

# Preface

The COVID-19 pandemic and global megatrends, including climate change, digitalisation, the new geography of work and demographic trends, provide momentum to scale up efforts to reuse, repurpose and decarbonise buildings in many OECD and partner countries. Many recovery packages offer dedicated funding from different levels of government, and specific incentives to drive that transition as part of national governments' commitments towards a net-zero economy. The European Commission's Renovation Wave, for example, aims to double annual energy renovation rates by 2030, with the objective of renovating 35 million building units and creating 160 000 jobs by then.

Buildings and construction are central to the low-carbon transition, since they account for about 40% of global energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The decarbonisation of existing building stock, where the greatest challenge lies, is a key priority in many OECD countries, given the low rate of new construction. In addition to reducing carbon emissions, decarbonising buildings also offers such co-benefits as better health, energy affordability and green jobs.

Cities and regions already play an important role in decarbonising buildings, thanks to their prerogatives and investment capacities. Not only do they own an important share of public buildings, but they are also responsible for land use and building code enforcement, and they are familiar with the local building stock and in close contact with citizens and local businesses.

Drawing on the findings of a global online survey conducted between July and October 2021 in co-operation with the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), this report demonstrates the potential of cities and regions for advancing the decarbonisation of buildings. It identifies key challenges and provides policy recommendations for both national and subnational governments. In particular, the survey showed that most cities and regions have developed their own plans and ambitious policies for building energy codes and public buildings. At the same time, cities and regions face major capacity and funding gaps that limit their capacity to ramp up such efforts. Collaboration across levels of government is urgently required to overcome these obstacles. The Checklist for Public Action provided in this report outlines key actions for national governments to establish the enabling environment, and for local and regional governments to unleash their potential to decarbonise buildings.

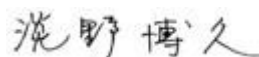
This report calls for an effective multilevel governance approach to decarbonising buildings in cities and regions. We look forward to active and widespread use of its findings and recommendations at all levels, and stand ready to support further action to develop and implement better building policies for better lives.



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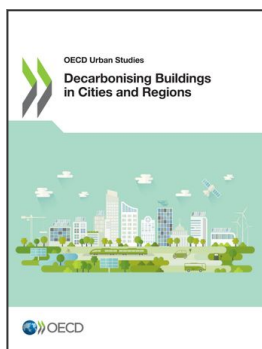


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