



Paths to upgrading community energy: Community energy upgrade toolkit

Deliverable 3.3

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Executive summary

The aim of this toolkit is to support the advancement of energy community maturity levels by providing a collection of existing toolkits, strategies, and briefs that help in the design of services to energy communities, their resources, targets, and engagement strategies. It aims to equip project partners, energy communities, and their national coalitions, as well as community leaders with the knowledge and practical tools necessary to foster sustainable and inclusive energy communities. By compiling existing guides and resources, the toolkit offers a comprehensive reference point for stakeholders looking to navigate regulatory frameworks, secure funding, engage communities effectively, and implement inclusive and just energy transitions.





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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 9 |
| 1.1. About Life-COMET project | 9 |
| 1.2. Aim and scope of the toolkit..... | 9 |
| 1.3. Structure of the document | 11 |
| 2. PATHS TO UPGRADING COMMUNITY ENERGY..... | 19 |
| 2.1. Frameworks for Enabling Community Energy | 19 |
| 2.1.1. How to improve transposition of community energy related directives? | 19 |
| Energy Communities under the Clean Energy Package: Transposition Guidance..... | 19 |
| Unleashing the power of community energy: Policy recommendations | 20 |
| REScoop.eu briefing on the revised RED | 20 |
| 2.1.2. How to build and include community energy into local, regional, and national strategies?..... | 21 |
| How cities can back renewable energy communities | 21 |
| Community Energy Municipal Guide..... | 22 |
| Enabling Energy Communities - A Toolkit for Just Transition Regions | 22 |
| 2.1.3. How to improve regulatory framework for community energy? | 23 |
| A roadmap to developing a policy and legal framework that enables the development of energy communities...23 | |
| 2.2. Practical development of community | 25 |
| 2.2.1. How to develop and promote sustainable business models for community energy?..... | 25 |
| Structured Overview of Existing and Emerging Business Models | 25 |
| Business Model Innovation Tool for Energy Communities | 25 |
| Leveraging European Public Funds to Support Energy Communities | 26 |
| COMPILE Toolkit: Financing Guide | 27 |
| Report on novel financing instruments for RECs | 27 |
| Financing Guide for Energy Communities | 28 |
| Financing Community Energy – A short guide for banks | 29 |
| Business Models with a Value Proposition to Vulnerable Households | 29 |
| ACCE Self-Management Guide | 30 |
| RES Project Development Guide | 31 |
| Financial Handbook: A Guide and several Business Cases | 31 |
| 2.2.2. How to ensure collective self-consumption, energy saving and efficiency?..... | 32 |
| Setting up community energy one-stop-shops..... | 32 |
| Guidelines on Community Heating and Cooling | 33 |
| Redistributing Power: How Can Renewable Energy Communities Alleviate Energy Poverty? | 34 |





| | |
|---|-----------|
| Energy Solidarity Toolkit: Practical ways for energy communities to tackle energy poverty | 34 |
| Energy sharing for energy communities - a reference guide | 35 |
| Citizen-led Renovation Resources Hub | 35 |
| 2.3. Community Energy Growth | 37 |
| 2.3.1. How to develop networks and mobilise stakeholders for community energy? | 37 |
| COMPILE Toolkit: Stakeholder Engagement Guide..... | 37 |
| SCCALE Community Energy Methodology Guide | 37 |
| Participatory Toolkit for Building More Inclusive Community Energy | 38 |
| Inclusivity Guide for Energy Communities | 39 |
| 2.3.2. How to improve knowledge and raise awareness of community energy? | 39 |
| Community energy communications at the local level..... | 39 |
| Best practice guide for Southeast Europe | 40 |
| COOLkit toolbox | 41 |
| Community Energy Guide: A Practical Guide to Reclaiming Power | 41 |
| COMPILE Toolkit best practice guide | 42 |
| Joining or setting up a rural energy community | 43 |

List of Tables

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Table 1: SCCALE Legend | 10 |
| Table 2: Key resources | 11 |





1. Introduction

1.1. About Life-COMET project

This deliverable is a part of Life-COMET project which aims to create community energy coalitions at national level in Eastern European countries and support pioneer energy communities in Greece, Croatia, Romania, Hungary, Slovenia, Poland, and Estonia. It was prepared under WP3 – National Coalitions’ Capacity Building – the work package that aims to empower national community energy coalitions, deliver the capacity building events for national partners in order to develop skills and tools to allow the catalysation of energy communities, develop a community energy upgrade toolkit for improving the national energy community maturity levels, and empower the stakeholders at the national level to provide effective support to future and existing community energy initiatives.

Under WP3 several activities were already implemented. A methodology for the assessment of community energy maturity on a national level was developed based on 11 criteria that impact maturity level of energy communities (political will, regulatory framework, business models, financing, collective self-consumption, local, regional, and national strategies, networking, transposition process, knowledge, awareness raising, stakeholder engagement). The assessment done at national level showed that Greece demonstrates a moderate level of maturity, while the remaining countries are at minimum level of maturity.

Challenges common to all countries relate to regulatory gaps that restrict the development and operation of energy communities, emerging business models that are not yet sustainable or scalable, limited financial incentives that undermine the long-term viability of community initiatives and low stakeholder engagement in policy promotion, resulting in minimal improvements to support frameworks for energy communities.

To address these issues, tailor-made action plans were developed for each country. These plans focus on policy promotion to improve regulatory and financial frameworks, mobilizing and strengthening national coalitions to foster collaboration and amplify policy feedback and developing and promoting innovative business models to support sustainable growth.

This toolkit was prepared to empower and support project partners and national community energy coalitions to tackle the challenges that hinder the development and operation of energy communities at national level and therefore support the efforts to increase the energy community maturity levels.

1.2. Aim and scope of the toolkit

The aim of this toolkit is to support the advancement of energy community maturity levels by providing a collection of existing toolkits, strategies, and briefs. It aims to equip project partners, energy communities, and their national coalitions, and community leaders with the knowledge and practical tools necessary to foster sustainable and inclusive energy communities. Some of the tools included in the toolkit are policy oriented and can therefore be used by policymakers to improve or change the existing national policy framework. By compiling existing guides and resources, the toolkit offers a comprehensive reference point for stakeholders looking to navigate regulatory frameworks, secure funding, engage communities effectively, and implement inclusive and just energy transitions.





This toolkit is designed for stakeholders engaged in energy community development. Energy communities and citizen groups will find guidance on governance, financing, and inclusivity strategies. They will also find arguments to convey to policymakers at the national and regional levels for designing enabling frameworks that facilitate the growth of community-led energy initiatives and to engage with local governments and municipalities to improve their understanding of their role in supporting and collaborating with energy communities. Additionally, researchers, policy promotion groups, and NGOs can leverage the toolkit to advance policy feedback and raise awareness about the benefits of energy democracy and equitable energy access.

The toolkit covers a broad spectrum of topics essential for energy community development, organized into key themes:

- Frameworks for Enabling Community Energy,
- Practical development of community,
- Community Energy Growth.

These three themes address 11 criteria used to assess the energy maturity level assessment and prepare tailored-made action plans for maturity level upgrade, as described in the [Chapter 1.1](#).


To make the document more accessible to new community energy groups and new project leaders in existing energy communities, and to help them grow a community energy initiative from a core group of people into a large group of engaged citizens who can develop and maintain their community energy project on their own, we used the basic structure of the [SCCALE methodology](#). The SCCALE structure includes 4 different stages of community energy projects: (1) Inspiration, (2) Preparation, (3) Implementation, and (4) Operation. Each of the stages are represented by a different icon, based on the legend below.

Table 1: SCCALE Legend

| Stage | Icon |
|--|------|
| Inspiration A core group of people starts shaping an idea and vision of a project | |
| Preparation A core group of people prepares the community energy project | |
| Implementation A community energy project is formally launched and becomes a reality | |








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|--|---|
| Operation | |
| An operational energy community maintains and may improve its activities |  |

1.3. Structure of the document

The table below provides an organized overview of key resources included in the Community Energy Upgrade Toolkit. It categorizes these resources by name, description, and topic, making it easier to identify relevant guides, reports, and toolkits based on specific areas of interest.





Table 2: Key resources

| Resource | Description | Theme | Topic | Stage |
|--|--|--|---------------------|---|
| Energy Communities under the Clean Energy Package | Outlines how to implement EU regulations on renewable and citizen energy communities, focusing on principles like open participation, market access, and non-discrimination, offering practical advice on financing, legal structures, and governance to support the design of services for energy communities' and their development. | Frameworks for Enabling Community Energy | Policy & Regulation |  |
| Unleashing the power of community energy: Policy recommendations | Analyses EU and national legislation affecting community energy, examining key directives like the Clean Energy Package and REPowerEU while offering recommendations to strengthen policies supporting Renewable and Citizen Energy Communities, which would help the design of services for energy communities. | Frameworks for Enabling Community Energy | Policy & Regulation |  |
| REScoop.eu briefing on the revised | Analyses amendments under Fit for 55 and REPowerEU, providing recommendations for integrating Renewable Energy Communities | Frameworks for Enabling Community Energy | Policy & Regulation |  |





[Renewable Energy Directive \(RED\)](#) (RECs) into national frameworks, helping policy makers in designing services.

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| A roadmap to developing a policy and legal framework that enables the development of energy communities | The document provides EU Member States with a step-by-step guide to fostering Renewable and Citizen Energy Communities through clear definitions, financial support, regulatory conditions, and iterative policy development based on real-world experience, helping the design of services for energy communities. | Frameworks for Enabling Community Energy | Policy & Regulation |  |
| How Cities Can Back Renewable Energy Communities | Guidebook for municipalities to support community-led renewable energy projects, featuring regulatory frameworks and best practices, helping them develop an enabling framework for energy communities. | Frameworks for Enabling Community Energy | Municipal & Local Government Support |  |
| Community Energy Municipal Guide | Practical resource for municipalities on integrating community-led initiatives into local energy planning, helping energy communities with targets of increase of local renewable energy production. | Frameworks for Enabling Community Energy | Municipal & Local Government Support |  |
| Enabling Energy Communities - A Toolkit for Just Transition Regions | Key regulatory insights, funding mechanisms, and successful models to support energy communities reaching their targets of local renewable energy adoption, economic benefits, and social cohesion. | Frameworks for Enabling Community Energy | Municipal & Local Government Support |  |
| Structured Overview of Existing and | Analysis of business models for EU energy communities, focusing on key elements like value | Practical development of community | Financing & Investment |  |





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|---|--|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| <u>Emerging Business Models</u> | propositions, technologies, and governance, with recommendations to enhance effectiveness and support energy communities in developing resources. | | | |
| <u>Business Model Innovation Tool for Energy Communities</u> | Tool that helps energy communities develop their resources, especially in the design of sustainable business models, offering 25 patterns across key areas to ensure financial viability, local adaptation, and long-term success. | Practical development of community | Financing & Investment | |
| <u>Leveraging European Public Funds to Support Energy Communities</u> | This policy brief examines how EU public funds can support community-led energy projects, emphasizing the role of regulatory frameworks and offering recommendations for accessible, citizen-inclusive funding schemes, helping communities in the development of their resources. | Practical development of community | Financing & Investment | |
| <u>COMPILE Toolkit: Financing Guide</u> | Supports energy communities in developing their resources, by helping them navigate financing options and ownership structures to develop sustainable, effective projects. | Practical development of community | Financing & Investment | |
| <u>Report on novel financing instruments for RECs</u> | Explores innovative financial mechanisms to support RECs in Europe, providing analysis and recommendations to improve financial accessibility and align tools with community-driven energy transitions, helping energy communities develop their funding resources. | Practical development of community | Financing & Investment | |





[Financing Guide for Energy Communities](#)

Introduces community energy financing, highlighting equity, debt, and grant options, and explores crowdfunding as a versatile tool, offering strategies to develop financial resources of communities and strategies to balance ownership, control, and risk while ensuring sustainable, community-driven energy projects.

Practical development of community

Financing & Investment



[Financing Community Energy – A short guide for banks](#)

Helps banks understand and engage with community-led renewable energy projects, offering insights on financing, risks, and successful case studies to promote sustainable energy, which helps in the development of financing services for energy communities.

Practical development of community

Financing & Investment



[Business Models with a Value Proposition to Vulnerable Households](#)

This report examines sustainable business models to combat energy poverty in five pilot cities, highlighting energy cooperatives, communities, and one-stop-shops while emphasizing local adaptation, stakeholder collaboration, and community engagement strategies for long-term success.

Practical development of community

Financing & Investment, Energy Poverty



[ACCE Self-Management Guide](#)

Helps energy communities develop sustainable financing resources, mechanisms, and effective governance for successful, long-term renewable energy projects.

Practical development of community

Financing & Investment



[RES Project Development Guide](#)

Provides practical advice on financing community energy projects, outlining five types of Community Energy Financing Schemes (CEFS) and key success factors for securing funds at

Practical development of community

Financing & Investment





different stages, from early development to long-term operation, assuring that energy communities know what funding resources are out there.

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|---|--|--|---------------------------------|--|
| <u>Financial Handbook: A Guide and several Business Cases</u> | Provides solutions to the financial challenges faced by community energy projects, offering financing resources, tailored funding mechanisms, risk mitigation strategies, and examples of successful business models, while emphasizing collaboration between public, private, and community stakeholders for sustainable financing. | Practical development of community | Financing & Investment | |
| <u>Setting up community energy one-stop-shops</u> | Offers a practical guide for setting up support structures for energy communities, covering key steps, services, stakeholder engagement, and real-world examples to tailor OSS to local needs. | Frameworks for Enabling Community Energy | Technical & Operational Support | |
| <u>Guidelines on Community Heating and Cooling</u> | Describes how citizen-led projects can decarbonize heating by building services, engaging communities, and providing resources, while highlighting success factors like democratic ownership and tackling barriers like funding and regulation. | Practical development of community | Community Energy Development | |
| <u>Redistributing Power: How Can Renewable Energy Communities Alleviate Energy Poverty?</u> | Help energy communities in achieving social equity targets by exploring how RECs can address energy injustice and poverty, highlighting their potential to empower citizens, reduce costs, and promote equitable energy access, while promoting supportive policies | Community Energy Growth | Energy Poverty | |





and inclusive governance for their growth.

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|--|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <u>Energy Solidarity Toolkit: Practical ways for energy communities to tackle energy poverty</u> | Offers guidance to energy communities in integrating solidarity measures into their operations, targeting energy poverty, and helping them achieve their social equity targets. | Community Energy Growth | Energy Poverty | |
| <u>Energy sharing for energy communities - a reference guide</u> | Explores energy sharing in communities, offering insights on business models, regulatory approaches, and key terms to help energy communities set up viable, localized renewable energy initiatives. | Practical development of community | Energy Sharing | |
| <u>Citizen-led Renovation Resources Hub</u> | Serves as a central platform for sharing best practices, providing resources, technical assistance, helping develop services and fostering collaboration among stakeholders to support and scale up citizen-led renovation initiatives across Europe | Practical development of community | Citizen-led Renovation | |
| <u>COMPILE Toolkit: Stakeholder Engagement Guide</u> | Provides resources for establishing energy communities, focusing on organizing core groups, raising local support, and creating democratic governance structures, while offering strategic planning tools, resources, and methods for developing community engagement strategies and volunteer management. | Community Energy Growth | Inclusivity & Community Engagement | |





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|--|---|--|------------------------------------|--|
| <u>SCCALE Community Energy Methodology Guide</u> | Offers a structured approach to citizen engagement in community energy projects, providing help in developing engagement strategies, practical insights, and steps from project initiation to operation, based on lessons from five pilot projects. | Community Energy Growth | Inclusivity & Community Engagement | |
| <u>Participatory Toolkit for Building More Inclusive Community Energy Cooperatives</u> | Focuses on developing engagement strategies for including underrepresented communities using participatory research and co-design methodologies. | Community Energy Growth | Inclusivity & Community Engagement | |
| <u>Inclusivity Guide for Energy Communities</u> | Provides strategies for making energy communities accessible and equitable, including gender audits and intersectional analysis frameworks. | Community Energy Growth | Inclusivity & Community Engagement | |
| <u>Community energy communications at the local level</u> | Provides practical strategies for effectively communicating and engaging local communities, helping to build support and sustainability for energy initiatives. | Community Energy Growth | Inclusivity & Community Engagement | |
| <u>Best Practice Guide for Southeast Europe</u> | Highlights successful energy community initiatives in the Balkans and provides a blueprint for new projects. | Frameworks for Enabling Community Energy | Best Practices & Case Studies | |
| <u>COOLkit toolbox</u> | Guides and technical tools to support energy communities in the development of financing resources, stakeholder engagement, and grid management. | Practical development of community | Technical & Operational Support | |





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| <u>Community Energy Guide: A Practical Guide to Reclaiming Power</u> | Offers practical advice for developing locally owned renewable energy projects, drawing on 27 European initiatives to help develop resources in funding, technology, while highlighting the social, economic, and environmental benefits of community-led energy. | Practical development of community | Community Energy Development | |
| <u>COMPILE Toolkit: Best Practice Guide</u> | Offers case studies and best practices for establishing, managing energy communities, and developing their resources. | Practical development of community | Best Practices & Case Studies | |
| <u>Joining or setting up a rural energy community</u> | Outlines the benefits and challenges of rural energy communities, focusing on environmental, economic, and social advantages while offering guidance on group dynamics, resources, engagement strategies, and policy alignment. | Practical development of community | Community Energy Development | |





2. Paths to upgrading community energy

2.1. Frameworks for Enabling Community Energy

2.1.1. How to improve transposition of community energy related directives?

Energy Communities under the Clean Energy Package: Transposition Guidance

The report provides a detailed framework for implementing the definitions and regulations related to renewable energy communities (RECs) and citizen energy communities (CECs) under the EU’s Clean Energy Package. It outlines the key principles, such as the non-commercial nature, open participation, and effective control, while also addressing challenges in transposing these definitions across different member states. The guidance emphasizes the need for a coherent regulatory approach to ensure market access, non-discriminatory treatment, and appropriate support for these community-driven energy models.

It also covers practical measures like facilitating access to financing, supporting low-income households, and creating enabling frameworks for RECs and CECs to thrive. The document stresses the importance of equal treatment in energy markets, fostering innovation through regulatory sandboxes, and ensuring energy communities can contribute to grid stability without undue costs. It also provides insights into legal structures, governance models, and administrative procedures necessary to implement energy communities effectively across Europe.

| | |
|--|---|
| Who is this for: Policymakers |  |
| Why is it useful: Equips national community energy coalitions and partners with practical guidance, legal clarity, and policy tools to effectively implement and promote supportive frameworks for energy communities across Europe, helping to build better services for energy communities. | |
| Published: REScoop.eu, ClientEarth, 2023 | |





Unleashing the power of community energy: Policy recommendations


The "Unleashing the Power of Community Energy: Policy Recommendations" report, published in May 2023 as part of the SCCALE 20-30-50 project, provides a comprehensive analysis of the legislative landscape affecting community energy initiatives across the European Union. It examines key EU directives, including the Clean Energy Package, Fit for 55 Package, REPowerEU plan, and the Electricity Market Design Reform proposal, highlighting their implications for RECs and CECs. The report underscores the significant shift these directives represent, acknowledging and promoting the active participation of citizens in the energy transition.

Beyond the EU framework, the document delves into the national legislative contexts of several countries, such as Belgium (Flanders), France, the Netherlands, Greece, and Croatia. It assesses the current state of affairs, examines how existing policies impact community energy projects, and offers tailored recommendations to foster a more supportive environment for these initiatives. By providing both EU-wide and country-specific insights, the report aims to empower policymakers, community leaders, and stakeholders to create favorable legislative conditions that enable community energy projects to thrive and contribute effectively to the broader energy transition.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who is this for: Policymakers, energy communities |  |
| Why is it useful: Offers EU-wide and country-specific policy insights and recommendations to help shape supportive legislation, build services, and accelerate community energy development. | |
| Published: SCCALE, 2023 | |

REScoop.eu briefing on the revised RED

The REScoop.eu briefing on the revised Renewable Energy Directive (RED) analyzes the amendments introduced under the Fit for 55 and REPowerEU packages. It provides several recommendations for Member States and the European Commission to further integrate RECs into national energy frameworks. These include incorporating RECs into offshore wind policies, promoting collaboration between local authorities and RECs through public procurement, ensuring community participation in renewable projects within acceleration areas, and allocating adequate resources to local authorities for supporting RECs in permitting processes. The document emphasizes the importance of clear guidance and supportive policies to facilitate the active involvement of citizens and local communities in the renewable energy transition.

| | |
|---|---|
| Who is this for: Local, regional, and national policymakers, the European Commission |  |
| Why is it useful: Helps national community energy coalitions and partners by offering targeted policy recommendations and practical strategies to better | |






| | |
|---|--|
| integrate RECs into national energy systems and empower citizen participation and engagement in energy communities and the energy transition. | |
| Publication: REScoop.eu, 2024 | |

2.1.2. How to build and include community energy into local, regional, and national strategies?

How cities can back renewable energy communities

The guidebook "How Cities Can Back Renewable Energy Communities" serves as a comprehensive resource for local and regional policymakers aiming to foster community-led renewable energy initiatives. It underscores the pivotal role of municipalities in facilitating the energy transition by empowering citizens and local organizations to actively participate in energy production and management. The document provides a detailed description of various collaborative models between local authorities and community energy projects, emphasizing the significance of creating supportive regulatory frameworks, offering direct project support, and managing energy infrastructures inclusively. By showcasing successful examples from across Europe, the guidebook illustrates practical approaches for integrating community energy into local strategies, thereby enhancing energy democracy and ensuring that the socio-economic benefits of renewable energy are widely shared.

A key focus of the guidebook is on actionable strategies that municipalities can adopt to support renewable energy communities. These strategies include incorporating community ownership targets into long-term climate and energy plans, mandating citizen participation in energy projects developed by private entities, and promoting urban-rural partnerships to leverage diverse resources and expertise. The guidebook highlights the importance of involving communities in planning processes, adopting innovative energy procurement methods, and collaborating with higher levels of government to establish conducive policies. By implementing these measures, local authorities can create an enabling environment that not only accelerates the deployment of renewable energy but also strengthens community engagement and resilience in the face of climate challenges.

| | |
|--|---|
| Who is this for: Municipalities, energy communities, local, regional, and national policymakers |  |
| Why is it useful: Supports national community energy coalitions and partners by offering actionable strategies and inspiring examples to help municipalities build | |





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| resources and create enabling environments that integrate and scale up renewable energy communities. | |
| Published: Energy Cities, 2019 | |

Community Energy Municipal Guide

The Community Energy Municipal Guide serves as a practical resource for municipalities looking to collaborate with energy communities and integrate community-led initiatives into local energy planning. It provides an overview of the legal and regulatory frameworks that shape community energy participation in Europe and highlights strategies for municipalities to support these initiatives beyond traditional public procurement processes. The guide presents case studies from pioneering cities, showcasing different approaches such as co-investment in local energy projects, shared staffing and resources, and direct municipal membership in energy communities.

The guide also outlines the roles municipalities can adopt to foster community energy, from sponsors and co-owners to facilitators and partners in citizen-led initiatives. It emphasizes the importance of local engagement, offering insights into public outreach and communication strategies that ensure broader participation. A key takeaway is that municipalities play a critical role in overcoming legal and financial barriers to scaling community energy. The guide further highlights policy instruments, including direct municipal investments, procurement strategies, and platforms for knowledge exchange, to inspire action at the local level.

| | |
|--|---|
| Who is this for: Municipalities, energy communities |  |
| Why is it useful: Demonstrates how municipalities can actively enable and scale community energy through supportive roles, strategic investments, and collaborative local planning approaches, ensuring or building engagement. | |
| Published: SCCALE, 2022 | |

Enabling Energy Communities - A Toolkit for Just Transition Regions

This toolkit serves as a comprehensive guide for local and regional policymakers, particularly in areas affected by the transition away from carbon-intensive industries. It defines energy communities as collective initiatives where citizens, local authorities, and businesses collaboratively finance, own, govern, and engage in energy-related activities such as production, consumption, storage, sharing, and aggregation. The toolkit emphasizes the potential of these communities to foster local renewable energy deployment, enhance social cohesion, and ensure that the economic benefits of energy projects remain within the community, thereby contributing to a just and inclusive energy transition.





To support the establishment of energy communities, the toolkit outlines key considerations, including understanding relevant EU regulations, maintaining community identity, and exploring various funding mechanisms. It provides practical examples of successful energy community models across Europe, highlighting their replicability in Just Transition Fund (JTF) regions. Additionally, the document discusses the potential for job creation associated with energy communities and presents five core principles for promoting their development in transitioning regions. By offering this guidance, the toolkit aims to empower local stakeholders to effectively navigate the complexities of forming energy communities, ultimately facilitating a more localized and equitable approach to renewable energy adoption.

| | |
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| <p>Who is this for: Local and regional policymakers, particularly in areas affected by the transition away from carbon-intensive industries</p> |  |
| <p>Why is it useful: Supports national community energy coalitions and partners by offering targeted guidance and replicable models to help foster inclusive, locally anchored energy communities in regions undergoing the transition from carbon-intensive industries, enhancing the engagement of local population in the energy transition.</p> | |
| <p>Published: ICLEI Europe, 2023</p> | |

2.1.3. How to improve regulatory framework for community energy?

[A roadmap to developing a policy and legal framework that enables the development of energy communities](#)

The document "A Roadmap to Developing a Policy and Legal Framework That Enables the Development of Energy Communities," provides a comprehensive guide for EU Member States to RECs and CECs. It emphasizes a "learning-by-doing" approach, recognizing that each Member State starts from a different baseline, with some having decades of experience and others just beginning. The roadmap outlines five foundational building blocks: clear definitions for energy communities, access to information and awareness-raising, financial support, minimal regulatory conditions, and a registration and monitoring framework. These elements are designed to create an enabling environment for energy communities to emerge and thrive, with examples from various Member States illustrating successful implementations.





The document also highlights the importance of iterative policy development, where initial pilot projects and temporary frameworks are refined based on real-world experience. It underscores the need for national assessments of barriers and potential, setting policy objectives, and creating enabling conditions for business models. The roadmap serves as a practical tool for policymakers, offering actionable steps and best practices to support energy communities, which play a crucial role in the EU's energy transition by promoting social acceptance, private investment, and local benefits. The annexes provide further details on registration, monitoring, and case studies from Member States, reinforcing the adaptable and collaborative nature of the proposed framework.

| | |
|--|---|
| Who is this for: National policymakers | A yellow circle with a green outline, with two green leaves sprouting from the top. |
| Why is it useful: Valuable to national community energy coalitions and partners as it offers a flexible, step-by-step framework and best practices to help shape enabling policies, adapt to local contexts, and support the growth of energy communities across diverse national settings and helps them develop their services. | |
| Published: Energy Communities Repository, 2024 | |





2.2. Practical development of community

2.2.1. How to develop and promote sustainable business models for community energy?

Structured Overview of Existing and Emerging Business Models

This report provides an in-depth analysis of various business models utilized by energy communities and collective actions within the European Union. It categorizes these models, offering examples and examining key elements such as value propositions, key activities, technologies, member demographics, external partnerships, and organizational structures. The report also explores factors influencing the effectiveness of these models, including national regulatory frameworks, socio-cultural and economic contexts, financing mechanisms, and potential barriers to implementation.

Additionally, the report delves into contractual conditions and governance arrangements, emphasizing their impact on the development and sustainability of energy communities. It highlights the importance of legal forms, sharing concepts, and governance structures in fostering fair and transparent operations. Through comprehensive analysis, the report provides recommendations for stakeholders involved in energy communities and collective actions, aiming to enhance their effectiveness and contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable energy transition.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities, policymakers |  A yellow circular icon with a green leaf on the left and a blue speech bubble with a white 'E' on the right, set against a green background. |
| Why is it useful: Offers insights into successful business models, governance structures, and contextual factors, helping energy communities build their services and develop effective, sustainable, and inclusive community energy initiatives. | |
| Published: DECIDE, 2021 | |

Business Model Innovation Tool for Energy Communities

The E-LAND Business Model Innovation (BMI) Tool helps energy communities design sustainable and locally adapted business models using a modular, pattern-based approach. It offers 25 proven business model patterns categorized into five key areas: community value proposition, member roles, energy value capture, key operational functions, and network effects. By guiding energy communities through these elements, the tool enables them to create financially viable and impactful models that enhance energy self-sufficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and strengthen local engagement.






The tool follows a structured four-stage workshop process: initiation (assessing current models and setting goals), ideation (adapting business model patterns to local needs), integration (selecting the most viable approach), and implementation (planning actionable steps). This step-by-step approach ensures that energy communities can innovate effectively while considering financial sustainability and long-term operational success. Ultimately, the BMI Tool empowers communities to develop resilient, scalable, and context-specific energy business models, fostering a just and sustainable energy transition.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities |  |
| Why is it useful: Provides a structured, modular approach to design sustainable, locally tailored business models that enhance financial viability and local engagement in energy communities. | |
| Published: E-LAND, 2022 | |

Leveraging European Public Funds to Support Energy Communities

This policy brief focuses on how European public funds can be leveraged to support energy communities. It analyses the extent to which EU financial mechanisms—such as the Recovery and Resilience Fund, Cohesion and Regional Development Funds, and the Modernisation Fund—are utilized by member states to facilitate community-led energy projects. The brief categorizes countries based on their level of financial commitment, identifying gaps and opportunities in public funding allocation.

One of the key insights from the brief is that countries with established regulatory frameworks for energy communities are more likely to effectively utilize public funds to support them. Conversely, in regions where enabling legislation is absent, energy communities struggle to access necessary financing. The brief also examines various funding instruments—including grants, loans, and blended finance mechanisms—that can be tailored to the needs of energy communities. Additionally, it provides recommendations for policymakers on designing transparent and accessible funding schemes that ensure citizen participation in the energy transition.

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| Who is this for: Policymakers, energy communities |  |
| Why is it useful: Helps national community energy coalitions and partners by highlighting how EU public funds can be effectively used to support energy communities, offering insights into building funding resources, funding opportunities, regulatory frameworks, and recommendations for improving access to financial support. | |





Year of publication: REScoop.eu, CEE Bankwatch
Network, CAN Europe, 2022

COMPILE Toolkit: Financing Guide

The "COMPILE Toolkit: Financing Guide" serves as a comprehensive resource for energy communities seeking to understand the connection between financing models and project ownership structures. It begins by introducing key considerations for selecting appropriate financing tools, emphasizing how these choices influence ownership dynamics. The guide explores various financing sources, including equity financing (such as share offers and self-financing), debt financing (like bank loans and leasing), subsidies and grants, crowdfunding, and guarantees. By providing insights into each financing type, the guide aims to equip energy communities with the knowledge needed to develop effective financing plans that align with their objectives and values.

Additionally, the guide discusses the importance of legal structures and ownership models, highlighting how different financing approaches can impact the autonomy and governance of energy projects. It offers practical advice on building a financing plan, understanding financial ratios, and navigating the balance between debt and equity to maintain financial health.

Who is this for: Policymakers, financial institutions,
energy communities

Why is it useful: Provides detailed insights into various
financing models and ownership structures, helping
energy communities design effective, sustainable
financing plans that help in reaching community targets
and governance needs.

Published: COMPILE, 2022



Report on novel financing instruments for RECs


The "Report on Novel Financing Instruments for Renewable Energy Communities (RECs)" addresses various model financing instruments, with a focus on the framework conditions and the context. It examines innovative financial mechanisms tailored to support the development and expansion of RECs across Europe. It provides an in-depth analysis of various financing instruments, evaluates their applicability, and offers recommendations to enhance financial accessibility for community-led renewable energy initiatives.

By addressing both traditional and emerging financing models, the report aims to equip stakeholders with the knowledge to navigate the financial landscape effectively. It underscores the importance of aligning financial tools with the unique characteristics of RECs to promote sustainable and community-driven energy transition. The insights






presented serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, financial institutions, and community leaders committed to advancing renewable energy communities throughout Europe.

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| Who is this for: Policymakers, financial institutions |  |
| Why is it useful: Helps national community energy coalitions and partners by analysing innovative financing models and providing recommendations to enhance financial resources and accessibility, enabling the growth and sustainability of community-led renewable energy initiatives across Europe. | |
| Published: COME RES, 2022 | |

Financing Guide for Energy Communities

This guide provides a very first introduction to community energy financing. It serves as a comprehensive resource for energy communities seeking financial strategies aligned with their values and objectives. It emphasizes the importance of selecting appropriate financing methods—equity financing, debt financing, and grants—each with distinct implications for ownership, control, and risk. The guide also explores crowdfunding as a versatile tool that can encompass these financing types, highlighting the necessity for clear communication with investors regarding the nature of their contributions and associated risks.

Furthermore, the guide differentiates between financing individual projects and financing the overarching organization, underscoring the importance of equity financing for organizational stability and democratic control. It addresses the challenges inherent in securing initial funding during the high-risk preparation stage and suggests solutions such as rolling funds that can transition from grants to loans as projects advance. By providing practical insights and real-world examples, the guide aims to empower energy communities to navigate the financial landscape effectively, ensuring sustainable and community-driven energy initiatives.

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| Who is this for: Individuals and groups interested in developing and managing energy communities |  |
| Why is it useful: Supports national community energy coalitions and partners by providing practical insights into selecting suitable financing strategies, helping energy communities navigate funding challenges and align financial choices with their values and long-term community targets and goals. | |
| Published: SCCALE, 2023 | |






Financing Community Energy – A short guide for banks

The "Financing Community Energy: A Short Guide for Banks," serves as an introduction for banks and financial institutions to the realm of community energy. It aims to familiarize financial professionals with the concept of community-led renewable energy initiatives, emphasizing their stability and forward-looking nature. The guide addresses key questions financiers might have before funding such projects, highlighting the mutual benefits of collaboration between banks and energy communities.

By exploring various financing mechanisms and showcasing successful case studies, the guide illustrates how financial institutions can effectively engage with community energy projects. It underscores the importance of understanding the unique characteristics of these initiatives and provides insights into assessing their viability and potential risks. Ultimately, the guide seeks to inspire banks to actively participate in the growing movement of community energy, contributing to a sustainable and decentralized energy future.

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| Who is this for: Financial institutions, energy communities |  |
| Why is it useful: Helps national community energy coalitions and partners by equipping them with the knowledge and insights needed to develop their financial resources and promote the support of community-led renewable energy projects, fostering collaboration and sustainable financing solutions, in financial institutions. | |
| Published: SCCALE, 2023 | |

Business Models with a Value Proposition to Vulnerable Households

This report explores sustainable business models aimed at alleviating energy poverty in five pilot cities: Eeklo, Valencia, Rožnov, UCSA, and Heerlen. It emphasizes the importance of tailoring strategies to local contexts and highlights models such as energy cooperatives, energy communities, and one-stop-shops. The document underscores the necessity of providing vulnerable households with access to affordable renewable energy, enhancing their understanding of energy markets, and offering support for energy efficiency improvements.

The report details the collaborative process undertaken with local stakeholders to develop these business models, focusing on long-term sustainability and replicability. It also discusses the challenges faced in adapting these models to specific local conditions and the importance of community engagement in ensuring their success. The document serves as a guide for other cities aiming to implement similar strategies to combat energy poverty through community-driven initiatives.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities | |
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| Why is it useful: Presents tailored business models and practical strategies for addressing energy poverty, emphasizing, and building community engagement and the replication of successful initiatives in diverse local contexts. | |
| Year of publication: POWER UP, 2023 | |

ACCE Self-Management Guide

The ACCE Self-Management Guide offers comprehensive support to energy communities aiming to establish and manage sustainable financing mechanisms for community-driven renewable energy projects. The guide presents a three-phase approach to help communities navigate the complexities of energy transition and financing: first, by assessing the local energy landscape, identifying specific community needs, and evaluating existing resources; second, by designing appropriate investment and financing tools that align with the community’s goals, values, and energy needs; and third, by implementing strong operational structures that ensure long-term sustainability and governance. It emphasizes the importance of involving local stakeholders, building transparent financial models, and aligning the project with the local energy context to ensure its effectiveness and adaptability.

Additionally, the guide stresses the significance of good governance and financial self-management in enabling energy communities to thrive independently. It provides a wealth of practical steps, case studies, and examples to support the process, offering tangible solutions to common challenges, such as securing investments, managing financial risks, and ensuring transparency in financial operations. By leveraging these resources, energy communities can develop customized financial structures and governance models that reflect their unique needs while remaining resilient in the face of market fluctuations. This resource is particularly useful for community organizations, local authorities, and financial institutions seeking to scale renewable energy projects, ensuring that these initiatives are both economically viable and socially beneficial.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities | |
| Why is it useful: Offers a structured, practical approach to help energy communities design sustainable financing mechanisms, establish strong governance, and ensure the long-term development of financial resources and success of renewable energy projects. | |
| Published: ACCE, 2023 | |





RES Project Development Guide

The RES Development Guide focuses on identifying and addressing the financial needs of community energy projects, offering practical advice for financing at different stages of development. It outlines five main types of Community Energy Financing Schemes (CEFS) tailored to various project needs, such as securing funds for early-stage or larger, long-term projects. The guide highlights the importance of understanding project phases—emergence, development, construction, and operation—and aligning financial tools accordingly, from grants to equity and loans.

Additionally, the guide emphasizes the key success factors for each CEFS, such as risk reduction, economies of scale, and long-term investment strategies. It also provides practical tips for replicating successful financing models, including leveraging existing subsidy schemes and involving governments as intermediaries to ensure sustainable funding for energy cooperatives and communities. This resource is aimed at stakeholders in community energy projects, including financial institutions, project developers, and policymakers.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities, financial institutions, policymakers | A green square containing three yellow circular icons: a leaf, a speech bubble with a gear inside, and a lightning bolt. |
| Why is it useful: Offers practical advice and tailored financing strategies for each stage of community energy projects, helping ensure sustainable funding sources and successful implementation across various project sizes. | |
| Published: ACCE, 2023 | |

Financial Handbook: A Guide and several Business Cases

The ACCE Financial Handbook focuses on addressing the unique financial challenges faced by community energy projects. It identifies barriers such as regulatory constraints, financial risks, and difficulties in accessing traditional financing. The guide offers practical solutions through Community Energy Financing Schemes (CEFS), which include various funding mechanisms like grants, loans, and equity investments tailored to each project stage. By showcasing successful business case examples, it emphasizes how replicating proven models and adapting financing tools to specific needs can improve funding access.

In addition, the handbook highlights the critical role of collaboration between public institutions, private investors, and energy communities in securing sustainable financing. It offers strategies for risk mitigation, emphasizing the importance of long-term investment approaches, economies of scale, and ensuring a clear business case. The guide also stresses the need to align project financing with the development phase, from early-stage planning to full operation, and encourages stakeholders to use tools such as government subsidies and intermediary support to strengthen the financial framework.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities, financial institutions, policymakers | |
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| <p>Why is it useful: Supports national community energy coalitions and partners by offering practical solutions and tailored financing schemes to overcome financial challenges, improve access to funding resources, and ensure sustainable investment in community energy projects.</p> |  |
| <p>Published: ACCE, 2023</p> | |

2.2.2. How to ensure collective self-consumption, energy saving and efficiency?

Setting up community energy one-stop-shops

The "Setting Up Community Energy One-Stop-Shops: Guidance Document" by the Energy Communities Repository serves as a comprehensive manual for entities aiming to establish one-stop-shops (OSS) to support energy communities. Recognizing the pivotal role of OSS in facilitating the creation and development of energy communities, the guide offers insights into various aspects of setting up such support structures. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the specific national and regional contexts, including regulatory and cultural factors, to tailor the OSS effectively to local needs. By providing case studies from diverse European countries, the document illustrates the varied approaches and services that existing OSS have implemented, highlighting the significance of adaptability and responsiveness to community-specific requirements.

The guidance document outlines key steps in establishing an OSS, starting with defining clear goals and objectives aligned with the needs of prospective energy communities. It underscores the necessity of offering a range of services, such as administrative, technical, capacity-building, and financial assistance, to address the multifaceted challenges that energy communities may encounter. The guide also discusses the importance of stakeholder engagement, recommending the mapping of relevant actors and understanding their interests to foster effective collaboration. Additionally, it provides practical advice on structuring the OSS, including considerations for staffing, funding, and the development of digital tools to enhance service delivery. By drawing on real-world examples and lessons learned from existing OSS, the document serves as a valuable resource for organizations seeking to empower communities in their transition to sustainable energy practices.

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| <p>Who is this for: Local and regional authorities, energy agencies</p> |  |
| <p>Why is it useful: Serves as a comprehensive manual for entities aiming to establish one-stop-shops (OSS) to</p> | |





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| support energy communities, by helping in building their services and in provision of resources. | |
| Year of publication: Energy Communities Repository, 2023 | |

Guidelines on Community Heating and Cooling

Analysing two countries where community district heating is dominant (Northern Italy and Denmark) and two countries where community district heating is up and coming (Belgium and the Netherlands), these guidelines give a non-exhaustive introduction into the world of renewable citizen-led heating and cooling, including explanations of what they are, how they function, and giving advice on how to replicate successful examples. Recognizing that heating accounts for approximately half of the EU's final energy consumption, the guidelines emphasize the importance of decarbonizing both electricity and heating to meet climate targets.

The document identifies key drivers for successful CH&C projects, such as democratic ownership, not-for-profit models, local value creation, and transparency. It also outlines common barriers, including lack of support, complexity, and limited access to capital, offering insights into overcoming these challenges. The guidelines serve as a practical resource for communities interested in initiating their own CH&C projects. They provide step-by-step advice on building capacity, securing financing, engaging stakeholders, and navigating regulatory frameworks. Additionally, the document discusses various renewable heating and cooling technologies, such as heat pumps and biomass systems, and offers guidance on governance structures and business models. By sharing best practices and lessons learned, the guidelines aim to empower energy communities to play a central role in the transition to sustainable heating and cooling solutions.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities, engaged groups and individuals | A row of four yellow circular icons: a leaf, a speech bubble with a leaf inside, a lightning bolt, and a leaf with a dollar sign. |
| Why is it useful: Outlines how citizen-led projects can decarbonize heating by building services, engaging communities, and providing resources, while highlighting success factors like democratic ownership and tackling barriers like funding and regulation. | |
| Published: REScoop.eu and Energie Samen, 2023 | |





Redistributing Power: How Can Renewable Energy Communities Alleviate Energy Poverty?

This report explores the potential of RECs to address energy injustices and alleviate energy poverty. It argues that RECs offer a transformative approach to the energy system by prioritizing social and environmental benefits over profit. The document discusses how community-driven energy initiatives can empower citizens, reduce energy costs, and promote equitable access to renewable energy resources.

The report also examines case studies demonstrating the effectiveness of RECs in various contexts, highlighting the importance of supportive policies and community engagement. It calls for a rethinking of energy governance structures to facilitate the growth of RECs and ensure they can contribute meaningfully to a fair and inclusive energy transition.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities, policymakers |  |
| Why is it useful: Helps RECs in reaching their social goals by highlighting how they can address energy poverty and promote energy justice by prioritizing social equity and environmental benefits, emphasizing the need for supportive policies and community engagement. | |
| Published: FOEE, 2023 | |

Energy Solidarity Toolkit: Practical ways for energy communities to tackle energy poverty

The CEES Energy Solidarity Toolkit serves as a comprehensive guide for energy communities (ECs) aiming to integrate solidarity measures into their core operations to combat energy poverty. Structured into key themes—Getting Started, Identify and Engage, Act, Financing, Legal and Regulatory, and Evaluate—the toolkit offers practical insights and strategies. It emphasizes preparatory steps such as onboarding new skills, engaging with vulnerable populations, implementing specific solidarity actions like organizing Energy Cafés and delivering Cosy Kits, exploring innovative financing methods, understanding relevant policies, and evaluating the impact of these initiatives.

Developed through pilot projects across Europe, the toolkit reflects real-world experiences and challenges faced by ECs in promoting energy solidarity. It underscores the importance of aligning community needs with EC capacities, highlights the necessity of securing diverse financing mechanisms, and promotes policy frameworks that support socially engaged energy practices. By sharing these insights, the toolkit aims to inspire ECs worldwide to leverage access to clean, affordable energy to empower vulnerable populations and advance a just, clean energy transition.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities, policymakers | |
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| <p>Why is it useful: Valuable for energy communities and national partners as it provides practical strategies for integrating solidarity measures, enhancing community support, and addressing energy poverty in a just energy transition, helping energy communities reach their social goals.</p> | |
| <p>Published: CEES, 2024</p> | |

Energy sharing for energy communities - a reference guide

This guide explores the concept of energy sharing within energy communities. Energy sharing enables consumers to jointly operate renewable energy systems and access the generated electricity at reduced rates. This practice fosters active engagement in the energy transition, enhances consumer ownership, and can attract investments for regional renewable energy projects.

The guide provides information on various business models and regulatory approaches from different EU Member States related to energy sharing within energy communities. It emphasizes the importance of understanding technical terms such as energy sharing key, allocation, matching period, optimization rates, and metering data. By examining these models and terms, the guide aims to assist energy communities in setting up energy sharing initiatives that are economically viable and tailored to their specific national, regional, or local contexts.

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| <p>Who is this for: Energy communities</p> | |
| <p>Why is it useful: Provides practical insights into energy sharing models, helping energy communities reach their targets and navigate regulatory frameworks and implement economically viable, locally tailored energy sharing initiatives.</p> | |
| <p>Published: Energy Communities Repository, 2024</p> | |

Citizen-led Renovation Resources Hub

The Citizen-led Renovation Resources Hub is an interactive platform developed by the EU's Support Service for Citizen-led Renovation (CLR) to empower citizens and communities in leading energy-saving renovation projects. It offers tailored resources for various roles within energy communities, such as policy advisors, technical experts, and communication managers. Users can access materials through guided questions that align with their specific needs and responsibilities, facilitating a personalized experience.





It serves as a central platform designed to support and empower communities engaged in citizen-led renovation initiatives by providing a wide range of valuable resources, including case studies, best practices, and proven strategies from successful energy-saving projects across Europe. These shared experiences can help guide new projects, offering insights into common challenges and effective solutions. The platform is not only a repository of knowledge but also an interactive space where users can access technical assistance tailored to their specific renovation needs, from energy audits to guidance on implementing energy-efficient technologies.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities, engaged groups and individuals |  |
| Why is it useful: Serves as a central platform for sharing best practices, providing resources, technical assistance, helping develop services and fostering collaboration among stakeholders to support and scale up citizen-led renovation initiatives across Europe. | |
| Published: Support service for Citizen-led renovation, 2024 | |





2.3. Community Energy Growth

2.3.1. How to develop networks and mobilise stakeholders for community energy?

[COMPILE Toolkit: Stakeholder Engagement Guide](#)

This toolkit serves as a comprehensive resource for individuals and groups aiming to establish energy communities. It focuses specifically on the tools and techniques that relate to structuring the core group of an energy community project and raising support in the local community. It offers practical tools and techniques for organizing a core group, structuring the community, and garnering local support. The guide emphasizes the importance of defining the group's vision and goals, understanding the legal context, and creating a democratic governance structure. It also introduces analytical tools such as PESTEL and SWOT analyses to assess the external environment and internal capabilities, aiding in strategic planning.

In addition to organizational strategies, the guide provides methods for effective community engagement, including stakeholder mapping and socio-dynamic analysis, to identify and involve key local actors. It discusses various outreach actions to raise awareness and enthusiasm within the community. Furthermore, the guide addresses volunteer management and the development of stable, democratic governance models, ensuring the sustainability and inclusivity of the energy community.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities |  |
| Why is it useful: Helps national community energy coalitions and partners by providing practical tools and strategies for organizing energy community projects, fostering local support, and developing sustainable, democratic governance structures to ensure long-term success and community engagement. | |
| Published: COMPILE, 2022 | |

[SCCALE Community Energy Methodology Guide](#)

This methodology guide focuses on the citizen engagement side of developing a diverse range of community energy projects. Drawing from experiences in five pilot projects, the guide offers a structured approach to engaging communities in renewable energy and energy savings initiatives. It serves as a practical tool, providing insights and steps to help citizens navigate the process of establishing their own energy communities.





This guide provides detailed insights into each phase of project development—from inspiration through preparation and implementation to operation. By sharing lessons learned and best practices, it can help any project leader grow a community energy initiative from a core group of individuals into a large group of engaged citizens who are able to develop and maintain their community energy project on their own.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities | A set of four yellow circular icons on a green background: a leaf, a speech bubble with a person inside, a lightning bolt, and a house with a leaf inside. |
| Why is it useful: Supports national community energy coalitions and partners by offering structured steps and insights for effectively developing citizens engagement strategies in community energy projects, empowering them to lead and sustain their own initiatives. | |
| Published: SCCALE, 2023 | |

Participatory Toolkit for Building More Inclusive Community Energy

The "Participatory Toolkit for Building More Inclusive Community Energy Co-operatives" aims to assist cooperatives in diversifying their membership by engaging underrepresented communities. The toolkit emphasizes participatory research and co-design methodologies to foster inclusivity within community energy initiatives. It provides practical tools and strategies for cooperatives seeking to broaden their membership base and enhance community engagement.

The document outlines a two-stage research process: initial community engagement through outreach and creative activities, followed by in-depth co-design workshops involving local participants. This approach led to the development of tailored community share offers and membership campaigns for cooperatives in North Kensington and Newham. Insights from this process are intended to inform future initiatives aimed at creating more inclusive, community-driven energy movements.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities | A set of four yellow circular icons on a green background: a leaf, a speech bubble with a person inside, a lightning bolt, and a house with a leaf inside. |
| Why is it useful: Provides national community energy coalitions with practical strategies for fostering engagement, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability in community energy projects. | |
| Published: Repowering London, the Centre for Sustainable Energy and King’s College London (with support from the Connect Fund), 2024 | |





Inclusivity Guide for Energy Communities

The Inclusivity Guide provides a framework for ensuring that energy communities are accessible, representative, and equitable. It highlights the systemic challenges that often lead to exclusion within the energy transition, particularly for marginalized groups such as low-income households, women, ethnic minorities, and individuals facing energy poverty. The guide offers practical tools for energy communities to assess their inclusivity levels, such as gender audits, intersectional analysis frameworks, and community engagement strategies tailored to diverse populations.

A major emphasis is placed on how inclusive decision-making strengthens energy communities by incorporating diverse perspectives and needs. The guide presents best practices for outreach, inclusive governance, and equitable resource distribution. It also offers recommendations for municipalities and cooperatives on fostering partnerships with advocacy organizations and adopting inclusive communication strategies. By providing case studies and tools, the guide serves as a roadmap for achieving a just energy transition where benefits are equitably shared.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities, municipalities, policymakers | A yellow circular icon containing three symbols: a green leaf, a speech bubble with a checkmark, and a lightning bolt. |
| Why is it useful: Useful for national community energy coalitions and partners by providing actionable strategies to enhance and build engagement, inclusivity, ensuring broader participation and equity in the development of community energy projects. | |
| Published: SCCALE, 2023, update 2024 | |

2.3.2. How to improve knowledge and raise awareness of community energy?

Community energy communications at the local level

The "Community Energy Communications at the Local Level" guide serves as a practical resource for individuals and groups aiming to initiate and develop local community energy projects. It provides a comprehensive overview of essential communication strategies, including the development of a communication plan, the use of hopeful storytelling to reinforce narratives, and methods for effectively engaging the community. The guide emphasizes the importance of cooperation with various stakeholders and offers insights into launching successful communication campaigns that resonate with local audiences.

Designed for non-experts in communications, the guide aims to equip readers with the knowledge necessary to kickstart communication and engagement activities. It underscores the significance of tailoring communication





efforts to the local context, ensuring that messages are relevant and impactful. By following the tips, tricks, and best practices outlined, community energy initiatives can enhance their visibility, foster community involvement, and build a supportive network that is crucial for the success and sustainability of local energy projects.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities |  |
| Why is it useful: Useful for national community energy coalitions and partners as it provides practical strategies for effectively communicating and engaging local communities, helping to build support and sustainability for energy initiatives. | |
| Year of publication: REScoop.er, Energy Cities, 2022 | |

Best practice guide for Southeast Europe

The “Best Practice Guide for Southeast Europe” serves as a comprehensive resource aimed at inspiring citizens in the Balkan region to establish their own energy communities. By presenting successful initiatives from countries such as Albania, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, and Romania, the guide offers practical insights into stakeholder engagement, policy advocacy, partnerships, networks, and financing strategies. These examples not only highlight the diverse activities undertaken by energy communities in the region but also provide a blueprint for others to emulate, fostering a culture of collective action towards sustainable energy solutions.

Beyond showcasing individual success stories, the guide emphasizes the potential of citizens in the Balkan region to collaborate and form a regional community energy network. This network aims to strengthen the European community energy movement by promoting unity and shared objectives. By aligning with national definitions of energy communities, as outlined in directives like the Renewable Energy Directive (RED II) and the Electricity Market Directive, citizens can access supportive frameworks and funding opportunities at both EU and national levels. This alignment not only facilitates the growth of energy communities but also ensures their contributions to a more decentralized and sustainable energy landscape.

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| Who is this for: Municipalities, policymakers, energy communities, engaged groups and individuals |  |
| Why is it useful: Offers practical examples and strategies for establishing energy communities, fostering regional collaboration, local engagement, and aligning with EU frameworks to promote sustainable, decentralized energy solutions, in Southeast Europe. | |
| Published: REScoop.eu, EUCENA, 2022 | |





COOLkit toolbox

COOLkit is a series of reports and dashboards designed to support individuals and communities in establishing and managing energy communities. This comprehensive repository offers a suite of resources, including the Best Practice Guide, Financing Guide, Stakeholder Engagement Guide, and Technical Tools Guide. These materials provide insights into successful community energy initiatives across Europe, strategies for financing and ownership structuring, methods for community engagement, and descriptions of technical tools developed within the COMPILE project. The COOLkit aims to inspire and equip users with the necessary knowledge to navigate the complexities of creating and sustaining energy communities.

In addition to these guides, the COOLkit features tools such as GridRule, HomeRule, and ComPilot. GridRule assists in operating and managing microgrids to enhance flexibility and stability, HomeRule offers energy building management solutions for optimizing consumption and production, and ComPilot facilitates the creation of virtual social energy communities to aid in cooperative management. By integrating these resources, the COOLkit serves as a dynamic and evolving platform, continually updated to reflect new insights and developments in the field of community energy.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities, engaged groups and individuals |  |
| Why is it useful: Valuable for national community energy coalitions and project partners as it provides a comprehensive, evolving set of tools and resources to guide the technical development, financing, and management of energy communities, fostering knowledge-sharing and effective collaboration across regions, helping them develop their resources and reach their community targets. | |
| Year of publication: COMPILE, 2022 | |

Community Energy Guide: A Practical Guide to Reclaiming Power

The guide is a comprehensive resource designed to support individuals and communities in developing renewable energy projects that are locally owned and managed. The guide draws from the experiences of 27 community-led energy initiatives across Europe, providing detailed step-by-step instructions on how to establish and sustain such projects. It covers the importance of collective action in transitioning towards a more democratic and sustainable energy system, emphasizing that community energy initiatives can contribute to energy independence, lower costs, and increased local economic benefits. Through practical advice, real-world examples, and best practices, the guide aims to inspire and equip communities with the necessary knowledge to take control of their energy future. Additionally, it highlights the broader social and environmental benefits of community energy, including reducing carbon emissions, fostering local job creation, and enhancing public engagement in energy decisions.





The handbook delves into various critical aspects of launching and managing a community energy project, from forming effective working groups and securing funding to selecting the right renewable energy technologies and navigating complex legal and regulatory frameworks. It also addresses common challenges that community initiatives face, such as financial constraints, bureaucratic hurdles, and gaining public support, while offering strategies to overcome these obstacles. Furthermore, the guide emphasizes the role of collaboration between citizens, local authorities, and businesses in creating a more inclusive and resilient energy system. By providing practical tools and insights, it seeks to empower communities to play an active role in the clean energy transition, demonstrating that renewable energy projects can be not only environmentally beneficial but also economically and socially rewarding.

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| Who is this for: Energy communities, engaged groups and individuals |  |
| Why is it useful: Valuable for national community energy coalitions and partners as it offers practical tools, real-world examples, and step-by-step instructions, helping communities navigate the challenges of developing and sustaining locally owned renewable energy projects and services. | |
| Year of publication: FOEE, REScoop.eu, Energy Cities, 2020, updated 2024 | |

COMPILE Toolkit best practice guide

The COMPILE Toolkit: Best Practice Guide is designed to inspire and support individuals and organizations looking to establish energy communities across different energy sector markets. By presenting a wide range of successful case studies and best practices, the guide aims to empower both existing energy communities and newcomers interested in forming their own initiatives. Existing communities can use the guide to explore innovative collective approaches, diversify their activities, and strengthen their role in the energy transition. Those new to the concept of energy communities can gain insights into proven models and strategies, allowing them to navigate the complexities of setting up cooperative energy initiatives with greater confidence. The guide not only highlights the benefits of energy communities in fostering local energy independence and sustainability but also provides a roadmap for overcoming common obstacles that might hinder their development.

Structured around specific energy-related activities, the guide makes it easy for users to identify relevant models that align with their goals and circumstances. It addresses key challenges that energy cooperatives often face, such as regulatory barriers, financial constraints, and stakeholder engagement difficulties, while also offering practical solutions to navigate these issues effectively. By incorporating real-world examples and providing references to established cooperatives, the guide serves as a networking and knowledge-sharing tool, helping energy communities learn from each other’s experiences. By leveraging these tools, communities can accelerate their participation in the energy transition and contribute to a more decentralized, sustainable, and community-driven energy landscape.






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| Who is this for: Energy communities, engaged groups and individuals |  |
| Why is it useful: Valuable for national community energy coalitions and project partners as it provides proven models, strategies, and solutions to common challenges, helping both established and emerging energy communities navigate obstacles, build resources and services, and strengthen their role in the energy transition. | |
| Published: COMPILE, 2023 | |

[Joining or setting up a rural energy community](#)

The “Joining or Setting Up a Rural Energy Community” booklet provides a detailed roadmap for individuals and groups looking to create or participate in rural energy communities. It highlights the numerous benefits of such initiatives, including their positive environmental impact by accelerating the energy transition through local renewable energy projects. Additionally, energy communities can offer significant economic advantages, such as reducing energy costs for households and businesses, increasing local economic resilience, and creating new job opportunities in sustainable energy sectors. Beyond financial benefits, these communities also foster social cohesion by encouraging active citizen participation, strengthening local networks, and promoting democratic decision-making regarding energy use and production. By emphasizing the collective power of communities in shaping their own energy futures, the guide seeks to inspire and empower rural populations to take ownership of their energy transition.

A crucial aspect of the guide is its focus on the challenges and enablers of rural energy communities, categorized into five key areas: group dynamics, project resources, community engagement, networking, and policy context. It underscores the importance of forming strong, motivated groups with a clear vision, securing adequate funding and technical expertise, and ensuring active participation from local stakeholders. Furthermore, it highlights the necessity of aligning energy community initiatives with national and EU policy frameworks. Adhering to these regulations can unlock access to financial and regulatory support mechanisms, facilitating the growth and long-term sustainability of rural energy communities.

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| Who is this for: Municipalities, energy communities, engaged groups and individuals |  |
| Why is it useful: Supports national community energy coalitions and partners by providing a practical guide to establishing rural energy communities and building engagement, emphasizing the benefits, challenges, and | |





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| enablers while aligning with national and EU policies to ensure their sustainability and growth. | |
| Published: REACH, 2024 | |





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