



Synchronising EEA certification instruments to other EU initiatives like CoM about energy and climate policies to accompany more and more tuned municipalities in their 2030 performance

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GUIDELINES FOR STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT





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Executive summary

This deliverable has been designed as a guideline for people involved in energy and climate planning or management and may be a useful resource for the wider environmental community. It is aimed at supporting working teams and leaders in the engagement of relevant stakeholders to reach higher and wider impacts.

Energy and climate are cross-cutting subjects, with environmental but also economic, social and political impacts: an effective and successful approach ought to be trans-disciplinary involving all interested departments, starting from the internal structure of the public body, and subjects.

The initiatives CoME EAsy wants to align and support, already foresee or can benefit from this transversal approach: there is no unique solutions, but methodologies and tools that have been already tested and that can be easily adopted with few adaptations.

The aim of this deliverable is thus to transfer from partners knowledge good practices and lessons learnt, together with practical tips and tricks that can be used by further municipalities in this fundamental, but also difficult, process.

It is important to know that engagement processes must be managed to achieve good results and should have clear rules, dedicated resources and realistic expectations (from both sides).

The present guide considers 'why', 'who' and suggests 'how' to engage, as well as managing working groups and conflicts and monitoring outcomes.

Case studies are provided in the Best Practices library of the project and not in the present document, to allow a wider range of examples and a continuous updating.



1. Background: CoME EASY's mission

CoME EASY overall objective is to promote, facilitate and extend the engagement of local public authorities in setting up and implementing sustainable and effective energy efficiency and climate action plans according to EU targets by applying a combination of synergistic supportive tools and initiatives. Taking into account the existence of a multitude of internationally approved and experienced initiatives in this context supporting local authorities, their overlaps and unique features, CoME EASY aims at bringing the most popular, suitable and compatible initiatives together. The project aims at **enhancing synergies, overcoming barriers and creating an all-inclusive, comprehensive, user-friendly and effective open support package**, i.e. its objective is to tune up the EEA tools and procedures to the requirements of the Covenant of Mayors, ISO and others in order **to strengthen the municipalities' commitment to EU targets and ensure a monitored, effective implementation of developed action plans / SECAPs** at local level.

CoME EASY project consequently does not aim at developing a new initiative, but at elaborating a synthesizing, simplifying and strengthening element to successfully connect existing ones.

By **joining strengths and benefits of several initiatives**, CoME EASY additionally aims at

- **facilitating capacity building and benchmarking, providing training materials, best practices and city KPIs,**
- **facilitating the daily operational work of local authorities** in their ambitious path toward EU targets and
- **facilitating the participation of public authorities in multiple initiatives seamlessly**, enabling them to put together and follow their energy and climate action plans in an easier and more structured manner.

The project will carry out a pilot test developing SECAPs (including Emissions Inventories, KPIs, best practices) with Ambassador municipalities and experienced advisors to collect their contributions and feedbacks, finalize the package based on these experiences and further implement and disseminate the developed open support package to all interested municipalities in all participating countries, paving the way for large use of these facilitating tools and procedures; at least 95 municipalities will be supported with 6 millions inhabitants, while the capacity building action will involve 150 advisors, 300 municipal staff and more than 500 stakeholders.

The project lasts from May 2018 until April 2021 and it is implemented by an international consortium, consisting of partners from seven European countries. The effects will go on after the project end thanks to the promotion and dissemination activity and some figures have been already provided for the impacts at 2030 based on the partners (EEA network) active involvement.

Abbreviations list

API	Application Programming Interface
BoE	Benchmark of excellence
BP	Best practice
CoM	Covenant of Mayors
EC	European Commission
EEA	European Energy Award
EMT	EEA Management Tool
EnMS	Energy Management System
H2020	Horizon 2020
OP	Open Platform
SECAP	Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans



2. Stakeholders' involvement: why?

With “stakeholders” a **wide group of interests and motivations** is addressed with different levels of influence and involvement, but it is clear that their involvement in the decision-making processes is crucial to delivering several **benefits**: learning from different experiences and point of views and discussing solution can enrich the results, improve trust between parties and avoid conflicts or negative outcomes.

The first phase of the engagement should identify the target and the scope of the activity to be co-produced; maybe these goals will be negotiated with the first group of stakeholders that can be revised and updated when the extent of the activity has been defined (the “transformation” in Steep methodology described in next paragraphs).

In participated processes, “**Motivation**” is the key element from both sides: the benefits of the engagement should be clearly identified since the beginning of the activity and communicated during the first approaches.

The most relevant reasons can be listed as follows:

- Raise awareness and provide clear understandings of the problem
- Improve relationships and build trust
- Exploit synergies among cross-cutting sectors
- Exchange experience and take opportunity for capacity building
- Empower stakeholders and understand deeply their needs, therewith improving the outcomes
- Identify opportunities and barriers
- Enhance transparency in decision making and improve communication channels
- Facilitate access to data and information
- Improve risk management
- Validate the outcomes.

To obtain those evident benefits, engagement must be managed properly being aware of some obstacles and **limitations** like costs, time and effort required. Stakeholder selection is critical as it can bring poor results or privileges and it must comply also with some ethical aspects like data or intellectual property rights.

Since being part of the planning process must be voluntary, how to motivate stakeholders is a key element.

It is interesting to disseminate properly the city planning process. The **communication** at all levels, press, television, newsletters, radio, social media, etc. will give a consistent framework to the city's planning effort. It is a way to show compromise by the administration. The message should be clear and state that this exercise is really meaningful for the city and that it will carry direct implementation actions. It should be stated clearly that this is not only to coproduce a document but an implementation plan for the city. In this sense, the involvement of city's politicians, and not only technicians, is important.

Together with the dissemination across different communication media, it is helpful to develop **events** to which selected stakeholders can be invited. This is the direct way of ensuring that key stakeholders will participate in the process. It will be the chance to explain the scope of the planning process, the goals that the city intends to achieve and what kind of collaboration is requested.



In some cases, **direct contact** should be sought. The engagement of big players is more difficult and personal interviews may help. This is also true for some departments within the City Council itself. Many times they work as silos and their willingness to get involved in this type of activity is undermined by a belief that their day-to-day work will be affected. Making direct contact can encourage participation and builds confidence into the process.

Something useful for the communication and engagement process is the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Platform in which all stakeholders can participate, share data and information, send comments and interact with rest of stakeholders.



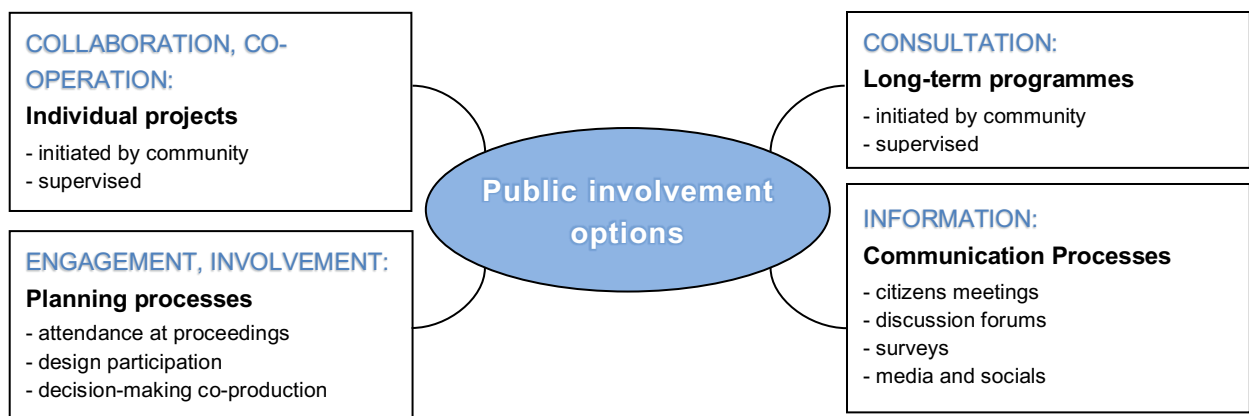
3. Stakeholders: who are they?

Any person or group **with influence or influenced** by the energy & climate topic could be considered a stakeholder.

The selection should be inclusive, identifying all potential interested people and groups considering their influence and the motivation to participate in the process.

The number of stakeholders to involve depends on the size of the municipality, the local situation and the extent of the Plan that the interested city may consider; after a first list, a prioritisation of interests should be carried out defining who must be involved from the start and who can only be informed and activated on specific projects.

The following diagram highlights some of the many ways in which communities can involve members of the public in the community decision-making process:



Public involvement options in decision making processes

From partners experience there are three groups of stakeholders that can be considered:

- Energy & Sustainability
- Mobility
- Integrated Solutions (involving ICT applied to the energy and environmental issues)

These three key groups follow main trends in EU considerations towards smart and sustainable cities.

The EU FP7-ENERGY-SMARTCITIES-2012 (314277) project STEEP (Systems Thinking for Comprehensive City Efficient Energy Planning) provided a simple classification that could be helpful for the analysis and selection of stakeholders for these groups or others:

- **Local Administration:** This is a main group of stakeholders as triggers of possible changes in the city. By “local administration” we mean any department and/or company related to the city council. Among others sustainability, mobility, housing, infrastructure, urbanism, maintenance, water services or energy efficiency departments can participate.
- **Regional/National Administration:** In the case of Regional and/or National Administration the same departments can be considered. In some cases, the specific weight of the Regional Government would be sufficient, in other cases the intervention of National Government should be sought depending on the responsibilities level.
- **Electricity Operators:** This is a reference group for any company related to power generation, distribution and/or commercialization (including Energy Services Companies ESCOs). All of them play an important role directly linked to the reduction of emissions by reducing consumption and electricity costs by providing and using data better managed.
- **ICT Operators:** In this group they will be included operators from the telecommunication field including internet providers, telephone operators, etc.
- **Gas Operators:** Companies that provide generation, distribution and/or commercialization of gas in the city.
- **Public Transport Companies** (usually part of the local administration)
- **Water Operators:** Operators of Water supply and disposal to the city (most of the time it will be municipal, but it can be supplied by private companies as well).
- **Environmental Organizations:** Organizations, private or public, working to foster sustainability of cities through any type of actions
- **Energy Organizations:** Organizations, companies, clusters, etc. related to the Energy field that can be considered interesting as a stakeholder in each city.
- **ICT Organizations:** Organizations, companies, clusters, etc. related to the ICT field that can be considered interesting as a stakeholder in each city.
- **Transport Organizations:** Organizations, companies, clusters, etc. related to the Transport field that can be considered interesting as a stakeholder in each city.
- **Academic & Research Organizations:** Academic and Research & Development centres that can provide knowledge and innovative approaches to what the city needs and must develop. The research concept must be understood in an open sense, allowing the participation of any entity that can add something interesting to the process.
- **Financial Organizations:** Financial sector should also be involved somehow in the system thinking process. Their participation will be requested for the implementation of many actions. Therefore it would be interesting to already have and consider their assessment and information during the early stages.
- **End-users’ Organizations:** This group of stakeholders gathers end-users in any of the fields of the Smart City Plan. It also includes community and voluntary organisations relevant to the district considered.
- **And Citizens’ Organizations:** In this case other organizations not considered under previous headings can be added. Here, even individuals (citizens) can participate if interested.

It is important to note that ‘stakeholding’ is an active process and mere *representation* in the process from any or all of these categories is not sufficient by itself to lead to change. Participants in the process must also ‘buy-in’ to the inevitable decision-making process that follows.

The characterisation of the stakeholders in this list reflects the ‘top-down’ nature inherent in the STEEP methodology. The final two categories of stakeholders are likely to be harder to integrate into a top-down methodology and other approaches should be considered, such as living labs¹.

In parallel some aspects should be investigated, like:

- There have ever been similar activities in our territory? How successful were they?
- Which stakeholders have been already engaged in the last years? How is the relationship? Is there any outcome already useful to start with? (not to double the work and to stress stakeholders twice with the feeling of not being taken into account)
- Which other processes/plans can be affected by this new activity?
- Do we need support for the analysis or the engagement? Could a “facilitator” be useful? How many resources are available?

Stakeholders’ engagement in the different initiatives

1 - CoM

In the Covenant of Mayors a wide **transversal working group** has to be created within the municipality to manage the analysis and the planning activity.

Depending on their size and human resources availability, local authorities may also benefit from the assistance of Covenant Territorial Coordinators or energy agencies taking active part in the process.

The role of the stakeholders is recognised as relevant and illustrated in detail in the reference guide developed by JRC:

¹ See <https://enoll.org/about-us/>

“...Stakeholders’ involvement is the starting point for stimulating the behavioural changes that are needed to complement the technical actions embodied in the SECAP. This is the key to a concerted and co-ordinated way to implement the SECAP.

Citizens and stakeholders – given their activities and their impact on the environment - are likely to be influenced by the solutions devised but they can also help reach the targets. The views of citizens and stakeholders should be known before detailed plans are developed. Therefore, citizens and other stakeholders should be involved in the key stages the SECAP elaboration process: building the vision (Hernandez et al., 2018), defining the objectives and targets, setting the priorities, etc. There are various degrees of involvement: ‘informing’ is at one extreme whilst ‘empowering’ is at the other. To make a successful SECAP, it is highly recommended to seek the highest level of participation of stakeholders and citizens in the process. Stakeholder and citizens engagement should be carried out since the very first steps of the planning process until the end of it, if a successful planning is desired (Hernández-González and Corral, 2017). Advisory groups including relevant experts from academia, NGOs, city networks and private sectors, among others, contribute to collect and share useful data and to define sound and policy-relevant indicators.”

Among the reasons for the stakeholders’ engagement, the following two motivations could be added to the ones already listed in chapter 3:

- The sense of participation seems to ensure the **long-term acceptance** of strategies and measures
- SECAPs may sometimes get **stronger support** from external stakeholders than from the internal management or staff of the local authority

The list of the relevant stakeholders in the SECAP development follows the guiding principles reported in the previous paragraph, adding some specific players like neighbouring local authorities, civil protection and health sector, tourist industry and agricultural community where applicable.

No specific participation techniques are imposed, but the use of a **professional facilitator** (“animator”, “neutral moderator”, etc) is suggested.

Communication is seen as an essential tool to keep the motivation and a communication strategy is requested to be integrated in the SECAP.

PHASE	STEP	ROLE OF THE ACTORS		
		Municipal council or equivalent body	Local administration	Stakeholders
Initiation	Political commitment and signing of the Covenant	Make the initial commitment. Sign the Covenant of Mayors. Provide the necessary impulse to the local administration to start the process.	Encourage the political authorities to take action. Inform them about the multiple benefits (and about the necessary resources).	Make pressure on political authorities to take action (if necessary).
	Mobilize all municipal departments involved	Allocate sufficient human resources and make sure adequate administrative structures are in place (e.g. horizontal offices ensuring collaboration amongst different departments of the administration) to ensure a coordinated action between mitigation and adaptation.		
	Build support from stakeholders	Provide the necessary impulse for stakeholders' participation. Show that you consider their participation and support as important.	Prepare an inventory of the relevant stakeholders, decide what channels of communication/participation you want to use, establish collaboration practices. Inform them about the process that is going to start, and collect their views.	Express their views, explain their potential role in SECAPs development and implementation.
Planning phase	Assessment of the current framework: Where are we?	Make sure the necessary resources are in place for the planning phase.	Conduct the initial assessment, collect the necessary data, and elaborate the CO ₂ baseline emission inventory and the climate risks and vulnerabilities assessment. Make sure the stakeholders are properly involved.	Provide valuable inputs and data, share the knowledge.
	Establishment of the vision: Where do we want to go?	Support the elaboration of the vision. Make sure it is ambitious enough. Approve the vision (if applicable).	Establish a long-term vision and objectives that support the vision. Make sure it is shared by the main stakeholders and endorsed by the political authorities.	Participate in the definition of the vision, express their view on the city's future.
	Elaboration of the plan: How do we get there?	Support the elaboration of the plan. Define the priorities, in line with the vision previously defined.	Elaborate the plan: define policies and measures in line with the vision and the objectives, establish budget and financing sources and mechanisms, timing, indicators, responsibilities. Keep the political authorities informed, and involve stakeholders. Make partnerships with key stakeholders.	Participate in the elaboration of the plan. Provide input, feedback. Contribute to initiating and designing the processes.
	Plan approval and submission	Approve the plan and the necessary budgets, at least for the first year(s).	Submit the SECAP via the CoM website. Communicate about the plan.	Make pressure on political authorities to approve the plan (if necessary)
Implementation phase	Implementation	Provide long-term political support to the SECAP process.	Coordinate the implementation. Make sure each stakeholder is aware of its role in the implementation.	Each stakeholder implements the measures that are under its responsibility and shares the results.
		Make sure that the energy and climate policy is integrated in the everyday life of the local administration.	Implement the measures that are under responsibility of the local authority. Be exemplary. Communicate about the actions.	Make pressure / encourage the local administration to implement the measures under its responsibility (if necessary).
		Show interest in the plan implementation, encourage stakeholders to act, show the example.	Motivate the stakeholders to act (information campaigns). Inform them properly about the resources available for EE, RES and adaptation.	Changes in behaviour, EE, RES and adaptation action, general support to SECAP implementation.
		Networking with other CoM signatories, exchanging experience and best practices, establishing synergies and encouraging their involvement in the Covenant of Mayors.		Encourage other stakeholders to act
Monitoring and reporting phase	Monitoring	Ask to be informed regularly about the advancement of the plan.	Proceed to a regular monitoring of the plan: advancement of the actions and evaluation of their impact.	Provide the necessary inputs and data.
	Reporting and submission of the implementation report	Approve the report (if applicable).	Report periodically to the political authorities and to the stakeholders about the advancement of the plan. Communicate about the results. Every second year, submit an implementation report via the CoM website.	Provide comments on the report and report on the measures under their responsibility.
	Review	Ensure that plan updates occur at regular intervals.	Periodically update the plan according to the experience and the results obtained and based on new opportunities. Involve political authorities and stakeholders.	Participate in plan update.

The SECAP process: main steps and roles of key actors (JRC Guidelines)

Degree of involvement		Examples of tools
1	Information and education	brochures, newsletters, social networks, advertisement, exhibitions, site visits
2	Information and feedback	telephone hotline, website, public meetings, teleconferences, surveys and questionnaires, staffed exhibitions, deliberative polls
3	Involvement and consultation	workshops, focus groups, forums, open house
4	Extended involvement	community advisory committees, planning for real, citizen's juries

Example of tools for stakeholders (JRC Guidelines, adapted from Bristol Environment Agency – 2000)

2 - EEA

Like commercial **quality management systems** such as Total Quality Management (TQM), the EEA programme is a process which is carried out in a series of stages in order to

- ✓ identify strengths as well as areas that can be improved,
- ✓ integrate quality factors into current administration work,
- ✓ further improve the administration processes,
- ✓ establish a process of continuous improvement,
- ✓ strengthen public participation in key decision-making processes relating to energy policy.

The key elements of this programme, namely assessing positions, defining goals and decision criteria, preparing energy policy plans as well as continually monitoring the success of measures mean that a **process-orientated approach** is essential.

In the EEA process, the municipality is supported by a **qualified “advisor”** (facilitator and expert) whose main functions are the following two:

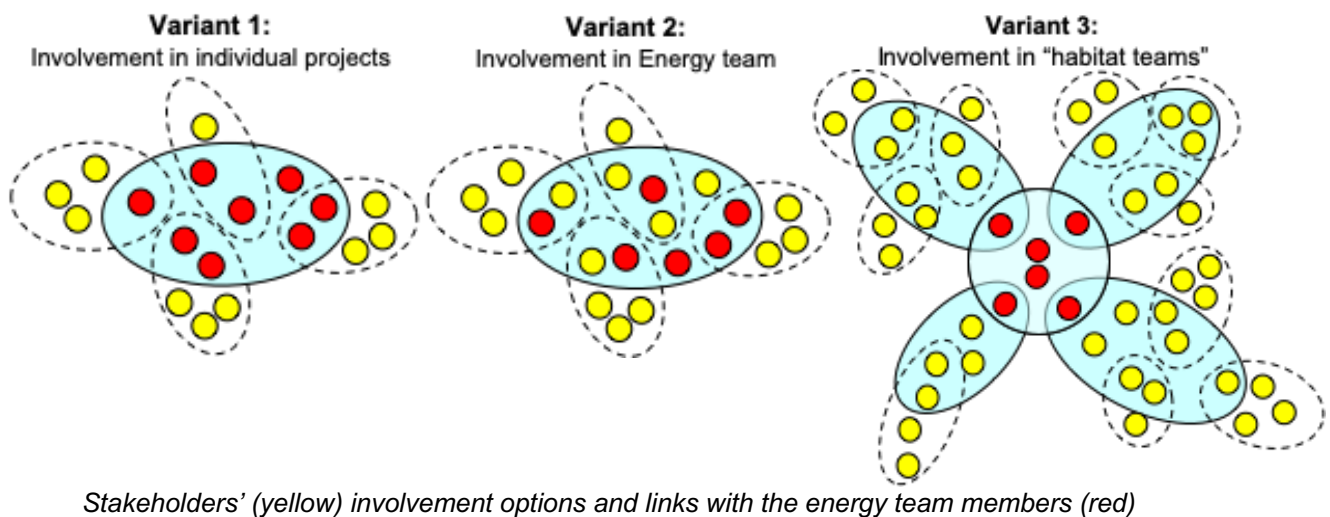
- The Role of Process Supervisor and Moderator, responsible for keeping an overview of the programme process, moderating important decision-making processes, supporting the team leader and keeping the team on course.
- The Role of Expert: in certain phases of the programme, including the stakeholders' engagement, the specialist expertise of the advisor is called on.

The process is implemented by the “**energy and climate team**”, an interdisciplinary group made of representatives from all the main city departments and policy makers. There is the possibility of involving stakeholders in this working group, following specific methodologies depending on the size of the municipality and the complexity of the plan, but also on the availability of resources and personnel. The EEA methodology dedicates a full area (chapter) to the topic of communication and cooperation with diverse stakeholders and attributes benchmark points to municipalities taking the stakeholder engagement seriously.

The involvement of members of the public is explicitly desired by the programme as it is also listed as a concrete implementation measure in the “Catalogue of Measures”. This is because it makes the goals and values of the EEA Programme accessible to the broadest possible audience, adding from one hand additional problem-solving capabilities to the programme and from the other hand empowering citizens who can acquire new useful skills.

If a community is interested in involving its citizens in the EEA Programme, there are a number of ways in which it can do this. The following are three common examples in the EEA:

1. The energy and climate team consists exclusively of “internal experts” in community policy and administration. Stakeholders and citizens are involved during the planning and implementation stages of definite projects (depending on the type of project).
2. The energy and climate team includes stakeholders so that they can play an active role in the formulation and implementation of the community’s energy policy activities.



3. In communities which have at least 50000 inhabitants and which are divided into independent districts it is a good idea to divide the energy team into a professional co-ordination team, (comprising community employees) and several “habitat teams”. The habitat teams consist primarily of members of the public and each team is supervised by a member of the co-ordination team. These teams concentrate on their immediate surroundings or “habitat” (area, district etc.). As an alternative to forming habitat teams, it is also possible to divide members of the public into specialist teams (e.g. transport, town planning, alternative energy sources etc.). However, the focus on the immediate surroundings is lost as the interaction/synergy within sectors that is ensured only by the coordination team.

The choice as to which model to use is made by each community. Community representatives are requested to individually check which of these models most closely matches the goals of the community programme.

3 – ISO

All the related ISO regulations (9000, 14001, 50001) foresee the involvement of the different levels of the organisational structure and also the connected external stakeholders.

In particular, focusing on the most recent version of the energy management regulation (ISO 50.001: 2018) the importance of the **context** in which the organisation is acting as well as of the external stakeholders, have been underlined in two specific additional points.

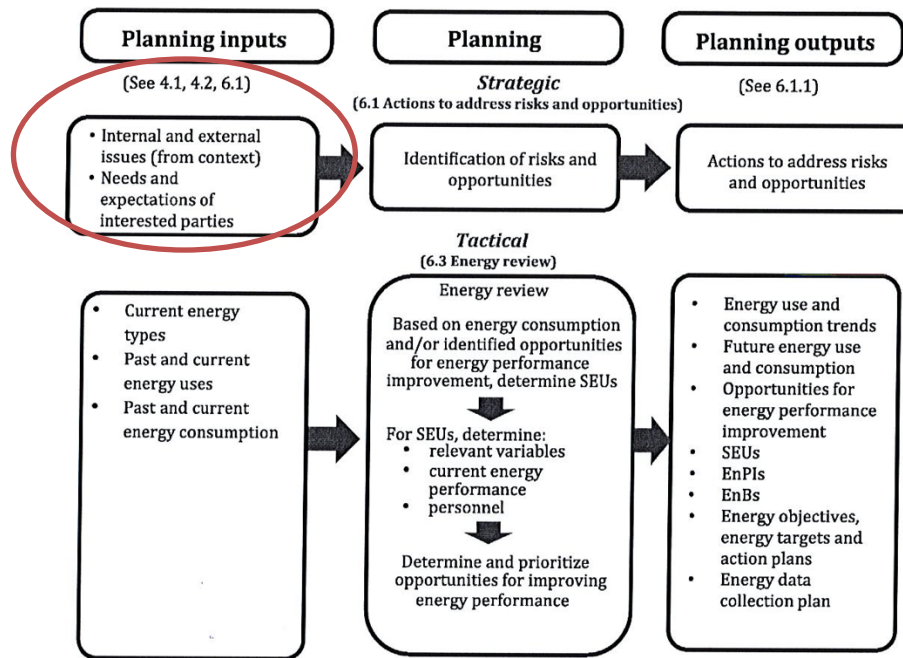
ISO 50001:2011	ISO 50001:2018
Introduction	Introduction
1 Scope	1 Scope
2 Normative references	2 Normative references
3 Terms and definitions	3 Terms and definitions
	4 Context of the organization
	4.1 Understanding the organization and its context
4 Energy management system requirements	
4.1 General requirements	4.3 Determining the scope of the energy management system 4.4 Energy management system
4.2 Management responsibility	5.1 Leadership and commitment
4.2.1 Top management	4.3 Determining the scope of the energy management system 5.1 Leadership and commitment 7.1 Resources
4.2.2 Management representative	5.1 Leadership and commitment 5.3 Organizational roles, responsibilities and authorities
4.3 Energy policy	5.2 Energy policy
4.4 Energy planning	6 Planning
4.4.1 General	6.1 Actions to address risks and opportunities
4.4.2 Legal requirements and other requirements	4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of interested parties
4.4.3 Energy review	6.3 Energy review
	6.1 Actions to address risks and opportunities
4.4.4 Energy baseline	6.5 Energy baseline
4.4.5 Energy performance indicators	6.4 Energy performance indicators

Differences and correspondence between the two versions (2011 vs. 2018) – Source ISO 50001: 2018

The organisation is required to analyse the context, pointing out external issues and players who can affect the achievement of a successful EnMS implementation or its energy performances.

In point 4.2 of the regulation is suggested to determine the **relevant interested parties, their needs and expectations** addressed through the EnMS. No specific methodologies are reported for stakeholders' engagement, except for the usual communication requirements.

In the section about risks and opportunity also the topic of external players is addressed and included in the preliminary activities to energy planning.



Energy Planning process scheme – Source ISO 50001: 2018

4 - Smart Cities (EIP)

In the framework of the Smart Cities and Communities initiative, the **European Innovation Platform** (<https://eu-smartcities.eu>) has been created which is a major market-changing undertaking supported by the European Commission bringing together cities, industries, SMEs, investors, researchers and other smart city stakeholders.

Through the platform, stakeholders can find information, share ideas, get in touch and debate.

Several **action clusters** have been working in this context, sharing expertise on specific issues: since 2014 the **Citizen focus** has been activated promoting and participating to mutual learning and networking efforts with key stakeholders and EU and national policy-makers. Among its main outcomes are the “*Inclusive Smart Cities: a European Manifesto on Citizens engagement*” and the toolkit “*Principles and Enablers for Citizen Engagement*”.

The main targets of the Citizen Focus approach are **civic engagement/leadership**, empowerment and participation to achieve the transformation into sustainable, smart and inclusive cities.

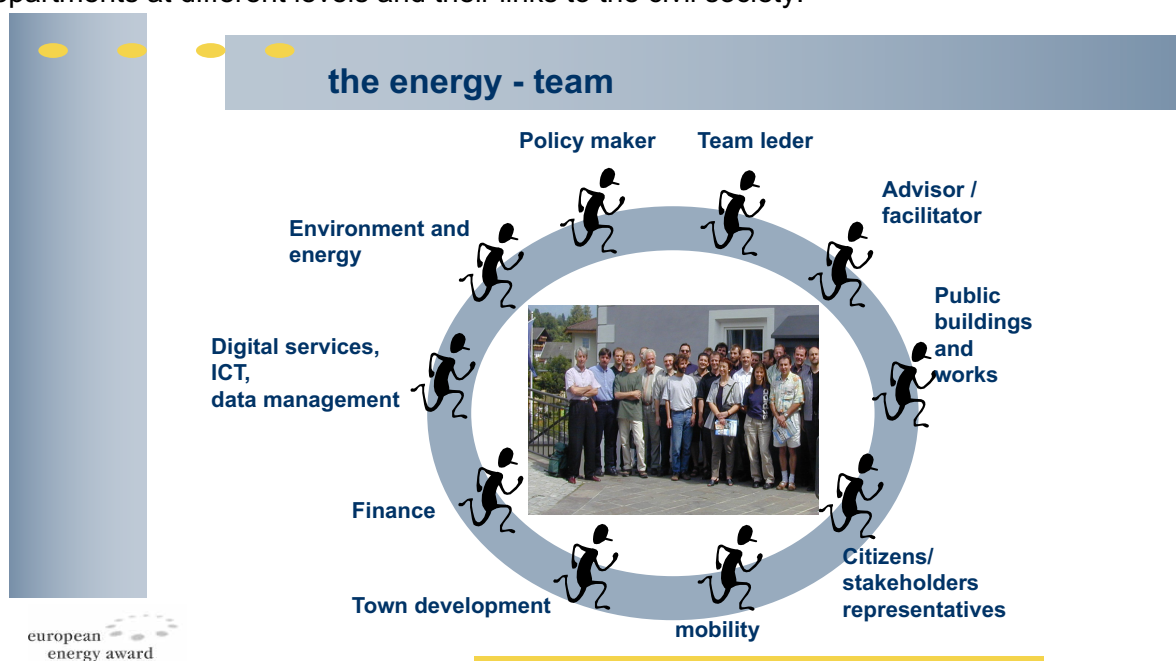
“Citizen Focus Action Cluster strongly believes in citizens as fundamental actors for the regeneration and development of smart cities. Civic engagement, empowerment, participation and co-creation are at the basis of our advocacy approach since we acknowledge that citizen voice can be pivotal in providing the demand-side pressure on government, service providers and organisations needed to encourage full response to citizen needs. It also ensures the setup of a trusted and sound relationship with local governments and a source of democratic legitimacy and transparency. In the context of smarter cities, citizens understanding of concrete problems and challenges can help local governments prioritise and respond consistently to inhabitants’ need.”

Steering group and stakeholders’ workshops

Taking inspiration from the above-mentioned initiatives, the creation of a **multi-disciplinary steering group** is a common issue and represents the engine of the process.

This core group is responsible for keeping continuous relations with stakeholders and programming their contributions.

This group is usually made mostly of internal resources and some **experts/facilitators** and one of its sub-targets is the adaptation of the municipal internal structure to the upcoming needs: the process governance is a transversal factor, including all the interactions among public departments at different levels and their links to the civil society.



Example of steering group: a typical energy and climate team in the EEA process

The municipality can directly influence the local legal framework, whose impact is relevant and if not coordinated and in line with the vision it could affect the targets' achievement or at least the efforts and the time needed. The governance is as much smart as it is coordinated at a wider level in horizontal as well as vertical perspective.

The steering group is responsible for stakeholders' involvement with the political and communication department supports.

As part of the engagement process it should be clearly stated how stakeholders will participate, timelines, goals, etc.

One element is the preparation of **specific workshops** to develop, apply and work with selected methodologies. These workshops should be coordinated in advance, with explanations of the purpose of the workshop, giving details of relevant objectives and intended goals. In most cases this becomes an excellent set of information resource and the data and comments gathered can offer in depth analysis of the process.

The “transition” time between the different meetings should not derail the engagement. That is, avoiding isolated events rather than a process in which stakeholders can really collaborate and be part of.

The number of events will depend, as the number of working groups that will be established, but, at least, the following phases (workshops) could be considered with these general purposes:

- 1st Phase: Diagnostic of situation and pointing out main goals.
- 2nd Phase: Elaboration of targets (intermediate and final) and definition of key processes
- 3rd Phase: Selection of projects/processes to achieve City's goals

After this definition phase, a monitoring process should be set up including regular feedbacks from working groups and eventual calibrations of the plans.

4. How to involve stakeholders?

Stakeholder engagement methods are in continuous evolution and they can vary from a mono-directional information level to a participatory process. Their selection ought to be made taking into account the public involvement level targeted; the following table provides an example of the most appropriate options.

Methodology	Information (communication)	Consultation (long term processes)	Cooperation (specific projects)	Engagement (planning)
Media and socials	XXX	XXX	X	X
Interviews		XX	XXX	
Surveys		XXX	XX	X
Events/meetings		XX	XX	X
STEEP (Modelling)		X	X	XXX
EMT	X		XX	XXX
SWOT, USP, PESTEL	XX		XXX	X
KPIs	X	X	XX	XXX
MAPs	X	X	XX	XX

Example of methodology selection in the different public involvement options

The methods described in the following paragraphs are those experienced by partners and selected as the most promising and adapt for the energy and climate planning/management purpose.

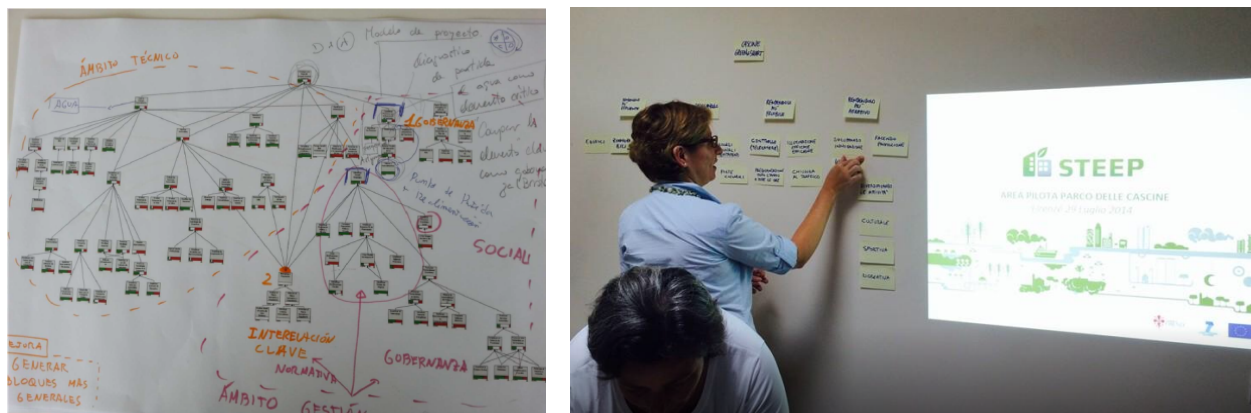
• STEEP “System thinking” methodology

By taking an integrated approach to strategic city planning where all systems and their interlinkages are considered would actually result in greater efficiency in terms of both carbon and cost and also provide other benefits such as greater stakeholder engagement and ownership of actions. The instrument for this endeavour should be a comprehensive plan which includes the whole set of necessary actions following a **holistic approach**.

Energy planning ought to be viewed as a **wicked problem**, because it has to deal with situations that are not well defined, because of many uncertainties and lack of reliable data, involving many interested parties with different perspectives. There is a general difficulty in agreeing objectives of interventions which requires creating consensus amongst parties involved to be successful (Yearworth, 2016).

The STEEP project (www.smartsteep.eu) identified the following key factors for its definition:

- ✓ It is necessary to have the **collaboration of all the stakeholders** across the value chain: public administrations, technology experts, companies, end users, etc.
- ✓ It is necessary to **consider the city as a complex system of processes**, where the different elements of the city are connected and one intervention in one process of the city influences the rest of the processes.



Snapshots from STEEP modelling sessions

The STEEP Methodology is a **systemic Problem Structuring Method (PSM)** (Yearworth & White, 2014) designed for use by organisations such as municipalities for planning transformations in complex problem contexts such as energy and smart city planning. These are examples of what is known as messy or wicked problems².

The methodology is based on ideas from Soft Systems Methodology where a system model is considered as a conceptual device to describe the target transformation through the use of a root definition. For example:

“A city council owned system to transition the organisation to new forms of financing projects, by designing new smart city governance and project selection processes, in order to meet the capital investment required for the municipality’s smart city portfolio addressing citizen needs”.

The main benefit is that the methodology brings a system-thinking perspective to the transformation and manages the process of reconciling different stakeholder worldviews, providing a common operational picture and addressing issues of transparency. It can be used with participants in multi-organisation groups.

The methodology can be applied at any time and at any scale of transformation. This is entirely determined by the root definition, which defines *both* the scope of the transformation and the stakeholder group. These are therefore *co-dependent* and *co-created*.

² <https://www.grounded.systems/2017/03/wicked-problems/>

The model and the co-production methodology

The STEEP Methodology uses a form of systems modelling known as a Hierarchical Process Model (HPM) to develop a shared understanding by the problem owners about how to achieve the transformation.

- The vision and the transformation:

Cities face the challenge of sustainable urban development: a city is something dynamic and mutating as quick as the needs of its society. To manage the inevitable changing process in a proper way there must be a **long-term driving concept** to be translated into policies which should overcome short term political cycles and technological development. Whilst the tools (i.e. technologies and methodologies) will evolve, with a clear vision, the city should be able to implement any innovative solution which helps to achieve the target. However, care should be taken that there is not a mis-match between transformational scope and stakeholder inclusion, disregarding their co-creational/co-dependent nature can lead to difficulties (Freeman & Yearworth, 2017).

The first step in the process is to define **purpose**. Consensus amongst stakeholders regarding a high-level objective for the planning has to be achieved: this is essential in the process for prioritising interventions, as it allows a specific focus on what can be plausibly achieved and who will own this process. The following points are crucial for the successful implementation of the STEEP methodology:

1. There must be **clear ownership** of the process
2. Deciding the **transformational goal** and defining the **stakeholder group** are **co-dependent** activities. It is not possible to define transformational goals independently from identifying *who* would be the Actors (A) responsible for achieving them, and the Owners (O) accountable for the actions³. Likewise, a stakeholder group with no transformational goal in mind is a nonsensical construct, in *what* does this group have a stakeholding? The '*who*' and '*what*' of a transformational goal *must be defined simultaneously at the outset*, before any thought about the *how*, *when* and *why* can be discussed. The STEEP methodology as implemented by Yearworth, Schien, and Burger (2014) focuses particularly on the latter, and particularly the method of system modelling, but the learning from evaluation has shown that this preliminary step is absolutely critical to success.

Experience from the STEEP project suggests the “purposeful transformation” should be

- sufficiently ambitious to catch the interest of stakeholders and to start the change
- realistic in scope not to waste time in fruitless discussions

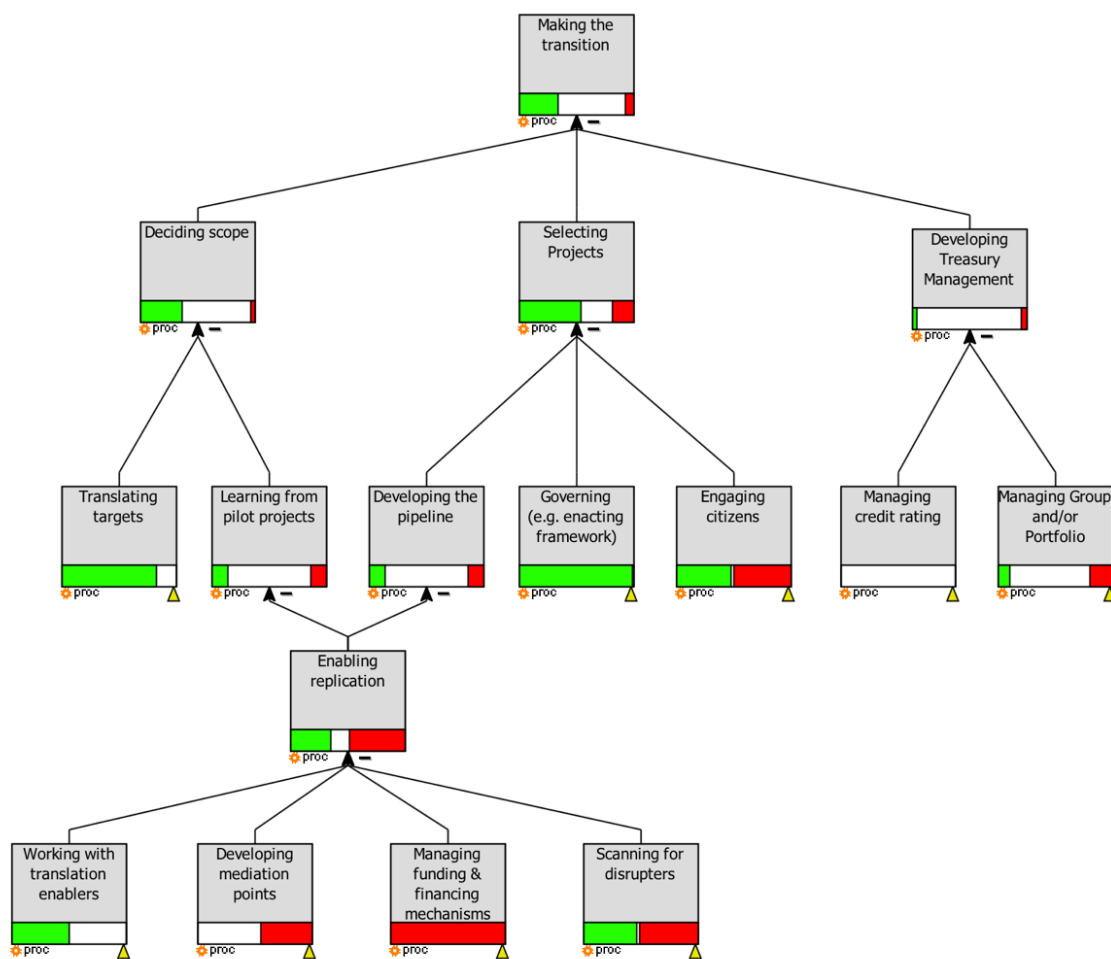
³ The Actors (A) and Owners (O) are two of the three stakeholder groups identified in the CATWOE formulation of Soft Systems Methodology (SSM), the third is Customers (C). The meaning of these roles is discussed in the STEEP methodology training course (<http://www.smartsteep.eu/resources/>)

- wide enough to touch every sector of influence but focussed on the topic
- dynamic and flexible in approach to be able to fit future evolution and re-calibration due to the monitoring feedbacks

The last consideration implies logically an **ongoing planning process**. The transformation is unlikely to be met simply with an agreed solution, but will require continuous effort to bring about alignment of stakeholders' views on the problem and possible interventions: the actions, which will be documented as plans, are not the end goal, but it is the transformational system that is important.

- The model building and performances monitoring:

The model can be developed by the owners of the transformation in a facilitated group model building workshop, or by a systems expert interviewing the owners, or a mixture of both. An example is shown in figure below.



System model and example of a performance evaluation produced in the REPLICATE project.

The one illustrated in the picture is a system designed to achieve the transformation described in the text. Each sub-process below the top-level process provides more detail about *how* to achieve the process. Two immediate actions are apparent from the Italian Flag scoring of processes i) the <Managing funding & financing mechanisms> process needs to be improved, and ii) the <Managing credit rating> process is completely uncertain and needs some work to research how to implement this process. Note that the model and the evidence is only for illustration purposes.

The systems model can be read **down the page**, where sub-processes provide answers about **how** the high-level processes can be achieved. The model can also be read **up the page** as answers to **why** processes exist. Inferior processes are 'part-of' or contained within superior ones.

The system model is designed to help with decision making and therefore **the processes can be evaluated for performance** using evidence from stakeholders. A colour scheme is used; green for a process performing well, red for processes performing badly, and white where there is little or no information about performance. The arrangement of green, white and red leads to its colloquial label of an **Italian Flag**. For each process that is labelled mostly red there is a clear need to act to improve its performance. For processes that are labelled mostly white then there is a need to find out more about what is happening or what needs to be done. For these 'issue' processes options must be developed to address them in order to improve the overall performance of the system. The stakeholders can be debate arguments for and against each option, or vote on them, until a decision is made about which options to implement. Thus, a group is able to work through the process of deciding a transformation and how it might be achieved leading to an 'action plan'.

The approach can be implemented using the conventional props of flipcharts and post-it notes in face-to-face workshops. An experimental online system is available for working groups to continue developing system models and action plans (so-called same-time/different-places workshops (Yearworth & White, 2019)). Expert systems' modellers have access to modelling software that can produce systems models such as shown in the figure above. The latter can be used to calculate overall system performance metrics for monitoring.

Where there is some commonality of purpose across different municipalities and where there is a common facilitator (or facilitation team) that is operating across them, as is the case with CoME Easy, then there is an opportunity for exploiting some preliminary systems modelling prior to face-to-face workshops taking place. Experience from the expert facilitators themselves, as 'qualified advisors' in using the COM/SECAP and EEA processes, means that there is already an understanding of the transformational purpose that is *shared* or common by all municipalities. At the moment, this understanding is not shared between the qualified advisors, but is brought individually by them to each engagement. However, systems modelling of the sort used in the

STEEP methodology could also be used to *capture* the knowledge of the qualified advisors to build a shared understanding of common elements (processes) of transformation that occur across all municipalities. It can be seen immediately that if these common elements (processes) of transformation need to (re-)discovered every time in a face-to-face workshop then a considerable amount of valuable time could be saved by initiating or seeding the workshop with this preliminary model⁴. Such techniques have been used successfully in the problem structuring field for many years (Rouwette & Vennix, 2006; Vennix, 1996). The precise details of operationalising this preliminary model building stage in CoME EAsy will be published in the forthcoming training materials for qualified advisors and municipalities.

It is expected that the STEEP methodology, enhanced with the preliminary modelling stage, is adopted as a continuous and ongoing process whilst the transformation is underway, rather than just used once at the start; the action plan being updated to reflect tasks completed, learning – which would lead to changes to the structure of the system model, and revised evidence about performance e.g. tasks completed should lead to processes becoming ‘green’. The key message from the STEEP project is that **it is the planning process that is important**; plans are inherently transitory and merely specific artefacts of the process. The co-productive approach with stakeholders’ engagement is not going to end with the adoption of the action plan, but it should follow its monitoring and re-calibration over time.

• Other useful tools

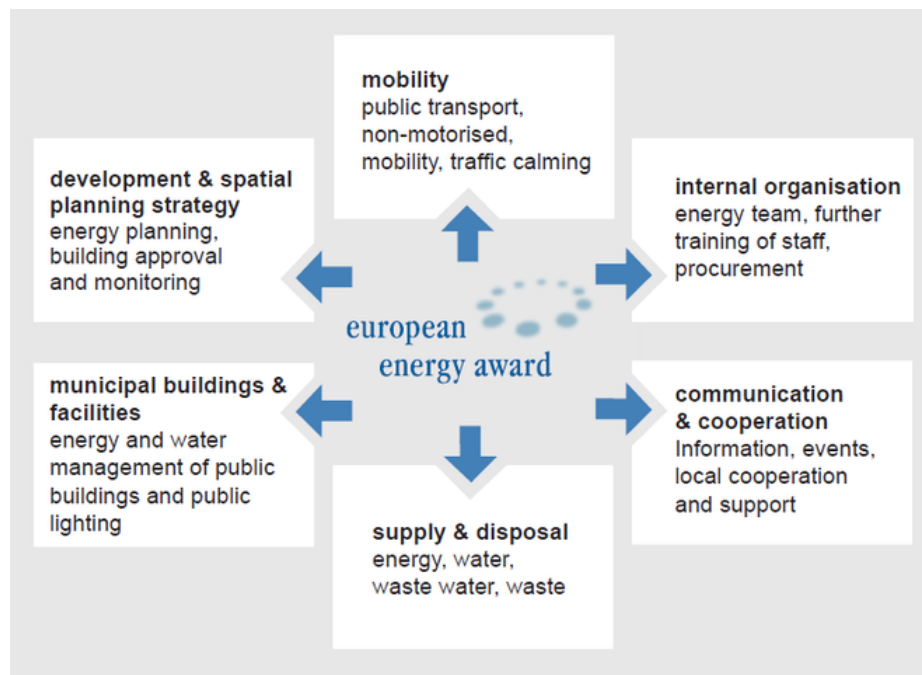
EMT

The EEA-Management-Tool (EMT) with its catalogue of measures is the central online tool in the EEA Programme. It is used as a checklist during position definition, as an aid for planning activities and also as an assessment tool for use during monitoring and external auditing.

The catalogue comprises six separate areas of activity where communities can be active with regard to energy and climate policy.

The EEA process ensures that all activities in each of these areas are systematically determined, assessed, continually checked, co-ordinated and precisely implemented.

⁴ Face-to-face workshops require a considerable investment of time and commitment from stakeholders to attend. This is good for engendering a sense of buy-in to the process, but also places considerable stress on the facilitator to ensure that the maximum benefit is gained from this investment in time. By removing from this process, the elicitation of a model that is generally known implicitly, but to date hasn’t been made explicit, then the benefits from the workshop can be enhanced – primarily from participants being focussed on the processes of transformation that are *specific* to the municipality.



The EEA-Management-Tool six areas

In the six areas of activity, there is a list of 79 possible measures which can be implemented: the significance of each measure is explained, some examples of best practice are provided and each measure is allocated a maximum number of potential points, which can be adjusted depending on the municipality's scope of action, which in turn is determined by its size, structure and competencies.

The catalogue of measures is used for:

1. As a **checklist** for position definition (energy reviews)

During the position definition process, the energy team works through the catalogue step by step, which becomes the basis of the discussion, assessing the level of implementation of each "possible measure" (i.e. a measure which the community can act at least partially).

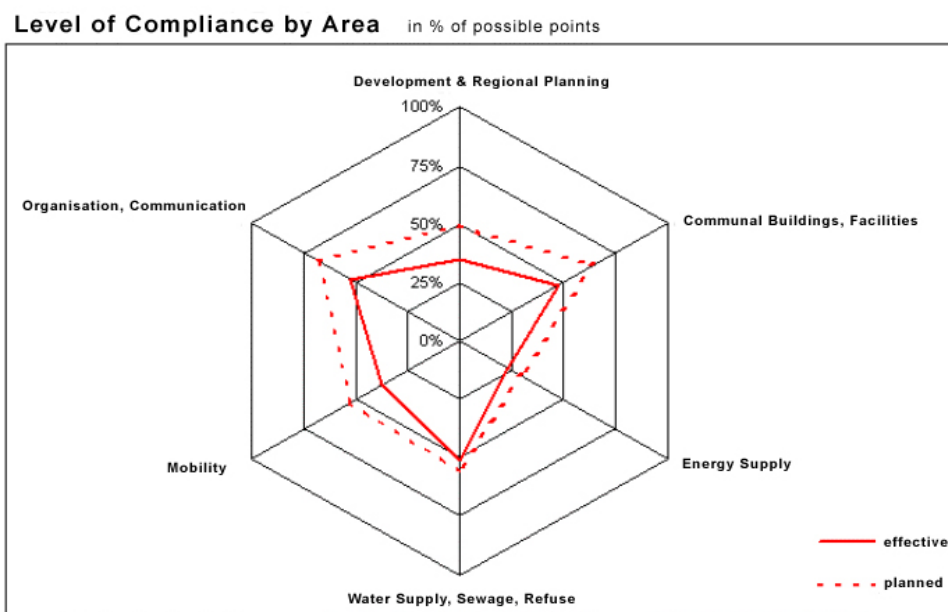
2. As an **aid in planning** future activities

As a result of the diversity of measures listed in the tool, communities are provided with a comprehensive overview of the numerous possibilities open to them, enriched by best practices, where they can select their own set depending on priorities and put their own targets.

3. As a **yardstick** for external auditing, awarding and **benchmarking**

By using the catalogue of measures, the activities of a community are assessed (= the level of implementation of possible measures) and easily compared with those of other communities.

Using the evaluation of points for implemented measures, it is possible to produce automatically reports and an energy policy profile for a community. This profile illustrates the various strengths and weaknesses of a community in the various activity areas.



The energy profile, part of the automatic energy reporting in the EMT

One area of activity is fully dedicated to the communication and cooperation with stakeholders. It gives input to and assess the communal activities under the following sub-chapters:

- Communication and cooperation strategy
- Cooperation and communication with other authorities
- Cooperation and communication with industry, business and trade (including forestry and agriculture)
- Communication and cooperation with residents and local multipliers
- Support for private activities

SWOT, USP and PESTLE analysis

This kind of analysis, derived mainly from the market sector, can be used in a co-productive environment to point out in a simple way the main aspects characterising a plan or a specific action. The main advantages, above the user-friendliness, are to deepen the knowledge about the topic in discussion and to reach a greater consensus on the strategies if stakeholders involved in the intervention participate in the analysis. The risk is to simplify too much the problem if not all the aspects are detected and to obtain subjective and limited results if the evaluation team is not including all the interested parties.

Multi-Criteria Analysis, like PESTLE, are decision-making supporting tool for exploring issues belonging to multiple dimensions or criteria (economic, social and environmental). Both quantitative and qualitative data can be incorporated to understand the relative value placed on different dimensions of decision options.

- SWOT

SWOT Analysis is a well-known and useful technique for understanding Strengths and Weaknesses, and for identifying both the Opportunities and the Threats of a process.

Originated by Albert S. Humphrey in the 1960s, the SWOT matrix could be a powerful tool to support strategy making as it can highlight the characteristics of a project, a program, an organization and the consequent relationships with the operating environment in which it is located, offering a framework of reference for the definition of strategic guidelines aimed at achieving a goal.

The SWOT analysis allows users to reason with respect to the objective they want to achieve while simultaneously taking into account both internal and external variables. The internal variables are those that are part of the system and on which it is possible to intervene; the external ones instead, not depending on the organization, can only be kept under control, in order to exploit the positive factors and limit the factors that risk compromising the achievement of the set objectives.

The SWOT Analysis is constructed through a matrix divided into four fields:

1. **Strengths:** internal factors within the context to be enhanced
2. **Weaknesses:** internal limits to consider
3. **Opportunities:** possibilities for development that are offered by the external context
4. **Threats:** critical external risks

Florence Smart City Control Room and ICT Platform

Strengths (Internal: actions and infrastructures)	Weaknesses (Internal: actions and infrastructures)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNIFI project partner know-how and open tools • Governance model and Digital manifesto signed by major players (service providers) • Existing sectorial platforms (traffic supervisor) and ICT infrastructures • Existing Open data Library • ICT department • Smart city framework (Smart City Plan) and related targets 	<p>Some aspects to be improved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data transferability and graphical visualization tailored on each user • Training of dedicated personnel • Involvement of all the possible data providers • ICT focus in daily activities (tendering procedures, design, ...) of all the sectors
Opportunities (External: influencers and framework)	Threats (External: influencers and framework)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting programs (PON METRO, EU programs...) for the Smart City Control Room creation • Innovative technologies providers links (project partners like E-distribuzione/Enel X, Telecom, Thales...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security issues • GDPR compliance • Agreements for data exchange • Technology fast development

Example of SWOT analysis from REPLICATE project (SPES – WP7)

In the upper part, the first two quadrants highlight the "internal", "proper", material and immaterial aspects that characterize the object of analysis (community, sector, action, etc.) in positive and in negative. In the lower part of the scheme, on the other hand, will be listed the forces, trends and factors, - external to the object of analysis - that can offer support and opportunities for development and those that could make the existing situation even worse and limit the existing future possibilities.

- USP

The USP is the core value of the action, the unique thing that the measure can offer that competitors can't (make sure that it's something that really matters to potential customers/beneficiaries of the measure). It's the "**Competitive Edge**" which makes the action attractive for both the promoter and the beneficiaries.

Florence Smart City Control Room and ICT Platform

The Smart City Control Room has a unique multi-level governance model (Firenze Digitale) which is paving the way for a successful collaboration among utilities, public bodies, private sector and the Municipality (win-win solution).

The whole smart city platform is open source, thus removing the problems of vendor lock-in.

Example of USP analysis from REPLICATE project (SPES – WP7)

- PESTLE and its adaptations

PESTLE is an acronym which means **Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental analysis**. It gives a bird's eye view of the whole environment from many different angles that one wants to check and keep a track of while contemplating on a certain idea/plan. PESTLE is a much more comprehensive version of the SWOT, more linked to strategy.

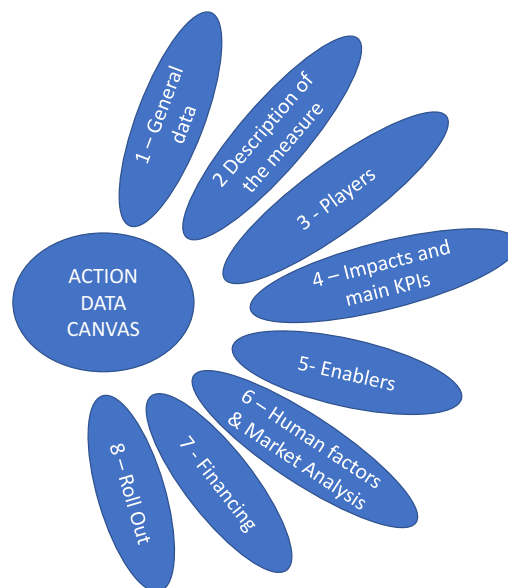
It has been used as supporting tool to prioritise interventions in the STEEP methodology, above the modelling method: based upon the results of the Pestle, the interventions were given a corresponding 'likelihood of success rating' which further defined which interventions to take forward. Performance of a given action was rated from 'exemplary' to 'best practice', 'good practice', 'minimum standard' and finally the 'sub-standard'.

In REPLICATE project, PESTLE concept has been adapted to define the template for describing the common actions in the three City's pilots: its aim was to harmonise the information and to have a complete and unique reference for the measure analysis and discussion.

Addressing the need of implementing a comprehensive methodology for analysing a city's integrated action from different points of view, the proposed framework identifies the key elements of each services, their interaction and the overall effect of the integrated implementation. This tool, named the **Action data Canvas**, inheriting the name form the economic sector models, can be used by cities to create a co-productive description of their actions and the context.

The standard topics included are:

1. General data: contacts, timeframe...
2. Description of the measure: state of the art, issues targeted, size and impact area of the implementation, technical solution selected and its innovation level
3. Players: public and private players taking part also indirectly to the action (to check the reliability of the working group composition)
4. Impacts and main KPIs: direct and indirect impacts in the environmental, economic and social fields; baseline values and monitoring methods are included for the quantified impacts.
5. Enablers: legal framework influencing the action, facilitations and obstacles affecting the implementation
6. Human factor & Market analysis: citizens and stakeholders impacted, success factors and obstacles from the market and the social point of view, costs savings, competitors
7. Financing: investments needed and triggered, financing sources, tendering procedures, management schemes, operational lifetime and expenditure, revenues and business model
8. Roll out: further developments, possible scale-up or replication with impacts



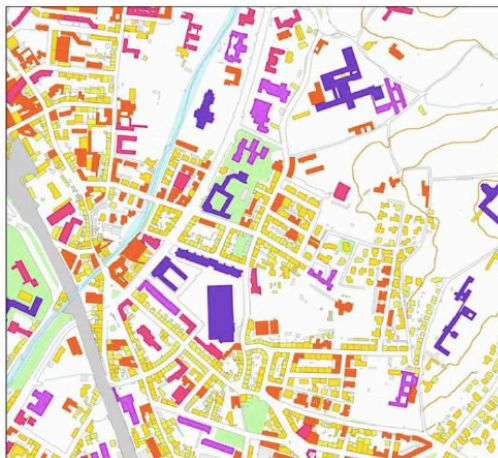
General scheme of the Action Data Canvas from Replicate project (SPES – WP7)

MAPS

Generally, in order to raise the interest of the working groups members, it is recommended to use visual tools: GIS tools, models and schemes which allows to show visually the data being presented.

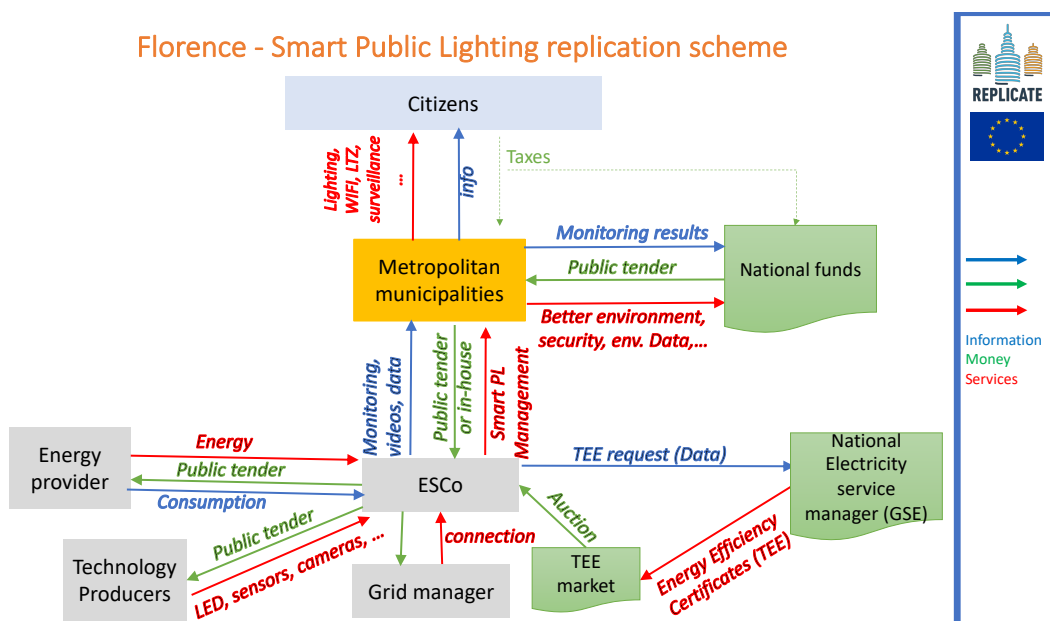
The use of **GIS maps** allows users to create visual representations of data relevant to planning, which they can share with other stakeholders who can then explore and interrogate the data and contribute to the development of new ideas.

Visualising an issue geographically is useful to detect patterns which may not be obvious from the raw data. It allows to target areas more intelligently, and to identify regions where additional interventions may be required. Maps could be also used, for example, to identify groups of people who will be affected by the plan/action, allowing their active engagement as stakeholders.



Example of thematic map: age of the buildings, heating power installed in a city district

Another tool is the **Eco-systems mapping**: for example the “Value Chain models” (ref. Replicate D9.3 - Esade) developed in Replicate project, provide for each action a management model scheme illustrating the links and the value chain (steps, players and values) between the network of stakeholders involved to provide the result.



Example of VCE from Replicate Project mapping interactions between stakeholders.

The flows analysed consider money transfers, services provision and information/data Exchange. Ecosystems are not static as they are evolving over time including new actors, technologies and services and it is important to analyse them periodically together with stakeholders.

KPIs

The measurement of city performance is one of the critical ways in which we can assess the complexity of urban change, and judge which approaches are successful or not.

From the decision-making and planning point of view, it is very important to evaluate the impact of different choices and also to analyse strengths and weaknesses of the territory, underlining achievements of new policies in a fast-evolving economy and critical points as well.

There is a wide collection of global city indexes, benchmarks and comparative rankings produced, but generally the KPIs set has to be:

- ✓ open to any interested stakeholder
- ✓ reliable and valuable
- ✓ standardized,
- ✓ consistent and
- ✓ comparable over time, across cities

The CoME EAsy open platform will provide a set to any other interested municipality for planning and benchmarking activities (ref. D1.7 KPIs set selection).

The main goals in the set selections were:

- ✓ To develop an agreed, valuable and reliable indicator list for the cities to easily evaluate their progress over time.
- ✓ To adapt existing measurement assets in order to make data collection and use less onerous.
- ✓ To achieve broad acceptance and use of the indicators among stakeholders.

5. How to make an initiative successful

From partners experience, CoME EAsy has listed some requirements for successful public involvement:

- ✓ There should be a consensus (and commitment) among decision makers as regards the benefits of involving stakeholders.
- ✓ In the selection of the stakeholders don't stop at usual contacts but try to map all possible interested (directly and indirectly) parties. Stakeholders' selection should be inclusive, meaning that special attention should be given to include players that are potentially marginalised and more vulnerable (e.g. minorities, poor households, etc.)
- ✓ Define the level of involvement of different stakeholders (information, planning process, single project,)
- ✓ Make use of "facilitators" for stakeholders' selection and management

Facilitators and experts

Steering groups usually do not include experts, especially with regards to engagement or communication.

This can be a limit, affecting the result of the engagement activities which can even cause negative effects instead of the desired benefits.

It is necessary to consider the appointment of some resources in the budget for moderators and experts ("facilitators", "advisors" ...) and training courses for steering group members.

- ✓ Engaged stakeholders ought to take part also in the definition of their activities program
- ✓ The offer of allowing members of the public to play an active part must be sincere. Suggestions and initiatives prepared by stakeholders involved in the project must be discussed seriously and their knowledge valued. Under no circumstances are members of the public to be treated as mere PR tools. Some suggestions should be implemented, if all suggestions are always rejected there is a high risk of getting the opposite effect than desired – loss of trust in the decision makers.

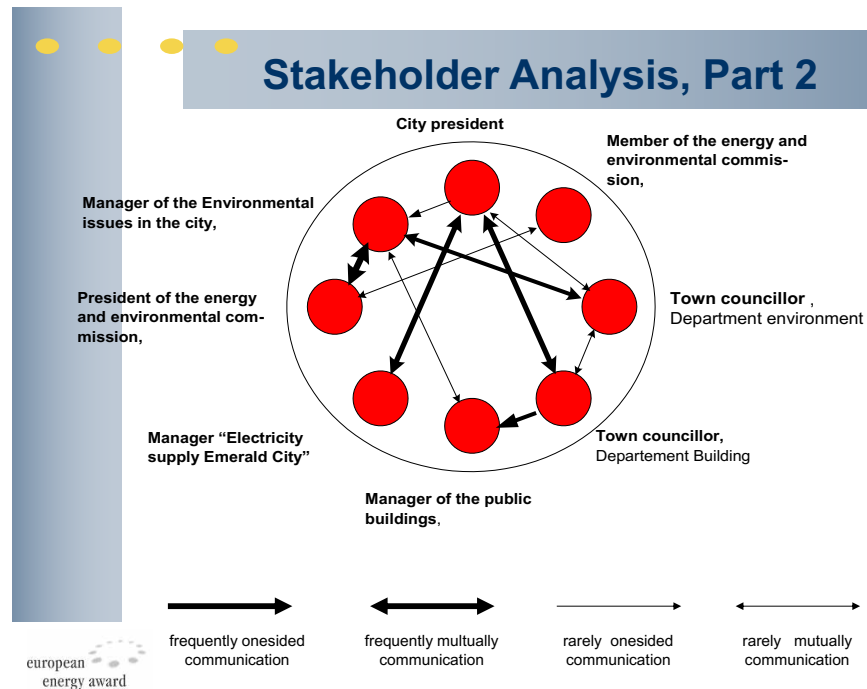
Dealing with Voluntary Members:

- ☐ The voluntary members of the team must not be abandoned and left to their own devices. They must be guided/supervised by full-time community employees (and external experts if necessary), encouraged and relieved of administrative duties.
- ☐ The official community representatives must show that the voluntary work carried out by the members of the public are appreciated. (Suggested methods of showing appreciation include: reimbursement for meetings, joint social events, excursions, funding of relevant training etc.)
- ☐ Voluntary members provide their time free of charge for the benefit of the community. Team leaders should ensure that they are not placed under any unnecessary pressure. Instead they must ensure that their motivation levels and the enjoyment they get from the work is maintained.
- ☐ The formal and administrative requirements should be kept to an absolute minimum otherwise initiative groups will become bored/frustrated.
- ☐ Always leave doors open to make it easy to enter/exit meetings (thereby giving the impression that people can move a little and that they aren't "trapped").
- ☐ Special support must be provided to members who do not have a lot of specialist knowledge (perhaps prior to the start of the programme) – provide them with background knowledge, allocate tasks which show them the progress they are making > experience of success, team integration.
- ☐ If the working team wants additional voluntary members, a clear project end date must be specified from the outset to make it easier for people to decide on participating.
- ☐ Each team member must be able to play an active part. If people spend a long time in the role of "observer" or "spectator", they will become frustrated. (Involve everybody and allow everybody to speak.)

- ✓ Appoint referents and contacts for communications
- ✓ Address ethical issues, including data management (GDPR) and intellectual property rights (IPR).
- ✓ Be prepared to flexibility and changes, but manage expectations clarifying boundaries
- ✓ Analyse stakeholders' behaviour and their interactions to optimise the discussion

Group moderation and analysis:

Making a diagram of the working group could help the moderator/facilitator in detecting lack of communication (one side or mutual contacts, multiple interactions or left out members) and in managing the discussion in favour of the process.



Example of stakeholders group analysis – EEA training materials (ENCO)

Roles within the group could also be classified following typical behaviours (the leader, the admirer, the disruptive, the diplomat, the avoider...) to predict possible conflicts or communication problems (keeping the focus, respecting timing, involving all members, etc).

Some questions could be answered to analyse meetings and improve cooperation, like:

- ✓ Could we proceed the way we wanted to?
- ✓ Who did bother or supported us?
- ✓ How did we take influence?
- ✓ Whose ideas were considered and whose were not?
- ✓ Who took over the lead?
- ✓ How were decisions made?

- ✓ Be aware of conflicting interests and moderate them

Conflicts:

During the first approach with the different stakeholders, the **possible conflicts** that can arise **must be identified**. Restricted meetings can be foreseen to point out obstacles and collect information about conflicts.

Sometimes, the so called “functional” conflicts, could bring positive impacts on the overall results, while dysfunctional problems have to be managed carefully not to affect the dialogue and the exchange with negative relationships.

The recourse to professional moderators or councillors could be foreseen.

In any case it is important to **enhance transparency** of involved interests, trying to solve conflicts through an **open discussion** where people are asked to contribute to solutions not to make them feel as “a problem”.

- ✓ Provide regular feedbacks and circulate results. Involve stakeholders continuously also in the monitoring phase to discuss adaptations and eventual changes

Monitoring and follow up

A sustainable or smart city should aim at a systematic approach to a **continuous improvement** in every activity with or without performance specific criteria.

Following a classic Deming cycle of every quality management system, a plan-do-check-act procedure has to be set up to avoid the plans uselessness.

There are technological, human and institutional factors which could be able to divert municipal policies or to force their fast development: a proper **control system** will detect the weak points that must be recalibrated.

A regular assessment activity focuses attention on the plan and a benchmarking with other municipalities, which could suggest new targets and policies; in this way the success of municipality's efforts could be easily made visible and promoted.

The monitoring activity, that can be supported by the ICT implementation, should take into account indicators evaluating a wide spectrum of sector of influence. In this sense, CoME EAsy project has developed a KPIs tool for benchmarking and control with a set of mandatory and optional indicators and some general data that could support the monitoring activity.

The control system should be as much ambitious and detailed as the targets set by the plan.

The main concept is that **the action plan should be “live” and flexible to fit evolutions** and calibrations based on the step-by-step monitoring of the achievements: these are not time defined activities, but more likely embedded processes where stakeholders and citizens should take part in a **continuous and regular relationship** with the decision making structure.

Killer questions

Partners can count on decades of experience in energy planning and management, trying to engage internal structures and stakeholders in the activity. Hereafter a collection of the most recurring “killer questions” is reported for the use of newly engaged communities and professionals.

- General comments about engagement in the different initiatives

Killer Comment: *What is the point of comparing communities against each other? Each community should be viewed as unique and each one has its own particular conditions which make it impossible to accurately compare them.*

The concept of “benchmarks” is only slowly making its way into community politics. With terms such “location attractiveness” and so on, communities are courting the favour of innovative companies and well-off potential inhabitants. Sometimes it is possible to compare communities. What is truly exciting is discussing the many possibilities.

Killer Comment: *This is just another competition just like all the others. Everyone sets up these competitions and the communities are expected to play their part, but it doesn't bring any rewards.*

Well EnMS or CoM commitment are actually much more than just competitions. Taking part in those programmes is a way of restructuring energy and environmental protection policies right across the board and on all levels. The fact that communities receive recognition, visibility and praise for their efforts is only a part of the system but one which I doubt anyone would object to!

Killer Comment: *If I'm already involved in one of those initiatives, why should I engage to the others doubling the work?*

Just because they're complementary. You won't double your work, but exploit synergies and reuse data and procedures you're already familiar with extending your influence and obtaining more ambitious results

Killer Comment: *We have barely finished working on the legal requirements and regulation and each day new ones are coming along – why should we invest time and money in creating our own programme?*

In the area of energy and climate policy there are “obligations” and “options” – and that is correct. If you believe you are already well-positioned in certain areas, you can go for the options or even for recognitions like certification/award. A variety of communities just stepped in the programmes and they have become more and more enthusiastic thanks also to the feedback of their citizens.

Killer Comment: *What are the real benefits for us in having another plaque outside our offices or another sign outside our town? Nobody will ever notice – you can hardly see our building as it is with all the awards and plaques.*

You have to remember that the primary objective here is not just getting a new plaque! Certification and awards are intended to make the services more efficient and also more visible to increase acceptance and identification among citizens and politicians.

Killer Comment: *The work done on the EnMS won't save a single kWh of power or a single kilogram of CO₂ – it would make much more sense to invest directly in measures instead of sitting around yet again to discuss things and wasting paper on notes.*

Breaking silos, providing guidance and best practices, involving stakeholders, monitoring achievements are supporting activities which can concretely influence results in terms of savings.

Killer Comment: *We know ourselves how best to tackle these problems and we don't need an award or a programme – what we need is money and unfortunately, these won't get us any!*

Recognition and awards create acceptance and political acceptance brings greater funding.

Killer Comment: *The certifications/awards won't result in a single new company setting up in the region – we would be better concentrating on economic measures. This type of programme will only discourage companies because they are afraid to be subjected to even greater scrutiny.*

You're partly correct, lower taxes do make for a better argument for companies setting up in an area! But having said that, a clear policy framework with the chance of co-production in decision making processes is a valuable service. Communities made visible for their climate ambitious results could be a good location for companies interested in green topics.

Killer Comment: *We have already implemented a number of measures in relation to energy efficiency and climate policy. We have no need for more projects.*

The initiatives like CoM and EEA also evaluate activities which were carried out in the past. These programmes recognise existing efforts, not just new ones!

Killer Comment: *Our community does not have the resources to put money into implementing measures. Is there any point in taking part in such programmes?*

The most important thing to remember here is that the speed and manner of implementation activities is determined entirely by each community. Even communities with limited finances have options and they can take part in what are known as low-level measures. The energy savings could make further resources available in the next years and new forms of financing (ESCOs, crowd funding, PPPP...) can be used.

Killer Comment: *Why should we publicise our internal processes and responsibilities? Nobody does that! We don't want people from outside the organisation telling us what we should do.*

Communities are not forced to do anything! There are no compulsory measures and the content and targets are defined by the community. The initiatives provide support for the work in energy and climate field and they will even recognise good work when certain standards have been reached! And of course, all sensitive community information is treated in the strictest of confidence.

Killer Comment: *The only way of ensuring that the initiatives are processed properly is to dedicate a considerable amount of resources to research.*

This is true, but the success of climate protection and adaptation policies can avoid further costs for externalities incurred later on.

Killer Comment: *What kind of credibility do the results quality figures (CO₂ reductions and other KPIs) have? Are they scientifically verified?*

The values calculated are based on common experience of several projects/initiatives. Using these values, communities can get a good idea of the effects of their activities. Their accuracy depends on the availability of data at local level. User friendly tool and guide is available for calculations to avoid mistakes and benchmarking is possible on the project platform. No data will be published without the agreement of the owner and in compliance with the GDPR rules.

- Working group and stakeholders' involvement

Killer Comment: *If each stakeholder in the working group is to be represented, the team will become too big and ineffective.*

Not all stakeholders have to be represented in the steering team. However, it must be possible for each group to become involved in the process in some form or another.

It is important to underline that although municipalities are the promoters and the engine of sustainability policies, they only control a small percentage of their territory's consumption and emissions, as well as of the financial capacity needed. It is therefore necessary to engage stakeholders and private partners in innovative participation models from the decision making to the implementation to achieve the EU targets

Killer Comment: *What are the benefits of participation for individual stakeholders in a community?*

Interdepartmental nature of the work creates new synergies, rationalises processes and generates new ideas. What's more, the stakeholders can work on redesigning climate policy in a process-orientated manner. Ideas aren't lost in the process, but they are gathered together.

Stakeholders' involvement makes the visions, targets and achievements of energy and climate policy directly accessible to the broadest possible audience and creates engagement to the program.

It is also interesting from the point of view of empowering citizens: they acquire new skills and personal qualities which may later apply in other areas.

Killer Comment: *Reorganisation and new working groups are of no use whatsoever if additional work is piled on top of existing work - don't you think we 're busy enough? What we need is more staff and resources. The programme won't give us that – it will only create more work for staff who are already overloaded. We have already used up all of our financial and staff resources.*

If everything is so overburdened, you really need reorganisation as a matter of urgency! Together with the employees, a Total Quality process is the ideal way of finding the most efficient solutions. The possibility of discussing problems with unusual speakers from other sectors or even external could provide new solutions and exploit synergies facilitating your work.

Killer Comment: *We cannot bring together 10 people for a one-day “position definition” meeting which is only relevant to about one sixth of them. It'll be a waste of time just having them sitting around twiddling their thumbs.*

It is important that all departments have a broad overview and understanding of the energy policy activities of the community as a whole. This interdepartmental work creates new synergies, shortens work processes and generates new ideas. The attendance, naturally, takes time but if silos will be overcome, significant savings can be obtained for all the involved parties.

Killer Comment: *There's no point in nominating a politician to the steering team because only the behind-the-scenes people with no real authority will be sent. That will be of no use to the work.*

There can be no behind-the-scenes people in this programme. Managing energy and climate policy is a matter for leaders!

Killer Comment: *What happens if a stakeholder has a very negative position?*

Initial survey before the meeting could help for the identification of mitigation actions

Killer Comment: *What happens if there is an alliance between different stakeholders within the stakeholder group against the initiative?*

It could happen but, as in the previous comment, it can be foreseen and mitigated. A facilitator could be useful to avoid problems.

Killer Comment: *What happens if during the discussion the group takes to discuss topics that are not strictly pertinent?*

The facilitator has the task of redirecting the discussion, and the staff of the municipality should monitor the focus.

Killer Comment: *Why should we involve hostile stakeholders?*

To avoid problems during the implementation, the involvement in the decision-making process is important to mitigate negative positions through the discussion, highlighting benefits of the initiative, and the flexibility of the results

Killer Comment: *Some stakeholders can see participation as a public communication opportunity.*

It is true, but this aspect should be managed and it can become a strength for the process enhancing motivation. The owner of the process, i.e. the municipality with the support of the facilitator, should control the communication strategy, providing materials correctly informing about objectives and results and common communication rules.

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EEA Process guidelines with public involvement in energy team and materials for EEA advisors

Images of stakeholders' working groups have been kindly provided by the city of Florence.

