



CoM SSA Final Evaluation

added value and lessons learned

24th June 2020



Agência para a Energia



Climate Alliance



TITLE CoM SSA Final Evaluation: added value and lessons learned

PUBLISHED BY Covenant of Mayors for Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA) Square de Meeûs, 1 Brussels, 1 000 (BE)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

We would like to acknowledge the support and the availability of all the interviewees and questionnaire respondents that provided essential inputs to this report.

Disclaimer

The content of this report is the responsibility of the Contractor and it should not be taken as a reflection of the views and official position of the European Union.

About CoM SSA

The Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA) is an initiative which aims to support Sub-Saharan cities in their fight against climate change and in their efforts in ensuring access to clean energy. Started in 2015, it is funded by the European Union (EU) and from 2019, co-funded by the German Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ) and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID). CoM SSA is part of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM) – the largest coalition of cities committed to local climate and energy action.

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CoM SSA was mainly coordinated by a consortium of 10 partners (European and African organisations), led by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), which shaped and launched the initiative.

CoM SSA is shaped by local authorities to reflect local contexts and specifics; it currently comprises local authorities in over 34 Sub-Saharan countries who have made voluntary political commitments to implement climate and energy actions in their cities and who agree on a long-term vision to tackle three pillars, namely access to energy, climate mitigation and climate adaptation. In order to translate political commitment into practical measures, CoM SSA signatories have committed to produce and implement a Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plan (SEACAP).

Phase I and Phase II of the programme have now been concluded. Phase III, which was initiated in 2019, is now ongoing.

Executive Summary

Following a successful program in Europe, the Covenant of Mayors expanded to Sub-Saharan Africa through the CoM SSA initiative, which began in 2015. Phases I and II focused on the implementation of the programme, engagement with stakeholders, building of capacities and the first steps towards the development of Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plans (SEACAPs).

The objectives of this initiative were the following:

- Strengthen the capacities of cities to develop and use planning and implementation tools and action plans in energy, mobility and urban planning;
- Improve the legal and institutional framework of local authorities as well as their technical and resource mobilization capacities; and
- Promote political ownership and best practice dissemination.

One of the biggest successes of the CoM SSA initiative was the scale that it was able to obtain, presenting over 200 signatory cities by the end of 2019, and a much larger number of cities reached and engaged with. From the nature and the objectives of the initiative, this means that over 200 cities have committed to present a plan for action on sustainable energy access and climate change mitigation.

Capacity building was another set objective that was met, in particular in the most technical areas: GHG emissions inventory and development of a SEACAP. Another area that signatory cities were quite thankful for was the presentation of financing solutions that they could use. The work done so far in this area is commendable and has yielded good results, but it is relevant to point out that capacity building is an area that needs a continuing level of investment. It will be crucial for the continuation of the work done so far, and the cities are still very dependent on external technical assistance.

Together with the above, the creation of a network of cities/municipalities that often face similar challenges was highly valued by the participants. The share of experiences was highlighted often as one of the main benefits of the workshops done, and sometimes, even of the overall programme.

There is, however, still some work to be done, especially in the integration of the SEACAPs with plans at the national level (NDCs). Vertical integration, which was part of the institutional framework desired, still needs to be further developed to make sure there are platforms for engagement between national and local governments. This will be a focal point to the long-term sustainability of these plans and on the true impact they will have in each country/region.

From the assessment done, it was possible to gather the following lessons learned/recommendations that could be considered for the now ongoing Phase III:

Programme Design

1. When other organisations are present in the region/city, efforts should be made to work collaboratively to avoid duplication of efforts and competition for time and attention from city officials.
2. When evaluating a pool of projects proposed by cities, the assessment team should take into account the capacity of local government teams for the themes of energy and climate. This will have impacts not only on the needed resources that need to be allocated for technical assistance, but can also provide indications regarding the likelihood of the success of such projects.
3. Grant contracts similar to the ones provided for the pilot projects should require the participation of the city as a direct beneficiary of the grant to ensure that the objectives and activities of the project are aligned with the objectivities and activities being developed by the city officials.

4. A coordinated approach from international donors and financial instruments is needed to facilitate access and channel direct funding to local governments to implement concrete actions in line with the developed SEACAPs.

Capacity Building

5. Development of workplans and guiding documents should always take into consideration the regional challenges and realities from the start.
6. For more efficient technical assistance, there should be technical resources on the ground, which would enable more continual support and better understanding of the local challenges and possible solutions.

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Stakeholders Engagement

7. When there is particularly high political instability in the country/city, it would be important to consider the engagement of local organisations (apolitical, preferably) in the project to ensure some continuity even in the event of changes in the local government.
8. Engagement of multiple actors takes time and is often built on more personal relations.
9. It will be essential to maintain the support and some form of engagement with the cities to guarantee both their continuing active participation in the initiative and that the SEACAPs already developed are followed-through.
10. More support is needed from national governments to support local governments' actions in tackling climate and energy issues in their territories.

Community Building

11. A platform that would allow cities to share their experiences and interact in a dynamic way could be developed, building on the informal platform already created. Its structure could be similar to a discussion forum for open questions complemented by a page/location where cities could share specific projects and their experience in their implementation (e.g. including challenges faced and how they were overcome).
12. Interacting tools and platforms amongst cities should be made multi-lingual so that participating cities do not become segregated by language.

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1. Project background and context

In 2008, the European Commission (EC) launched the Covenant of Mayors (CoM) initiative, initially focused on the engagement of European cities and municipalities in working towards EU energy and climate objectives. Within this initiative, at the moment of writing, over 10,000 European municipalities have become signatory cities, with a large majority having already submitted their commitments for GHG emission reduction by 2030. The success of this initiative led to the expansion of the programme to other regions.

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African cities will be the subject of relevant changes, with a growing population and expected increase in the urbanisation rate. Population scenarios indicate that, by 2050, the overall population of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) will more than double compared to 2015 (from 969 million inhabitants to 2 167 million inhabitants) and the urbanization rate will increase almost 20 percentage points (from 39% to 58%). This means that there will be an additional 882 million people living in African cities in the course of 35 years¹. With this, climate change mitigation plans need to take into account this urban growth and that cities will play a fundamental role in the move to a sustainable future.

At the same time, SSA countries face very specific challenges. In this region, only about half the population has access to electricity, and two-thirds still rely on biofuels for cooking, which has significant impacts in the health of the population²; hence, access to clean energy is a high priority for the region.

Vulnerability to the risks of climate change is also a crucial theme in SSA, with large areas already being affected by extreme weather events. This makes the need to mitigate climate change ever more urgent; however, this priority competes with the one of adaptation to already present effects. In a region where resources are scarce, these two areas are often seen as competing for the same kind of resources (both in technical and financial terms).

To mitigate the risks of climate change, governments (at all levels) will need to take action and make cohesive, clear and ambitious strategic plans for GHG emissions reduction. However, the SSA region has a large deficiency of technical knowledge, which hinders possible progress in this area. There is also a general lack of awareness on the subject of carbon emissions and the link to climate change and extreme weather events. To tackle current and future challenges, there will need to be a very steep increase in the technical capacity and large efforts for engagement with all levels of society, starting at the political level.

The expansion of the CoM to the Sub Saharan Africa region was, then, a natural step, and it was initiated in 2015 with Phase I. This phase had the main objective of developing the capacities of the cities in the region towards the sustainable energy and climate action. Under this phase a grant contract was signed with a Consortium led by Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and with the participation of 9 other organisations: Climate Alliance – CA, Energy Cities - ENC, ICLEI World Secretariat, ICLEI Africa, United Council of Local Governments Africa – UCLG Africa, French Agency for Environment and Energy Management – ADEME, International Association of Francophone Mayors – AIMF, the Portuguese Energy Agency – ADENE, Environment Development Action in the third world – ENDA, based in Senegal and Sustainable Energy for Africa NGO – SEA, based in South Africa. Additionally, grant contracts were awarded to 7 pilot cities, which were managed by the EU delegations in each country. The scope of these grant contracts was essentially to support the city in developing the energy and climate action plan.

¹ Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, Online Edition.

² Source OECD, Jan Corfee-Morlot, Paul Parks, James Ogunleye, Famous Ayeni (2018). Case Study: Achieving clean energy access in sub-Saharan Africa

Phase II was signed in late 2016 with the main objective of engaging cities with the specific purpose of the creation of their SEACAP. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) was the appointed organisation to coordinate the creation of specific SEACAP guidelines and to provide specific technical assistance to cities regarding the application of these guidelines. Also under Phase II, grants were attributed to 6 additional cities/applicants, which increased the total number of pilot cities to 13.

At the beginning of 2019, Phase III of the CoM SSA was initiated, a focus of which is in the expansion of the programme, continuation of capacity building and access to financial solutions. The scope of this evaluation, however, does not include work and progress achieved in Phase III.

As a whole, the CoM SSA initiative presents 3 main goals:

- Strengthen the capacities of cities to develop and use planning and implementation tools and action plans in energy, mobility and urban planning;
- Improve the legal and institutional framework of local authorities as well as their technical and resource mobilization capacities; and
- Promote political ownership and best practice dissemination.

The activities planned to support the implementation of the programme were organised in 6 Working Packages, each coordinated by one, or more, members of the Consortium.

Work Package 1 (WP1): Overall project coordination – Lead: CEMR

Work Package 2 (WP2): Management of the central help desk – Lead: UCLG Africa; Contributors: ADENE, ADEME and AIMF

Work Package 3 (WP3): Adaptation from CoM to CoM Africa on local energy planning process – Leads: ENC and CA; Contributors: CEMR, ENDA, SEA, UCLG Africa, ICLEI Africa and AIMF

Work Package 4 (WP4): Institutional framework, political advocacy and networking – Leads: ICLEI World Secretariat and UCLG Africa; Contributors: CEMR, SEA and ENDA

Work Package 5 (WP5): Assistance to capacity development on Sustainable Energy Climate Action Plans - Leads: SEA and ADEME; Contributors: UCLG Africa

Work Package 6 (WP6): Management of knowledge/ outreach/ dissemination – Lead: ENDA; Contributors: UCLG Africa³, CEMR and ADENE

³ UCLG Africa led this Work Package from the end of 2018 to May 2020.

2. Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

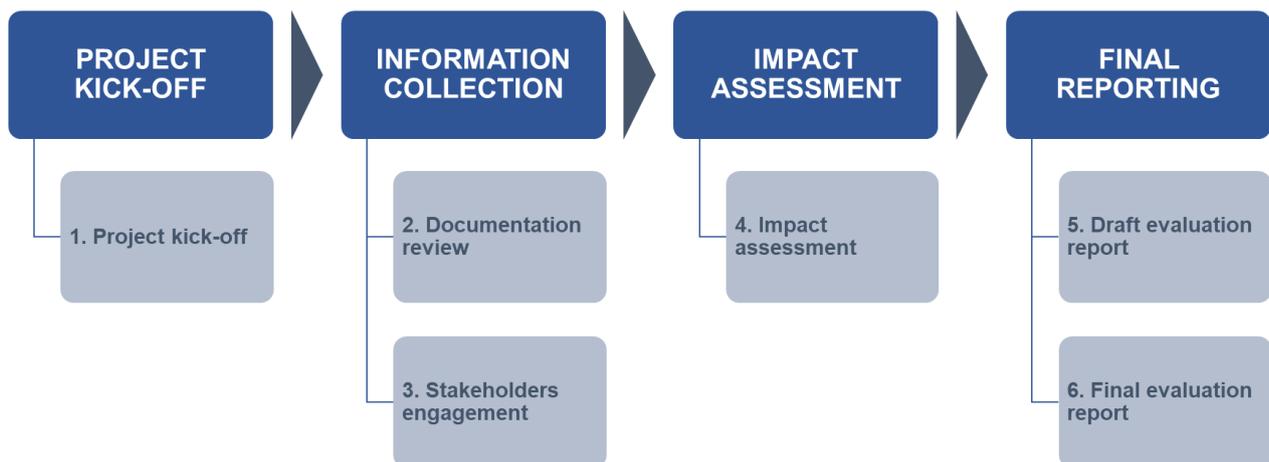
2.1 Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

With the end of Phases I and II of the CoM SSA initiative, it is important to understand what has worked and what needs to be improved in the future so that the partners involved in subsequent phases can adapt its strategy to maximise its impact in the region during the continuation of the CoM SSA initiative in the future. This is especially relevant given the high dependency on third-party engagement, in particular of cities (to take the political commitment to join the programme) and several other regional and local entities for the planning, management and implementation of the action plans.

Given this, this evaluation intends to assess the main successes and poor performance areas, identifying the added value this initiative had in the SSA region and how these matched with the objectives set. The assessment also enabled the identification of lessons learned/recommendations that could be considered in future activities in the region.

2.2 Methodology approach

The evaluation project used a staged process with 6 phases split across 4 stages as presented below.



2.3 Project kick-off

The project kick-off happened in December with the evaluation team agreeing with the contracting authority (CEMR) on the final outputs, communication channels and timelines.

2.4 Information Collection

Under the scope of this evaluation project, information was collected in three ways: through a documentation review, a set of interviews done with multiple stakeholders and a questionnaire sent to all signatory cities of the initiative.

2.4.1 Documentation review

This stage enabled the evaluation team to have a deeper understanding of the context of the initiative. Part of these contextual documents were the interim evaluation reports (ROM and Mid-Term Evaluation), annual reports and meeting minutes, which allowed the understanding of previous progress points and previously highlighted challenges. The documents provided also included the information related to the set objectives of the initiative along with the Logical Framework design, which served as the basis of this evaluation.

2.4.2 Interviews

To have a deeper understanding of the reach and impact of the project, along with the main challenges and opportunities, it was very important to collect direct inputs from the various stakeholders involved in its delivery. The engaged stakeholders included not only the signatory cities to the CoM SSA, but also the consortium partners and other relevant stakeholders that have contributed to the implementation of the initiative programme, either centrally or at a city level.

In the Terms of Reference, a total of 20 interviews were indicated. The breakdown by type of stakeholder was the one presented in Table I. The list of interviewees can be found in Annex A.

Table I. Breakdown of number of interviews per type of stakeholder

Type of Stakeholder	Planned	Completed
<i>Signatory city</i>	8	7
<i>Consortium member</i>	5	7
<i>Other relevant stakeholder</i>	7	6
TOTAL	20	20

The interviews conducted were semi-structured interviews which allowed for specific topics to be discussed but also allowing for flexibility, depending on the experience of the interviewee. A set of questions was designed for both cities and consortium members. The list of questions for other relevant stakeholders was adapted to the nature of the contribution of each interviewee. Annex B presents an Interview Report for each of the conducted interviews.

In general, the interviews lasted between 30 to 60 minutes and were undertaken in English, French and Portuguese, depending on the preferred language of the interviewee.

2.4.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was drafted to obtain feedback from a larger number of signatory cities. To increase participation by the cities, most of the questions were closed (e.g. multiple choice questions) with only a limited number of open questions.

The questionnaire was split into 4 sections:

- I. General Information – related to the basic information of the respondent;
- II. Capacity Improvement – related to the improvement of skills within the city/municipality during participation in the CoM SSA initiative and the identification of still existing capacity-building needs;
- III. Progress in their Sustainable Energy Access and Climate Action Plan (SEACAP) – related to the progress made by cities in their SEACAP and specific related projects; and
- IV. CoM SSA Project – related to overall feedback of the coordination of the CoM SSA initiative and the biggest benefits for the cities

The questionnaires were distributed by the Helpdesk of the CoM SSA and were provided in three languages (English, French and Portuguese). The English version of the questionnaire can be found in Annex C.

In total, 47 responses were received, of which only 44 have been considered valid, since the remaining three were identified as being repeated answers from cities (i.e. more than one response from a participant city). Additionally, some of the questionnaires were not completed, with only some sections being submitted after completion.

From an analysis of the questionnaire data we can characterize the sample obtained by language and country, split between pilot and non-pilot cities and completion rate.

From Figure 1, we can see there were a large number of responses received from Togo (around 30%). Cameroon was also a country with a high participation rate, with five cities providing their replies in French and one city replying in English. The remaining countries showed a similar number of number of participants (between one and three). Some countries with signatory cities were not represented in the questionnaire replies received (e.g. Benin).

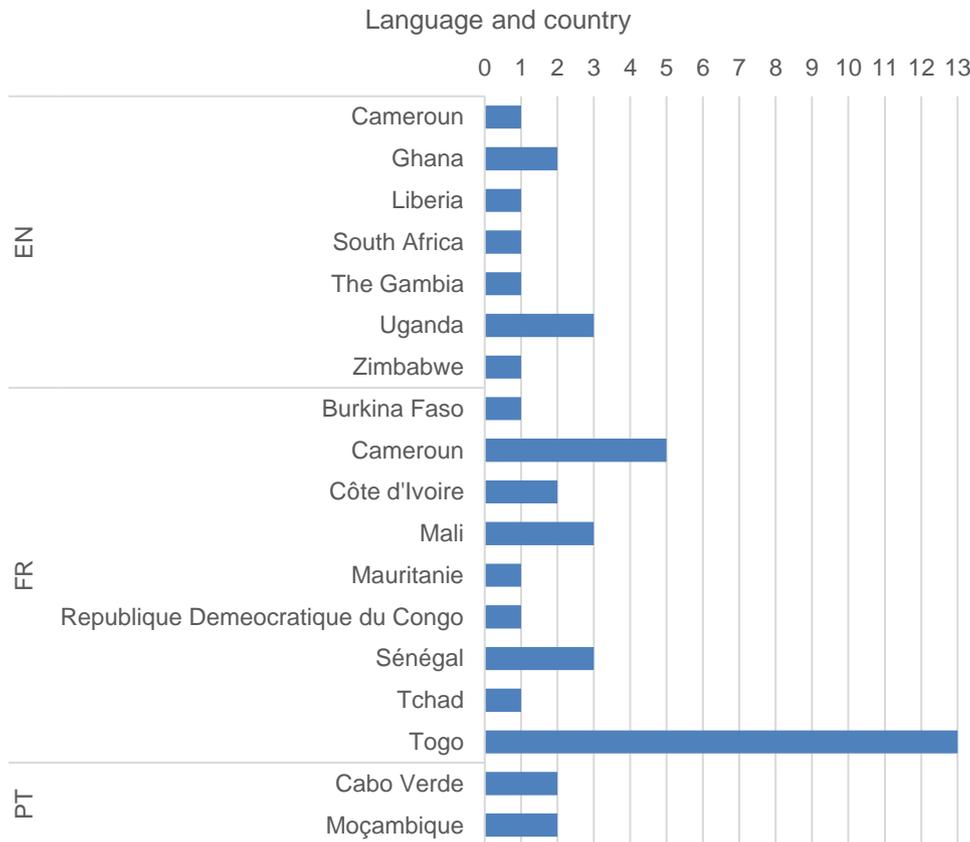


Figure 1. Number of responses received with a breakdown by language and country

Of the 13 pilot cities, 8 have replied (2 replies were received for the same city) to the questionnaire, which implies a participation rate of nearly 70%. Of the non-pilot cities, we have received a total of 34 replies from nearly 200 non-pilot signatory cities. There is also a higher participation rate amongst cities that have more recently joined the CoM SSA initiative.

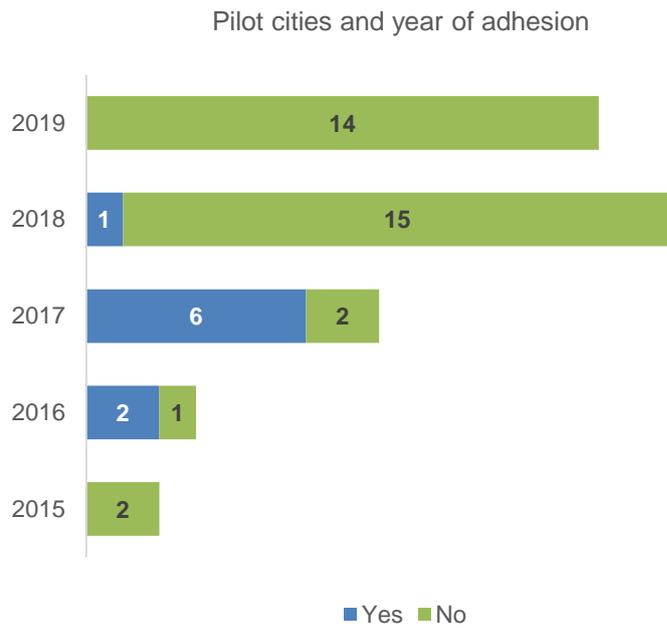


Figure 2. Number of cities by year of adhesion and pilot/non-pilot cities

As the questionnaires were divided into sections, it was possible to start the questionnaire and submit the initial sections without completing all sections. The completion rate of the interviews was quite similar for the three languages made available to the signatory cities and close to the completion rate suggested as expected by the platform used for the surveys (~70%).

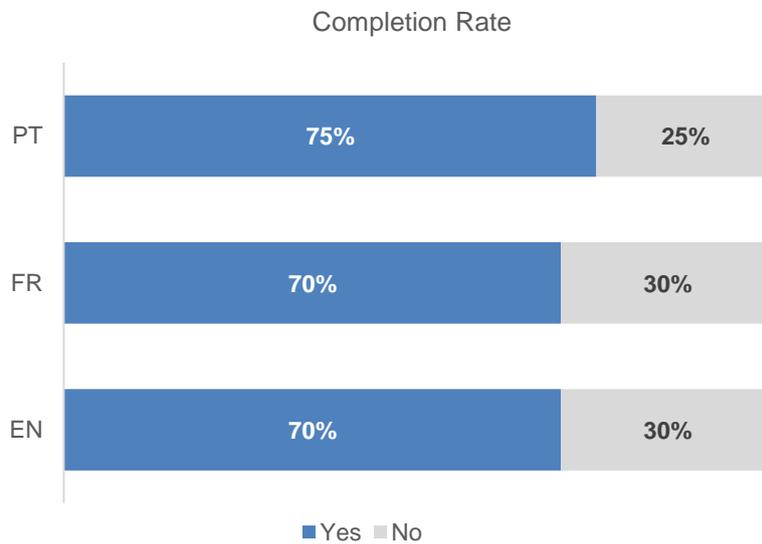


Figure 3. Completion rate for each of the languages used in the questionnaire

2.4.4 Impact assessment

Using the information collected through the documentation review, interviews and questionnaires, the project team performed an assessment of the relevance of the activities of the initiative and of the performance during these past four years against each one of the objectives set. For this, the project team

complemented the quantitative results of the Logical Framework, with the more qualitative information regarding the impact in each of the three set objectives. Complementarily, the worst performance areas have been highlighted along with some of the key barriers found.

2.5 Limitations

Due to time constraints, the reach of stakeholders was relatively limited. Amongst the over 200 signatory cities (210), seven were interviewed and 38 additional cities have replied to the questionnaire; this means that this report includes the views of 21% of signatory cities.

Additionally, engagement with the stakeholders was always done in a remote way, with the exception of ADENE, the Portuguese Energy Agency, which was easily accessible to the evaluation team. Remote interviews have large benefits, including decreasing the sustainability impact of this evaluation. However, face-to-face interactions often lead to more dynamic interviews and, consequently, more valuable outputs.

3. Presentation of Findings

This section presents the most relevant findings of the evaluation team regarding the CoM SSA initiative's relevance, progress and efficiency, and effectiveness and impact.

3.1 Relevance and design of the initiative

3.1.1 Are the initiative objectives relevant for the scope of the cities / regional reality?

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HIGHLY SATISFACTORY

As a starting point, the objectives of the CoM SSA initiative are of crucial relevance to Africa given the need to engage local governments to take actions toward increasing access to clean energy and the need for a plan which would allow foreseen exponential urban population growth to occur in a sustainable way.

Following COP21 and the Paris Agreement, most of the SSA countries presented their National Development Contribution (NDC) plans, which laid out the ambitions of reduction at the national level along with a broad indication/plan on how to achieve these reductions. Even if some of the activities included in the NDC are linked to a strategy that can be applied at a national level (e.g. investments in large-scale renewable energy production), most of the planned actions need to be aligned with the needs and plans of local governments. The relevance of this effort was highlighted in the interview by Secretary-General, Mr. Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi from the UCLG World Africa.

Considering the above, the CoM SSA initiative seems of very high relevance to the region. In particular, the objectives set seem pertinent to the particular challenges faced by governments, both at the national and the local levels by responding to the needs of capacity building and engagement of various political and societal actors.

Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that the CoM SSA is not the only programme in the region with an approach to these subject areas (Energy and Climate Action). Other initiatives as the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All), Supporting African Municipalities in Sustainable Energy Transitions (SAMSET) and C40 also have specific programmes aimed at the African region, with a large number of resources being applied, including for capacity building, technical assistance and financial funds. There is at least the case of one city (Dakar), where the actions of CoM SSA were very similar to those of another programme that was also providing support to that city (C40). Going forward, it is very important to assure that the efforts and resources of the CoM SSA initiative are not working in competition with work by other initiatives or agencies. **When other organisations are identified in the region/city, efforts should be made to work collaboratively to avoid duplication of efforts and competition for time and attention from city officials.**

3.1.2 Was the design and governance of the CoM SSA initiative adequate to the objectives set?

SATISFACTORY

Phases I and II of the initiative were coordinated separately by three sets of entities: 1) The Consortium led by CEMR that coordinated the workplan proposed under Phase I; 2) JRC who was responsible for the creation of the SEACAP guidelines and respective technical assistance to cities; and 3) the various EU delegations that had direct contractual management of the pilot cities grants.

Even though there was some level of coordination, led by CEMR, between the work done by these three components (highlighted, for example by the focus of the technical assistance on pilot cities or by the joint work in the elaboration of the SEACAP Guidebook and related workshops), these efforts were undermined by the lack of governing structures to lead the collaboration efforts between the CEMR Consortium, JRC and the EU delegations. This is also true amongst the various pilot cities projects, as the contractual management was conducted individually through the respective country's EU delegation with no overall

oversight or coordination from a specific entity. The lack of such structures led to slow communication and, sometimes, ineffective management of the work, in particular for work related to the pilot projects.

The project is innovative in some aspects regarding its approach (e.g. bottom-up encouraging of cities to join the initiative on a voluntary basis), type of organisations involved (civil society organisations, city networks, and public and research institutions), and geographical spread of actors (African, European, and International). However, the inclusion of a large number of partners with different backgrounds was viewed as a disadvantage by Ms. Peta Wolpe, Managing Director at SEA, as it caused difficulties in reaching consensus needed to move the project forward. Even though this was also recognised by Mr. Durmish Guri, CEMR’s Projects Director in his interview, he also highlighted that this variability provided richness to the initiative.

Regarding the plan of activities presented by the CEMR Consortium, in general terms it seemed to be adequate to the objectives set. Being split into six work packages, it allowed for a differential focus to attain different objectives with a strong focus on advocacy and engagement, and development of the capacities of the institutions and of technical skills. It was however highlighted in some interviews (including the one with Ms. Maryke Van Staden, Director at ICLEI – WS) that the progress of the work being developed in each work package could have been better communicated and coordinated. The area in which the work plan presented seemed to be less ambitious than could have been appropriate, was related with WP5 – Assistance to capacity development on Sustainable Energy Climate Action Plans. Dedicated technical assistance was only planned for a small number of cities (13) with most of the support being provided remotely or through the organisation workshops. Given the lack of skills in most of the cities, to enable a better follow-up of the work being developed, a more dedicated support on the ground could have been included.

3.2 Progress and efficiency of implementation

3.2.1 Was the reach of the programme in line with the set objectives?

VERY SATISFACTORY

In the Logical Framework, the progress of the reach of the programme is measured through accounting for the total number of signatory cities. Comparing to the set target of 200, by December 2019, the number of signatory cities had already passed this mark (210). This was a recent achievement, as the number of cities in March 2019 was still below the set target with 162 municipalities committed to the programme.



Figure 4. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - Number of signatory cities achieved and respective target

The geographical distribution of these cities is as per the map below. In total, 36 countries are now represented throughout all the regions in SSA, and some of them with a very high number of signatory

cities and municipalities, such as Cameroon (40) or Mozambique (14)⁴. This high level of participation might be explained by the level of programme activity in the country (there were two workshops held in Cameroon) or by the active presence of a partner association (in Mozambique, a number of cities/municipalities were engaged by UN Habitat and/or ICLEI). There are however, 13 countries with no representation in the initiative (Angola, Botswana, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Lesotho, Madagascar, Niger, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, South Sudan and Sudan). The lack of participation by these countries might have varied causes, from political instability to a lack of resources to make the commitments at the time of signing up to the initiative.

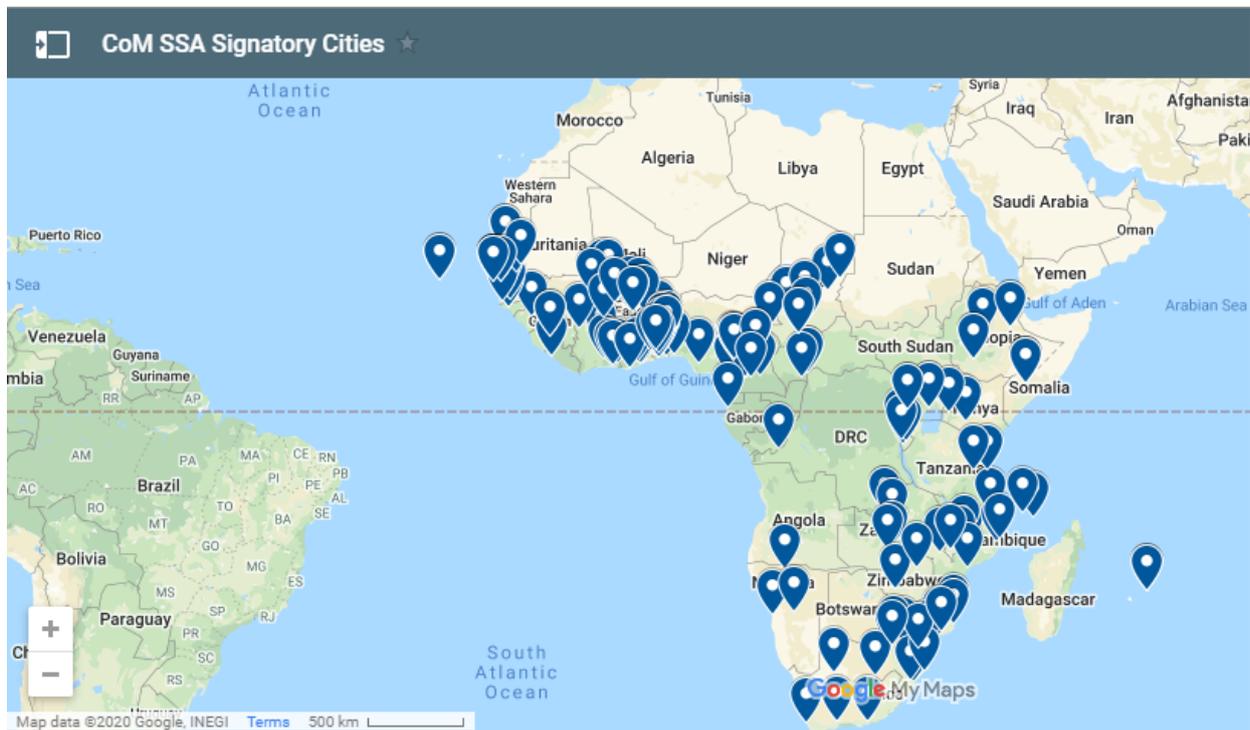


Figure 5. Geographical distribution of the CoM SSA signatory cities (source: <http://comssa.org/join-the-com-ssa/#countries>)

Nonetheless, the wide reach of the programme over the past 4 years is commendable and is an encouraging sign for Phase III.

3.2.2 Were the pilot projects successful in their specific objectives and in supporting the cities in developing their SEACAP?

SATISFACTORY

The pilot city projects showed broad variability in their success. Some projects presented a very high execution rate and their respective cities developing Draft SEACAPs by the end of 2019 (e.g. Zou, Benin). Others showed no progress in planned activities or in development of the SEACAP (e.g. Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo). In other cities, there was a significant progress in the SEACAP, but the execution of the pilot project itself was not very successful (e.g. Bangui, Central African Republic).

There seems to be three main differentiating points regarding the 13 pilot cities:

⁴ These figures might be outdated or not in line with the December 2019 figures as they were taken from the CoM SSA website (<http://comssa.org/join-the-com-ssa/#countries>) at 14th of February.

- Initial level of maturity in the themes of energy and climate: Cities that were already aware and/or already working in the area of energy access and/or climate change had a clear advantage, even in the creation of the project proposal. Considering this, **the assessment of pilot projects and allocated resources should take into account the variability of maturity in the city teams on the themes of energy and climate.**
- Political instability: Changes in local government are sometimes abrupt and radical with little effort being done to ensure the continuation of ongoing projects. Where this happens, engagement with mayors and respective teams needs to be restarted, especially in regards to any advocacy progress that might have been achieved. Even if this is a barrier difficult to tackle, it might be possible to mitigate it by **including local organisations (e.g. a societal organisation) in the project to ensure some continuity even in the event of changes in the local government.**
- Another identified reason for low levels of success was the way the grant contracts were attributed. **The grant contracts for the pilot projects in Monrovia and Bissau were not signed with the city but with organisations that operated in the city;** these two cities are amongst the pilot projects with the worst performance. In these cities, the collaboration work between the pilot project and the overall objective of developing the SEACAP was also almost non-existent, which may be pointed to as one of the causes of the lack of progress towards the development of an Action plan by these cities. This problem was highlighted by Boye Robertson, the Focal Point of Monrovia, Liberia.

It is highly recommended, that, in the future, all similar grant contracts require the participation of the city as a direct beneficiary of the grant to ensure that the objectives and activities of the project are aligned with the objectivities and activities being developed by the city officials.

3.2.3 Was the use of resources sufficient, in line with the initially planned, and well allocated?

VERY SATISFACTORY

As previously mentioned, the work plan of the CEMR Consortium was split in 6 WPs, each managed by, one or two, leads. The WPs had a relatively high level of independence towards each other, which allowed for a more flexible management of the specific activities. This was important, especially due to the very large structure of the consortium (with 10 members). On the other hand, this also meant that the coordination of the activities of the various WPs was too loose, which sometimes created delays in the performance of one WP because of a lack of awareness of the progress done in the work of other WPs.

A misrepresentation of African partners in the Consortium was also pointed out as a weakness of the programme (by Ms. Peta Wolpe, Managing Director at SEA). This meant that, at the beginning of the initiative, the presented approaches were not well fitted to the reality of the region; this caused delays at the start of the project. JRC, who was contracted to develop the guidelines for the SEACAP, initially proposed a document that needed some inputs from the African partners to be aligned to the local context; after an iterative process, the final result was accepted by all as being a very helpful tool for SSA cities. The development of the SEACAP guidelines document was delayed, which affected the work done in WP5 with workshops specifically focussed on the creation of an action plan only being held in 2019.

The use of financial resources seems to have been in line with the originally planned. Even though the timing of some activities was longer than expected, as the programme took time to show first results, the overall efficiency of the programme was positive. In the interviews undertaken, there were reports of ineffective use of funds. Financial resources should have been sometimes allocated in priority to the actual development of internal capacities or applied to a specific project and less for travels and participation in external events.

3.3 Effectiveness and Impact

3.3.1 Was the capacity building of the initiative successful?

VERY SATISFACTORY

The objectives set on the Logical Framework have all been met or surpassed with is a highly commendable achievement.

As previously mentioned, the tailored technical assistance provided under Phase I and Phase II of the CoM SSA was focussed on the pilot cities. This target was achieved over the course of 2019, and most of the cities have had more direct support from early 2018 or before (Figure 6).

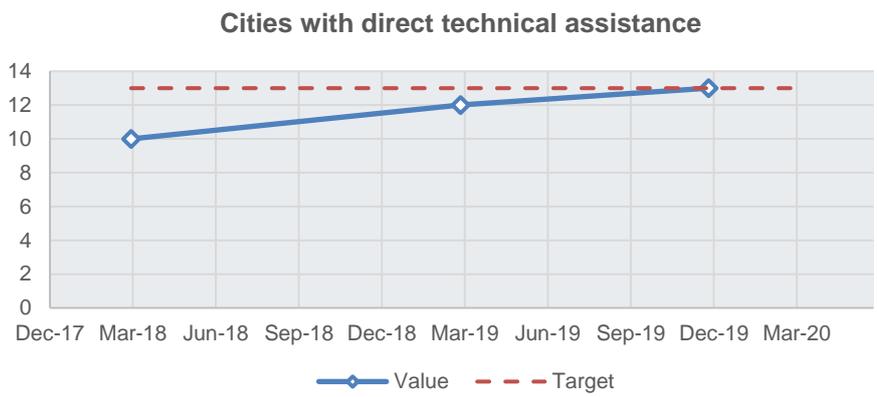


Figure 6. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - Number of cities with tailored technical assistance and inception visits

The target for capacity development activities had already been surpassed in March 2019 (Figure 7). These events were made available to all signatory cities and provided in the three languages of the programme – English, French and Portuguese. It should be noted, however, that there was only one workshop held in Portuguese in Cape Town, South Africa.

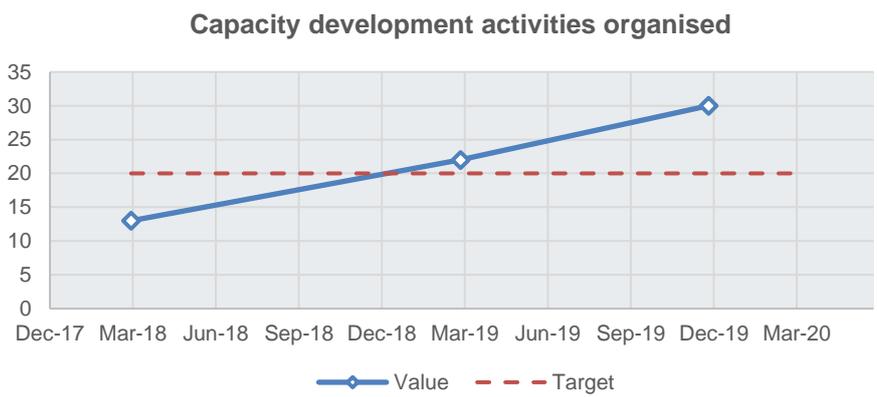


Figure 7. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - Number of capacity buildings activities organised by CoM SSA

The total number of beneficiaries of these activities also surpassed the set target in early 2019, with the value in December being over the target by 33%. This means that the reach of these activities has been larger than what was originally planned.

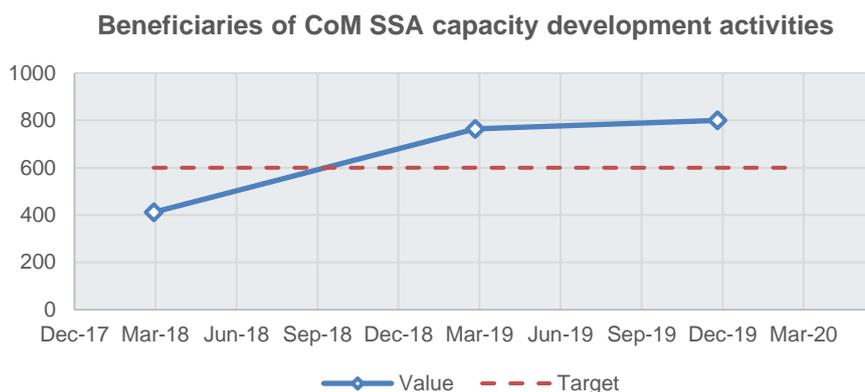


Figure 8. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK – Number of participants that have benefited from at least one capacity development event

During the interviews with the signatory cities, one very common pointed out benefit from their participation in the CoM SSA was the workshops organised. Beyond the technical knowledge gained in these events, cities value the share of experiences with other signatory cities. In particular, there was often a mention in a WhatsApp group that was created informally amongst the participants of a Workshop. The same happened, but at a smaller scale, with the workshop held in Cape Town with the Portuguese-speaking cities. From this experience, it would be of a **high value to the cities that a platform is created where cities could share experiences and ask questions and interact in a forum-like design.**

UCLG Africa has also mentioned that a platform to share best practices and successful project is now being created and that this will be disseminated to all signatory cities.

It should be noted that **the multi-lingual approach should also be reflected in these platforms, where cities with different native languages should be allowed to communicate and share experiences with no language barriers.**

The results from the questionnaire show, however, that 18% had not attended any workshop and 21% of the respondents had no capacity building benefits from their participation in the CoM SSA. The large majority of the cities that indicated this joined the initiative in 2019, so the lack of impact can be due to not having enough time to participate in any of the aforementioned events.

For the other 79% of cities that have felt an improvement in their technical capacity, the main areas of improvements highlighted relate to accounting of GHG emissions and development of the SEACAP.

Notwithstanding this, amongst the areas that have been highlighted as the ones where there is still a relevant gap in capacity, GHG emissions accounting is the second, with more than 50% of the cities showing a need for further support. The main option chosen is, however, access to funding as cities see this as a crucial area for the future of their plans and of which they do not have enough understanding.

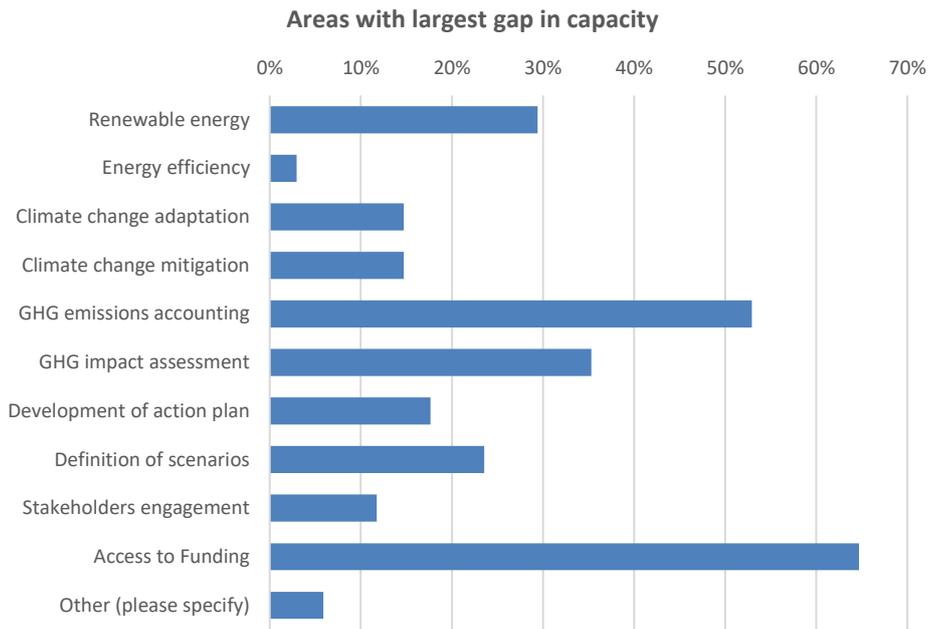


Figure 9. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS: Gaps identified in the technical capacity of cities

3.3.2 Have institutional frameworks improved?

SATISFACTORY

For this area, the performance of CoM SSA against the set objectives in the Logical Framework is mixed. On one side, the number of beneficiaries of CoM SSA activities related with capacity development and advocacy in December 2019 is estimated to be 50% higher than the set target. However, this metric can be biased by the beneficiaries of capacity development, which is an area where the CoM SSA initiative overperformed. However, it is difficult to demonstrate what the actual reach of the advocacy activities organised is.



Figure 10. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - Number of participants that benefited from CoM SSA activities in capacity development and advocacy

One of the most relevant points for the building of the institutional framework was to establish clear channels of communication between local and national governments. This was an area where the initiative showed little progress over the course of 2019 and fell behind the set target.

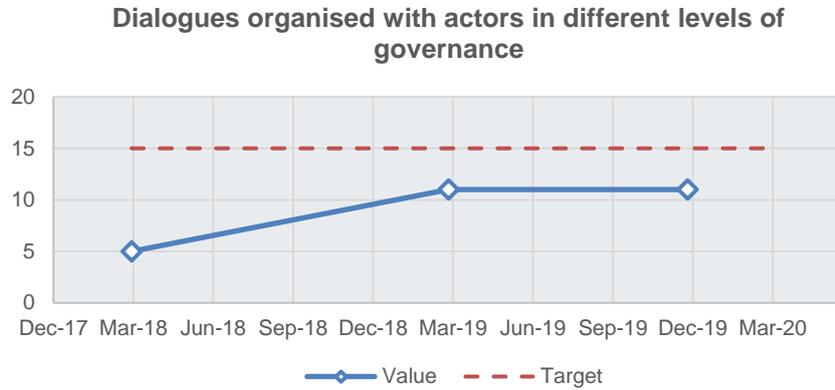


Figure 11. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - Number of dialogues organised with actors in different levels of governance (e.g. national and local governments)

Together with the vertical integration, it is also important to ensure that there is a strong collaboration between several cities in a country. With this in mind, the Logical Framework included a target for the number of engaged national associations of local authorities. However, by December 2019, the number of associations mobilised was half of the set target. Again, there seems to be little to no progress toward this target over the course of 2019.

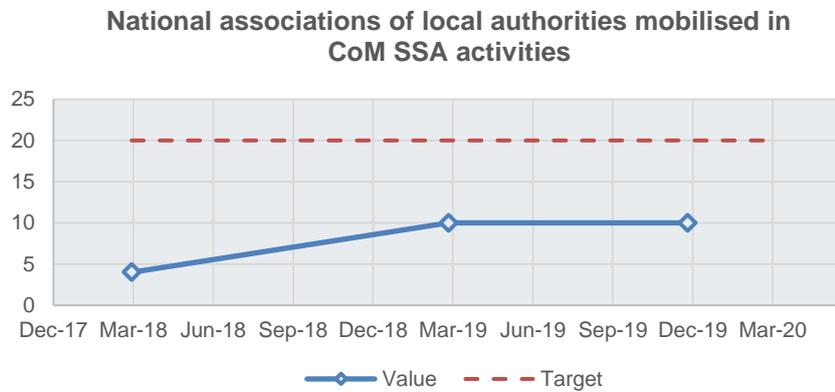


Figure 12. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - Number of national associations of local authorities mobilised in CoM SSA activities

In the interviews, it was highlighted that a differentiating factor between CoM SSA and the work of other initiatives is the pledge to the commitments that mayors need to make. This binds the city to an agreement adding political pressure to take action.

There is, however, **a lot of work to be done to ensure there is vertical integration between national goals (as per defined in the NDCs) and the SEACAPs being designed at a local level.**

Conversations amongst different actors (either vertical or horizontal) are often tense for political reasons. Ms. Maryke Van Staden, Director at ICLEI – WS, has stated that they found that this could be facilitated by enabling closed door meetings in a neutral environmental.

Despite not having been covered by a specific target, there is also an additional point, regarding the institutional frameworks, that is linked with the good governance practices with a city. Often, the various teams in the city work independently and there is little coordination regarding their objectives and/or activities. This initiative and the need to create a SEACAP that touched on the subjects of many of these different teams (e.g. mobility, city planning, environment), led to a stronger collaboration within the city, hence improving the internal frameworks of cities. This was highlighted in a number of interviews, namely, by Ms. Khara Cissé, UCLG’s Help Desk Officer.

3.3.3 Was the SEACAPs production in line with the set objectives?

SATISFACTORY

This was one of the areas where the targets defined in the Logical Framework have not been met in totality. The first objective, of completing at least one task for the development of the SEACAP by at least 10 cities was met (Figure 13), however, only 5 cities have completed a Draft version of their SEACAP against the set target of 13. It should be noted that these targets seem to be poorly designed as for the completion of a Draft version of the SEACAP, all the steps need to be completed; for this reason, the target for the Draft SEACAP should be lower than the target for the individual tasks.



Figure 13. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - Number of cities with at least one step concluded towards the development of a SEACAP and target



Figure 14. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK - Number of cities with a Draft version of the SEACAP and target

In the questionnaire’s results, 47% of the respondents indicated that they had yet to start making any progress on the development of the SEACAP. The reasons indicated for this were mostly linked with lack of technical knowledge to undertake the necessary tasks. Within the other reasons identified, a large percentage of respondents mentioned the lack of funding to undertake the necessary process. Another reason mentioned was the change in local government which delayed the whole process.

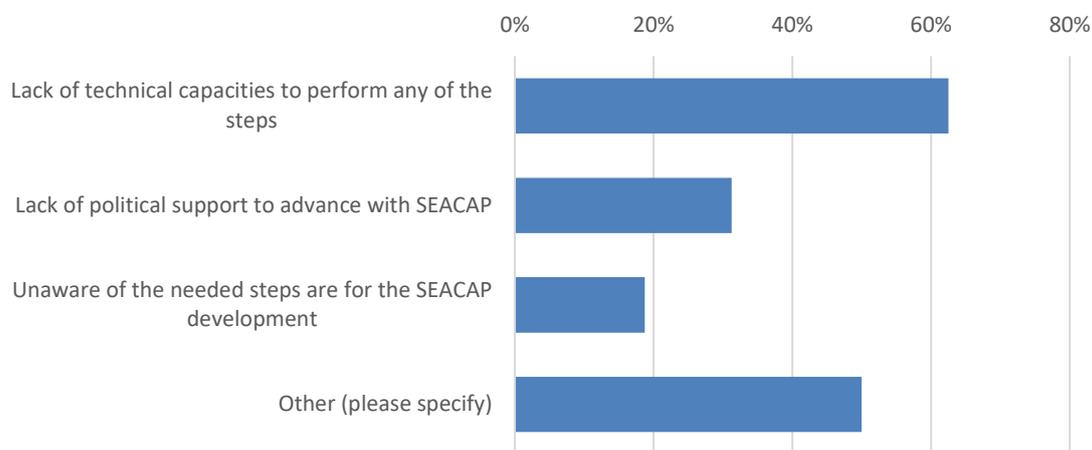


Figure 15. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS - Reasons for no progress attained in SEACAP development (% of cities with no progress)

Amongst the 53% that had made some progress, the majority had completed a Baseline Emissions Inventory and a Risks and Vulnerabilities Assessment. Despite being identified as a crucial area in the region, only half the respondents had already started to perform an assessment on Access to Energy. There is, however, a large number of Draft SEACAPs (nearly 40%, six cities⁵).

⁵ A total of 7 responses were accounted for, but two city officials from Kampala have submitted their points of view, so one was subtracted to avoid double counting.

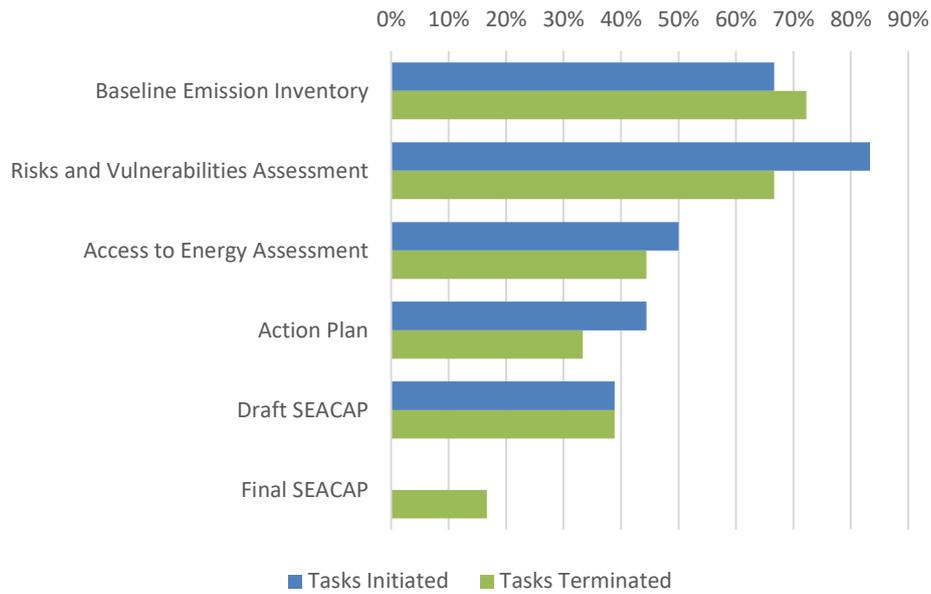


Figure 16. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS - Steps initiated and concluded towards the development of a SEACAP (% of cities with some progress)

It should be noted that, from interviews, it was understood that there was a recent large push towards the conclusion of the SEACAPs and that some have already been submitted in 2020. This means that the information used from December 2019 might no longer be representative of the current reality. For the purposes of this evaluation, however, the reporting values for the final results of the Logical Framework considered are those from the end of 2019 that have been shared by CEMR.

Additionally, it was understood that some of the cities where there was faster progress with the development of a SEACAP were also being supported by other agencies and were already working in this subject area. This was the case in Kampala, Uganda and Zou, Benin, whose focal points were interviewed. Both these contacts have, however, highlighted that their participation in the CoM SSA initiative (and the commitments made under it) allowed them to complete the development of an Action Plan faster.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Overall assessment and added value

- The CoM SSA initiative had a slow start where different implementing partners were defining their space and method of collaboration to move forward. However, there were clear progresses in the activities developed in Year 2 and Year 3 of the initiative, and the extension of the pilot projects (from 7 to 13 cities) was also well accommodated in the workplan and Logical Framework defined.
- At a later stage, there were also delays in development of the SEACAP guidelines which contributed to delays of workshops and technical assistance focused in this area, which might have partly contributed to delays in the submission of the Draft SEACAPs by the signatory cities.
- The CoM SSA initiative was highly successful in the scale that it was able to obtain, with over 200 signatory cities, and a much larger number of cities reached and engaged with. This means that over 200 cities have committed to present a plan for action on sustainable energy access and climate change mitigation.
- Even though there are other initiatives/programmes in SSA related with energy and climate change, some of them focused on energy, CoM SSA was unique in the size of the number of signatories, approach and in the type of commitments obtained.
- Another positive point regarding Phase I and Phase II was the capacity building that happened, especially in the most technical areas: GHG emissions inventory and development of a SEACAP. It is important to highlight, however, that even though the work done so far is commendable and with good results, capacity building is still an area that needs a continuing level of investment. It will be crucial for the continuation of work done so far, since the cities are still very dependent on external technical assistance.
- The presentation of financing solutions signatory cities could use was also mentioned as a very appreciated output of the programme.
- An added value that falls beyond the Logical Framework set for this initiative was the development of a network of cities/municipalities that often face similar challenges. The share of experiences was highlighted often as the main benefit of the workshops done and sometimes even of the overall programme.

There is, however, still some work to be done and support, in particular, in the integration of the SEACAPs with the plans at a national level – vertical integration. This will be a focal point for the long-term sustainability of these plans and for the true impact they will have in each country / region.

4.2 Lessons learned / recommendations

The list presented below is a collection of recommendations and main messages that have already been presented throughout the document. Most of these have been presented in bold above. We have categorised these recommendations in 4 main areas: programme design, capacity building, stakeholders engagement and community building.

Programme Design

1. When other organisations are present in the region/city, efforts should be made to work collaboratively to avoid duplication of efforts and competition for time and attention from city officials.
2. When evaluating a pool of projects proposed by cities, the assessment team should take into account the capacity of local government teams in the themes of energy and climate. This will

have impacts not only on the resources that need to be allocated for technical assistance, but can also provide indications regarding the likelihood of success for such projects.

3. Grant contracts similar to the ones provided for the pilot projects should require the participation of the city as a direct beneficiary of the grant to ensure that the objectives and activities of the project are aligned with the objectives and activities being developed by city officials.
4. A coordinated approach from international donors and financial instruments is needed to facilitate access and channel direct funding to local governments to implement concrete actions in line with the developed SEACAPs.

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Capacity Building

5. Development of workplans and guiding documents should always take in consideration the regional challenges and realities from the start.
6. For more efficient technical assistance, there should be technical resources on the ground, which would enable more continual support and a better understanding of the local challenges and possible solutions.

Stakeholders Engagement

7. When there is particularly high political instability in the country/city, it would be important to consider the engagement of local organisations (apolitical, preferably) in the project to ensure some continuity even in the event of changes in the local government.
8. Engagement of multiple actors takes time and is often built on more personal relations.
9. It will be essential to maintain the support and some form of engagement with the cities to guarantee their continuing active participation in the initiative and that the SEACAPs already developed are followed through on.
10. More support is needed from national governments to support local government's actions in tackling climate and energy issues in their territories.

Community Building

11. A platform that would allow cities to share their experiences and interact in a dynamic way could be developed, building on the informal platform already created. Its structure could be similar to a discussion forum for open questions complemented by a page/location where cities could share specific projects and their experiences in their implementation (e.g. including challenges faced and how they were overcome).
12. Interacting tools and platforms amongst cities should be made multi-lingual so that participating cities do not become segregated by language.