



D3.1 Capacity Building Planning and Methodology

Authors:

Abigail Mizzi, Stephane Dupas (Energy Cities)
Margo Didichenko (Ro3kvit)
Beatriz Raimundez, Lesya Tymoshenko (Eurocities)
Tetiana Melnyk, Yulia Bandura (AUC)

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Authors	Abigail Mizzi & Stephane Dupas (Energy Cities) and Margo Didichenko (Ro3kvit)
Lead Organisation	Energy Cities
Contributing partners	Beatriz Raidmunde, Lesya Tymoshenko (Eurocities), Tetiana Melnyk, Yulia Bandura (AUC)
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Executive summary

This deliverable, D3.1: *Capacity Building Planning and Methodology*, presents the design, structure, and methodology of the SUN4Ukraine Capacity Building Programme (CBP), developed under WP3 of the SUN4Ukraine project. This document outlines how the programme supports Ukrainian municipalities—particularly the twelve Flagship Municipalities (FMs)—in building the skills, knowledge, and institutional capacity required to plan and implement Climate Neutrality Plans

The Capacity Building Programme has been designed through an extensive co-creation process involving Ukrainian partners, Flagship Municipalities, and European experts. It combines international experience from the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities.

with the specific realities and needs of Ukrainian cities navigating war-related challenges and post-war reconstruction.

The programme follows a structured approach inspired by the ADDIE methodology (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation), ensuring a systematic yet flexible design that adapts to participants' evolving needs. Learning is organised across four interconnected thematic tracks—Foundations, Governance, Actions, and Finance—which together provide a comprehensive pathway from strategic vision to implementation readiness.

The design places strong emphasis on practical, applied learning. Through an “on-live” blended format combining regular online sessions, interactive workshops, checkpoints, and peer-learning exchanges, participants progressively build their CNPs during the two-year programme. The approach ensures that learning translates directly into municipal action and long-term institutional change.

Additional components—including the Partnership Programme (pairing Ukrainian cities with European Mission Cities) and the forthcoming Ukrainian Cities Climate Hub (UCCH)—enhance the programme's reach and sustainability. These elements aim to build a lasting community of practice, enabling knowledge sharing, replication, and ongoing support beyond the lifetime of the project.

Spanning from October 2025 to September 2027, the SUN4Ukraine Capacity Building Programme represents a cornerstone of the project's ambition to empower Ukrainian cities as leaders in sustainable, climate-neutral urban development.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
ADDIE	Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation
CB	Capacity Building
CBP	Capacity Building Programme
CCC	City Climate Contract
CNP	Climate Neutrality Plan

EU	European Union
FM	Flagship Municipality (=frontrunner cities)
FRCs	Front Runner Cities
GHG	Greenhouse gas
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MEPs	Municipal Energy Plans
NZC	NetZeroCities
Q&A	Questions and Answers
SECAP	Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan
SUN4Ukraine	Sustainable Urban Net Zero Network for Ukraine
UCCH	Ukrainian Cities Climate Hub
U-SNAP	Ukrainian Support Needs Assessment Process
UTMC	Urban Transitions Mission Centre
WP	Work Package

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Introduction

The SUN4Ukraine Capacity Building Programme has been developed to help Ukrainian cities accelerate their transition toward climate neutrality, even in the face of extraordinary challenges caused by the war and the need for reconstruction. As part of the broader SUN4Ukraine initiative, this programme provides the knowledge, tools, and collaborative environment needed for municipalities to design and implement Climate Neutrality Plans (CNP) that align with both Ukraine's recovery and the European Union's climate objectives.

The programme builds on the principle that learning is most effective when it is collaborative, applied, and grounded in local realities. The Capacity Building Programme has been carefully tailored to address the real needs of cities. It draws on the experience of European Mission Cities, while recognising the specific social, financial, and institutional constraints faced by Ukrainian local governments.

This document provides a detailed explanation of the programme's design methodology, structure, learning objectives, and delivery model. It presents how the training is organised across four main thematic tracks—Foundations, Governance, Actions, and Finance—and how each contributes to building the technical, governance, and financial capacities required for effective climate neutrality planning.

Beyond training design, the document also outlines the Partnership Programme, that links the project with the broader EU Mission: Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, and the Ukrainian Cities Climate Hub (UCCH), which will ensure that the knowledge generated is shared widely and will remain accessible for future learners. These components reinforce SUN4Ukraine's long-term vision: to establish a self-sustaining ecosystem for urban climate action in Ukraine that endures beyond the project timeline.

Together, all the elements of the capacity building programme form a comprehensive framework for building the institutional capacity, expertise, and confidence of Ukrainian municipalities to lead their climate neutrality transitions—turning vision into actionable, locally owned strategies for a sustainable future.

1. Design Methodology of the Capacity Building Programme

In SUN4Ukraine, learning is understood as a collaborative process. Trainers and participants work together to build new knowledge, skills, and competences that are directly useful for Flagship Municipalities (FMs). Learning opportunities are designed in close cooperation with Ukrainian partners, FMs themselves, and thematic experts. This ensures that the content is not only of high quality, but also rooted in local realities and directly applicable to the development of Climate Neutrality Plans (CNPs).

To guarantee consistency and effectiveness, the design of all learning materials follows a structured methodology developed by the work package leads of the Capacity Building Programme: Energy Cities and Ro3kvit. This approach makes sure that each session is prepared and delivered in a way that is engaging, interactive, and suited to learners' needs.

The methodology is inspired by the widely used ADDIE framework (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation), which offers a step-by-step process to plan, deliver, and improve training activities.

THE ADDIE methodology and how it has been applied in SUN4Ukraine:

This step-by-step approach ensures that SUN4Ukraine's capacity building is practical, engaging, and context-sensitive, while leaving room for continuous refinement as needs evolve. The methodology follows 5 inter-linked phases:

Analysis: mapping out the learning needs, challenges, and knowledge gaps of FMs, and ensuring that course goals are aligned with the overall objectives of SUN4Ukraine. The analysis stemmed from both the U-SNAP (Ukrainian Support Needs Assessment Process) carried out with the FMs as well as from the discussions with Ukrainian partners and FMs during the first workshop with FMs held in Vilnius in May 2025.

Design: shaping the learning objectives, outlining the structure of modules and sessions, and selecting methods such as case-based exercises, videos, group work, or quizzes to stimulate interaction and measure progress. This phase has been carried out during the course of May 2024 up until late September 2025.

Development: co-creating content with experts and Ukrainian partners, producing relevant sessions, video and written materials, preparing assignments, and curating relevant resources. This phase is currently in process, with one successful training already delivered in Kyiv in October 2025, where various session plan and material were developed in preparation.

Implementation: launching the course across online and in-person formats, providing onboarding support, setting up interactive tools, and creating spaces for peer exchange. Trainers guide learners throughout this journey. This phase is currently in process, with the implementation of one in-person workshop in Kyiv, the preparation of another in-person workshop in Munich in November 2025, as well as planning underway to set-up the Ukrainian learning space on the NetZeroCities portal.

Evaluation: collecting feedback from both trainers and participants, analysing participation and engagement data, and making adjustments to improve future learning cycles. This phase is currently in process, following the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework developed in WP1. Evaluation and feedback are already being implemented such as during the in-person workshop in Kyiv where the overall score for the workshops delivered has been between 4.58 and 4.89 out of 5 across the scoring criteria.

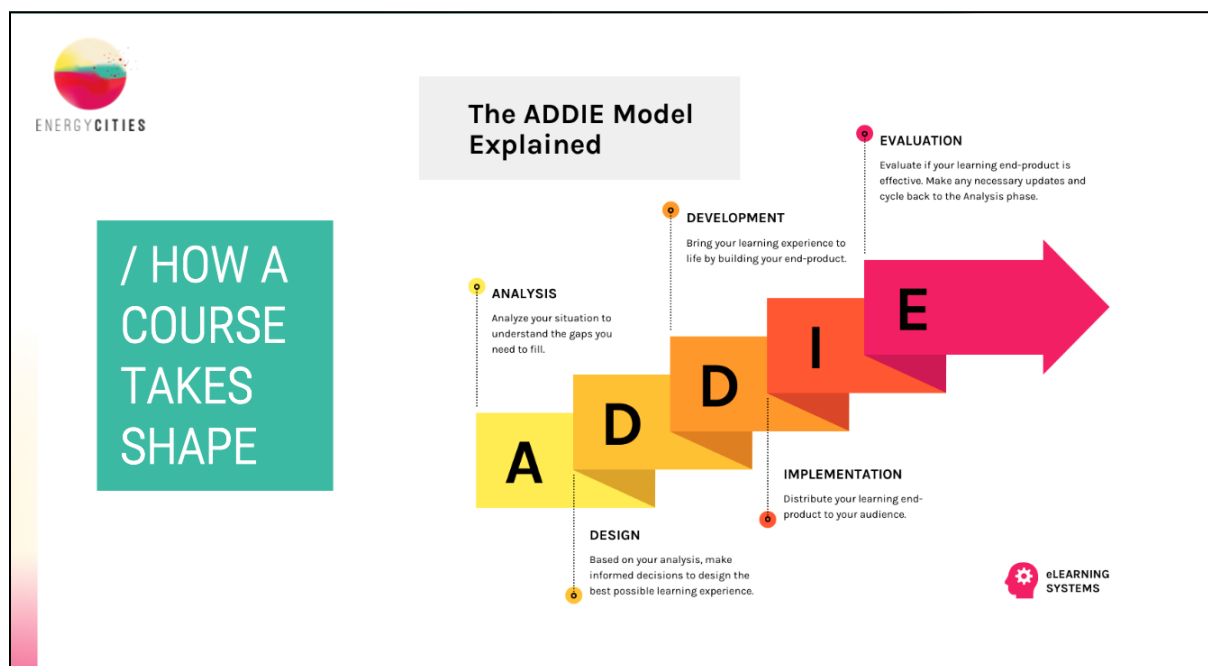


Image1: How a learning course takes shape using the ADDIE methodology

1.1. Needs Assessments, U-SNAP and formulation of the challenges to be addressed by the capacity building programme (links to WP1)

A key component which shaped SUN4Ukraine’s capacity building programme (and a core part of the Analysis phase of the methodology applied) has been the U-SNAP results which has been carried out in WP1, where a deep dive on the diverse needs, strengths, opportunities and barriers for the 12 Ukrainian FMs was carried out in depth.

After careful analysis of these assessments, the Capacity Building Programme (CBP) coordination team narrowed down 10 core ‘challenges’ forming the focus of the Capacity Building Programme. These challenges appear to present the most important common issues that Flagship Municipalities need to address to be able to develop their Climate Neutrality Plans within the scope of SUN4Ukraine.

Challenge 1: Infrastructure Demolition, Deterioration and Needs for Reconstruction and Modernisation

Aging and war-damaged water, heating, and sewage systems and transport systems
Poor energy efficiency and reliance on coal or centralised heating.

Challenge 2: Internal governance on climate issues

Siloed approaches common within internal municipal governance
Lack of cross-cutting priorities
Lack of dedicated climate/ energy departments is also common

Challenge 3: Challenges on Energy Transition	High dependency on fossil fuels and lack of energy-efficient structures Limited renewable energy deployment. Lack of technical expertise in energy management and decentralisation.
Challenge 4: Financial Constraints	Insufficient funding for critical infrastructure projects. Municipal budgets overwhelmed due to the war and lack of state co-financing mechanisms. Projects are stalled or underdeveloped due to lack of donor or loan-based support In some cases, FMs struggle with negative or disadvantaged credit making it harder to obtain favourable loan conditions
Challenge 5: Data and Planning Gaps	Missing or outdated data complicates strategic planning (e.g. SECAPs, MEPs). Lack of spatial development plans delays infrastructure projects. Weak monitoring and evaluation systems. This also applies to environmental monitoring (air/ industrial pollution etc) Lack of guidance from central government to local governments on developing strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation at the local level.
Challenge 6: Lack of Skilled Staff	There is a shortage of skilled professionals, in the FMs particularly in energy management, climate planning, and infrastructure development. Many positions remain vacant due to war-related displacement or lack of capacity Staff retention is difficult/ high staff turnover
Challenge 7: Environmental Concerns & risks	Industrial pollution, river degradation, and poor air quality. Environmental damage caused by Russia's armed aggression. No regulatory tools to manage riverbeds, reforestation, or illegal dumping.
Challenge 8: Weak Sustainable Mobility Systems	Public transport systems are underdeveloped, dominated by private operators and/or outdated fleets.

Cities seek to expand electric public transport, bike infrastructure, and pedestrian zones, but face funding and technical constraints

Challenge 9: Public Awareness and Engagement

Mistrust and low participation in co-financing and in green initiatives launched by the FMs.
Crisis fatigue and resistance to change hinder community involvement.

Challenge 10: Factoring in Industry and or Industrial activities:

A lot of FMs have industries operating within their territories which is often a major cause of emissions and pollution.
There is a need to engage Industry players in the process and in discussions (for instance around industrial parks, etc)
Some FMs experience a lack of leverage mechanisms over major industrial players to hold them accountable and to incentivise them to decarbonise

1.2. Benchmarking exercise

The coordination team undertook a comprehensive benchmarking exercise, reviewing both Ukrainian and international capacity-building programmes and training offers related to municipal climate planning and sustainability. This review was conducted to scan existing initiatives and resources in the field, ensuring that SUN4Ukraine's Capacity Building Programme builds on current knowledge and addresses real needs. The benchmarking focused on identifying proven best practices, common gaps in training content, and innovative methodologies that could inspire and be adapted for SUN4Ukraine's context.

All findings from this review have been consolidated into an analytical table for internal use by the SUN4Ukraine team. In total, 36 relevant capacity-building resources and programmes were identified and analysed. Most of these trainings were found through a compilation of resources which have been developed by the consortium partners, projects which SUN4Ukraine will work closely with such as NetZeroCities (NZC), as well as desk research in order to ensure that the benchmarking is as exhaustive as possible. Most of the courses listed are open-source or openly accessible.

For each programme, the table provides its name and a summary of its content and focus, paying particular attention to the relevant thematic scope of each programme. Links to the original sources and references are also provided. The table also identifies the authoring organisation or provider, the primary target audience (e.g. municipal staff, decision-makers, or technical experts) and the format in which the content is delivered (e.g. online, in-person, self-paced or workshop-based). The table also records the language of delivery and the accessibility of the programme. Where possible, it also includes the team's assessment of key takeaways, such as innovative elements or pedagogical strategies worth replicating. It also notes critical observations on potential shortcomings or issues that SUN4Ukraine should

actively avoid in its own implementation. Where relevant, the table notes whether any SUN4Ukraine consortium partners were involved in developing or delivering the content, which could be leveraged for deeper collaboration or contextual adaptation.

This benchmarking table was an important source of information during the development of the SUN4Ukraine programme's methodology, ensuring that its structure was evidence-based, relevant to the local context, and aligned with approaches that had been tested in other settings.

SUN4Ukraine's capacity building programme will build on the existing resources available (especially those developed in important or linked projects such as that of NetZeroCities' and Covenant of Mayors East, or else developed by the consortium partners). This will be key not to replicate material that already exists but rather adapt it and curate it to reflect the needs and realities of the FMs. The added-value of the SUN4Ukraine's capacity building content would be that it will be multi-disciplinary (cutting across different themes such as setting the foundations, governance, finance and implementation- see section 2 on Structure for further detail). It will also focus on a learning by doing approach, where the learning content will be applied and brought back to climate neutrality planning.

Therefore, the offer will be a highly relevant, specialised and dedicated course on the development of a Climate Neutrality Plan specifically in the Ukrainian context – first targeted to 12 FMs but then expanded and opened to other Ukrainian municipalities during its replication phase. This in itself makes the programme quite novel. Moreover, the programme will also bring the knowledge, experiences, and learnings of the Mission Cities not only through the partnerships arm of the programme, but also in the content, inviting Mission Cities to share their experiences when there's a possibility to do so with all FMs during both online and in-person sessions. This city to city learning not just through partnerships but also through content (by sharing tools, methodologies, techniques and more) is a way to leverage on the concrete experiences and learning of the Mission Cities.

In a nutshell, the SUN4Ukraine programme will offer an incredibly comprehensive and extensive programme of learning to the FMs which sets it apart from other courses identified during the benchmarking exercise. The courses identified in the benchmarking are often shorter, more specific and/ or tackling only a few topics and/or focus mainly on expert-city interactions or city-to city interactions. SUN4Ukraine's CBPs covers a wide-range of topics and blends different formats and approaches in a single comprehensive offer.

1.3. Feedback gathered from FMs during first in-person workshop

At an early stage of programme development, a dedicated workshop was held with representatives from the Flagship Municipalities to clarify their expectations, needs and institutional capacities in relation to the Capacity Building Programme. SUN4Ukraine took advantage of the Cities Mission Conference organised in Vilnius in May 2025 to organise the first in-person gathering of all Flagship Municipalities. The session focused on identifying the elements to be integrated to ensure that the support provided to SUN4Ukraine throughout its learning process is meaningful, practical and well-structured. Rather than validating a predefined concept, the workshop provided an opportunity to explore together what would make the capacity-building effort relevant and effective.

Participants strongly emphasised the value of in-person training and peer exchange, which they considered essential for meaningful engagement and practical learning. At the same time, they stressed the need to balance training intensity with limited human resources: municipal teams are often small, overstretched, and affected by staff turnover. In this context, offline sessions should be focused, well-paced, and complemented by flexible formats to ensure continuity and institutional memory.

A clear request was made for step-by-step guidance not only in the development but also in the implementation of Climate Neutrality Plans. Municipalities highlighted the need for practical tools, flexible methodologies, and clarity on team roles. Specific topics included project management, investment preparation, and access to financing – all seen as critical for moving from plans to action. Teams also pointed to persistent gaps in monitoring and evaluation, including difficulties with indicator design, data quality, and progress tracking.

The workshop also surfaced the importance of strategic communication: many municipalities face challenges in articulating the value and urgency of climate neutrality, both internally across departments and externally with residents. There was a shared interest in building communication capacity and in framing messages that foster public trust and political ownership.

Finally, participants underlined the importance of applied learning. They expressed a strong preference for training grounded in real-world cases – including lessons from unsuccessful examples – to better understand practical risks, trade-offs, and decision-making logic.

These insights were used to refine the programme's structure, content, and delivery methods, ensuring that the Capacity Building Programme is not only conceptually sound, but also operationally realistic and aligned with the working conditions of Ukrainian municipalities.

1.4. Learners' Profile/ Survey

After analysis of all the inputs obtained during the analysis phase of the CBP (which included analysis of the U-SNAP results, benchmarking, and feedback gathered by both Ukrainian partners and FM's – see previous sections), the coordination team refined the target audience of SUN4Ukraine's CBP.

The Programme is primarily aimed for staff members of Ukrainian city administrations responsible for, or involved in, climate-related planning and implementation. Some of the sessions and/ or material of the CBP will also be targeted at elected and political representatives (however, this will constitute a small percentage of the CBP).

Implementers: Staff members working at the operational level in different departments or units within departments. These are staff members responsible for technical implementation, coordination, and day-to-day work in climate and energy matters. They will probably be tasked and best-placed for the development of the CNP due to the nature of their work as well as previous experience and understanding of climate and energy matters. They will constitute the core audience for technical and hands-on trainings.

Seniority level: The primary audience for the CBP should be middle management, unit managers, departmental heads and programme leads within municipalities. This group is strategically placed: they are senior enough to influence decisions, allocate resources, and translate knowledge into practice, while still being close to day-to-day operations. By engaging

them, the programme ensures that knowledge is not only retained but also cascaded within teams and across departments. These individuals are also more likely to champion new approaches, integrate them into existing workflows, and secure buy-in from both frontline staff and higher-level political leadership. In short, they act as multipliers, bridging strategy and implementation, which maximises the long-term impact of the programme.

Apart from middle-management, the following roles could also be suitable: municipal energy managers, environmental protection officers, technical coordinators or project managers and specialists in strategic planning, investment or international cooperation.

Relevant departments could include: department for climate and/ or energy; infrastructure, housing and utilities (Home and Community-based Services), and/ or urban planning/ development, environment and/ or ecological departments, strategic planning, investment and/ or international cooperation, and economic development department

Common Characteristics of these profiles in the Ukrainian context, based on experiences of Ukrainian partners in the consortium who have work extensively with Ukrainian city administrations:

- Often work in small teams (1–2 people covering several areas)
- Operate under pressure and time constraints
- Require practical guidance, templates, and simple algorithms
- Motivated to learn, but need applied and contextualised formats

Capacity Needs to keep in mind during session design:

- Step-by-step methodologies
- Cross-departmental collaboration strategies/ mechanisms
- Visual tools, technical templates, and peer-to-peer case studies

Engaging other staff such as junior staff and/ or highly specialised staff: Even though, junior staff and specialists are often deeply engaged in operational tasks, they often lack the decision-making authority to put new knowledge into practice or to drive cross-departmental collaboration. While they should not be excluded from the process, their role will be more supportive, complementing the leadership of middle managers who can integrate learning into municipal systems and processes.

Decision-makers: Although these are not the core or specific audience this CBP will aim to target, we also understand that it is important to engage decision-makers in short and/ or specific moment in the CBP as they will be important to institutionalising the CNP process. These actors are important in ensuring interdepartmental alignment, and most importantly political will, support and commitment not only for the development of the CNP, but also for its implementation. However, their involvement tends to be more strategic and less technical. Their availability is also limited, and their priorities can shift with electoral cycles. For these reasons, they will be engaged selectively in high-level sessions focused on, for instance, mandate setting political buy-in and sessions linked with multi-level governance, rather than as the primary target group for the technical training. **Typical Roles can include** the mayor, deputy mayors (responsible for strategic development, infrastructure, finance), program/project coordinators in executive committees and city council members, especially those responsible for budget, development, or environment committees

Common Characteristics of these profiles in the Ukrainian context, based on experiences of Ukrainian partners in the consortium who have work extensively with Ukrainian city administrations:

- Overloaded schedules and limited availability

- Can Influence resource allocation and prioritisation
- Need to see alignment of CNPs with broader development and recovery goals
- Some remain sceptical of climate as a top priority in the wartime context

Capacity Needs to keep in mind during session design:

- Strategic framing of CNPs which also puts emphasis on recovery and urban resilience
- Clear articulation of co-benefits by embarking on climate action: international visibility, funding, innovation opportunity
- Coordination tools, insights, frameworks and best-practise examples of cross-sector and multi-level governance
- Exposure to inspirational city leadership cases from Mission Cities

In summary, by targeting middle management as the core audience, while ensuring complementary engagement with both senior leadership and junior staff where appropriate, the programme maximises both the uptake and the practical application of new knowledge

Group	Role	Engagement Focus
Implementers (unit managers, departmental heads, programme leads)	Core audience and knowledge multipliers; ensure integration of learning into municipal structures and processes	Sessions oriented towards methodology & know-how: • All technical sessions across tracks • Input in checkpoints every 6 months • Hands-on workshops (Greenhouse gas inventory, portfolio design, scenario planning, MEL) • Peer-learning and cross-city exchanges
Junior Staff and/or Technical Experts (policy officers, project coordinators, analysts)	Provide operational expertise and data; support application of knowledge	Sessions oriented towards specific expertise or where it would be useful for middle management to have additional support, such as: • Technical and sectoral modules (mobility, waste, adaptation) • MEL and data collection exercises • Support scenario building and co-benefit identification
Decision-makers (mayors, deputy mayors, councillors)	Provide political endorsement, strategic direction, and legitimacy	Sessions focused mainly for them to understand the process & its importance, for instance: • Mandate-setting sessions • Multi-level & Cross-sectoral governance • Partnership and visibility events

2. Structure

2.1. Programme Framework

Internally, the programme's curriculum is structured around **four thematic tracks** – **Foundations, Governance, Actions, and Finance**. These tracks serve as the organising framework for developing content and sessions, ensuring that all key dimensions of climate neutrality planning are covered. Each track corresponds to a critical domain of local capacity to develop and implement Climate Neutrality Plan:

- **Foundations:** Focuses on the core concepts and technical basics of urban climate neutrality. This track introduces what climate neutrality means for cities and how it can be achieved locally, giving participants a systems-level understanding of climate challenges and opportunities. It covers the Climate Neutrality Plan as both a strategic process and a guiding document – explaining why the CNP is important and what its key components are. This track also guides participants through foundational tasks like compiling a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory. Participants learn standard methods and tools for GHG accounting (including handling scopes 1–3 and war-impacted data gaps) and they also obtain an overview of major sectors (energy, transport, waste, etc.) to build a robust baseline for action.
- **Governance:** Concentrates on creating an enabling environment and governance structures for climate action. In this track, participants learn how to organise internally and externally for effective CNP implementation. Key topics include setting up a cross-departmental transition team within the municipality, mobilising political support, and establishing collaborative frameworks that break down silos. The track also addresses stakeholder mapping and engagement strategies – identifying who needs to be involved and how to co-create a shared vision and commitment for climate neutrality. Skills in social innovation and inclusive participation are developed so that the climate transition is just and equitable. Moreover, Governance emphasizes iterative learning and adaptation: participants are encouraged to set up feedback loops, so the CNP remains a living process that can reflect, adapt, and repeat in response to new data or changing circumstances (a particularly important aspect given the uncertainties of a wartime and post-war context).
- **Actions:** Emphasises the planning and integration of concrete climate actions. This track guides cities in shifting from ad-hoc, fragmented projects to a coherent portfolio of measures that together drive the climate transition. Participants are shown how to design a holistic Climate Action Plan as part of the CNP. They learn how to develop future scenarios (exploring how policy changes, technologies, or socio-economic trends could affect their pathway to neutrality) and to map impact pathways for their proposed actions. A practical methodology for prioritising actions is taught, considering factors like cost-effectiveness, emissions impact, and co-benefits. The Actions track also includes monitoring and evaluation techniques, ensuring participants can set indicators and track progress over time. In the latter part of this track, attention turns to implementation readiness: participants dive deeper into selected priority actions to conduct pre-feasibility studies or develop project concepts, positioning these actions for eventual financing and execution. In summary, the Actions content builds the capability to craft an integrated, strategic roadmap of climate measures rather than isolated projects.

- Finance:** Provides the knowledge and tools to fund and sustain the climate neutrality efforts. This track demystifies how municipalities can finance climate action across all stages of their CNP, from planning through to implementation. Participants learn how to develop a comprehensive climate financing strategy aligned with their action plan, including how to estimate the financial needs of their portfolio of actions and link these to the city's budgeting and investment cycles. A wide range of funding sources is explored – international and European funds, national programs, municipal budgets, and innovative instruments. This track teaches how to select appropriate financial mechanisms for different types of projects and stages of intervention. Importantly, participants gain practical skills in investment planning and project preparation: they learn to translate climate actions into financially viable, “bankable” projects by preparing investment plans, conducting basic cost-benefit analyses, and understanding the requirements of investors or banks. The track also covers financial risk management and decision-making under uncertainty – ensuring that city teams can identify potential risks and put in place strategies to manage those. By the end of this track, participants should be equipped to turn their climate neutrality ambitions into concrete projects with robust financing and governance structures to support implementation.

Below is a visual representation of how the SUN4Ukraine CBP structure looks behind the scenes, with the different colours representing different tracks, the different boxes representing the different sessions and how they fit into the different periods of the CBP and the different arrows on top representing the learning cycles of the CBP.



These tracks are not visible to participants as separate strands; rather, they function as internal organising categories for curriculum development and ensure comprehensive coverage of content. From the participants' perspective, the programme's learning journey is structured through consecutive **learning cycles**, each combining content from several tracks around a practical theme corresponding to a key milestone and step-by-step logic for developing and implementing the Climate Neutrality Plan. Each cycle consists of roughly 4–6 sessions that cover interrelated topics (drawing from the various tracks) and build towards a concrete outcome or set of skills. Each thematic cycle is directly linked to a key aspect of climate neutrality planning, so that the learning remains grounded in participants' real-world tasks. Crucially, at the end of each cycle, a “checkpoint” session is held to pause and consolidate learning. The cycle-based approach ensures that participants see the connections between different knowledge areas. This integrated structure mirrors the actual process of climate action planning and makes the training more practical and outcome oriented.

The programme follows a regular bi-weekly learning rhythm, balancing synchronous and asynchronous activities across a two-year period. The calendar aligns with the standard municipal workflow: short breaks are scheduled in August and again between December and January, allowing participants to manage local reporting and budget cycles.

The CBP operates under a generalised framework that defines the overall structure and thematic focus. Within this framework, detailed design and content of each learning cycle are developed approximately three months in advance, following an agile, sprint-based planning approach. This approach ensures flexibility to integrate current priorities, localisation needs, and to ensure that participants remain consistently engaged without overload.

The coordination team works closely with trainers from consortium partner organisations to shape each session, ensuring coherence with the whole programme. To facilitate coordination and co-design, two key documents have been developed: the Trainer Guideline, which explains the programme framework, methodological principles, and facilitation approach; and the Session Plan Template, which provides a structured format for preparing and documenting each session.

- [SUN4UKRAINE_CBP_Trainers_Guidelines.docx](#)
- [SUN4UKRAINE_Session_Plan.docx](#)
- [SUN4UKRAINE_Session_Handout_EN.docx](#)

2.2. Addressing Key Delivery Challenges

In designing the structure and delivery, the SUN4Ukraine team paid special attention to several challenges and requirements identified through participant feedback and the Ukrainian context:

- **Language and Accessibility:** A fundamental consideration is the need for Ukrainian-language content. Many existing resources on climate planning (European frameworks, tools, case studies) are in English, which can be a barrier for local officials. Therefore, the programme ensures all training sessions are conducted in Ukrainian or provided with simultaneous interpretation. Presentation materials and discussions occur in the local language so that participants can fully engage without language barriers. Additionally, key reference documents and tools are being translated or locally adapted. This commitment to language accessibility was driven by early consultations with cities, which stressed that comprehension and comfort in one's native language are essential for deep learning and confident participation. By delivering the content in Ukrainian (and translating technical terminology where needed), the programme increases inclusion and ensures that knowledge can be more easily shared within the municipalities.
- **Online vs. Offline Balance:** Given the ongoing war context and associated constraints, the programme had to strike a careful balance between online and face-to-face activities. Travel and in-person gatherings are limited by both security concerns and resource/logistical constraints, so a heavily online model was adopted by necessity. The majority of sessions are conducted virtually, allowing all cities to participate regularly despite geographic distances or instability. Online delivery also gives flexibility to busy municipal staff and avoids the disruption of frequent travel. However, the programme designers recognised that some learning objectives, such as, hands-on collaboration, trust-building, and complex problem-solving, are best served by in-

person interaction. To address this, the curriculum includes a select number of offline workshops and events at strategic points: notably the kick-off sessions in 2025 and a few multi-day workshops in 2026 and 2027. These face-to-face gatherings are intended to deepen engagement through intensive exercises, peer networking, and direct teamwork that is hard to replicate online. This blend was a conscious methodological choice. It reflects not only practical constraints but also educational feedback that a mix of formats can keep participants more engaged over a long period.

- **Interactive & Applied Format:** Traditional training (e.g. long lectures or static presentations) was identified as ineffective for this audience, especially considering many participants are practitioners who prefer hands-on learning. Both previous capacity-building experiences and the target audience analysis indicated that passive information transfer would not lead to real learning uptake. Many implementers noted they have access to reports and guides, but what they need is help in translating that information into action. As a result, the SUN4Ukraine CBP is deliberately designed to be highly interactive, practical, and task oriented. Every online session incorporates opportunities for engagement, such as Questions and Answers (Q&A) segments, live polls, moderated discussions, and group exercises in order to move beyond one-way communication. Participants are frequently prompted to relate content to their local context (for example, discussing how a case study might apply in their city, or doing a quick exercise using their own data), which fosters reflection and deeper understanding. The methodological guideline is “learning by doing”. This interactive ethos extends to offline workshops as well, which are structured around group work, simulations, and peer exchange instead of slide presentations. The rationale for this format comes directly from participant needs. As many Ukrainian city staff work under pressure, they value training that directly helps them solve problems and produce outputs that feed into their work. Moreover, fostering dialogue among cities (peer learning) is seen as crucial: implementers feel encouraged when they can share challenges and solutions with counterparts from other municipalities. By making sessions interactive, the programme builds a community of practice and keeps learners engaged over the two-year period (which is especially important in an online environment where attention can wane).
- **“On-live” Blended Learning Approach:** The SUN4Ukraine methodology is described as an “on-live” approach, underlining the mix of online and live (real-time) learning modalities. In effect, this approach blends active and passive learning experiences into a single continuum. Concretely, it combines multiple dimensions of learning: online and in-person activities, synchronous (live) sessions and asynchronous content, as well as self-paced study and group-based collaboration. Participants benefit from a rich variety of formats and media that cater to different learning styles and schedule needs. For example, a typical module might include an interactive live webinar (synchronous online) where an expert presents concepts and participants engage in discussion; this could be supplemented by short, pre-recorded videos or micro-lectures that distil key concepts in a concise, accessible way. Learners can watch these at their own convenience (asynchronous), which helps those who may need more time or who want to revisit complex topics. Additionally, the programme provides self-paced resources, such as reading materials, reference guides, and online quizzes, that participants can use between sessions to deepen their knowledge and test their understanding.

Importantly, many of these resources and quizzes will be hosted on the SUN4Ukraine learning platform, allowing participants to reinforce learning objectives on their own time. The on-live approach also integrates practical assignments and tasks that

participants complete in the context of their city's planning work. Some assignments feed directly into the CNP development. This ensures that passive content (like a video or document) is immediately followed by an active component, converting information into actionable knowledge. Synchronous elements provide real-time interaction and social learning (e.g. group discussions, live feedback from trainers), while asynchronous elements provide flexibility and time for reflection. This balance is especially vital given participants' varying schedules and the unpredictable disruptions that can occur. The on-live design was thus a strategic solution to maintain continuity of learning: if someone misses a live session, they can catch up via recordings and still do the exercises. Conversely, live sessions ensure a regular cadence and a sense of community. By blending these components, the programme creates a resilient learning process that can adapt to the participants' context.

2.3. Learning modalities and requirements

As mentioned in the previous section, the CBP delivery model foresees a combination of online and in-person sessions. While in-person activities remain an essential component, most sessions are expected to be conducted online due to time, resource, and contextual constraints. The CBP coordination team has developed a set of recommended session formats intended to support trainers in selecting the most suitable approach in accordance with the session's content, learning objectives, and pedagogical framework.

Online sessions

An online session is designed as a 1.5–2 hour interactive learning format. Each session should balance engagement and intensity, combining different methods and formats to foster active participation while maintaining a clear structure and a well-paced learning flow.

Format	Duration	Structure & Methods	Best Use Case
Lecture-style / Input session	Max 2 hours (ideal 90 min)	Max. 60–75 min presentation (split into 2 blocks if possible)- 15–30 min Q&A / clarifications - 15–20 min reflective activity (polls, small breakout reflection, chat storm)	Introducing new frameworks, concepts, or technical knowledge. Best when content is essential baseline for all FMs.
Case study session	90–120 min	30–45 min presentation of case(s) (can be 2 shorter cases)- 30–60 min structured peer exchange in breakout groups (guided by specific questions)- 15 min plenary wrap-up	Sharing concrete examples from Mission Cities or partner municipalities. Helps connect abstract concepts to practice.
Peer-to-peer exchange	60–90 min	Short framing input by facilitator (max 10 min)- Small group discussions (30–45 min) guided by pre-shared questions- Plenary harvest (20–30 min)	Deep dive on a specific challenge (e.g., governance, financing). Builds trust and cross-learning between FMs.
Pre-recorded session	Max 30 min (ideally 10–20 min segments)	Short, focused video inputs (explainers, expert interviews, tutorials)- Always accompanied by reflection questions / task sheet - Hosted on platform for flexible access. A check-in	Technical inputs, tutorials, or expert knowledge that don't require live delivery but are useful as pre-work.

		session should always follow a pre-recorded one.	
Reflection / Check-in session	45–60 min	Based on pre-recorded input or prior assignment- Guided discussion using 3–4 focused questions shared in advance- Can include short pair or trio exchanges before plenary	Consolidating learning, ensuring uptake of pre-recorded material, building shared understanding across FMs.
Online workshop	90–120 min	20–30 min short input to set the stage- Breakout groups (30–45 min) for co-creation, mapping, or problem-solving- Plenary (20–30 min) to share outputs and next steps	Collaborative work on roadmaps, scoping exercises, or stakeholder mapping. When FMs need to “produce” something together.
Clinic / Drop-in Q&A (<i>suggested new format</i>)	45–60 min	No presentation, only open Q&A with an expert/facilitator- FMs submit questions in advance or raise live- Facilitator organises discussion around themes	Providing tailored advice to cities, addressing context-specific challenges without overloading with new input.
Learning Circle (<i>suggested new format</i>)	60–75 min	Small group (5–7 FMs) meets regularly- Each shares progress/obstacles (5–10 min each)- Group reflects, suggests solutions, shares resources	Ongoing peer support across cohorts, fostering accountability and deeper peer learning over time.

In-person sessions

In-person sessions will be linked to larger events and should prioritise interactive and participatory formats. A good formula to aim for would be roughly 30% plenary input/presentations, 50% interactive workshops and peer learning, and 20% networking and reflection, ensuring that participants remain engaged and leave with both new learnings and practical outputs directly applicable to the development of their CNP.

Format	Duration	Structure & Methods	Best Use Case
Plenary input / Lecture-style	30–60 min (rarely longer)	Short expert/keynote presentations- Use visuals, storytelling, real cases- Always followed by clarifying Q&A	Setting the scene, introducing frameworks, inspiring participants.
Case study session	60–90 min	20–30 min case presentation (possibly 2 cases)- 30–45 min table/group discussions on lessons learned- Plenary harvest (10–15 min)	Sharing best practices, making abstract frameworks tangible.
Peer-to-peer exchange	60–90 min	World Café format: small rotating group discussions around tables- Or fishbowl discussion with inner/outer circles- Questions prepared in advance	Stimulating diverse perspectives, building shared ownership across cities.

Hands-on workshop	Half-day (2–3 hrs) or full-day	Short framing input (15–20 min)- Group work with templates, canvases, mapping tools - Frequent energisers and reporting back- Outputs captured visually (flipcharts, post-its, digital boards)	Co-creation of roadmaps, stakeholder mapping, scenario planning.
Simulation / Role-play	60–120 min	Scenario or role-play game (e.g. city council debate, stakeholder negotiation)- Guided debrief on insights	Exploring governance challenges, stakeholder conflicts, decision-making.
Clinic / Advisory corner	30–60 min slots (parallel)	Expert tables where cities can “drop in” for tailored advice- Cities rotate between experts	Addressing context-specific challenges with direct expert support.
Learning Circle	60–75 min	Small groups (5–7 FMs)- Roundtable check-ins on progress/barriers- Peer advice exchange	Ongoing support and accountability within or across cohorts.
Gallery Walk / Poster Session	45–60 min	Cities prepare posters/visuals of their work- Participants walk around, ask questions- Can include “speed-dating” rotations	Showcasing city projects, enabling informal knowledge exchange.
Reflection & Check-out	30–45 min	Circle or pair reflections- “One key takeaway / one next step” sharing- Visual harvest (sticky wall, graphic recording)	Consolidating learning, surfacing commitments, closing events with energy.
Networking / Informal exchange	Flexible (30–90 min)	Structured mingling (speed networking)- Informal social moments (coffee breaks, dinner with thematic tables)	Building trust and relationships, which are crucial for follow-up collaboration.

Content Design Principles

- **Relevance:** Link every session clearly to a step or component of the Climate Neutrality Plan. Use existing case studies, preferably from comparable cities, and ideally in a similar context (Ukraine/crisis situation). In the absence of relevant examples, it is essential to demonstrate how the provided examples can be adapted to align with Ukrainian realities.
- **Practicality:** Prioritise tools, templates, and examples over abstract theory.
- **Clarity & Accessibility** Avoid jargon; define technical terms. Provide Ukrainian translations of key materials where possible.
- **Incorporating Mission Cities:** Where relevant, include testimonies, examples, or lessons learned from Mission Cities involved in the programme.
- **Gender Balance:** Be mindful of gender balance among the speakers/experts/team.
- **Context sensitivity:** Avoid political commentary.

Session delivery requirements

- **Language.** Ukrainian should be prioritised as the main language of delivery. When English is used, simultaneous interpretation or Ukrainian subtitles/voice-overs should be provided to ensure accessibility.

- **Follow-up assignments.** Short and practical follow-up tasks may be included to reinforce learning outcomes and connect sessions to the development of the Climate Neutrality Plan.
- **Connectivity.** Sessions should be designed with accessibility in mind, considering possible technical disruptions and ensuring that participants have access to recordings and materials. All sessions will be recorded for later view if necessary.
- **Visuals and branding.** All materials should follow the CBP's visual identity and branding guidelines to ensure consistency and recognisability.
- **Monitoring and feedback.** Each session should include a brief feedback component. Feedback collected will inform ongoing improvement of the programme's content and delivery.

2.4. Participant Experience & Programme Components

From the participants' viewpoint, the SUN4Ukraine programme is organised into a clear sequence of events and learning activities over the two-year period. The delivery structure can be outlined as follows, illustrating how an individual engages with the programme step by step:

Kick-off Events (Autumn 2025)

The journey begins with in-person launch events that set the tone and foundation for the programme. In October 2025, a two-day introductory workshop is held in Kyiv for all participating Flagship Municipalities, followed by a multi-level policy dialogue and partnership workshop in November 2025 alongside European "Mission Cities" in Munich. These kick-off meetings serve multiple purposes: they formally introduce the Capacity Building Programme's aims and structure, emphasise why climate neutrality is a crucial goal even amid the war context and reconstruction, and help participants establish the basic building blocks for climate action success. During these sessions, city teams are guided to form or confirm their local transition teams and to seek a clear political mandate for the CNP process. The content at the kick-off is motivational and foundational: participants explore what climate neutrality means for their city and begin mapping out their vision and high-level timeline. By bringing everyone together at the start, the programme also builds a sense of community among the Ukrainian municipalities and connects them with European peers for inspiration.

Expected result: After the kick-off events, the Flagship Municipality teams leave with a shared vision and understanding of the path ahead, initial skills for planning their transition, and the reassurance that they are part of a supportive network of cities and experts.

Regular Online Sessions (2025–2027)

The core of the programme consists of bi-weekly online training sessions that run from early 2026 through 2027. Roughly every two weeks, participants join a live online session of 1.5 to 2 hours, conducted via webinar in Ukrainian (with simultaneous translation provided for any international guest experts). These sessions are the primary vehicle for delivering new content and skills. Each online session is carefully designed to be interactive and engaging: trainers combine expert presentations with live discussions, Q&A segments, and sometimes real-time exercises (using tools like online polls, jamboards, or breakout discussions) to ensure active learning. The programme's dedicated online learning platform supports these sessions by hosting all session materials, recordings, and supplementary resources. After each live session, the recording and slides are uploaded for participants to review or for team members

who could not attend in real-time. The platform also offers quizzes or short assignments related to the session content, allowing participants to test their knowledge and trainers to gauge comprehension. Every cluster of 4–6 sessions constitute a thematic “cycle” (as described earlier), covering related practical topics. Participants thus experience the online sessions as a continuous course, gradually building their competencies and their city’s plan step by step. Importantly, all online sessions feature simultaneous interpretation or bilingual materials when needed, to integrate international content while remaining accessible to Ukrainian speakers. The regularity of these virtual meetings (twice a month) establishes a predictable rhythm, which helps cities allocate time and maintain engagement over the longer term.

Expected result: Through the online sessions, participants steadily gain knowledge and tools across all four thematic tracks. They are prompted to apply each new piece of learning to their CNP development in real time, meaning that with every passing month, their climate plan documents and ideas are taking shape alongside the training. The expectation is that by following along and doing the exercises, participants will incrementally draft and refine their Climate Neutrality Plan throughout the programme, rather than leaving all the work to the very end.

Checkpoints

After each learning cycle (i.e. every 4–6 online sessions), a Checkpoint session is conducted to conclude the cycle before moving on. These checkpoints are effectively interactive review workshops held online. In a checkpoint, there are no new inputs; instead, participants and trainers engage in reflection and consolidation of what has been covered so far. Typically, the format involves open discussion and peer exchange: city teams might present brief updates on how they have applied recent lessons and then receive feedback or suggestions from trainers and other cities. The goal is to connect the dots; to explicitly link the theoretical content to each city’s practical progress on their CNP. Trainers facilitate by asking prompting questions. These sessions create a space for participants to voice challenges, successes, and requests for help in a collegial environment. Checkpoints also serve as quality control; they help ensure that no city falls behind without notice, because any lack of progress or confusion can be spotted and remedied. In essence, they embed an iterative learning cycle within the programme: **learn** → **apply** → **reflect** → **adjust**, then, **repeat**.

Expected result: By engaging in checkpoints, participants reinforce their understanding and catch any misunderstandings early. They also directly integrate the cycle’s learnings into their draft CNPs during these pauses, so knowledge doesn’t remain abstract but translates into concrete plan sections or decisions. Moreover, the checkpoints strengthen the peer network: cities realize they share similar hurdles and can learn from each other’s experiences, fostering a supportive community of practice.

In-Person Workshops (2026–2027)

Alongside the online sessions, the programme features several offline workshops in 2026 and 2027 to provide deeper, hands-on learning opportunities. These are typically 2–3 days intensive trainings hosted in person (locations and exact dates to be determined based on safety and feasibility). Unlike the shorter online sessions, these workshops allow participants to dive much deeper into practical work and to collaborate face-to-face with both trainers and peers. A typical workshop agenda includes expert facilitation, but the emphasis is on active work by the city teams: they might spend half a day in a group exercise to build out their climate action roadmap or engage in role-play simulations to practice governance skills. Peer learning is heavily integrated. The face-to-face setting also helps build trust and camaraderie, which is

important for sustaining momentum back in the virtual environment. *Expected result:* Each in-person workshop is expected to accelerate participants' progress and skill development. Cities typically leave with tangible outputs, such as significantly updated sections of their CNP, refined project ideas, or new partnership leads, as well as documented solutions to common challenges developed collaboratively. The workshops act as milestones where participants can measure how far they've come since the kick-off, re-energise their teams, and validate their approaches against expert and peer feedback. They also reinforce inter-municipal collaboration – participants form working relationships across cities that often continue through the online phases, exchanging tips or even pooling resources on similar projects.

Partnership Programme

In parallel to the main training stream, the programme provides a Partnership Programme to enrich the learning experience through peer-to-peer approach. Each Ukrainian Flagship Municipality is paired with a NetZeroCities Mission City that has already developed a City Climate Contract (CCC). Over the course of the programme, these pairs engage in approximately four joint online sessions and one study visit. The joint sessions are opportunities for direct peer-to-peer learning based on preliminary designed roadmap for each pair. The study visit lets the Ukrainian team visit the partner city to see climate projects on the ground and to interact with practitioners and political leaders there. This international partnership component broadens the horizon of participants, giving them real examples of what is possible on the implementation of their CNPs and building informal peer-to-peer relationships. This approach is described in more detail in a specific chapter in this report.

Technical Assistance (WP2)

The methodology of SUN4Ukraine includes a dedicated stream of technical assistance delivered through WP2 – Climate Neutrality Targets, Planning and Investment. One of the objectives of WP2 is to support the co-development of a CNP for each FM, incorporating specific redevelopment needs and addressing context-specific challenges including governance, citizen and stakeholder engagement.

This support is not part of the capacity-building curriculum but constitutes a core work package in its own right, encompassing a broader set of tasks aimed at enabling cities to develop robust Climate Neutrality Plans. Within WP2, Task 2.3 offers expert consultations that help municipalities address specific technical or strategic challenges. These consultations are tailored to each city's context and can be scheduled flexibly, ensuring that local authorities receive targeted guidance whenever they encounter bottlenecks in preparing their CNP.

While independent in structure and scope, the technical assistance in WP2 is closely connected to the learning activities under WP3/T3.1 (in particular Partnership Programme). The two streams reinforce one another: insights exchanged with European mentor cities can inspire new approaches or identify areas where cities may need deeper technical advice, while the WP2 expert support ensures that cities can translate these inspirations into concrete, operational solutions. This synergy strengthens the overall effectiveness and sustainability of SUN4Ukraine's support.

The combination of structured peer learning (WP3) and tailored expert assistance (WP2) increases the practical impact of the programme. Cities gain confidence and motivation from peer examples, while also having access to specialised expertise to resolve complex issues. WP2 and WP3 are distinct but complementary. This ensures clarity in reporting deliverables and results—particularly regarding D2.3 (Guidance for Cities to Develop and Implement their

Climate Neutrality Plans)—while highlighting the coherent, interconnected support architecture of SUN4Ukraine.

2.5. Learning Platform

All the above components are managed and delivered through a comprehensive learning management system based on Moodle in a dedicated section of the NetZeroCities portal, which serves as the programme's information centre and workspace.

This online platform hosts all course materials, resources, and tools in one place for easy access by participants. After each session (online or offline), relevant documents (slides, handouts, example datasets, templates) and recordings are uploaded, allowing participants to revisit content or catch up if they missed a live meeting. Interactive elements like quizzes, feedback surveys, and assignment submission portals are included to make the learning process more engaging and trackable, as it enables monitoring of engagement, progress and participants flow. The learning platform is the backbone of the blended approach, ensuring continuity and cohesion. It allows the SUN4Ukraine CBP to maintain a structured learning pathway despite participants being dispersed across locations and time constraints.

Through this multi-faceted structure: combining internally organised tracks with participant-facing learning cycles and blending online consistency with strategic offline intensives; the SUN4Ukraine Capacity Building Programme addresses the unique needs of Ukrainian city teams. All components are aligned to ultimately guide the municipalities from the initial kick-off through to plan completion and ready-to-implement projects, with constant learning reinforcement at each step. The thoughtful design, rooted in both educational best practices and practical feedback, provides a strong rationale for how the programme is structured – it maximises the chances that knowledge will be absorbed and put into action, which is the ultimate measure of success for this capacity-building effort.

At the time of writing this deliverable, the construction of the landing page is under development and is foreseen to be accessible by the beginning of 2026 when the online sessions will start.

3. Key learning objectives & learning outcomes of the Capacity Building Programme

The SUN4Ukraine programme is driven by a comprehensive set of learning objectives that span the four tracks and translate into practical outcomes for participants. By the conclusion of the two-year journey, learners will have developed a broad array of skills, knowledge, and capabilities that enable them not only to draft a Climate Neutrality Plan, but also to begin implementing it. The core learning goals can be summarised as follows:

Understanding Climate Neutrality in Context

Participants will gain a clear conceptual understanding of what climate neutrality means for a city and why it matters in the Ukrainian context. They learn the overarching framework of Climate Neutrality Planning – essentially the “big picture” of how various efforts (mitigation, adaptation, sectoral policies) fit together into a cohesive strategy. This includes appreciating

the alignment of climate goals with post-war urban recovery and resilience objectives, so they can articulate how a CNP contributes to their city's broader development vision. An outcome here is that participants can confidently explain the purpose and components of a Climate Neutrality Plan to stakeholders, framing it not just as a document but as an ongoing transformative process. They understand key concepts like emissions scopes, climate neutrality versus net-zero, and the importance of integrating climate considerations into recovery plans.

Baseline Assessment & Data Skills

A critical set of competencies involves analysing emissions and establishing a baseline for action. Participants are trained to carry out a comprehensive GHG emissions inventory for their municipality, following international standards and using appropriate tools. They learn to collect and organise data across sectors (energy, transport, waste, etc.), deal with methodological issues like different emission scopes, and account for anomalies due to wartime disruptions. By programme's end, each team will have produced a baseline emissions profile as a foundation of their CNP. In doing so, they also build skills in data management and analysis – for example, how to use spreadsheet-based tools or online platforms to input local data and interpret the results. Participants learn to identify data gaps and make estimations or use proxy data where needed, which is a key capability in a context where perfect data may not be available. They also become adept at visualising and communicating data. The intended outcome is that each city can not only complete an emissions inventory but also update it in the future, enabling evidence-based planning and tracking of progress.

Strategic Climate Planning & Scenario Development

The programme equips participants with the ability to think strategically and long-term about their city's climate trajectory. They learn to conduct a thorough assessment of the current state of play: reviewing existing local plans (SECAPs, energy plans, transport plans, etc.), policies, and projects to understand what is already in place and where critical gaps lie. From this, they can identify barriers (financial, technical, institutional) that need to be addressed and spot opportunities or low-hanging fruits. Building on the baseline and gap analysis, participants are taught how to develop future scenarios for climate neutrality. Using tools such as Climate Transition mapping or scenario planning exercises that were developed and used in other projects such as the Horizon 2020 (H2020) funded TOMORROW project (<https://www.citiesoftomorrow.eu/>), they gain the skill to outline multiple pathways and compare them. The programme emphasises the creation of a theory of change for their climate action – linking inputs and activities to intermediate outcomes and the end goal of neutrality. Participants learn how to set targets and interim milestones in a realistic way. An expected competency is being able to produce a strategic roadmap or vision document that outlines how their city will move from the baseline to climate neutrality, including key milestones. Essentially, participants become capable of designing a coherent strategy: rather than seeing projects in isolation, they can integrate them into a unified action plan underpinned by data and scenario analysis. This strategic planning acumen is a cornerstone outcome, enabling them to guide their municipalities in long-term decision-making for sustainability.

Governance & Collaboration Skills

A major focus of the programme is building participants' capacity to organise and lead effective governance processes around climate action. By the end, they will know how to establish a cross-sectoral Climate Action Team or Transition Team within their city administration – including clarifying roles, mandates, and working methods for that team. Participants also develop skills to engage and mobilise external stakeholders: they learn to

map out all relevant stakeholder groups and identify their interests/influences. They also explore methods of social innovation and co-creation to involve the broader public in the climate transition. In terms of vertical governance, participants learn strategies for coordinating with other levels of government – understanding what support or frameworks exist at national and regional level, and how to advocate for their city's needs or align with national climate targets. Communication is another key skill area: the programme trains them in communicating city climate action effectively to different audiences. The outcome is that participants become change agents able to convene meetings, build coalitions and secure leadership buy-in for climate initiatives. They leave with improved leadership and project management skills applicable to implementing the CNP. A concrete indicator of success here would be each city having a functioning climate governance structure and an active stakeholder engagement plan as part of their climate neutrality journey.

Development of an Integrated Action Portfolio

Participants will acquire the competence to develop and prioritise a comprehensive portfolio of climate actions for their city. Rather than a random list of projects, they learn to create an integrated action plan that addresses all major emission sources and resilience needs in a synergistic way. They practice using multi-criteria analysis and decision-making tools. They also learn to identify quick wins versus longer-term structural changes, ensuring their portfolio has a balance of immediate impact and foundational investments. The track on Actions and parts of Foundations provide knowledge on sector-specific solutions – participants are exposed to current best practices in building retrofits, renewable energy and energy communities, sustainable urban mobility, waste management improvements, nature-based solutions for adaptation, etc. They are not expected to become deep technical experts in each area, but to know what kind of actions are possible and have examples to draw inspiration from. Armed with this, they can choose a mix of measures that suit their city's context. Another key skill is impact pathway design: understanding how individual actions contribute to overall climate goals. Participants learn to link each action to intermediate outcomes and ensure the actions together form a logical pathway. Additionally, they are taught to plan for monitoring and evaluation of actions – selecting indicators and setting up a system to track progress on implementation once the plan is underway. By programme end, each city team will have developed a draft action plan within their CNP, typically comprising dozens of measures across sectors, complete with timelines and assigned responsibilities. The participants will be adept at articulating why those actions were chosen, what their expected outcomes are, and how they will be implemented and tracked. Essentially, they become capable of producing a Climate Action Portfolio that is strategic, evidence-based, and ready to be presented for funding or political approval.

Financing and Implementation Readiness

A crucial outcome of the capacity building is that participants gain the ability to connect plans to finance and implementation mechanisms. They learn to prepare a financial strategy for their Climate Neutrality Plan – determining the overall investment needed and exploring where that money could come from. They become familiar with a range of funding sources: international donors, national government grants or subsidies, municipal budget allocations, and private financing options. Importantly, they are trained in innovative financing instruments relevant to climate action. They learn when and how to use these instruments in most appropriate way. The programme also covers how to align climate projects with municipal budgeting processes – participants practice translating their action plan into budget line items and multi-annual investment plans, bridging the gap between technical project planning and the city's financial decision-making cycles. In terms of implementation, participants will be able to develop pre-feasibility studies and business cases for priority projects. This includes identifying the

technical requirements, estimating costs and benefits, analysing risks, and outlining institutional arrangements for project delivery. They also learn about procurement and project management basics for climate projects, and how to meet typical requirements from funders. A specific skill is financial risk assessment – evaluating what could go wrong financially and planning risk mitigation. The expected outcome is that participants can move from a wish-list of actions to a credible, finance-able plan. Each city should be able to produce, as part of its CNP, a financing chapter or an investment plan that outlines how the priority actions will be funded and implemented in the coming years. In essence, they learn to speak the language of both climate policy and finance, bridging the gap between technical planning and real-world execution.

Designing and Delivering a Climate Neutrality Plan

Ultimately, the integrated outcome of all these objectives is the ability for participants to create a full Climate Neutrality Plan for their city and drive its implementation. Over the course of the programme, as they apply each skill, the participants are incrementally building their CNP – and by the end, they are expected to have a finalised plan document ready for approval and roll-out. Beyond producing the document, participants gain the confidence and leadership capacity to use the CNP as a tool for change. They learn how to update and iterate the plan (treating it as a living document), how to report on progress, and how to mobilise political and public support around it. They are trained to view the CNP not as a one-time exercise but as a continuous cycle of planning, action, monitoring, and revision – thereby setting the stage for sustained climate management in their city. By the programme's conclusion, each team should be ready to present their Climate Neutrality Plan to their city's leadership and stakeholders for endorsement and immediately start implementing early actions outlined in the plan. The true measure of success is that participants possess not only a document but also the capability and commitment to translate it into reality. In summary, the key outcome is a cohort of municipal professionals who are knowledgeable, skilled, and empowered to lead their cities' journey to climate neutrality – effectively becoming champions of sustainable urban development armed with a concrete plan (the CNP) and the know-how to implement it.

4.Partnership Programme (Twinning)

4.1. Introduction and context

The SUN4Ukraine Partnership Programme represents a distinctive bilateral learning initiative designed to accelerate Ukrainian cities' transition towards climate neutrality through structured peer-to-peer collaboration with European Mission Cities. Spanning 18 months from October 2025 through April 2027, the programme builds bridges between Ukrainian municipalities navigating extraordinary wartime challenges and European cities that have successfully developed Climate City Contracts under the EU Mission for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities.

The programme's conception emerged from recognition that Ukrainian Flagship Municipalities require more than technical expertise alone—they need authentic partnerships with cities that have confronted challenges in climate transition planning and implementation. By connecting 12 Ukrainian cities with 14 European Mission Cities, the programme creates spaces for genuine knowledge exchange. European cities share tested methodologies, governance frameworks and implementation practices, whilst Ukrainian cities contribute invaluable insights into urban resilience and adaptive governance under pressure.

Through peer-to-peer knowledge exchanges between Ukrainian municipalities and European Mission Cities possessing relevant experience, the programme also accelerates Climate Neutrality Plan development. The combination of intensive study visits, regular online engagement, strategic mentor city support, and responsive consultation mechanisms ensures learning occurs across multiple modalities, accommodating diverse learning styles and practical constraints.

Ultimately, the Partnership Programme's success will manifest not merely in completed CNPs but in transformed approaches to climate governance, strengthened international networks, and demonstrated possibility of ambitious climate action even in contexts of conflict and reconstruction. It positions Ukrainian cities as active contributors to European climate transition whilst supporting their immediate planning needs—proving that partnership, solidarity, and shared commitment can advance collective climate goals regardless of circumstances confronted.

4.2. Partnership Programme structure and participants engagement

Partnership Architecture

In December 2024, 12 Ukrainian Flagship Municipalities—Chernihiv, Chernivtsi, Dnipro, Kalush, Kharkiv, Konotop, Kyiv, Mykolaiv, Novovolynsk, Pervomaisk, Vinnytsia, and Zviahel—[were selected](#) to participate in the project. These municipalities receive tailored support in drafting their climate neutrality plans through technical assistance, policy recommendations, and a comprehensive capacity-building programme. The twinning component of capacity building programme is called “SUN4Ukraine Partnership Programme”. Each Ukrainian Flagship Municipality enters into partnership with a carefully matched European Mission City, creating 12 bilateral partnerships designed to support comprehensive learning across climate neutrality planning domains.

In August 2025, following a call for expressions of interest, 14 Mission Cities—Aachen, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Budapest, Dijon Métropole, Izmir, Lappeenranta, Leipzig, Mannheim, Munich, Oslo, Parma, Rzeszów, and Utrecht—[were selected](#) to join the SUN4Ukraine Partnership Programme. Twelve of these cities are paired with the Ukrainian Flagship Municipalities, while two act as mentors, supporting the Capacity Building Programme across the tracks. The City of Munich hosted the first introductory meeting of all participating Ukrainian and Mission Cities to kick-start the Partnership Programme planning and implementation.

The pairing process, facilitated by the SUN4Ukraine Steering Group, considered multiple factors including city size, economic activities, geographic context, and specific climate neutrality challenges. This matching ensures relevance: partnerships connect cities with comparable profiles where transferred knowledge adapts meaningfully to Ukrainian realities.

Beyond these bilateral pairs, Munich and Oslo serve as mentor cities offering enhanced support to all 12 Flagship Municipalities. Their role extends beyond typical peer exchange—these cities share cutting-edge practices, host thematic seminars, provide methodological templates, and offer expert consultation throughout the programme duration. This dual-layer structure ensures Flagship Municipalities benefit both from intensive bilateral partnership work and broader access to diverse expertise.

All exchanges between the partner cities are facilitated by two organisations from the SUN4Ukraine project consortium (one based in Ukraine and the other one in the European Union). The project facilitators will organise and follow all exchanges between the city pairs to help ensure that their learning exchanges objectives are met.

Flagship Municipalities	Mission Cities	Facilitators
Chernihiv	Amsterdam	AUC, CEMR
Chernivtsi	Mannheim	Cedos, DemSoc
Dnipro	Budapest	Cedos, CEMR
Kalush	Rzeszów	Ro3kvit, ENC
Kharkiv	Izmir	Ecoaction, DemSoc
Konotop	Lappeenranta	KSE, DemSoc
Kyiv	Leipzig	KSE, ENC
Mykolaiv	Barcelona	AUC, EUR
Novovolynsk	Aachen	Ecoaction, EUR
Pervomaisk	Parma	Cedos, CEMR
Vinnytsia	Dijon Metropole	Ro3kvit, ENC
Zviahel	Utrecht	KSE, EUR

Mentor Cities:	Munich and Oslo
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Partnership Objectives

For Ukrainian Flagship Municipalities and their Mission City partners, objectives centre on practical knowledge exchange supporting climate neutrality planning and actions.

Overall, participation in the Partnership Programme will enhance the preparedness of all participating municipalities to respond to adverse situations and foster more effective collaboration in addressing shared risks, particularly those related to climate change. The cooperation established through the programme will also strengthen the institutional capacities of the municipalities involved, as well as the competencies of the individuals engaged in the process.

Munich and Oslo as mentor cities pursue complementary objectives enhancing capacity building at scale. They contribute to sharing general recommendations for climate neutrality planning, advise on assessing Flagship Municipality progress on planned climate actions, governance and funding. This combination ensures mentor city expertise reaches beyond individual partnerships to strengthen the entire programme cohort.

Participant Roles and Responsibilities

Ukrainian Flagship Municipalities drive their learning agendas by defining knowledge exchange topics jointly with European partners and planning learning roadmaps collaboratively. They participate actively in both online and offline knowledge exchanges

organised by SUN4Ukraine. Their active engagement ensures that learning remains grounded in practical CNP development and capacity building needs.

Mission Cities participate in online and offline knowledge exchanges by providing necessary coordination, municipal and/or expert contacts, relevant information, best practices and lessons learnt. They share detailed experiences of their city, including challenges confronted and achievements realised on their climate neutrality path. By defining cooperation goals jointly with Ukrainian partners and participating in learning roadmap planning, Mission Cities ensure partnerships develop around genuine mutual interests.

Mentor Mission Cities participate in online seminars within the capacity-building programme, sharing knowledge and best practices aligned with identified learning needs and capacity building programme structure and plan.

Facilitators serve as essential programme infrastructure, supporting Flagship Municipalities and Mission Cities throughout their online and offline exchanges. They act as facilitators and moderators during peer-learning activities, including organisation and participation in study visits. This hands-on support ensures smooth programme delivery whilst allowing city participants to focus on substantive learning rather than administrative logistics.

4.3. Learning pathways

Overview

Activities take place from October 2025 to April 2027 and include an introductory meeting, bilateral study visits, online exchanges, thematic sessions with mentor cities:

- The introductory meeting in Munich in November 2025 brings all partners together to exchange municipal profiles, align expectations, clarify programme objectives and brainstorm learning roadmaps.
- The pairs progress through structured knowledge sharing via study visits and online exchanges on average every two months, focusing on climate neutrality roadmap implementation and coordinated climate action steps.
- Each Flagship Municipality then participates in a study visit to their partner Mission City. These visits last two to three days and include structured workshops, training sessions, and visits to relevant facilities. They allow Ukrainian participants to observe climate solutions in practice and engage with European peers working on similar challenges.

A stock-taking session will be incorporated in the SUN4Ukraine final project event.

Critical early tasks include identifying priority topics and developing schedules for peer-learning and experience exchange between partners, agreeing on mentor cities' functions and advisory roles, and defining online seminar topics addressing partnership-specific interests. Facilitators work closely with capacity-building programme leaders to develop and agree training programmes ensuring coherence between partnership activities and broader CBP objectives. This design phase produces tangible outputs: agreed partnership objectives, detailed learning roadmaps, and clear schedules balancing ambition with realistic resource constraints.

4.4. Key activities

Launch Event

The programme formally launches with a carefully orchestrated event in Munich (17–20 November 2025), bringing together representatives from all partnerships alongside facilitators. This inaugural meeting serves multiple critical functions: introducing partners, facilitating discussion of municipal profiles and cooperation expectations, and enabling joint definition of objectives, cooperation areas, plans and expected outcomes.

First In-person Meeting of Partner Cities: Participation and Format

- Two representatives from each Flagship Municipality
- One representative from each Mission City
- Assigned facilitator(s) for each partnership
- Structured sessions balancing plenary presentations with intensive bilateral break-out discussions time

The Munich event provides invaluable face-to-face time early in partnerships when relationship-building matters most. Participants leave with clarity around partnership objectives, preliminary learning roadmaps and established personal connections facilitating subsequent virtual collaboration.

Study Visits: Immersive Learning Experiences

Each partnership undertakes one dedicated study visit to the Mission City, representing the programme's most intensive learning opportunity. These visits span two to three days, balancing structured training sessions, collaborative workshops, and facility visits showcasing climate action implementation firsthand.

Key Features:

- Two Flagship Municipality representatives plus facilitator(s) participate
- Detailed individual programmes prepared for each visit addressing partnership-specific interests
- Combination of presentations, site visits, and hands-on problem-solving exercises
- All coordination handled by facilitators, allowing participants to focus on learning

Study visits transform abstract concepts into tangible realities. Ukrainian participants may observe renewable energy installations, sustainable mobility systems, citizen engagement processes and governance structures operating in real urban environments. Direct conversations with European practitioners managing similar challenges provide nuanced insights impossible to convey through remote exchanges alone.

Online Sessions: Sustained Virtual Engagement

Complementing intensive in-person activities, partnerships maintain regular connection through structured online sessions. Each partnership conducts four online sessions between December 2025 and October 2026, providing sustained engagement without demanding extensive travel resources. These sessions follow formats determined by partnership needs—sometimes focused presentations, sometimes peer discussion, sometimes collaborative problem-solving.

Munich and Oslo, as mentor cities, host additional online sessions according to separately developed schedules addressing themes in close liaison with capacity building programme coordinators. This layered approach ensures partnerships benefit from both bilateral exchanges addressing specific contexts and broader thematic sessions relevant across multiple cities.

Stock-taking at the End of the Programme

The final project event scheduled for early 2028 will provide space for taking stock and reflection. Partnerships present results achieved, demonstrating how experience gained through study visits and online exchanges manifested in CNP development and implementation planning. Flagship Municipalities showcase developed climate neutrality plans, whilst discussions integrate findings into Ukrainian Cities Climate Hub (UCCH) activities supporting experience scaling to other Ukrainian municipalities.

This closing event serves both accountability and celebration functions—documenting programme achievements whilst recognising extraordinary efforts undertaken by Ukrainian cities pursuing climate neutrality amid ongoing conflict.

Monitoring Outcomes and Disseminating Experience

The Partnership Programme incorporates systematic monitoring and evaluation of knowledge exchange activity effectiveness, ensuring continuous quality improvement. Regular analysis of experience gained and discussion of best practices helps identify successful approaches meriting broader adoption alongside challenges requiring additional support. Preparation and formalisation of partnership programme results creates documentation supporting both programme accountability and knowledge transfer to other Ukrainian municipalities.

Importantly, the programme commits to disseminating best practices through the Ukrainian Climate Hub for broader use by other municipalities across Ukraine. This dissemination transforms partnership learning from bilateral exchanges into collective resources strengthening Ukrainian municipal capacity nationally. By documenting and sharing partnership experiences, the programme creates lasting value extending well beyond direct participants.

5. Replication and scale-up (Ukrainian Cities Climate Hub - UCCH)

The Ukrainian Cities Climate Hub (UCCH) is SUN4Ukraine's replication and scale-up component, aimed at amplifying the project's impact beyond its 12 Ukrainian Flagship Municipalities. UCCH will be launched in Month 36 (April 2027) and will form a network with at least 25 more Ukrainian cities interested in climate action that will have access to the same capacity-building resources, benefit from shared knowledge, and strengthen collaborations with Flagship Municipalities, fostering nationwide alliances for sustainable urban transformation.

5.1. Objectives

The objective of the UCCH is to create a knowledge sharing network to disseminate expertise and best practices on the process of becoming a climate-neutral city in Ukraine and align with EU's climate targets. The Hub will also foster collaboration and promote connections between Ukrainian municipalities to promote the sharing of experiences and enhance case to case adaptation.

To achieve these objectives, the UCCH will be a platform to:

- Disseminate knowledge and best practices regarding the process of becoming a climate-neutral city;
- Encourage lasting collaboration between Ukrainian cities, building strong relationships that extend beyond the project's duration;
- Promote ongoing cooperation of Ukrainian cities with the EU Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission.

5.2. Expected outputs and outcomes

The establishment of the UCCH network is key to helping SUN4Ukraine's ultimate objective of promoting climate neutrality and supporting Ukraine's goal of reaching climate neutrality by 2050. To achieve this, the project has outlined key outputs and long-term impacts:

Outputs:

- At least 55 representatives of Ukrainian cities will have benefited from CB programme and technical knowledge (by 2027);
- At least 35 Ukrainian cities have staff registered on the Mission Portal by the end of 2027 and actively engage with the Cities' Mission.
- 10 CNPs to incorporate innovative governance and citizen engagement in their development and proposed implementation (end of project)
- At least 25 UCCH members represented in the in-person replication event which is to take place by M40 (August 2027).

Outcomes:

- Increased capacity of at least 10 Ukrainian municipalities to design and implement their Climate Neutrality Plans to achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

5.3. Members

The Ukrainian Cities Climate Hub will be open to all Ukrainian municipalities (staff, policy makers and decision makers) interested in advancing towards Climate Neutrality. Furthermore, given its interactive nature and its knowledge sharing purpose, civil society representatives, local businesses and related projects and initiatives are also welcome to join, as a multistakeholder perspective is part of the richness of the UCCH's perspective.

In order to keep track of the interest of the different stakeholders in joining the UCCH, a simple application form will be open from the launch date until the end of the project (May 2028), allowing for the interested stakeholders to enrol in the Hub at any stage of the project and have access to its platform, information and activities.

5.4. Thematic areas

In accordance to the structure of the SUN4Ukraine project, the UCCH will cover the following areas through its actions and materials/information shared. Partners will be responsible for sharing content for diffusion through the UCCH that are related to their tasks.

- **Climate neutrality targets and planning:** Sharing of information resources on climate adaptation and mitigation, guidance on developing climate neutrality targets for 2050, identifying and setting a plan to reach the targets, guidance on Climate Neutrality Plans preparation, communicating climate action.
 - D2.1 Report on provisional climate neutrality targets and gap to target
 - D2.2 FRCs (Front Runner Cities, another terminology for the project's FMs) Climate Neutrality Plans
 - D2.3 Guidance for cities to develop and implement their climate neutrality plans
 - D3.3 Compilation of CB learning content
 - D5.2 Communicating City Climate Action Booklet
- **Multilevel governance and citizen engagement:** Guiding documents on how to align Ukraine's national legal framework on climate action with EU policy and regulations. The shared documents will cover governance barriers, policy gaps and multi-stakeholder dialogue, policy recommendations for cross-sectoral integration, democracy, among other topics.
 - D2.4 Governance and citizen engagement toolkit
 - D4.1 Ukrainian Stakeholder Roadmap
 - D4.2 Report on policy, legal and governance gaps
 - D4.3 Policy recommendations & Multi-level governance gaps
- **Funding and finance for climate action:** Sharing of information on funders and grants available for Ukrainian cities, on the process to apply to these
 - D2.5 Guide on funding and financing for Ukrainian cities

5.5. Platform and activities

The Ukrainian Cities Climate Hub will be hosted on the NZC portal through the creation of a dedicated group for its members. The group will serve as a knowledge repository, a means for municipalities to connect with each other and to share structured information with the Hub's members.

To ensure effective use of the platform, an introductory session will be provided, recorded, and made available for future reference. Through the NZC portal, UCCH members will be encouraged to engage with Flagship Municipalities and other stakeholders actively participating in the platform. Additionally, members will have access to the Covenant of Mayors East and UTM (Urban Transitions Mission Centre) project portals, expanding their access to valuable resources and increasing the network's overall impact.

Furthermore, an in-person replication event will be organised in 2027. UCCH members, Flagship Municipalities and other stakeholders will be invited. The event will facilitate exchange and ideas, facilitate the establishment of partnerships between Ukrainian cities. And discuss the progress of the Flagship Municipalities in their Climate Neutrality Plans and their takeaways from the Capacity Building Programme.

6. Programme Timeline

The SUN4Ukraine Capacity Building Programme unfolds over two years, from October 2025 through foreseen September 2027, following a logical progression from initial engagement to full implementation readiness. Below is a summary of the timeline, highlighting key milestones and how participant capacities are progressively developed over the programme's duration:

October-December 2025: Kick-off Phase

The programme formally commences in October 2025 (project month 18) with a kick-off workshop in Kyiv (16–17 October 2025), immediately followed by a multi-level dialogue. The Partnership Programme kick-off is taking place in Munich (17–20 November 2025) with the invitation of both Flagship Municipalities representatives and European Mission Cities representatives. These initial events orient all participants to the programme and create early momentum. In Kyiv, the Flagship Municipalities' teams meet each other and the trainers, receive an introduction to the Capacity Building Programme's objectives, and engage in exercises to kick-start their climate neutrality journey (such as initial visioning and creation of transition teams). The Munich event exposes them to European peers and high-level EU climate initiatives, underscoring the international support behind their efforts. As well, a specific focus on Munich's experience is held through a study visit. Through these combined kick-off activities, participants are expected to hold a common vision, agree on a "Learning Roadmap" with their partner Mission City as well as a lightweight CNP framework that guides the first year of work.

2026: Building & Expanding

The year 2026 constitutes the core training and plan-building period, during which participants steadily **expand their knowledge and start building actual plan components**. The structure of 2026 is a series of four online learning cycles punctuated by checkpoints and at least one in-person intensive workshop, the date of which will be determined later. Across all cycles, municipalities teams progress from establishing baselines and diagnostics to exploring strategic options and impact pathways, then into sector-oriented deepening that translates strategy into actionable, city-specific measures while starting to embed governance and financing considerations that support portfolio design and delivery planning. By the end of the year, cities should hold a first integrated draft of their CNP, iterated and strengthened through the intervening checkpoints to ensure learning converts into concrete plan components.

2027: Refining & Finalising

The final programme year, 2027, focuses on bringing all elements together and preparing participants to implement their plans. The programme continues with three cycles focused on an iterative action portfolio, aligning multi-level governance and stakeholder arrangements, and advancing management and investment readiness. This ensures that priority projects form a credible, financeable pipeline, bridging the gap between planning and implementation. Outputs converge towards finalising the CNP by autumn, with checkpoints used to validate quality and readiness ahead of local endorsement and implementation.

The list of the lessons and their foreseen timeline is shown in the following table.

Sprint	Year	Week	Title of the Lesson	Track
Sprint 1	2025	42	Kick Start Intro Workshop - Kyiv (16-17 Oct)	-
		46	Introduction to Partnership Programme Meeting - Munich (18-20 Nov)	-
		46	Consolidation Workshop	-
Sprint 2	2026	3	1. Current state of Play	Actions
		5	2. Transition Team / Follow up	Governance
		7	1. Overview of relevant funding sources, financial instruments and mechanisms for climate action	Finance
		9	Checkpoint #01	-
		11	1. GHG Emissions Inventory series / deep-dive	Foundation
		13	2. GHG Emissions Inventory series / deep-dive	Foundation
		15	2. Deep dive session on future scenarios & impact pathways in climate action	Actions
Sprint 3		17	3. Identifying Co-Benefits	Actions
		19	Checkpoint #02	-
		21	3. Sectoral spotlights: Energy	Foundation
		23	4. Sectoral spotlights: Transport & Mobility	Foundation
		25	5. Sectoral spotlights: Waste	Foundation
		27	6. Sectoral spotlights: Climate Adaptation & Environmental Considerations	Foundation
		29	4. Visioning & Scenario Planning	Actions
Sprint 4		31	Checkpoint #02	-
		36	3. Designing Stakeholder & Citizen Engagement Processes	Governance
		38	2. Strategic Financing for Climate Neutrality - Financing the Project Portfolio	Finance
		40	4. Governance Models & Transition Alliances	Governance
		42	4. Collaboration Models and Partnerships for Financing	Finance
Sprint 5		44	5. Prioritisation & Resource Planning	Actions
		46	3. Innovative financing mechanisms	Finance
		48	Checkpoint #03	-
		3	5. Multi-Level Governance: Engaging with Other Levels of Government	Governance
		5	6. Monitoring Evaluation & Learning	Actions
Sprint 6	2027	7	5. Investment Preparation, Financial Risk Management and Decision-Making	Finance
		9	Checkpoint #03	-
		11	Project Management 7. Explanation session	Actions
		13	6. Direct Project Finance. From Investment Concept to Bankable Project	Finance

	15	Project Management 8. Check-in session	Actions
	17	Finance Check-in session	Finance
	19	Checkpoint #04	-
	21	Project Management 9. Check-in session	Actions
	23	Project Management 10. Check-in session	Actions
	25	6. Communicating City Climate Action	Governance
Sprint 8	27	Finance Check-in session	Finance
	29	Checkpoint #04	-
	36	8. Reflect, Adapt & Repeat: Iterating the CNP	Actions
	38	Final Recap session	-

Conclusion

The SUN4Ukraine Capacity Building Programme is a practical and comprehensive way to help Ukrainian cities move towards climate neutrality. It was developed with input from Flagship Municipalities, Ukrainian partners, and international experts to meet the specific needs of cities working toward ambitious climate goals during wartime and future reconstruction.

The programme is based on the idea that learning works best when it is shared and practice-oriented. It is organised into four connected tracks—Foundations, Governance, Actions, and Finance—to help participants gain both technical knowledge and practical skills for creating and carrying out Climate Neutrality Plans. The programme follows a clear structure inspired by the ADDIE model, but stays flexible so it can adapt to changing needs and local situations.

Its design balances ambition with what is realistically possible. Because Ukrainian cities face limited resources and competing priorities, the programme combines online sessions with selected in-person workshops. This blended “on-live” format makes learning accessible and engaging. It also includes checkpoints, peer exchanges, and collaboration with European Mission Cities, which strengthen learning and help build a lasting community of practice.

By focusing on middle managers and key staff in local governments, the programme aims to create long-term institutional change. These participants are well placed to turn knowledge into action, share what they learn with colleagues, and promote climate work across departments. They gain not only technical know-how for Climate Neutrality Plans, but also skills in governance, finance, and leadership to support implementation.

Running from October 2025 to September 2027, the programme provides a clear yet flexible timeline. Cities will build their capacity step by step while also developing their Climate Neutrality Plans. This approach ensures that learning is immediately used in practice, producing real and useful outcomes.

In the end, the SUN4Ukraine Capacity Building Programme’s success will be measured by how well Ukrainian cities are empowered to create sustainable, resilient, and climate-neutral futures. By helping local governments strengthen their institutions and skills, the programme supports Ukraine’s recovery and positions its cities as examples of sustainable urban development for the world.