

Peer-learning experiences on climate governance for climate and energy transition in the Italian Mission Cities: insights from the Let's GOv project

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Abstract Overcoming governance barriers is a crucial condition for accelerating climate and energy transition. Many local administrations face persistent challenges, such as poor cross-sectoral coordination, limited vertical alignment with higher levels of government, and insufficient stakeholder engagement, especially in sectors like energy consumption reduction. The current necessity of accelerating climate transition toward 2030 and 2050 requires to take those barriers seriously and to find solutions to overcome them also considering countries and local specificities.

The Let's GOv project (GOverning the Transition through Pilot Actions) supported the 9 Italian cities selected into the European "100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030", which aims to make 112 cities climate-neutral by 2030, to undertake a common path of mutual learning and understanding of those governance barriers, focusing on three key dimension: internal, external and multi-level. The project partners took part in a bench learning program for sharing and exchange, jointly organized by the University of Bologna (responsible for the activity), AESS, and the City of Bologna (project coordinator). The programme focused on exchanging knowledge and practices to accelerate decarbonisation focusing on major themes such as cities' energy infrastructure, energy citizenship and energy data monitoring systems and tools. Bologna, Bergamo, Florence, Milan, Padua, Parma, Prato, Rome, and Turin with additional 15 Italian Follower cities took part in the activities.

The initiative aimed to foster mutual learning and collective reflection among local administrations by identifying common governance challenges and sharing strategies to overcome them. Through a series of structured exchanges in person and online, the cities explored critical issues related to climate action and co-developed digital training pilots focused on selected themes. The process proved valuable not only for sharing best practices, but also for generating actionable knowledge through peer dialogue, joint problem-solving, and the co-construction of replicable solutions.

This contribution presents insights from this peer learning experience deepening the methodological aspects and some key findings both at the governance level and on the specific key topics.