Call for concepts:

Cities and Regions
Positive Energy Buildings Challenge

Issue date: 29 January 2026

Concepts due: 28 February 2026

Winners selected: 15 March 2026

Contents

About the RENEW-Southeast Asia project

The RENEW-Southeast Asia project continues its work across **Malaysia** and **Indonesia** in the domain of **energy-efficient public buildings**. It aims to create policy momentum, develop technical capacities, and provide exchange opportunities for local and regional governments (LRGs) to act and drive the sustainable energy transition in their territories, using the resources at their disposal.

Many LRGs face persistent barriers that slow progress, from limited financial capacity to restrictive national frameworks. However, there are many success stories that deserve to be spotlighted to highlight the progress being made. The RENEW-SEA project is therefore launching the **Positive Energy Buildings Challenge** in order to showcase innovative LRG projects, business models, and policy approaches, in the domain of sustainable energy use in buildings. In doing so, it aims to provide a space for leading LRGs to exchange and learn from each other, while inspiring others. **Due to their status as the target countries of the project, the Challenge is open to LRGs in Malaysia and Indonesia only**.

Buildings and energy in Indonesia and Malaysia

Cities and urban areas account for more than 60% of global greenhouse gas emissions and over 75% of primary energy consumption. Across **Southeast Asia**, LRGs play a critical role in shaping policies and implementing solutions that accelerate the transition toward renewable energy (RE) and improve energy efficiency (EE), particularly in the built environment.

As buildings become more efficient and are able to integrate RE sources such as rooftop solar photovoltaics (PV), they contribute to lower urban energy use, reduced energy-related emissions, and the provision of energy generation and other services to the grid. **Buildings that generate more energy than they consume—for export to the grid or to other buildings—can be referred to as 'positive energy buildings' (PEBs).**

Aiming for such an ambitious goal can help align present-day implementation with a long-term vision for the role of buildings in the sustainable energy transition,

bringing together various concepts such as EE, RE, green buildings, zero-emission buildings, and so on.

In **Indonesia**, EE in buildings is supported by national targets and regulations, including Government Regulation No. 33/2023, which mandates energy conservation for government buildings and large energy consumers. The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (MEMR) Regulation No. 3/2025 on Energy Conservation in the National and Regional Government clearly defines the obligations of LRGs in the implementation of energy management within their respective government institutions. Local and regional governments are positioned not merely as reporting entities, but as key implementers responsible for ensuring that energy planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting are carried out in a structured and sustainable manner.

Meanwhile, **Malaysia** aims to reduce building energy consumption to near-zero levels by 2040. Its Green Technology Master Plan 2017-2030 promotes sustainable energy use in buildings through targets for certified green buildings, RE and EE promotion, green materials use, and sustainable practices in design and construction, focusing on reducing emissions and resource use. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act (EECA) came into force in January 2025, highlighting growing momentum at the national level to mainstream EE, especially in buildings. The creation of a robust EE ecosystem is something LRGs can take advantage of through the emergence of new business models, partnerships, knowledge, and incentives as EE in buildings cuts across national and sub-national jurisdictions.

Overview of the Positive Energy Buildings Challenge

The **Positive Energy Buildings Challenge (PEB Challenge)** aims to highlight the work of leading LRGs in **Malaysia** and **Indonesia** and showcase subnational engagement in the energy transition, particularly in the promotion of sustainable energy use in the buildings sector.

By bringing together LRGs with a clear and demonstrated interest in promoting energy-efficient buildings powered by renewable energy, it hopes to build a cohort

of interested LRGs and facilitate peer exchange, learning, and visibility opportunities for each.

Interested LRGs are invited to submit existing or under-development projects or solutions that advance the **PEB concept in public buildings (or other projects with significant public sector involvement)**.

Eligibility criteria

Institutional eligibility: Who can apply?

The competition is open to local and regional governments in **Malaysia** and **Indonesia.** These LRGs must be the lead applicant.

To be eligible, applicants must be a legally recognized local or regional government/authority in Indonesia or Malaysia, including:

- City/municipal authorities, relevant agencies, or equivalent
- Provincial/state governments, relevant agencies, or equivalent

Project eligibility: Which projects can be submitted?

The submitted project must directly relate to **renewable energy and/or energy efficiency in public buildings and spaces**, in line with the PEB concept. The projects must have been implemented in a public facility or space, or in the case of public-private partnerships, feature significant public sector contributions.

Such projects may include (but are not limited to):

- Rooftop solar PV deployment in public buildings
- Battery energy storage solutions
- Energy-efficient lighting, cooling, or HVAC retrofits
- Digital solutions such as Building Energy Management Systems (BEMS)
- Innovative business and financial models enabling energy performance improvements of public buildings
- Policy or regulatory innovations that foster improved building energy performance at scale (e.g. green building policies, building codes, etc.)

We are seeking **projects that are in an advanced state of implementation,** having moved beyond the conceptualization and planning phases. Therefore, the project must be one that **1) has already been commissioned/constructed**; or **2) has secured funding and is ready to be implemented**; or **3) construction and commissioning are to be completed within the next 12 months**; or 4**) in the case of policies or regulation, are already in place.**

Participation requirements

Upon entering the Competition, LRGs must commit to:

- Designating focal points for regular communication
- Nominating an official to participate in the study tour/peer exchanges that will take place in Southeast Asia
    - The official should have some technical expertise and should ideally have been involved in the submitted project. A working knowledge of English will be essential.

Submission requirements

Number of projects

Only **one** project can be submitted per applicant, and only **one** official from each LRG may join the study tour (if the project is selected).

- The exception is if a regional government is submitting a project located within the territory of a local government. The regional government may submit more than one project, but only one official may join the study tour.

Submission details

LRGs must submit the following for their application to be considered complete:

- **(Required)** Completed application form
- Supporting documents and information, including:
    - **(Required)** Letter of commitment from a senior city official

- **(Required)** Technical or policy documents, as relevant, about the project. Examples of technical documents include (depending on availability and relevance):
  - *Pre-feasibility assessment report*
  - *Feasibility study and techno-economic modelling*
  - *Impact assessment report*
  - *Detailed project report, etc.*
- News articles, press releases, etc. about the project (*optional*)

*Note: These documents will **not** be made publicly available and will only be used to assess the project across the evaluation criteria.*

Note: Please email the supporting documents to the email addresses mentioned below. In the subject line, please mention the name of the LRG and "supporting documents". In case of technical difficulties, an offline form is available here.

Note: The application form must be submitted in English. However, supporting documents may be submitted in Bahasa Malay or Bahasa Indonesia if no alternatives are available; translation is not necessary.

Evaluation criteria

A jury of regional and international experts will assess submissions based on:

- **Energy impact**: Measurable benefits in energy savings, reduction in energy demand, RE generation, emissions reduction, or similar quantitative indicators or that have already been achieved or are likely to be achieved during implementation
- **Scalability & replication**: Potential for expansion within the territory or adoption by other LRGs
- **Inclusiveness**: Engagement of communities, especially vulnerable groups such as women, youth, etc.
- **Partnerships**: with private sector, academia, or civil society

Results and benefits of the Challenge

Only a limited number of winning projects will be chosen. Winning applicants will receive:

- A chance for **one** official to participate in an all-expenses paid international study tour and peer exchange in Southeast Asia. They will have the opportunity to learn about PEB best practices and exchange with other Indonesian and Malaysian LRGs.
    - The study tour is scheduled to take place in Q2 2026.
- Promotion of their project and work across regional and global platforms, including a 1-page case study (prepared by ICLEI).
- Access to a community of practice (R-EnEx CoP) featuring experts on sustainable energy issues, allowing for collaboration and learning opportunities beyond the Competition.
- Advice and guidance for submission of other similar projects to ICLEI's Transformative Actions Program, if requested.

Timeline

- **Call launched:** 29 January 2026
- **Call closed:** 2 March 2026
- **Notification of selection:** Mid-March 2026
- **Study tour:** May 2026

Contact information

Participants may submit inquiries (or applications) to: sustainable.energy@iclei.org.

For Indonesian LRGs, please keep selamet.daroyni@iclei.org and siti.koiromah@iclei.org in copy.

For Malaysian LRGs, please keep pamela.cabacungan@iclei.org and norazean.mohd.nor@iclei.org in copy.