

# ELENA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

**Grant support  
to prepare sustainable  
investments**

**ELENA – European Local Energy Assistance**



**European  
Investment Bank**

**ELENA Technical Assistance: Grant support to prepare sustainable investments**

© **European Investment Bank, 2024.**

All rights reserved.

All questions on rights and licensing should be addressed to [publications@eib.org](mailto:publications@eib.org).

European Investment Bank  
98-100, boulevard Konrad Adenauer  
L-2950 Luxembourg

Photo credits: EIB, Getty Images.

Authorisation to reproduce or use these photos must be requested from the copyright holder.

For further information on the EIB's activities, please consult our website, [www.eib.org](http://www.eib.org).  
You can also contact [info@eib.org](mailto:info@eib.org). Get our e-newsletter at [www.eib.org/sign-up](http://www.eib.org/sign-up)

Published by the European Investment Bank.  
Printed on FSC® Paper

# CONTENTS

- 1 UNLOCKING INVESTMENT IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY**
- 3 PAVING THE WAY FOR INVESTMENT**
- 5 SUPPORTING INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES WITH LASTING IMPACT**
- 8 TAKING THE FIRST STEPS**
- 10 A PROVEN TRACK RECORD SINCE 2009**



# UNLOCKING INVESTMENT IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

## The ELENA facility and how it can help

To achieve the European Union's target of a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, investments in sustainability need to accelerate locally, regionally and nationally.

Cities and regions across Europe are committed to reducing their energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions while improving quality of life for their residents. Building renovation programmes and investments in renewable energy and sustainable transport is key to achieving these aims.

The European Local Energy Assistance (ELENA) facility is run by the European Investment Bank (EIB) on behalf of the European Commission. It advises public authorities and private entities on the design and implementation of energy efficiency and building integrated renewable energy investments and innovative urban transport.

European cities and regions have made commitments to significantly reduce their energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. However, many investment programmes are hampered by inadequate resources, a shortage of skills in key areas, limited procurement experience and restricted access to finance.

ELENA provides grants for technical assistance, which helps overcome these bottlenecks by:

- Increasing the level of local experience and expertise
- Focusing on aggregating projects to build scale and impact
- Facilitating access to financial and legal expertise to develop sound investment plans and procurement procedures

The ELENA technical assistance grants to prepare the sustainable investment programmes are in three main categories: Energy Efficiency, Sustainable Transport and Residential Sector buildings. EIB staff help applicants every step of the way to access these grants, which must be approved by the European Commission.

The successful implementation of ELENA projects is assessed on the basis of the leverage factor achieved – that is, the ratio between the investments implemented and the technical assistance grant provided by ELENA.



Energy efficiency projects



Residential sector



Transport projects

### ELENA projects are divided into three categories

**Energy efficiency:** Technical assistance for energy efficiency focuses on preparing investments in energy efficiency and building-integrated renewable energy. Eligible projects include [energy efficiency in residential and non-residential buildings](#), [building-integrated renewables \(such as solar panels\)](#), [public lighting](#), [district heating \(including combined heat and power plants and biomass boilers\)](#) and [energy savings in production facilities](#). To receive an ELENA technical assistance grant, energy efficiency ELENA projects must have a leverage factor of at least 20.

**Residential sector:** Technical assistance grants for residential sector projects focus exclusively on [energy efficiency renovations and integrating renewable energy generation into existing residential buildings](#). They target privately and publicly owned single-family and multi-family buildings. To receive an ELENA technical assistance grant, residential sector ELENA projects must have a leverage factor of at least 10. (Note: The leverage factor of 10 is for ELENA projects exclusively supporting residential sector buildings. Residential sector buildings may also be included in the energy efficiency category alongside other eligible investments).

**Sustainable transport:** Technical assistance grants for sustainable transport focus on innovative transport and mobility projects that save energy and reduce emissions. Eligible projects include the [use of alternative fuels in urban mobility \(such as converting vehicle fleets from diesel to electric and hydrogen-fuelled\)](#) and [investments in new, large-scale, energy-efficient transport and mobility measures in urban areas \(such as tram lines\)](#). To receive an ELENA technical assistance grant, sustainable transport ELENA projects must have a leverage factor of at least 10.



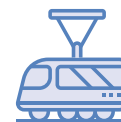
Energy efficiency projects

**70%**



Residential sector projects

**22%**



Sustainable transport projects

**8%**



# PAVING THE WAY FOR INVESTMENT

## **Delivering solutions tailored to local needs**

ELENA supports public and private entities by offering technical assistance grants that cover up to 90% of a project's preparation costs. The ELENA-funded team may consist of the entity's own staff and/or external experts. A wide range of technical and financial activities are eligible for ELENA funding, as long as they are directly required to implement the eligible investment.

ELENA grants are allocated on a first-come, first served basis. Unlike many other EU programmes, there is no submission deadline for ELENA grant proposals. They may be submitted at any time.

ELENA technical assistance for preparing and implementing investments may involve:

- Technical studies, energy audits
- Business planning
- Assessing financing options
- Applying for project financing
- Legal advice
- Tendering procedure preparation
- Project bundling
- Project management

### Boosting investment implementation with ELENA support

The current ELENA portfolio covers projects supporting investments in the following sectors (one project can target multiple sectors):



EE non-residential buildings

**53%**



EE residential buildings

**32%**



District heating

**16%**



Smart grids

**5%**



Renewable energy sources

**43%**



Street lighting

**31%**



Urban transport and mobility

**15%**





# SUPPORTING INVESTMENT PROGRAMMES WITH LASTING IMPACT

**ELENA project development activities work to accelerate investment decisions and improve the technical quality of sustainable projects, while boosting energy savings and reducing carbon emissions per euro invested.**

- **Technical needs clearly identified:** To qualify for ELENA support, energy efficiency and residential sector programmes must reach the investment stage within three years. For sustainable transport investment programmes this timeframe is four years. Given these time limits, investment programmes applying for ELENA support need a certain degree of readiness. Applications must clearly specify the technical support required under ELENA to finalise the investment plan.

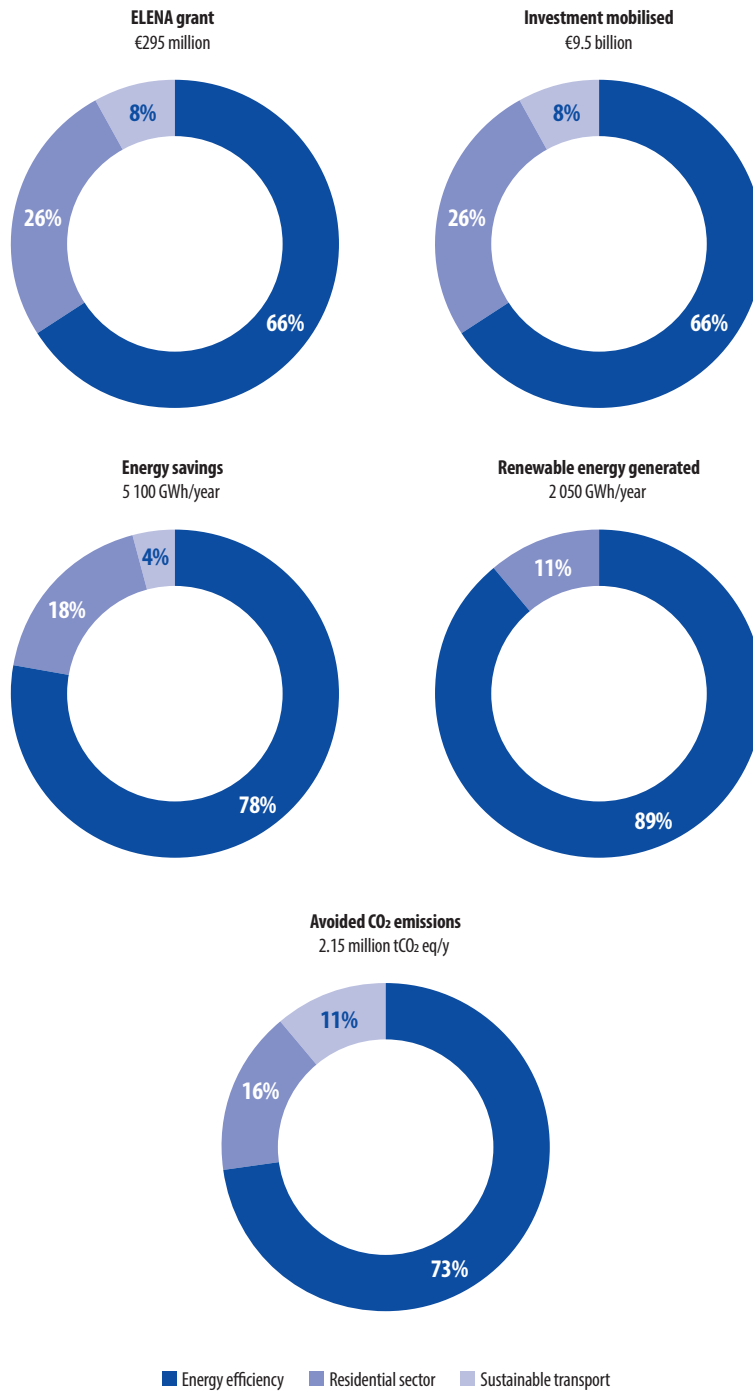
- **Investment at scale:** To encourage project aggregation, ELENA looks for a minimum investment volume of approximately €30 million. This can be financed from any source including investment grants from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), national or regional grants, debt or equity.

- **Prepared to deliver impact:** To receive ELENA support, the proposed investments should target real energy savings and reduced emissions.

To date there are 166 projects completed and ongoing, using ELENA grants totalling over €295 million, supporting more than €9.5 billion in sustainable energy and transport investment.

5 100 GWh/year energy saved  
 2 050 GWh/year from RES  
 2.15 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent

**ELENA in figures**

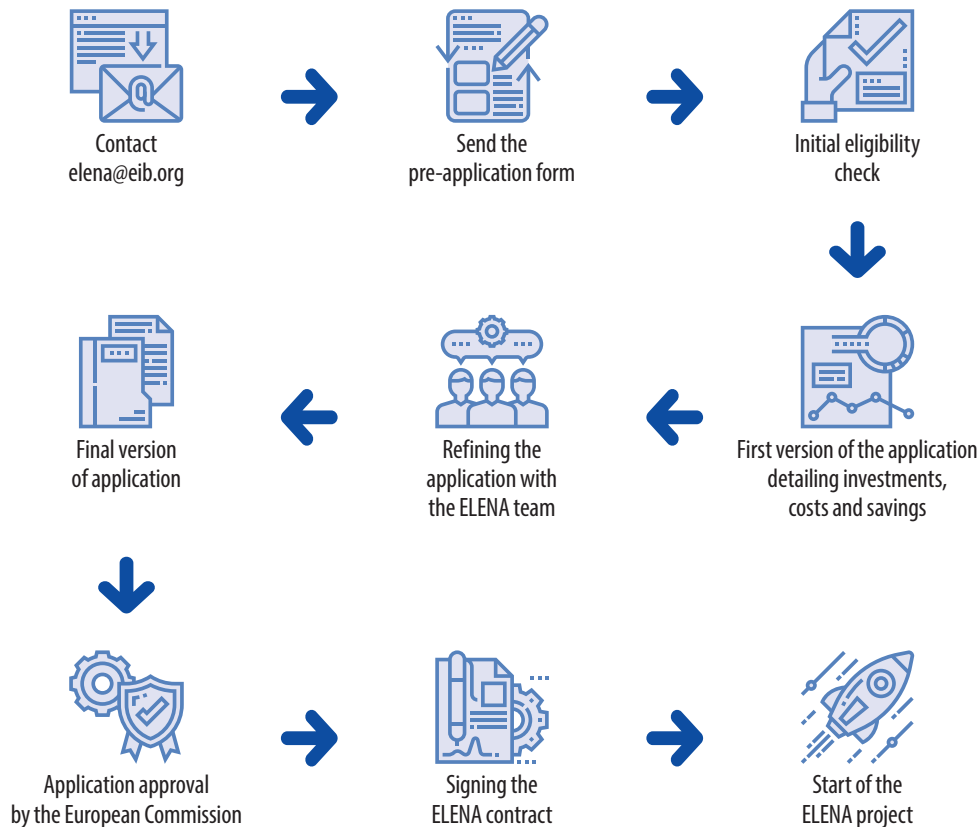


See details on ELENA projects on the ELENA website, [www.eib.org/elena](http://www.eib.org/elena)



# TAKING THE FIRST STEPS

## Your pathway to receive an ELENA technical assistance grant



Do you have a plan for a sustainable investment that could benefit from ELENA technical assistance? Contact the ELENA team at the EIB at [elena@eib.org](mailto:elena@eib.org).

Unlike other EU programmes, there is no submission deadline for applications for ELENA grants.

EIB staff are here to help you through every step of the application process.

The first step is to ensure eligibility through a pre-application assessment. Once that is complete, EIB experts will help applicants to develop, refine and finalise a request for approval by the European Commission.

Both public and private entities are eligible to apply.

## READY TO ASSIST PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTITIES

Central government	Energy agencies
Regional authorities	One-stop-shops
Municipalities	Housing associations
Public corporations	Public-private entities
Financial institutions	Banks and financial intermediaries

The ELENA application form can be found on the ELENA website, [www.eib.org/elena](http://www.eib.org/elena)

### National ELENA

The Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) encourages Member States to set up self-funded “*project development assistance facilities at national, regional or local level*”<sup>1</sup>. Referred to as a “National ELENA”, this facility would largely replicate the current ELENA model using other financing sources (e.g. Cohesion Policy funds, Modernisation Fund, Recovery and Resilience Facility funds or any other national funding).

If a Member State is interested in setting up a National ELENA facility, there is the option to start this process either directly with EIB support or by applying for a pilot project under the current EIB-managed ELENA facility. This is to facilitate the transition to Member State self-management and provide the possibility to gain relevant experience.

The EIB will provide close guidance and support during the application and implementation phases of a pilot National ELENA project.

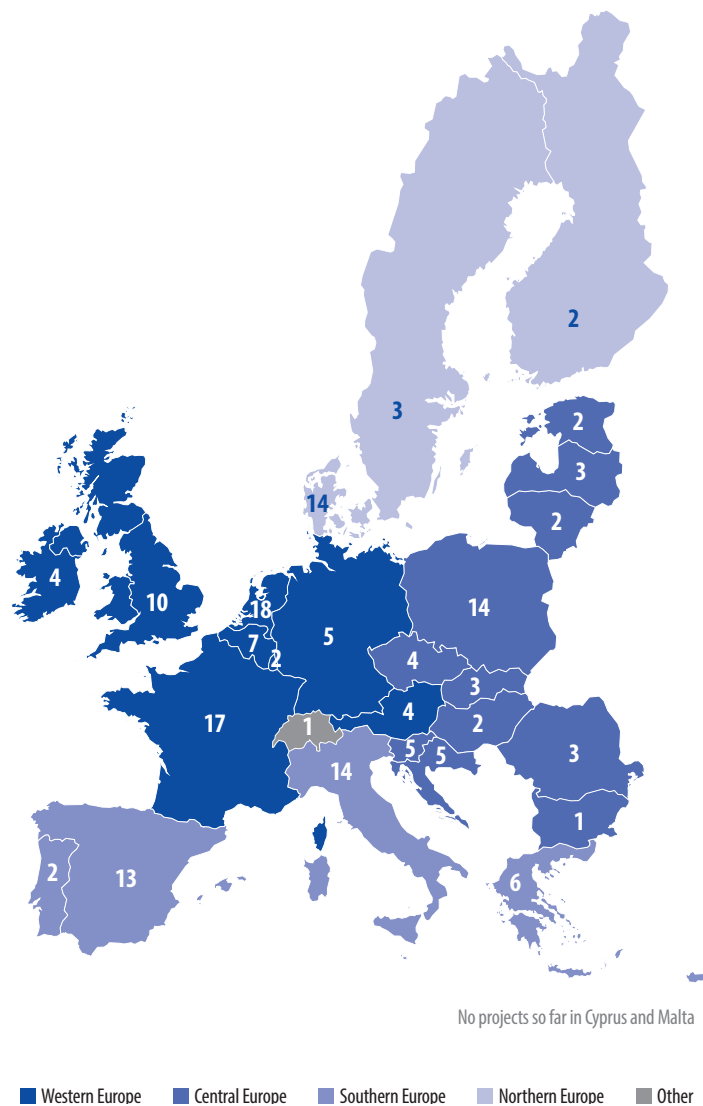
Please contact [elena@eib.org](mailto:elena@eib.org) to discuss further.

1. *Article 30 Directive (EU) 2023/1791*; Note the term National ELENA is used for simplicity for all Member State-funded entities. However such a structure could be set up at national, regional or local level.

# A PROVEN TRACK RECORD SINCE 2009

The ELENA facility has a solid track record of supporting projects that create investment and environmental impacts.

Across the European Union, to date there are 166 ELENA projects delivering real results.



Contact the EIB for more information on the ELENA facility at [elena@eib.org](mailto:elena@eib.org)



# ELENA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Grant support to prepare sustainable investments

