th call for applications, the EU 27 Member States, Iceland, Ukraine, Moldova, Montenegro and North Macedonia are included in the EUCF geographical coverage.



Regional call	Countries
Central and Eastern Europe	Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia
Nordic countries & Western Europe	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden
Southern Europe	Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain

2.1.3 When are the EUCF calls for applications taking place?

Overall, each call for applications will be open for two months. The following timeline applies for the EUCF calls for applications:

Call for Applications	Application period
1st call	25 May 2020 - 2 October 2020
2nd call	29 March 2021 - 31 May 2021
3rd call	15 October 2021 - 17 December 2021
4th call	9 June 2022 - 30 September 2022
5th call	28 April 2023 – 30 June 2023
6th call	15 January 2024- 15 March 2024
7th call	14 October 2024 – 18 December 2024
8th Call	**26 October 2026 – 21 December 2026**

The exact dates of all calls and any alterations regarding the opening and closing of application periods will be published on the EUCF website.

2.1.4 Can applicants apply several times and/or resubmit a rejected application?

Municipalities/local authorities, groupings of municipalities/local authorities, and local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities are able to benefit **only once** from the EUCF support. Thus, **beneficiaries from previous EUCF calls are not able to participate again in the calls for applications**. This is also the case for newly formed municipalities, where a former beneficiary forms a part.

Unsuccessful applications on the other hand can be revised in the EUCF website user zone and re-submitted in the next call for applications.

2.1.5 How to seek support in case of questions during the application process?

Available on the EUCF website, the **FAQs** provide a comprehensive overview of questions that arise during the application process and corresponding answers with detailed information. In case of further questions, municipalities, local authorities and local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities can seek support from the **EUCF Helpdesk**, which provides efficient and timely responses to the queries raised. Moreover, **National Hubs** provide hands-on guidance and technical support in national language.

2.2 Eligibility check

2.2.1 Who is eligible to receive EUCF support?

EUCF applicants must comply with the following five eligibility criteria to be eligible for EUCF support:

Eligibility criteria	Requirement
1. Type of eligible applicants	Following types of applicants are eligible for EUCF support: • Municipalities/local authorities • Groupings of municipalities/local authorities • Local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities
2. Country of eligible applicants	Applicants must be entirely located in: • the EU-27 Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden • Iceland, Ukraine, Moldova, Montenegro, or North Macedonia
3. Commitment to sustainable energy and climate targets	Applicant must have either a **Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan** *(SECAP or other local climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets)*, ***or*** a **Local Heating and Cooling Plan** *(according to the requirement in Article 25(6) of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EU) 2023/1791, or other Local Heating and Cooling plan with mitigation targets.)* Please note that the corresponding SECAP, Local Heating and Cooling Plan or other climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets must be submitted with the EUCF application form.
4. Political commitment	EUCF applicants must be able to demonstrate political commitment to develop the investment concept through a letter of support by the Mayor or by another relevant political representative. Please note that a letter of support to the development of the investment concept must be submitted with the EUCF application form. A template is provided by the EUCF and must be mandatorily used for the application.
5. Commitment to monitoring period	EUCF applicants must demonstrate commitment to the monitoring period of two years after the final submission of the investment concept.

	Please note that this requirement will be part of the EUCF Grant Agreement for awarded applicants. The monitoring period starts one year after the submission of the investment concept by EUCF beneficiaries.
6: Not previously received EUCF funding	Applicants must declare that neither the applicant nor the proposed specific Investment Concept has received funding under any previous EUCF call for applications? The full list of previous beneficiaries is available on the **EUCF website**. Please note: applicants that have already received EUCF financial support under a previous call are not eligible to receive funding again. A specific text declaring this is included in the letter of political support.

2.2.2 Where can the eligibility check be found?

The eligibility check is available on the EUCF website.

2.2.3 What type of Heating and Cooling, climate and/or energy plan is accepted for the EUCF application?

To be eligible for the EUCF, applicants must have a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SECAP) developed within the framework of the Covenant of Mayors or another local climate and/or energy plan with **mitigation targets included,** or a Local Heating and Cooling Plan **according to the requirement in Article 25(6) of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EU) 2023/1791, or other Local Heating and cooling plan with mitigation targets**.

In the application, applicants will be required to submit the required plan and briefly describe it, as well as to provide **at least one mitigation target established in the plan** for the municipality/local authority, grouping or local public entity aggregating municipalities/local authorities.

SECAPs or other local climate and/or energy plans or, alternatively, a Local Heating and Cooling Plan according to the Directive (EU) 2023/1791, or other Local Heating and cooling plan can be submitted in the national language.

2.2.4 How can an applicant demonstrate political commitment?

In order to demonstrate political commitment to the development of the investment concept, the EUCF applicant must submit with the application form a **letter of support to the development of the investment concept** signed by the Mayor or other relevant political representative. The letter of support must be submitted in English and explicitly includes that the investment concept proposed is connected to the wider strategic plans (SECAP, similar plan, or Local H&C Plan). A template is available for the letter on the EUCF website and must be mandatorily used for the submission.

2.2.5 What does the EUCF monitoring period entail?

The EUCF monitoring period has a duration of **two years**, in which the implementation of the investment concept is supervised and documented. During this period, beneficiaries are asked to notify the EUCF on the implementation process by submitting **two simple monitoring forms** - after one and two years, respectively - on key figures, which are used to assess the impacts of the EUCF.

2.2.6 What are the next steps after the eligibility check?

After successfully passing the eligibility check, applicants automatically receive login details to access the EUCF website user zone. There, applicants can complete and submit the online application form together with the supporting documents.

2.3 Application form

2.3.1 Where can the application form be found?

The online application form is integrated in the EUCF website user zone and accessible for applicants who have successfully completed the eligibility check. After the eligibility check, eligible applicants receive login details to the EUCF website user zone. Potential applicants can take a look at the questions of the application form in advance in the EUCF website.

2.3.2 Which information has to be provided in the application form?

The application form consists of a set of questions, grouped into four sections. For each of the sections, the following information has to be provided in **English** by the applicant:

1. Identification of the applicant

This section comprises general information about the applicant, such as contact details and contact persons as well as Local Administrative Units (LAU) and Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 3 codes. For groupings, the name of the lead applicant as well as the LAU and NUTS 3 codes of each participating municipality/local authority have to be provided. As LAU and NUTS3 codes are not available for all non-EU municipalities/local authorities**,** these applicants must select the administrative subdivision applying from the national system of regional and territorial statistics. In case of local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities, the NUTS 3 area code in which the entity is located must be provided as well as the tax identification number or equivalent.

Moreover, this section also includes the total population size (absolute number, not displayed as thousands or millions) of the municipality/local authority, grouping or of the area covered by the local public entity aggregating municipalities/local authorities needs to be stated in this section. The type of applicant (municipality/local authority, grouping or local public entity aggregating

municipalities/local authorities) selected in the registration to the EUCF website user zone cannot be changed in the application form.

2. Political commitments

In this section, the applicant is required to upload the two supporting documents to the EUCF application: the **SECAP, other local climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets, or the Local Heating and Cooling Plan** and the **letter of political support** signed by the Mayor or other relevant political representative. Applicants are required to provide some general information about the submitted plan, such as its title, the timeframe covered and a brief description. Moreover, applicants must indicate in a table the key mitigation targets established in the submitted plan in terms of energy savings, renewable energy production and/or GHG emissions reduction. Other targets can also be indicated.

Beneficiaries that have received funding in previous calls are not able to participate again in the current calls for applications. In this section, applicants are required to **confirm not to have benefited from EUCF support** in previous calls for applications.

For local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities, this section also includes a check on the specific eligibility criteria applying.

3. Proposed investment project

In this section, information has to be provided on the proposed investment project for which an investment concept should be developed within the EUCF. **The investment concept must be developed by EUCF beneficiaries for the same project described in the application form**. Deviations in the concept will be verified in the investment concept validation.

The requirements for this section are described more in detail in the following table:

Item	Requirement
3.1	**Title of the proposed investment concept**
3.2	**Project description and objectives** The applicant is required to briefly describe the proposed investment project, its relevance for the municipality/local authority, grouping or local public entity aggregating municipalities/local authorities and the main objectives to be achieved with its implementation.
3.3	**Implementation period** The applicant is required to state in months the period foreseen for the implementation of the proposed investment project after the development of the investment concept. The implementation period refers to the period during which the investment project is to be

	carried out and put into action. The implementation phase is concluded once the proposed project is commissioned and operation can start.
3.4	**Main investment sector targeted** The applicant is required to indicate the main sector targeted by the proposed investment project. The applicant can select one from the options below as well as specify another targeted sector, if necessary: • Public buildings (incl. social-rental and public housing) • Private non-residential buildings • Private residential buildings • Building integrated renewables • District heating and cooling networks • Sustainable urban mobility • Innovative energy infrastructure • Renewable energy production infrastructure • Public lighting • Waste heat recovery (new) • Other sectors.
3.5	**Governance structure for investment concept development** The applicant must describe the internal organisational structure for the development of the investment concept. The provided information should allow for an overview of the governance structure and internal capacities of the applicant, specifying the roles and responsibilities of the actors involved and how decisions are made within the organisation. Moreover, applicants must indicate the need for further support from external experts and how they can contribute to the development of the investment concept. In case of groupings, the description of the governance structure is particularly important to clarify how the grouping is organised internally and how responsibilities are distributed and decisions are made.
3.6	**Strategy for stakeholders' engagement** The applicant must describe the most relevant external stakeholders for the planned investment project, indicating their needs and expectations towards it. The provided answer should also include an overview of the activities and communication tools planned to engage the described stakeholders in the process of developing the investment concept, with the corresponding timing and objectives of each action.

3.7	**Intended measures** This section includes a table to be filled by the applicant stating the foreseen technology measures to be financed with the investment concept as well as their corresponding investment sector, investment costs (CAPEX) and associated expected impacts in terms of energy savings (GWh/y), renewable energy production (GWh/y) and/or greenhouse gas emissions reduction (in tCO_2eq/y). The implementation of the measures should be foreseen to be undertaken within the implementation period indicated in item 3.3.
3.8	**Expected size of investment** In this item the total investment costs (EUR) indicated for the intended measures described in 3.7 are summarized. To adjust the figure, applicants must make the corresponding adjustments to the individual investment costs provided in 3.7. The investment size refers to the overall investments in sustainable energy as the sum of investment costs of each intended measure. It does not refer to the 60 000 EUR financial support provided by the EUCF.
3.9	**Expected impacts** In this item the total impacts indicated for the intended measures described in 3.7 are summarized. It includes the total expected impacts in energy savings (GWh/y), renewable energy generation (GWh/y) and/or greenhouse gas emissions reduction (in tCO_2eq/y). To adjust these impact figures, applicants must make the corresponding adjustments to the individual impacts per measure provided in 3.7. Additionally, applicants can also outline if any initial estimations for other impacts, such as job creation, reduction of air pollution, etc, have already been made.
3.10	**Potential for replication and/or up-scaling** Applicants are required to explain how the investment project could potentially be replicated in other contexts and/or upscaled.

4. Use of EUCF support

In this section, applicants are required to indicate, for monitoring purposes only, the activities for which the EUCF grant is needed and whether the application has been prepared by the applicant municipality/local authority, grouping or local public entity aggregating municipalities/local authorities employing internal capacities or by an external expert/consultant.

2.3.3 What are the LAU and NUTS 3 codes?

The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) is a territorial classification that subdivides the territory of the European Union and Iceland into three different hierarchical levels

(NUTS 1, NUTS 2 and NUTS 3) for statistical and planning purposes. The NUTS 3 classification corresponds to *small regions for specific diagnoses* at regional level.

Concerning the local level, a system of Local Administrative Units (LAUs) is maintained in compatibility with the NUTS system. LAUs are subdivisions of the NUTS 3 regions. The respective NUTS 3 and LAU codes can be found on a regularly updated list, available on the Eurostat website.

For applying municipalities/local authorities and groupings the NUTS 3 codes can be selected from a drop-down list in the application form and the corresponding LAU codes are assigned automatically based on the postal codes provided.

For municipalities/local authorities and groupings from countries not using NUTS 3, the equivalent regional unit can be selected from a drop-down list in the application form (for Ukraine, for example the "Raions" code, and the corresponding local codes appear for selection).

Local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities must indicate through the drop-down menu the NUTS 3 area code in which they are located. The NUTS 3 code is only asked for statistical reasons. Local public entities located in Ukraine must select the corresponding "Raions" code from the drop-down menu.

Please note: *The LAU and NUTS 3 codes (or similar) are only updated in the application system on the actual launch date of each call, and applicants who have successfully registered earlier (for example, former applicants) may need to update their numbers in the application itself and ensure accuracy.*

2.3.4 What main investment sectors can be targeted in the application?

The following table presents the investment sectors that can be targeted in the EUCF application including a description of each sector and examples of intended measures they encompass:

Investment sector	Description	Intended measures
Public buildings (incl. social-rental and public housing)	Refers to the measures aimed at improving energy efficiency in **public buildings** through the reduction of energy use for heating and cooling, ventilation, lighting and hot water demands as well as reducing electricity consumption of equipment and appliances. Public buildings are those **owned by the municipality**,	Renovation of **public buildings**, including measures such as: • Insulation of outside walls, roof and cellar • Replacement of windows • Replacement of ventilation system • Replacement of inefficient systems for heating, cooling and hot water

	including schools, community centres, libraries, courts, information centres and government buildings as well **social-rental and public housing**.	• Replacement of inefficient light sources within the building • Upgrade of existing equipment and appliances • Integration of renewable energy technologies, e.g. PV or solar thermal systems
Private non-residential buildings	Refer to the measures aimed at improving energy efficiency in **private non-residential buildings** through the reduction of energy use for heating and cooling, ventilation, lighting and hot water demands as well as reducing electricity consumption of equipment and appliances. Private non-residential buildings are those **owned by a private person and wherein no portion occupied or used for human habitation**, i.e. buildings used for commercial and industrial purposes.	Renovation of **private non-residential buildings**, including measures such as: • Insulation of outside walls, roof and cellar • Replacement of windows • Replacement of ventilation system • Replacement of inefficient systems for heating, cooling and hot water • Replacement of inefficient light sources within the building • Upgrade of existing equipment and appliances • Integration of renewable energy technologies, e.g. PV or solar thermal systems
Private residential buildings	Refer to the measures aimed at improving energy efficiency in **private residential buildings** through the reduction of energy use for heating and cooling, ventilation, lighting and hot water demands as well as reducing electricity consumption of equipment and appliances. Private	Renovation of **private residential buildings**, including measures such as: • Insulation of outside walls, roof and cellar • Replacement of windows • Replacement of ventilation system

	residential buildings are those **owned by a private person and which provide for dwelling purposes**. Residential buildings are used for housing and include the necessary facilities and utilities to satisfy the living requirements of its residents.	• Replacement of inefficient systems for heating, cooling and hot water • Replacement of inefficient light sources within the building • Upgrade of existing equipment and appliances • Integration of renewable energy technologies, e.g. PV or solar thermal systems
Building integrated renewables	Refers to solutions aimed at **integrating renewable energy systems**, such as biomass plants, solar photovoltaics and solar thermal collectors, into the building in order to produce renewable electricity and reduce electricity consumption and greenhouse gas emissions across the building lifecycle.	• Building integrated photovoltaic systems • Building integrated solar thermal systems • Biomass based power plant for building energy system
District heating and cooling networks	Refers to the different measures aimed at **improving the efficiency of district heating and cooling networks** and integrating low-carbon energy sources into the heating and cooling energy mix.	• Renovation of existing district heating and/or cooling network to improve energy efficiency • Switch to renewable energy sources, such as biomass, geothermal, solar thermal, wood energy, biogas, green hydrogen, etc • Integration of secondary heat sources, e.g. from industrial processes, household waste incineration, data centres, metro, wastewater, etc

		• Digitalisation of existing network, e.g. for reducing network's temperature • Improvement of components of the existing network
Sustainable urban mobility	Refers to the different measures aimed at **reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in the local transportation and mobility sector**. Sustainable urban mobility measures contribute to reducing the environmental footprint of transportation activities and have a positive effect on society, reducing traffic congestion and air pollution and improving access to public transport and sustainable and/or non-motorized transport modes	• Expansion of sustainable public transport modes, e.g. e-buses, vehicle integrated photovoltaics • Development of infrastructure for road transport electrification, e.g. charging stations, e-road systems, electricity and hydrogen power capacity • Charging infrastructure for e-mobility in publicly accessible buildings • Port electrification, e.g. charging facilities in ports and hybrid and electric ships
Innovative energy infrastructure	Refer to **innovative energy technologies and implementation schemes** designed to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy production	• Citizen energy communities • Circular economy models, such as wastewater treatment plants • Innovative renewable energy solutions, such as hydrogen infrastructure • Smart grid development • Energy storage innovation • Digitalisation for integration of renewables and energy saving measures • Systemic innovation solutions that potentialize synergies among different innovations

		across various components of the system
Renewable energy production infrastructure	Refers to measures aimed at the **renovation of existing infrastructure or development and implementation of new infrastructure for the production of renewable energy**. Renewable energy is energy from renewable resources that are naturally replenished, such as bioenergy, geothermal energy, hydrogen, marine energy, solar energy and wind energy	Installation of renewable energy production systems, such as: • Biomass systems • Solar photovoltaics power plants • Geothermal power plants • Combined heat and power (CHP) • Onshore wind turbines • Offshore wind turbines • Tidal power • Hydrogen plants
Public lighting	Refers to the measures aimed at **improving energy efficiency in public and street lighting systems**. Reliable public lighting technologies can contribute to reducing accidents and crimes, allowing for economic activities to take place during the evening as well as reduce energy consumption and operation and maintenance costs.	• Replacement of inefficient light sources by more efficient ones in street lighting and traffic signals • Improvement of control systems for public and street lighting • Integration of renewable energy sources in street lighting systems, e.g. solar photovoltaic
Waste heat recovery	Refers to measures aimed at improving energy efficiency by recovering excess heat that would otherwise be released into the environment and using it to meet heating and/or cooling demand. Excess heat from industrial processes, data	• Installation of systems to recover excess heat for heating and/or cooling • Use of heat exchangers and high-efficiency heat pumps to recover and upgrade excess heat to a useful temperature

	centres, wastewater treatment facilities, commercial buildings and other sources can reduce primary energy consumption and the energy required to provide local heating and cooling.	• Integration of recovered heat into efficient district heating and/or cooling systems • Use of thermal storage to optimize recovered heat for heating and/or cooling • Improved control system to optimize heat recovery, distribution and use

2.3.5 Which technology measures are not eligible under the EUCF?

The EUCF is aligned with the EIB energy lending policy last updated in 2023. Consequently, investments in energy projects reliant on unabated fossil fuels are not supported. See also section 1.3.5 for more information.

2.3.6 How should intended measures be specified in the application form?

The intended measures to be financed with the investment concept must be specified in section 3.7 of the EUCF application form. These refer to the planned actions, strategies, or initiatives proposed within the investment concept to achieve the defined objectives and expected impacts and should outline the steps and interventions foreseen to be implemented.

For each intended measure in the application form, EUCF applicants must assign the corresponding investment sector as well as the respective expected investment costs (in EUR) and impacts in energy savings (in GWh/y), renewable energy production (GWh/y) and GHG emissions reduction (in tCO_2eq/y). The table in section 2.3.4 of this document provides different examples of potential intended measures per sector.

The tables below provide examples on how to fill section 3.7 of the application form. Please note that **the examples, scenarios and numerical figures presented are entirely fictional and for illustrative purposes only.**

Example 1 – *Renovation of public buildings and efficient public lighting*

The examples, scenarios and numerical figures presented below are entirely fictional and for illustrative purposes only.

Intended measure	**Investment sector** (drop-down menu)	**Investment costs** (EUR)	**Energy savings** (GWh/y)	**Renewable energy production** (GWh/y)	**GHG emissions reduction** (tCO_2eq/y)
Insulation of outside walls, roof and cellars, and replacement of windows in *X school buildings*	Public buildings (incl. social-rental and public housing)	3 000 000	2.5	-	550
Replacement of inefficient systems for heating, cooling and hot water in *X residential buildings*	Public buildings (incl. social-rental and public housing)	5 000 000	4.0	-	840
Installation of photovoltaic systems in *X public school buildings*	Building integrated renewables	2 000 000	-	2.0	300
Replacement of *X inefficient public lighting sources* with LED	Public lighting	600 000	0.5	-	80
TOTAL		**10 300 000**	**7.0**	**2.0**	**1 770**

Example 2 – *Photovoltaic renewable energy infrastructure and energy community and renovation of public buildings*

The examples, scenarios and numerical figures presented below are entirely fictional and for illustrative purposes only.

Intended measure	**Investment sector** (drop-down menu)	**Investment costs** (EUR)	**Energy savings** (GWh/y)	**Renewable energy production** (GWh/y)	**GHG emissions reduction** (tCO_2eq/y)
Implementation of a municipal energy community for photovoltaic energy with *X MWp*	Renewable energy production infrastructure	2 500 000	-	2.0	400
Implementation of a municipal solar	Renewable energy	4 000 000	-	3.5	700

photovoltaic power plant with *X MWp*	production infrastructure				
Building insulation, replacement of ventilation and heating systems in *X public buildings*	Public buildings (incl. social-rental and public housing)	6 000 000	3.0	-	350
Replacement of *X inefficient public lighting sources* with LED in recreational areas	Public lighting	100 000	0.4	-	100
TOTAL		**12 600 000**	**3.4**	**5.5**	**1 550**

Example 3 – *Sustainable urban mobility and energy efficient street lighting*

The examples, scenarios and numerical figures presented below are entirely fictional and for illustrative purposes only.

Intended measure	**Investment sector** (drop-down menu)	**Investment costs** (EUR)	**Energy savings** (GWh/y)	**Renewable energy production** (GWh/y)	**GHG emissions reduction** (tCO_2eq/y)
X e-buses for the municipal fleet	Sustainable urban mobility	4 000 000	-	-	350
X e-bikes for bike sharing service	Sustainable urban mobility	100 000			500
Municipal EV charging infrastructure (*X EV charging points*)	Sustainable urban mobility	2 000 000			150
X MWp photovoltaic energy production for cycling infrastructure	Renewable energy production infrastructure	2 500 000	-	2.0	350
X LED lamps for public lighting	Public lighting	1 000 000	1.0	-	250
TOTAL		**9 600 000**	**1.0**	**2.0**	**1 600**

The elements required in each column of the table are defined as follows:

- **Intended measures:** refer to the actions planned to be implemented with the proposed investment concept aimed at generating impacts in energy savings, renewable energy production or greenhouse gas emissions reduction.
- **Investment sector:** refers to the specific category or industry in which the proposed investments are allocated. The investment sector applying to each individual measure can be selected from the drop-down menu in the respective column.
- **Expected impacts:** refer to the energy savings, renewable energy production or greenhouse gas emissions reduction expected with the implementation of each intended measure. Expected impacts in energy savings and renewable energy production must be stated in the application form in **GWh/y**. The expected impacts in terms of greenhouse gas emissions reduction must be stated in **tCO_2eq/y**.
- **Investment costs:** refer to the capital necessary for the implementation of each individual measure. The costs must be provided in **EUR** and the sum stated in the last row of the table corresponds to the project's total investment size.

What to consider when filling section 3.7 of the application form:

- ✓ **Avoid double counting impacts in energy savings and renewable energy production:** It is unrealistic that a proposed measure presents the same impacts in both energy savings and renewable energy production. While the installation of renewable energy systems can lead to impacts in energy savings, these should not be indicated as equivalent to the expected renewable energy generation. The double-counting of impacts for intended measures will be considered in the evaluation of criterion 4 – Coherence and plausibility.
- ✓ **Be as specific as possible in describing intended measures:** If already known at this stage, please provide more detailed information on the described measures, in order to enhance the clarity of the proposal and facilitate a comprehensive overview of the concept. This includes, specific quantities (e.g. the number of buildings slated for renovation, the quantity of light bulbs planned to be replaced, the count of planned EV chargers, etc.) as well as generation capacities and any other relevant particulars of each measure.
- ✓ **Use the correct units required in the application form:** Investment costs must be provided in **Euro**. Impacts in energy savings and renewable energy production must be provided in **GWh/y**, and greenhouse gas emissions reductions in **tCO_2eq/y**. The use of correct units for providing these figures will be considered in the evaluation of criterion 4 – Coherence and plausibility.

What to consider when filling section 3.7 of the application form:

- ✓ **Focus on the proposed investment concept to be developed within the EUCF:** The measures to be described in section 3.7 of the application refer to the actions to be implemented with the investment concept to be developed within the EUCF. The intended measures do not refer to the activities foreseen to be funded by the 60 000 EUCF grant. These are – for monitoring purposes only – subject of section 4 of the application form.
- ✓ **Consider the implementation period:** The implementation of the measures described in section 3.7 should be foreseen to be undertaken within the implementation period indicated in item 3.3 of the application form.
- ✓ **Make use of the comments section:** Below the table of intended measures in section 3.7 of the application form, applicants can use the comments section to elaborate on the measures, investment costs and impacts described in the table. While key information on intended measures should be presented in the table in a concise manner, the comments section below can be used to provide more details and highlight further relevant aspects of the estimations.

2.3.7 How is the expected investment size defined?

The investment size provided by the applicant in the application form should cover only the **investments in sustainable energy of the planned project.** It does not encompass the costs of any other potential components of the project which are not related to the generation of energy savings or renewable energy. The measures planned to be implemented within the project must be specified by the applicant in the table in item 3.7 of the application form with their corresponding investment costs. The total investment size is automatically calculated in item 3.8 as the sum of individual investment costs per intended measure listed in the table.

Please note that **the investment size does not refer to the EUCF grant amount of EUR 60,000**, but to the total investments in sustainable energy for the planned investment project. There is no minimum or maximum threshold for investment size to apply to the EUCF. In the evaluation process, the level of ambition of the absolute and per capita figures of the expected size is assessed in relation to the other submitted applications in the regional call. Moreover, the overall coherence and plausibility of the provided figure is also considered in the evaluation.

2.3.8 How should energy savings and/or renewable energy production be calculated?

The expected impacts in terms of energy savings and/or renewable energy production of the proposed investment project must be specified by the applicant in the table in item 3.7 of the application form according to the intended measures to be implemented. For each measure listed in the table, the applicant must state in **GWh/y** the corresponding impacts in terms of energy savings

and/or renewable energy generation. The total impacts of the project are calculated in item 3.9 of the application form as the sum of individual energy savings and renewable energy production per intended measure listed in the table. In the evaluation process, the level of ambition of the expected energy savings and/or renewable energy production assessed relation to the other submitted applications in the regional call, considering both the absolute and the per capita figures. Additionally, also the overall coherence and plausibility of the elements is assessed.

Investment projects focused on energy efficiency measures will be appreciated in the evaluation, i.e. projects with the majority of impacts in energy savings (higher than 50% of the total impacts in energy savings and renewable energy production) as well as projects that include substantial measures aimed at energy efficiency, even if these do not correspond to the majority of impacts.

2.3.9 What happens if the exact investment size or energy savings/renewable energy production amount cannot be determined yet?

In case specific values for the investment size and energy savings/renewable energy production cannot be determined yet, the applicant can use approximate values instead, which still allows the EUCF evaluation team to understand the level of ambition of the proposed investment project and its potential impacts. Any comments on the values, assumptions and calculations can be added in the comments section of item 3.7 of the application form.

2.4 Required documents

2.4.1 Which documents must be submitted with the EUCF application?

A Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP) or other local climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets or a Local Heating and Cooling Plan.

A SECAP or another local climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets must be submitted together with the application form to show that the municipality/local authority, grouping of municipalities/local authorities or local public entity aggregating municipalities/local authorities already has an overall climate/energy strategy in place.

The **SECAP is a key document** that describes how GHG emissions can be reduced so as to reach climate neutrality by 2050. More information about it can be found on the Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy website.

In case the applicant does not have a SECAP in place, another local climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets can be submitted. For the EUCF application, the submitted plan must include **at least one mitigation target**, which must be stated and referenced by the applicant in the corresponding section of the application form. Different mitigation targets can be considered, such as energy savings, renewable energy production and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Other

mitigation targets can also be specified by the applicant, if preferred. The submitted local climate and/or energy plan must apply to the entire geographic area of the municipality/local authority, lead applicant of a grouping or grouping itself or local public entity aggregating municipalities/local authorities.

The SECAP or other local climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets can be submitted in **national language**. Therefore, for the evaluation, it is important that the applicant fills correctly in the information required about the submitted plan in English in the application form.

Instead, a Local Heating and Cooling Plan meeting the requirements of Article 25(6) of Directive (EU) 2023/1791 is accepted in place of a SECAP.

A Local Heating and Cooling Plan is a key document that identifies measures to improve energy efficiency and decarbonise local heating and cooling, including the use of renewable energy and excess heat. Municipalities with more than 45,000 inhabitants are required to prepare such plans under Article 25(6) of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EU) 2023/1791. More information can be found on the European Commission's Energy Efficiency Directive website.

In case the applicant does not have a Local Heating and Cooling Plan meeting the requirements of the Directive, another Local Heating and Cooling Plan with mitigation targets can be submitted. For the EUCF application, the submitted plan must include **at least one mitigation target**, which must be stated and referenced by the applicant in the corresponding section of the application form. Different mitigation targets can be considered, such as energy savings, renewable energy production and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Other mitigation targets can also be specified by the applicant, if preferred. The submitted Local Heating and Cooling Plan must apply to the entire geographic area of the municipality/local authority, lead applicant of a grouping or grouping itself or local public entity aggregating municipalities/local authorities.

The Local Heating and Cooling Plan meeting the requirements of the Directive or another Local Heating and Cooling Plan with mitigation targets can be submitted in **national language**. Therefore, for the evaluation, it is important that the applicant fills correctly in the information required about the submitted plan in English in the application form.

Letter of political support to the development of the investment concept

To demonstrate political support to the development of the investment concept, the EUCF applicant must submit a letter of support, signed by the Mayor or other relevant political representative of the municipality/local authority, grouping or local public entity aggregating municipalities/local authorities. The applicants must use the corresponding template provided by the EUCF for submission. The letter of support must be submitted in English.

2.4.2 What are the requirements for the supporting documents?

The table below summarizes the requirements for the respective supporting documents to be submitted with the EUCF application:

Mandatory Annex	Requirements
Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan *(SECAP or other local climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets)*, ***or*** a **Local Heating and Cooling Plan** *(LHCP according to the requirement in Article 25(6) of the Energy Efficiency Directive (EU) 2023/1791, or other LHCP with mitigation targets.)* (to be submitted in PDF)	• SECAPs or other local climate and/or energy plans, or LHCP (according to the Energy Efficiency Directive 2023/1791 or other LHCP with mitigation targets) can be submitted **in national language or English**, as preferred by the applicant. • In the application form, applicants must mandatorily fill the required **general information about the plan** (title, time period covered and brief description). • In the application form, applicants must fill in the table **at least one of the mitigation targets established by the plan** (in terms of energy savings, renewable energy generation, GHG emissions reduction or other targets), including the corresponding target value and unit, the target year and the number of the page in the submitted plan where the target is addressed. • The submitted plan **must apply to the entire geographical area** of the municipality/local authority, lead applicant of a grouping or the grouping itself or local public entity aggregating municipalities/local authorities.
Letter of support to the development of the investment concept (to be submitted in PDF)	• The letter of support must be **signed by the Mayor or other relevant political representative** of the municipality/local authority, grouping or local public entity aggregating municipalities/local authorities. • The **template provided by the EUCF** must be used for the submission of the letter of support. Applications with letters of support that do not make use of the provided template from the EUCF will **not be considered** in the evaluation.

2.4.3 Which information must be provided about the SECAP, other local climate and/or energy plan, or Local Heating and Cooling Plan in the application form?

In the application form, applicants are required to provide some **general information about the submitted plan**, including: the title of the plan, the time period it covers and a brief description of its geographical scope, overall objectives and focus areas. In case the document of the plan cannot be submitted, applicants can also provide a link to access it online. Additionally, applicants are required to provide **at least one mitigation target established by the plan**, specifying its target value, unit, target year and the page number of the submitted document where the target can be found. Applicants can specify targets in terms of energy savings, renewable energy generation and/or greenhouse gas emissions reduction. Other targets can also be added in the last row of the table, if preferred.

In the EUCF letter of Support template, applicants also confirm their foreseen Investment Concept connects to the plan.

2.4.4 Can the application be submitted without any of the supporting documents?

For the application to be considered for EUCF support, both supporting documents must be submitted by the applicant in the EUCF website user zone: The Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP), other local energy and/or climate plan with mitigation targets or the Local Heating and Cooling Plan; and the letter of support to the project by the Mayor or another relevant political representative. For the submission of the letter of support, the template provided by the EUCF must be mandatorily used.

2.4.5 In which language must the documents be submitted?

It is possible to submit the SECAP, other local climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets, or the local Heating and Cooling Plan in **national language**. The letter of support to the development of the investment concept must be submitted in **English** language. To facilitate this, the EUCF provides a template for the submission of the letter. The template is available for download in the EUCF website.

2.5 Applications by groupings of municipalities/local authorities

2.5.1 What has to be considered when applying as grouping?

Groupings of municipalities/local authorities are highly encouraged to apply for the EUCF. When applying as grouping, the following points have to be considered:

- Both formal (e.g. formalised by an assembly act) and informal groupings are invited to apply.
- One responsible partner, i.e. **one lead applicant** has to be defined.
- Municipalities/local authorities participating in the grouping cannot be beneficiaries of previous EUCF calls for applications, either individually or as part of a different grouping.
- In the application form, the relations and decision-making processes within the grouping for the development of the investment concept have to be outlined.
- Either the lead applicant or the grouping needs to have a SECAP or other local climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets, or a Local Heating and Cooling Plan.
- Only the lead applicant has to provide the proof of political commitment to the development of the investment concept by signing the Letter of support to the development of the investment concept.
- As the EUCF aims to support especially small and medium-sized municipalities and, if feasible, encourages them to team up, groupings are appreciated in the evaluation process.
- In case the application is successful, **the grant amount of EUR 60,000 is awarded to the grouping as a whole**. Thus, the lump sum is awarded per application, not per municipality/local authority.
- The lead applicant is responsible to sign the Grant Agreement and to disburse the amount among the partners.

2.5.2 Who qualifies as part of a grouping?

Formal or informal groupings of municipalities/local authorities are eligible to apply. They have to define in the application form one lead applicant.

2.5.3 Must each partner of a grouping provide their own SECAP or other climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets?

No, the lead applicant must have a SECAP, other local climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets, or a Local Heating and Cooling plan. Joint action plans prepared collectively by a grouping of municipalities/local authorities are also accepted.

2.5.4 Does each partner have to provide a proof of political commitment?

No, the proof of political commitment to the development of the investment concept through a letter of support by the Mayor or other relevant political representative must be submitted only by the lead applicant of the grouping.

2.6 Applications by local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities

2.6.1 What has to be considered when applying as a local public entity?

Local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities are also able to apply for EUCF support. When applying as a local public entity aggregating municipalities/local authorities, the following points have to be considered:

- Local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities need to declare in the application form that (i) they are officially recognised as a tier of local government (different from the regional and provincial levels) by the national law with the obligation for municipalities/local authorities to join the supra-municipal organisation; (ii) they are composed only by municipalities/local authorities; (iii) they have a specific political and administrative structure.
- Local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities must present an own SECAP or local other climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets or a Local Heating and Cooling Plan that covers their geographical area.
- Local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities are not able to apply to the EUCF as groupings.
- Local public entities applying for EUCF support cannot be beneficiaries of previous EUCF calls for applications.

2.6.2 Who qualifies as a local public entity aggregating municipalities/local authorities?

Local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities may vary from country to country. Applicants included in this category must confirm their eligibility in the application form. **Eligible entities must fulfil all of the following criteria:**

- Eligible public entities must be officially recognised as a tier of local government[1] (different from the regional and provincial levels) by national law with the obligation for municipalities/local authorities to join the supra-municipal organisation;

[1] Public agencies and public companies (such as in the field of energy/waste management, economic development, touristic promotion, etc.) and/or other legal entities and/or non-profit organisations (e.g. collectives, institutions, associations, agencies etc.) which are fully or partially owned by the municipality/local authority and/or any eligible applicant, and/or which are fully or partially managed/supervised by the municipality/local authority and/or any eligible applicant, are not considered as local governments and therefore cannot be recognised as eligible public entities.

- Eligible public entities must be composed only by municipalities/local authorities[2]; and
- Eligible public entities must have a specific political and administrative structure.

Applicants are encouraged to check their potential eligibility before preparing the application by contacting the National Hubs or EUCF Helpdesk.

2.6.3 Are there examples of local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities?

Yes, the list below provides **a set of examples (non-exhaustive list, in national languages)** of potential eligible applicants included in this category.

Country	Examples of public entities[3]
Croatia	Urbane aglomeracije: urbana aglomeracija Zagreb, sa sjedištem u Zagrebu; urbana aglomeracija Split, sa sjedištem u Splitu; urbana aglomeracija Rijeka, sa sjedištem u Rijeci; urbana aglomeracija Osijek, sa sjedištem u Osijeku
Finland	Seutukunta
France	Communautés des communes. The list of Communautés des communes can be found here Communautés d'agglomération. The list of communautés d'agglomération can be found here Communautés urbaines. The list of communautés urbaines can be found here Métropoles. The list of Métropoles can be found here
Germany	Landkreise. The list of Landkreise can be found here
Hungary	Budapest Főváros, Kistérség
Italy	Unioni dei Comuni, Comunità Montane, Unioni Montane, Comunità isolane o di arcipelago. The list of Unioni dei Comuni can be found here

[2] This category does not include associations involving other public and/or private entities such as universities, chambers of commerce, energy agencies, regions etc.
[3] The entities included in this list are examples only. Entities not listed in this table but fulfilling the criteria set above are considered potential eligible applicants. The EUCF considers as eligible applicants any equivalent entity to those listed in the table officially defined by the laws and lists included in this table or by any further modification in force prior to the closing date of the EUCF Call.

	Città metropolitane, as defined by art. 1, comma 5, L. n. 56/201 or any further modification in force prior to the closing date of the EUCF Call, and any other città metropolitana officially defined in any of the "Regioni a statuto speciale" prior to the closing date of the EUCF Call
Portugal	Área Metropolitana and Comunidade Intermunicipal, as defined Lei n.º 75/2013, de 12 de setembro, and any further modification in force prior to the closing date of the EUCF Call. The list can be found here
Spain	Mancomunidad, Área metropolitana.

2.6.4 Do local public entities require an own SECAP, other local climate and/or energy plan or Heating and Cooling Plan with mitigation targets?

Yes, local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities need to have an SECAP, or other local climate and/or energy plan with mitigation targets, or a Local Heating and Cooling Plan covering their geographical area.

2.6.5 Which documents can be required by the EUCF team in case of successful evaluation to check compliance with the eligibility criteria for local public entities?

In case of successful evaluation during the Grant Agreement preparation phase, local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities might be asked to submit a set of documents as evidence in support of their confirmation of the eligibility criteria in the application form. These documents must clearly confirm the conditions included in the application form:

A. The public entity is officially recognised as a tier of local government (different from the regional and provincial levels) by the national law of its State with the obligation for municipalities/local authorities to join the supra-municipal organisation;

B. The public entity is composed only by municipalities/local authorities; and

C. The public entity has a specific political and administrative structure.

The required documents may include:

- Extract of the national and/or regional law where the local public entity is officially defined.
- The statute of the local public entity; and/or
- Any other document issued by the competent authority in the country of the business residence of the respective public entity, by which the compliance with the aforesaid preconditions listed under points A, B and C, may be proven.

If in the country of the business residence of the respective public entity such documents are not issued and/or if they do not prove the compliance with the conditions set in the application and listed

under points A, B and C above, they may be replaced with the statement given under oath. If such statement does not exist under the legislation of a country of the business residence of the public entity, a statement of the legal representative of the respective public entity verified in front of the competent court or administrative entity, Notary Public or professional or commercial entity in the country of the business residence of the said public entity can be submitted, by which statement the compliance with all aforesaid conditions specified under points A, B and C, will be confirmed under civil, material and criminal responsibility.

3 Evaluation and selection of beneficiaries

3.1 EUCF Evaluation process

3.1.1 What is the procedure for the evaluation of applications submitted to the EUCF?

The evaluation of EUCF applications is conducted after the closing of each call for applications by a dedicated team composed of external experts (the partners Energy Cities, ENVIROS ESCAN, FEDARENE, ICLEI Europe and GNE Finance are not involved in the evaluation process). Each application is evaluated individually by at least two evaluators. A third evaluator is assigned in case of discrepancy on the scores of the first two evaluators. The final score is derived as the average of the scores of each evaluator.

Applications are evaluated based on four evaluation criteria. At the end of the evaluation process, each applicant is informed about the final results and receives feedback on their application. The best scored applications are selected to receive EUCF support. Unsuccessful applications can seek support from the EUCF Helpdesk or National Hubs and are able to participate again in the next call for applications. Any questions/complaints on the outcome of on the final results can be raised within 10 working days from the date the notification e-mail is sent.



3.1.2 How are applications with identical/similar content verified in the evaluation?

Applications submitted for EUCF support shall be **unique and tailored** to the local context of the applicant municipality/local authority, grouping or local public entity aggregating municipalities/local authorities. Evaluators will flag up applications with duplicate content in the description of the requirements in the application form. These applications **cannot be considered for EUCF support and will be rejected in the evaluation process under criterion four (Coherence and plausibility).**

3.1.3 What are the criteria for evaluating the applications?

EUCF applications are evaluated based on the following four evaluation criteria:

Evaluation criteria	Requirements	Score
1. Ambition of the proposed investment concept	Following aspects are considered in the evaluation: **1.1** Ambition level of the expected absolute investment size **1.2** Ambition level of the expected investment size per capita **1.3** Ambition level of the expected impacts in terms of energy savings and renewable energy production **1.4** Ambition level of the expected impacts per capita in terms of energy savings and renewable energy production **1.5** Cost-effectiveness of the proposed investment project **1.6** Focus on energy efficiency of the proposed investment project **1.7** Potential for replication and/or upscaling of the proposed investment project	**7 points**
2. Governance structure for the development of the investment concept	Following aspects are considered in the evaluation: **2.1** Elements addressed in the description of the governance structure: • Roles and responsibilities of the actors involved • Decision-making processes and actors with decision-making power • Persons in charge for the development of the investment concept • Internal capacities for the development of the investment concept • Need for external experts and capacity building areas **2.2** Overall clarity and coherence of the governance structure description	**5 points**

	2.3 Appropriateness and robustness of the governance structure for the development of the investment concept	
3. Stakeholders engagement strategy	Following aspects are considered in the evaluation: **3.1** Elements addressed in the description of the stakeholder engagement strategy: • Definition of relevant stakeholders • Definition of stakeholders' needs and expectations towards the investment project • Planned activities for fostering stakeholder engagement and their objectives • Foreseen communication instruments • Timing of implementation of planned engagement activities **3.2** Overall clarity and coherence of the description of the stakeholder engagement strategy **3.3** Appropriateness of the stakeholder engagement strategy for the development of the investment concept	**5 points**
4. Coherence and plausibility	Following aspects are considered in the evaluation: **4.1** Application is thoroughly filled, and its content is coherent and plausible **4.2** The expected investment size and impacts in energy savings and renewable energy generation are coherent and realistic in relation to the proposed investment project, the local context and other submitted applications in the regional call. **4.3** Application is unique and tailor-made and does not include any duplicate/similar content compared to other applications submitted in the same call.	**3 points**

3.1.4 How are applications scored?

For each evaluation criterion, a maximum score can be achieved based on the specific sub-score of each evaluation question. The table below presents an overview of the evaluation questions and specific sub-scores that can be achieved within each of them:

Nr.	Evaluation questions	Score
1.	**Ambition of the proposed investment concept** No quality threshold applies	**7**
1.1	In relation to the local context and the other submitted applications in the regional call as well as the foreseen implementation period, how is the ambition level of the expected investment size?	**0.7**
1.2	In relation to the local context and the other submitted applications in the regional call as well as the foreseen implementation period, how is the ambition level of the expected investment per capita?	**0.7**
1.3	In relation to the local context and the other submitted applications in the regional call, how is the ambition level of the expected impacts in energy savings and renewable energy generation?	**0.7**
1.4	In relation to the local context and the other submitted applications in the regional call, how is the ambition level of the figures per capita of the expected impacts in energy savings and renewable energy generation?	**0.7**
1.5	Considering the intended technology measures and the local context, is the project cost-effective?	**0.7**
1.6	Is the investment project focused on energy efficiency measures?	**2.5**
1.7	Does the investment project demonstrate potential for replication and/or up-scaling?	**1.0**
2.	**Governance structure for the development of investment concept** Quality threshold: 2.5/5	**5**
2.1	Are the following elements included in the description of the governance structure? ▪ Roles and responsibilities of the actors involved ▪ Decision-making processes and actors with decision-making power ▪ Persons in charge for the development of the investment concept ▪ Internal capacities for the development of the investment concept ▪ Need for external experts and capacity building areas	**2.5**

2.2	Overall, is the governance structure clearly described?	**1.25**
2.3	Overall, does the governance structure seems robust and appropriate for the development of the investment concept?	**1.25**
3.	**Stakeholders engagement strategy** Quality threshold: 2.5/5	**5**
3.1	Are the following elements included in the description of the stakeholder engagement strategy? ▪ Definition of relevant stakeholders ▪ Definition of stakeholders' needs and expectations towards the investment project ▪ Planned activities for fostering stakeholder engagement and their objectives ▪ Foreseen communication instruments Timing of implementation of planned engagement activities	**2.5**
3.2	Overall, is the stakeholder engagement strategy clearly described?	**1.25**
3.3	Overall, does the stakeholder engagement strategy seem coherent and appropriate for the development of the Investment Concept?	**1.25**
4.	**Coherence and plausibility** Quality threshold: 1.5/3	**3**
4.1	Is the application thoroughly filled and its content coherent and plausible?	**1.5**
4.2	Are the expected investment size and impacts in energy savings and renewable energy generation coherent and realistic in relation to the proposed investment project, the local context and the other submitted applications in the regional call?	**1.5**
4.3	Is there identical or similar content in the application form compared to other applications submissions in the same call? (This evaluation question is not scored. Applications with identical or similar content to other applications submitted in the call cannot be considered for EUCF support and will be rejected in case both evaluators answer YES to this evaluation question.)	**0.0**
TOTAL POSSIBLE SCORE		**20**

The maximum score achievable by applicants in the evaluation is 20 points. **A quality threshold of 50% of the total possible points applies to evaluation criteria two, three and four.** Applications that do not meet the quality threshold in one of the criteria cannot be considered for EUCF support. **The quality threshold does not apply for criterion 1 – Ambition of the proposed investment concept.**

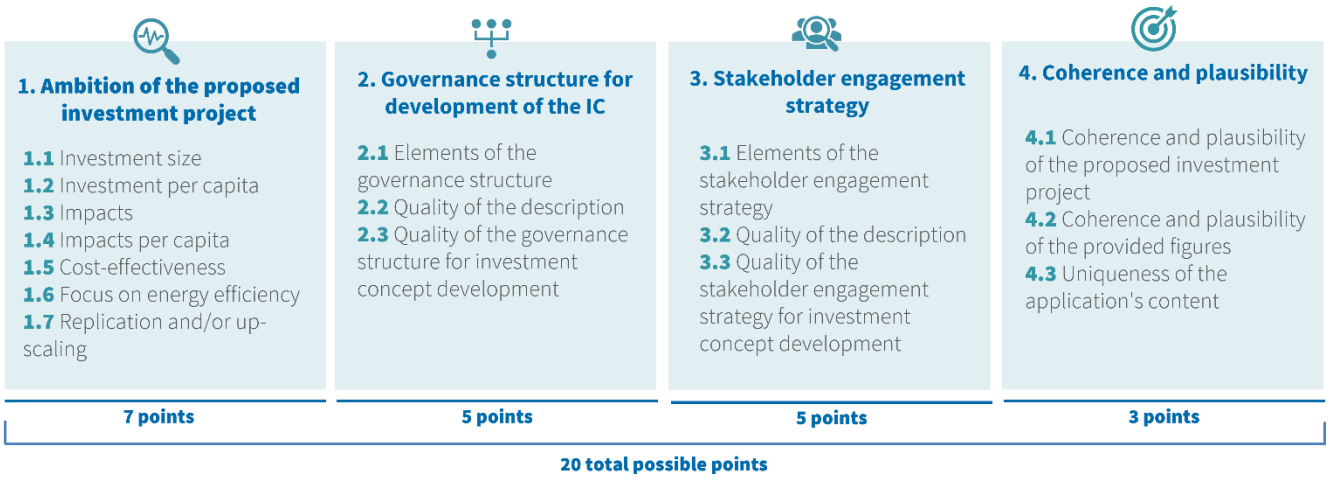
3.1.5 How is the investment project's focus on energy efficiency considered in the evaluation?

Given the high relevance of energy efficiency for achieving the goals of European climate and energy policy, projects with focus on energy efficiency measures are appreciated in the EUCF evaluation within criterion 1 – Ambition of the proposed investment project.

In the evaluation of sub-criterion 1.6, applications with investment projects that have the majority of impacts in energy savings (i.e. more than 50% of the total impacts in energy savings and renewable energy generation) will be awarded with the maximum score (2.5 points). Applications with investment projects that include substantial energy efficiency measures, although these do not correspond to the majority of the total impacts, will be awarded with half of the total score possible in this criterion. Applications with investment projects focused on renewable energy generation, i.e. that do not include energy efficiency measures, will not score in this criterion.

3.1.6 How is the final score derived?

The calculation of the evaluation score follows the logic presented in the graphic below:



3.1.7 How are applications selected?

In each regional call, **the best scored applications fitting the available budget are selected for EUCF support**. Applications that do not meet the quality threshold of 50% of the total possible points in one of evaluation criteria two, three and four cannot be selected and are not included in the regional ranking. **The quality threshold does not apply for evaluation criterion one** (Ambition of the proposed investment project).

In case of more than one application with the same final score at the end of the regional ranking, the application with the **higher total impacts per capita** will be selected, considering the expected impacts in energy savings and renewable energy generation indicated in the application form.

3.2 Selection of beneficiaries

3.2.1 How long does it take to receive the final results?

The evaluation process takes approximately **two months from the close of the respective call**.

3.2.2 How are applicants informed about the final results?

After the evaluation process is concluded, applicants are informed by email about the final results with corresponding feedback through a feedback report in the EUCF website user zone.

Any questions/complaints on the outcome of the final results can be raised within **10 working days** from the date the notification email is sent.

3.2.3 What are the next steps in case the application is selected?

As a next step, successful applicants conclude a Grant Agreement to receive EUCF support. The time period foreseen for the preparation and signature of the Grant Agreement is **two months** as of the day when the successful applicant(s) was/were informed about its/their selection for the EUCF support. After the signature of the Grant Agreement each applicant has a period of up to 12 months to develop the investment concept.

If the successful applicant fails to sign the EUCF Grant Agreement within the given period, the EUCF reserves the right to annul the "awarding decision", whereby consequently, an agreement with such applicant shall not be concluded, i.e., such applicant shall not be awarded with the respective financial support.

If applications with a higher ranking drop out or fail to sign the EUCF Grant Agreement, **the next applicant originally placed on the regional waiting list**, i.e. the next application in the region with the highest score in the evaluation, will be contacted by email. The applicant will have 10 (ten) working days to express its interest in proceeding to the signature of the EUCF Grant Agreement. In case of more than one application with the same final score at the end of the regional ranking, the application with the **higher total impacts per capita** will be selected, considering the expected impacts in energy savings and renewable energy generation indicated in the application form.

All applications that satisfy the eligibility, admissibility and criterion-level thresholds but cannot be funded within the number of grants allocated to their EUCF region are placed on the **overall reserve list** in ranking order. The overall reserve list therefore contains all remaining fundable applications. If funds are available due to beneficiaries not completing their commitments or other justified reasons, **in the last Call (Call 10), after the regional selection is finalized, the overall reserve list is activated and crossed with the remaining funds. If funds are available** (i.e. 60,000 Euro or more remaining budget) **applicants from the overall reserve list will be selected in descending order of score, starting with the highest-scoring applicant**.

Similar to the regional reserve list process, they will be contacted by email, and the applicant will have 10 (ten) working days to express its interest in proceeding to the signature of the EUCF Grant Agreement. The decision of selection of an application from the reserve list is documented.

In parallel to the process of signature of the Grant Agreement, National Hubs organise a conference call with their respective beneficiaries for a capacity needs assessment to better understand the planned activities and to identify the needs for support to develop the investment concept.

3.2.4 What happens in case the application is unsuccessful?

Unsuccessful applications can seek support from the EUCF Helpdesk as well as from their respective National Hubs on the issues identified in the evaluation.

Applications with scores above the quality threshold are placed on a **joint waiting list including applicants from the three regional calls**. These applicants might be invited to the Grant Agreement preparation if applications with a higher ranking drop out or fail to sign the EUCF Grant Agreement. They will be informed accordingly.

3.3 Grant Agreement

3.3.1 Which information is provided in the Grant Agreement?

The Grant Agreement sets out the terms of the relation between the beneficiary and Energy Cities, the coordinator of the EUCF, defining roles and responsibilities, milestones, and the timeline for the development of the investment concept. Moreover, the Grant Agreement determines the disbursement of the EUCF grant and requires the beneficiary to commit to the EUCF monitoring period in the implementation phase of the investment concept. A template of the Grant Agreement will be provided on the EUCF website.

3.3.2 What is the timeline for the signature of the EUCF Grant Agreement?

The timeline for preparation and signature of the EUCF Grant Agreement is two months as of the day when the successful applicant(s) was/were informed about its/their selection for the EUCF support.

3.3.3 How is the EUCF grant paid?

The grant amount will be disbursed as follows:

- Pre-financing of 65% of the total amount at the Grant Agreement signature;
- Final payment of 35% of the total amount after positive validation of the investment concept.

4 Investment concept

4.1 Development of the investment concept

4.1.1 What is an investment concept?

An investment concept is a document which **translates an investment project idea into financial language** in order to mobilise financing for its realisation. It aims to bridge path between the project idea and the business/financing plan.

The purpose of an investment concept is to provide investors and financial institutions with the preliminary information necessary to **assess an investment project in a simple and fast manner**. It converts climate and energy plans or some of their measures into sound investment packages and thus, facilitates access to funding for municipalities/local authorities and local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities.

So far, many municipalities/local authorities, groupings of municipalities/local authorities and local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities have developed ambitious climate and energy action plans but have had difficulties accessing appropriate funding. In turn, financial institutions are more and more interested in financing sustainable energy projects but have problems in finding investment projects that fulfil their requirements in terms of maturity. This document shall help in bridging this gap.

The investment concept is to be developed by EUCF beneficiaries for the same projects described in the application form and awarded in the evaluation process. Deviations in the concept will be verified in the investment concept validation.

4.1.2 Who can develop an investment concept?

The investment concepts are developed by the beneficiary municipalities/local authorities, groupings of municipalities/local authorities or local public entities aggregating municipalities/local authorities either completely in-house if enough internal capacities are available or they can engage external experts for support. National Hubs assist beneficiaries in their respective countries in this process, but can neither be sub-contracted to develop investment concepts, nor prepare them (or parts of them)..

4.1.3 What is the timeline for the development of the investment concept?

EUCF beneficiaries have up to twelve months to develop their investment concept as from the date of the Grant Agreement signature.

4.1.4 What encompasses the final investment concept?

The final investment concept encompasses:

- The investment concept template, which can be completed in the beneficiary's national language;
- The investment concept english summary;
- the financial model;
- the investors' deck; and
- the letter of support to the implementation of the proposed investment project by the Mayor or other relevant political representative.

The investment concept template can be developed by EUCF beneficiaries in national language and will be available for download in different languages in the EUCF website.

4.1.5 How is the investment concept validated?

The validation of the investment concept is conducted by a dedicated evaluation team, with evaluators from GNE Finance and Enviros. Each investment concept is validated by at least two evaluators. If the investment concept complies with the validation criteria, it is positively validated. In this case, the beneficiary receives the second payment of the EUCF grant, corresponding to 35% of the total value.

4.1.6 Must beneficiaries implement the investment concept developed during the EUCF journey?

EUCF beneficiaries are highly encouraged to seek funding from investors and financial institutions and implement their investment concepts. Beneficiaries are able to share their experiences and hurdles by participating in matchmaking events, expert trainings, and other capacity building events that are organised by the EUCF. They can further benefit from the EUCF Helpdesk to address the EUCF team in case of questions regarding the implementation of the investment concept, the procedures for monitoring and reporting and the potential aggregation/joint procurement of projects.

4.2 EUCF support for beneficiaries

4.2.1 What support does the EUCF provide for the development of the investment concept?

The EUCF provides different means of support for beneficiaries both throughout the development of the investment concept and after they have been developed and validated. Support to beneficiaries for the development of the investment concept includes:

- Financial support is provided in the form of a EUR 60,000 grant for activities necessary for the development of the investment concept, such as feasibility studies, engineering analyses, legal analyses, social studies, market studies, financial analyses, etc.
- Technical support is provided by the EUCF team, which can be contacted for any sort of queries regarding the investment concept through the **EUCF Helpdesk**. Moreover, the respective National Hubs, who are assigned for each EU-27 Member State, Iceland, Ukraine, Moldova, Montenegro and North Macedonia provide beneficiaries with national technical and financial expertise.
- Capacity building opportunities will be organised by the EUCF to strengthen beneficiaries' technical and financial capacities and facilitate exchanges and knowledge sharing among beneficiaries.
- Standard tools and documents, such as the investment concept template are available on the **EUCF website.**

4.2.2 What activities are planned for capacity building of EUCF beneficiaries?

During the development of the investment concept, EUCF beneficiaries will have access to the EUCF Learning Programme, combining online learning modules, case-based learning with expert input and in-person EUCF Intensive Days; thematic peer-to-peer exchanges; and technical assistance workshops focusing on project development, financing and implementation. Onboarding sessions and tailored guidance on investment concept development will also be provided, alongside opportunities for individual investment concept reviews for selected beneficiaries.

4.2.3 What support does the EUCF provide for the implementation of the investment concept by beneficiaries?

EUCF support does not end with the development and validation of the investment concept. The Facility continues to support beneficiaries in moving towards implementation, providing opportunities to engage with financing institutions, share experiences and identify concrete next steps to bring their investment projects to life.

As part of this support, selected beneficiaries will receive individual investment concept reviews, including tailored recommendations to improve project bankability and identify next steps towards implementation. National roundtables will also provide opportunities to connect with public and private funding institutions and explore financing options. Furthermore, the EUCF will monitor the implementation of validated investment concepts over two years, with beneficiaries reporting on their progress, financing mobilised and barriers encountered. Beneficiaries will also have opportunities to share their experiences and lessons learned with other municipalities through EUCF knowledge-sharing and replication activities.

The **EUCF Helpdesk** remains available to beneficiaries for questions regarding monitoring and reporting procedures.