



Covenant of Mayors  
for Climate & Energy  
South East Europe

# COVENANT OF MAYORS SOUTH EAST EUROPE GREEN CHAMPIONS 2026



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## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

### Covenant of Mayors SEE Green Champions 2026

Organized by the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS)

#### 1. Background

The Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS) brings together 14 Associations of Local Authorities representing nearly 9,000 local governments across the region. In April 2024, the XIX NALAS General Assembly endorsed the Covenant of Mayors for Energy and Climate South-East Europe (CoM SEE) Commitment and supported the establishment of the CoM SEE Office as a regional hub for strengthening local climate and energy action.

Through the Covenant of Mayors SEE Green Champions 2026 initiative, NALAS aims to recognize municipalities that demonstrate leadership, innovation and measurable impact in advancing the green transition at the local level, particularly through the implementation of sustainable energy and climate measures.

The initiative builds upon the 2023 Green Champions of the Western Balkans Recognition Award, launched under the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans Action Plan 2021–2030 and the Tirana Conclusions of the Local Self-Governments Forum 2023.

The 2023 edition highlighted the growing leadership of local governments in advancing decarbonisation, sustainable transport, circular economy practices, biodiversity protection, and



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community-driven environmental initiatives.

Building on this momentum, the 2026 initiative broadens its reach to South-East Europe and continues to celebrate municipalities that turn environmental commitments into visible local action, promote mutual learning, and inspire the spread of proven solutions across the region.

## 2. Objective

The initiative aims to recognize outstanding green initiatives implemented by local governments, promote peer learning and regional exchange, showcase replicable solutions, and strengthen visibility of local leadership in sustainability.

## 3. Who Can Apply

Eligible applicants are municipalities, cities and towns from NALAS member associations, as well as inter-municipal initiatives with a designated lead municipality.

Applications shall be submitted by the municipality.

## 4. Thematic Categories

Applications may be submitted under one of the following categories:

### *Climate Action and Energy*

This category recognizes municipalities that have implemented specific, measurable climate or energy actions resulting in clear environmental improvements.

Eligible initiatives may include:

- Energy efficiency improvements in public buildings
- Installation of renewable energy systems
- Sustainable public lighting upgrades
- Low-emission mobility measures
- Climate adaptation infrastructure
- Local greenhouse gas emission reduction initiatives

### *Circular Economy*

This category recognizes municipalities that have introduced and implemented circular economy approaches and initiatives that demonstrate measurable environmental, economic, or social benefits for the community.

Eligible initiatives may include:

- Separate waste collection systems for recyclable and biodegradable waste
- Composting, recycling, and reuse schemes
- Waste prevention initiatives
- Construction and demolition waste recycling systems
- Public awareness campaigns promoting waste prevention and sustainable consumption



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- Public procurement practices integrating circular economy principles
- Improvements in water supply and wastewater treatment
- Air, soil, or water pollution reduction measures

### ***Green & Inclusive Urban Development***

This category recognizes municipalities that have implemented sustainable urban measures improving environmental quality and quality of life.

Eligible initiatives may include:

- Sustainable urban mobility measures
- Urban greening and biodiversity initiatives
- Nature-based solutions
- Revitalization of public spaces
- Environmentally resilient public infrastructure

## **5. What Selected Green Champions Receive**

- Official recognition by NALAS
- Inclusion in a regional publication of best practices
- Promotion through NALAS communication channels
- Opportunity to present at a regional NALAS event
- Participation in peer-learning activities

## **6. Selection Criteria**

All eligible applications will be evaluated by an independent Evaluation Committee appointed by NALAS.

### **Stage 1 – Eligibility Check**

NALAS Secretariat will verify completeness and compliance.

### **Stage 2 – Technical Evaluation**

Applications will be assessed based on:

- Relevance and problem addressed (20%)
- Results and benefits (25%)
- Sustainability and institutional integration (20%)
- Participation and inclusiveness (20%)
- Innovation and added value (15%)

## **7. Application Procedure**

Applicants must submit a completed Application Form and provide supporting documentation. Applications should be sent electronically to [info@nalas.eu](mailto:info@nalas.eu) with the subject line 'Green Champions SEE 2026 – [Municipality Name]!'



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## 8. Timeline

Launch of the Call: 05.03.2026

Deadline for submission: 24.03.2026

Evaluation period: 25 -31.03.2026

Announcement of results: 03.04.2026

Award ceremony: At NALAS General Assembly 2026 – 21.04.2026.

*Lead locally. Inspire regionally. Become a Covenant of Mayors SEE Green Champion.*