

# EUROPEAN COVENANT OF COMPANIES FOR CLIMATE AND ENERGY

## Guide for applicants for Technical Assistance

Second call: May 2023

Public



Think E



*This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission. The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.*



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## 1. Introduction to the Covenant of Companies for Climate and Energy

The Covenant of Companies for Climate and Energy (CCCE) is a European Commission pilot initiative, launched in January 2022, intended to encourage and support companies to step up their contribution to a clean energy transition, energy savings and related climate objectives as set out in the European Green Deal<sup>1</sup>. It also aims to increase private investments in clean energy Research & Innovation (R&I), technologies and solutions.

To mobilise as many companies as possible, the CCCE initiative is offering a pledging scheme whereby businesses, in particular small and medium enterprises, can commit to taking action to reduce their carbon emissions and receive support to do so.

### The advisory services within the CCCE

The aim of the CCCE advisory services is to experiment, evaluate and then derive the most impactful format for support to European SMEs and larger companies in their energy transition.

The concrete pool of services that a company can receive depends on the level of ambition of their pledge and ranges from access to guidance material, peer learning and masterclasses to direct one-to-one Technical Assistance.

Within the current CCCE Initiative timeline, direct Technical Assistance can be provided for to up to 100 entities. This assistance is intended to cover a variety of aspects of the energy transition, including social, legal, regulatory, financing and Technical Assistance. The Technical Assistance is provided to entities based on the two calls for Technical Assistance which represent separate processes and are not connected:

- **the first call – June 2022 – April 2023:** the call for applications was launched on 15 June 2022 and closed on 30 September 2022. The Technical Assistance was provided between October 2022 and April 2023.
- **the second call – May 2023 – October 2023:** the call for applications opened on 8 May. Applications are being screened continuously and applicants will be informed about the results as soon as their application has been evaluated. Applications are being evaluated subject to the eligibility criteria and are awarded on a first-come-first-served basis.

## 2. The Second call for Technical Assistance

The goal of the second call for direct Technical Assistance is to provide companies with the support they need to transition to clean(er) energy sources and solutions. The call is open to applicants from all EU member states.

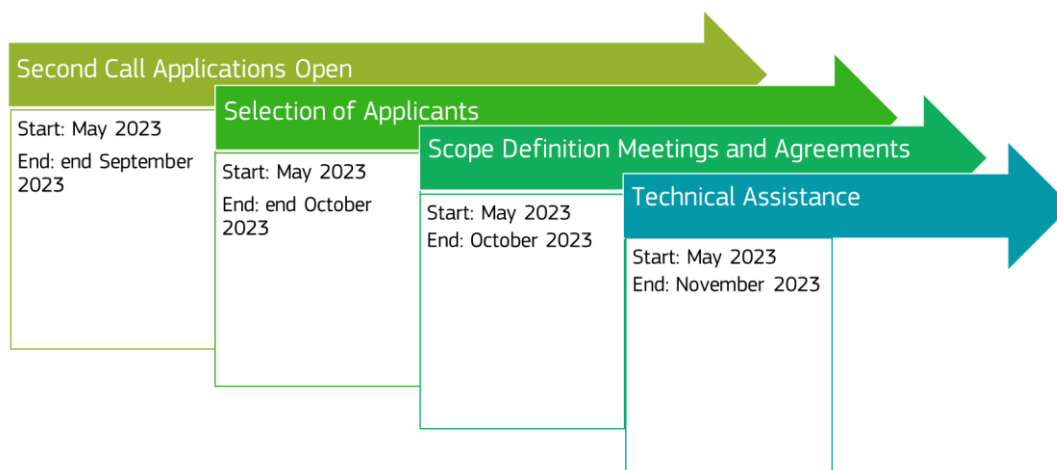
Under the second call, direct assistance will be offered to up to 80 entities. Applicants will be informed about the results of their application once it has been reviewed.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

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The assistance will be provided between May 2023 and November 2023. Once the Technical Assistance is completed, the companies and involved intermediaries<sup>2</sup>, if any, will be invited to provide feedback via an evaluation survey. The feedback will be used evaluate the Technical Assistance performed by the Covenant. The complete process of the second call for Technical Assistance is provided in Figure 1. Each step in the process is explained hereafter.



**Figure 1** The complete process of the second call for Technical Assistance includes four steps: Application, Selection, Scope Definition and Technical Assistance.

## 2.1 Who can apply for the call?

The second call for Technical Assistance is open to applicants from all EU Member states. The applicants should be companies. A precondition for direct Technical Assistance is having pledged to at least Bronze level. Please see here the [Guide for Pledging](#).

### Languages

The second call for Technical Assistance is open to entries from all EU member states. Technical Assistance will however only be provided in English, Dutch, French and German with certain translation capabilities provided for Bulgarian, Lithuanian, Romanian and Spanish.

### One type of applicants

The second call for Technical Assistance aims to provide direct support to **75 companies, preferably SMEs** (as per EU definition).

## 2.2 What does the Technical Assistance consist of?

The second call for Technical Assistance consists of a range of 15 advisory services that applicants can chose from. Table 1 below indicates the different types of services offered.

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<sup>2</sup> Intermediary associations or networks that are in contact with the selected applicant to help improve their operations and decarbonise. Intermediaries can be invited to take part in the process of the Technical Assistance in order to facilitate interaction with and engagement of the companies.

Applicants should choose one of the proposed advisory services. We ask applicants to provide a full description of their chosen support as this will help us in our evaluation process (see Page 7). Applicants are also able to identify a service that is not listed but, in this instance, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to provide it.

The final scope and details of the Technical Assistance will be agreed upon with the CCCE experts once the application is evaluated and selected for the next stage (including specific tasks, required data, deadlines, etc.).

**Table 1: Proposed advisory services for Bronze and Silver pledgers**

No	Proposed advisory service description
1	Energy audit assistance – doing energy audits or interpreting results
2	Build understanding of where to start effectively
3	Evaluation of an existing plan/roadmap of a set of measures
4	Assessing appropriate technologies for the applicant
5	Plan on how to implement energy efficiency, renewable energy, other clean energy projects or to achieve climate neutrality
6	Provide training on technologies or energy services (aggregation, demand response, etc.)
7	Identification of the measures needed to reach the Science Based Targets (SBT) <sup>3</sup>
8	Investment support – connecting to other initiatives, funding and financing mechanisms
9	Providing support in assessing local or national financial support
10	Assist in the selection of support schemes for SMEs and in their implementation
11	Business model development or evaluation (due diligence)
12	Support in the development of a research and innovation project with potential linking to knowledge institutes and innovative companies
13	Communication and engagement support to gain acceptance among employees, the board, or other companies in the neighbourhood or part of the supply chain or local municipalities
14	Linking with upskilling or reskilling programmes
15	Benchmark with peers, and Peer2Peer exchange
	Open – the applicant can define any other support

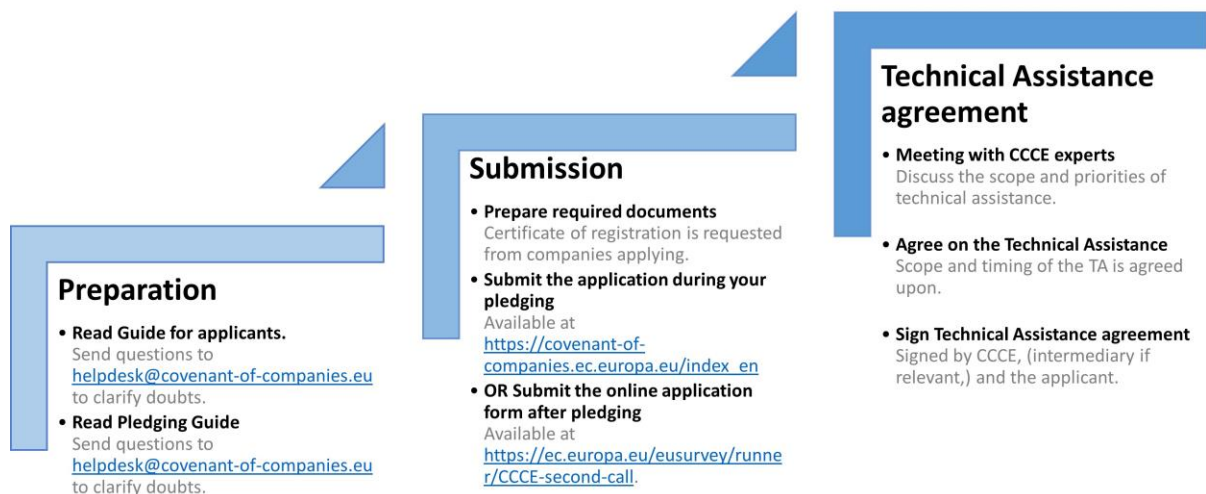
<sup>3</sup> “Targets are considered ‘science-based’ if they are in line with what the latest climate science deems necessary to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement – limiting global warming to well-below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.” <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/>

**Table 2: Technical Assistance to Gold pledgers**

No	Proposed advisory service description
1	Assistance in determining the required measures to reach the gold level, and assistance in developing an action plan to implement these measures.
	Open – the applicant can define any other support

## 2.3 Application process

The application process (Figure 2) has three main steps: **Preparation** of the application, **Submission** of the application and **Technical Assistance (TA) agreement**.



**Figure 2 The application process consists of three steps: Preparation, Submission and TA agreement**

### Preparation

This **guide for applicants** for the second call for Technical Assistance is available along with the online application form, a pledging guide and a Quick Guide.

This guide for applicants explains which applicants are eligible for the call, the application process, how applicants are evaluated, how Technical Assistance is implemented, and finally the process of evaluating the Technical Assistance received. This document is meant to be a complete guide through the process. For additional questions, the CCCE can be contacted through the [helpdesk@covenant-of-companies.eu](mailto:helpdesk@covenant-of-companies.eu).

On 23 May an [online seminar on Pledging and Technical Assistance](#) was organised by the CCCE secretariat. The goal of this webinar is to explain the workings of the CCCE pledging and recognition scheme, as well as the Technical Assistance that companies can receive once they have pledged.

## Submission

**The application form for Technical Assistance is integrated and is available as part of the pledging form. It is also available separately if a company prefers to apply for Technical Assistance at a later stage.**

The link to the pledging form can be found here: [https://covenant-of-companies.ec.europa.eu/get-involved/make-pledge\\_en](https://covenant-of-companies.ec.europa.eu/get-involved/make-pledge_en). **The application can only be submitted online through the online form.**

To submit the application form, the applicant needs to fill in a simple online form and provide a VAT/registration number and attach the certificate of registration (or similar entity registration document). These documents are submitted in original language in .pdf format.

## Technical Assistance agreement

### *Direct Technical Assistance*

Based on the evaluation criteria outlined in the 'Evaluation of the applications' section below, 75 entities will be selected to receive the direct Technical Assistance. An expert from the CCCE secretariat will contact the applicant to organise a **meeting with the relevant CCCE experts**. The goal of the meeting will be to discuss the scope and timing of the Technical Assistance. The representatives of each of the entities of the applicant<sup>4</sup> should be present at this meeting. The meeting will be organised shortly after the applicant's application has been positively evaluated. Based on the discussion, the representative of the CCCE will prepare the draft **Technical Assistance agreement** that will have to be approved by the beneficiary before signing. The signed Technical Assistance agreement marks the beginning of the Technical Assistance.

## 2.4 Evaluation of the applications

This second call for Technical Assistance is a part of the pilot advisory services tested by the CCCE secretariat. It will help us understand how the Covenant of Companies for Climate and Energy (CCCE) can best support and encourage companies to step up their contribution to a clean energy transition, energy savings and related climate objectives. Therefore, we are seeking a diversity of applications: in the type of services needed; in the type of applicants (SMEs, groups of companies,); in the applicants' stage of decarbonisation (pledging to bronze, silver or gold seal); and in their sector and geographical location. In addition, we will be favouring applications with high replication potential and with the greatest potential impact on the climate and on energy use (in equal measure).

The full evaluation process is described below:

- After the application of an entity has been received, it will be reviewed against the eligibility criteria.
  - If the application is found to be ineligible the applicant will be notified.

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<sup>4</sup> In case of Group of companies there are multiple entities.

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- Eligible applications will be categorised based on their country of origin, type of applicant, sector of operation and to which seal they have pledged (bronze, silver, or gold).
- Eligible applications will be invited to a scope definition meeting on a first-come-first-served basis, with limits built in to avoid uneven distribution between the different types of applicants. (e.g.: all applicants are from the same country)
  - These limits are put in place in order to support a representative group of entities to be able to evaluate this pilot program.
- The scope definition meeting will serve as the final check of eligibility. After this meeting the applicant should know if they are accepted and the information on which the Technical Assistance agreement will be drafted will have been exchanged.

## 2.5 The Technical Assistance process

### Direct Technical Assistance

The Technical Assistance will be provided based on the tasks and timing defined in the Technical Assistance agreement. The Technical Assistance will be provided remotely. No site visits are foreseen as part of the Technical Assistance.

The Technical Assistance is finalised with a short report. The report summarises the process and the results of the Technical Assistance. The report can be confidential, public, or shared with relevant third parties, depending on the decision of the beneficiary. The report itself does not have to be approved by the beneficiary of the Technical Assistance.

### The role of intermediaries

**Intermediaries** are an **optional** part of the Technical Assistance and can be national authorities, national bodies, associations, or networks that interact with the selected applicant to help improve their operations and efforts to decarbonise<sup>5</sup>. Intermediaries can participate in the process of the second call for Technical Assistance as non-applicants. Their role is to be an intermediary between the CCCE team and the applicant, to encourage applicants to participate and to facilitate the engagement with them.

## 2.6 Evaluation of the Technical Assistance

After completion of the Technical Assistance, the beneficiary is provided with a satisfaction survey from the CCCE. The satisfaction survey is also provided to the intermediary (if applicable) that was involved in the support services to reflect on the quality and process of the Technical Assistance and replicability of the support for its other members. The survey will be segmented into questions relating to A) the application process; B) support; C) impact; D) next steps and recommendations.

The aggregated survey responses will form the basis for the evaluation of the advisory services and provided Technical Assistance process.

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<sup>5</sup> SMEunited members are intermediaries. Covenant of Mayors signatories can also be intermediaries. The intermediaries that will be invited to get involved in the process will not be limited to SMEunited members.



It is expected from the applicants to provide feedback to the Covenant to help us evaluate the pilot program.

## 2.7 What follows?

The Technical Assistance has a goal to help SMEs reach their pledges. After the completion of the Technical Assistance SMEs must implement the measure(s) they have chosen in order to fulfil their pledge and receive the corresponding recognition.