



Deliverable D4.1: Methodology for Stakeholders’ Engagement for capacity building programme

Public Document

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Executive Summary

This document presents a comprehensive methodology for planning stakeholder engagement activities across four distinct use cases within the Step-WISE Project. The goal is to establish a structured and consistent approach to stakeholder engagement, ensuring effective participation and collaboration for successful capacity-building towards the implementation of low-carbon energy solutions and the deployment of Clean Energy Transition Plan (CETP).

Chapter 1 introduces the context and objectives of the stakeholder engagement methodology, emphasizing the importance of tailored engagement strategies to address the specific needs and challenges of each use case.

Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framework and best practices for stakeholder engagement, drawing from established principles and real-world examples. It highlights key concepts such as stakeholder mapping, communication channels, and participatory methods.

Chapter 3 details the preparatory steps required for effective stakeholder engagement, including stakeholder identification, analysis, and initial outreach strategies. It emphasizes the importance of understanding stakeholder interests, influence, and potential contributions.

Chapter 4 presents a detailed plan for executing engagement activities, specifying various methods and tools to be used, such as workshops, training sessions, public consultations, and digital platforms. This chapter provides practical guidance on organizing and conducting these activities to maximize stakeholder involvement.

Chapter 5 synthesizes the insights and suggestions gathered from a brainstorming session on engagement strategies. It addresses key questions such as effective communication with stakeholders, opportunities for active involvement, motivation strategies, and resource requirements. The chapter offers a range of engagement strategies, evaluating their advantages and disadvantages to help tailor approaches for different stakeholder groups.

Key insights from the stakeholder workshops and brainstorming sessions include the identification of effective communication channels, such as face-to-face meetings for local authorities and online forums for community members. Active involvement opportunities, like participatory workshops and thematic working tables, were highlighted as crucial for co-designing local projects and gathering community feedback. Incentive strategies, including public recognition and free training opportunities, were identified as effective means to motivate stakeholder participation. Additionally, the need for financial and logistical support to organize meetings and ensure stakeholder engagement was emphasized.

Chapter 6 introduces the guidelines for developing engagement plans for each use case. It includes a structured template to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness in planning engagement activities. The template covers stakeholder identification, engagement objectives, activity planning, communication strategies, resource allocation, monitoring, and evaluation.

- **Chapter 6.1** explains the methodology for using the template, highlighting its role in standardizing engagement activities across different contexts.
- **Chapter 6.2** provides an introduction to the template, describing its components and the rationale behind its structure.
- **Chapter 6.3** details the engagement process, approach, and strategy for each use case:

- **UC1 Bulgaria** focuses on strengthening local governance and institutional capacity for low-carbon energy projects through stakeholder workshops and consultations.
- **UC2 Spain** emphasizes collaborative stakeholder involvement in co-creating energy solutions and policies, supported by continuous feedback and adaptive strategies.
- **UC3 Cyprus** adopts a top-down approach to assess and enhance governance structures and institutional arrangements for low-carbon energy implementation.
- **UC4 Mediterranean Islands** leverages peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange to build a community of practice among stakeholders, facilitating the sharing of best practices and co-creation of solutions.

This document serves as a foundational guide for effectively engaging stakeholders in the CET, promoting collaboration, knowledge sharing, and sustainable energy transitions. By following this methodology, project teams can ensure that engagement activities are well-planned, inclusive, and impactful, driving the successful implementation of clean energy initiatives across diverse contexts.

Acronyms

CBP	Capacity Building Program
CET	Clean Energy Transition
CETA	Clean Energy Transition Agenda
CETP	Clean Energy Transition Plan
EE	Energy Efficiency (action plans)
LRA	Local and Regional Authority
RES	Renewable Energy Sources (action plans)
SEAP	Sustainable Energy Action Plan
SECAP	Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans
UC	Use Case
VKO	Virtual Knowledge Office
WP	Work Package

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1 Introduction

In the current European context, there is an accelerated movement towards increasingly stringent energy and climate goals, with the aim of becoming the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. This drive is evidenced by recent European Union initiatives such as the Green Deal and the 2030 climate and energy targets, including a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels, a 45% share of renewable energy, and an overall energy efficiency target of 32.5%. However, the implementation of these goals at national and regional levels has been uneven and has revealed significant gaps in achieving energy reduction and investment objectives. The transition to a low-carbon economy thus requires more targeted efforts, especially at the local and regional levels, where much of the energy and emissions are concentrated.

Local and regional authorities play a pivotal role in this transition. As the governance bodies closest to citizens, they are able to understand and respond to the unique challenges and needs of their communities and to frame the clean energy discussion in a way that resonates with the values of their constituents. However, the significant variation in the adoption of national targets at the regional and local levels is often attributed to complex internal governance structures and political landscapes. The responsiveness of local and regional authorities varies considerably, which can either slow down or accelerate the energy transition. Thus, local and regional authorities are essential in reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions through the creation of local Clean Energy Transition Plans (CETPs).

The Step-WISE project aims to tap into this potential by providing local and regional authorities with a crucial toolkit designed to tackle their primary obstacles and needs in the CET planning process, thus enabling them to reach their goals more efficiently. This approach is guided by an awareness of the diversity of local contexts and the need to tailor energy strategies to the specific needs of each region. The implementation of Step-WISE is particularly relevant at a time when the European Union is committing to strengthen its efforts towards decarbonization in the transport, buildings, and energy supply sectors. By focusing on local realities and offering an innovative digital toolkit, Step-WISE stands as a cornerstone in guiding Europe towards a sustainable and low-carbon energy future.

1.1 Step-WISE terminology

This section briefly outlines the key definitions of the terms used in the context of Step-WISE project. The brief description of the terms and the chart in Figure 1 helps the reader understand the context of the project further.

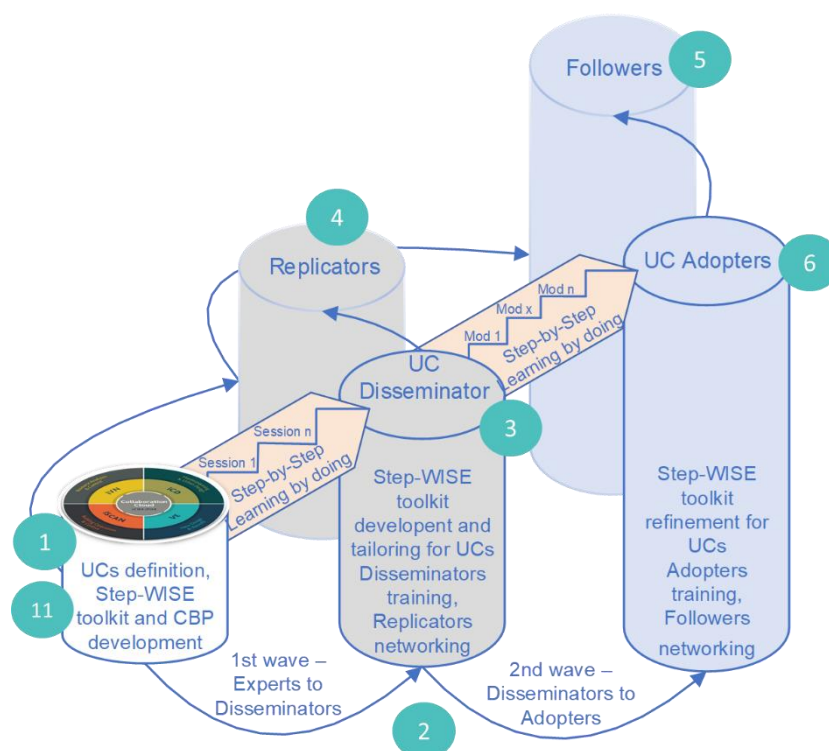


Figure 1 Step-WISE overall concept cross-section explaining main UC based activities, key actors involved, and Step-WISE toolkit use across the process. Numbers added to cross reference from terminology list on the left (From Step-WISE grant agreement)

1. **Use cases** in the project refer to 4 distinct regions of focus for the project: Bulgaria, Spain, Cyprus and Mediterranean islands. The goal of the project is to increase the capacity of local and regional authorities to create and implement Clean Energy Transition Plans. The variety of use cases in Europe provide different political, geographical and socio-economic backgrounds for the project to test the applicability of the toolkit, provide case studies and have impacts spread across different European contexts. (See no. 1 in Figure 1)
2. **Wave 1** and **Wave 2** of capacity building in the project refers to two phases of project implementation. In the first wave, the training of the use of a toolkit (Step-WISE toolkit) will be provided to Use Case leaders, who are part of the consortium. In the second phase or second wave of the project, the trained use case leaders extend this training to local and regional authorities within the use case regions. (See no. 2 in Figure 1)
3. **Disseminators** are the use case leaders in the Step-WISE consortium (See no. 3 in **Errore. L'origine riferimento non è stata trovata.**). They will receive the training in the Wave 1 of the project action, and provide training to interested local and regional authorities in the Wave 2 of the project (referred as Adopters). The disseminators also engage other entities to replicate their role as trainers of Step-WISE approach (referred as replicators). (SINLOC, EAP, CEA, CERES and linked third party Traza)
4. **Replicators** are the entities outside of the project who are engaged to follow the example of the disseminators and will play the role of replicating the Step-WISE approach and training other local and regional authorities within their regions (LRAs also referred as followers). The replicators can also be seen as future-disseminators and can be any type of entity. (See no. 4 in Figure 1)

5. **Followers** are the local and regional authorities who are interested in adopting the Step-WISE approach to develop CET plans, or are contacted by Replicators, or Disseminators to engage in creating these after the end of the project. (See no. 5 in Figure 1)
6. **Adopters** are the local and regional authorities that are trained by disseminators to use the Step-WISE approach in Wave 2 of the project implementation. They are linked to other local and regional authorities in the use case region, as they can encourage and facilitate these to also adopt the Step-WISE approach as a *follower* after the end of the project. (See no. 6 in Figure 1)
7. **Trainers** or experts are consortium members that are contact points for both the technology provider in the consortium and the use case leaders/ disseminators. These members assist the disseminators to receive and perform the training programme, as well as coordinate with the technology provider with feedback on the toolkit and relevant materials (primarily involved in Wave 1 in Figure 1). (FredU and R2M)
8. **Technology provider** in the project is the member of the consortium that provides the technology that forms the core of the Step-WISE toolkit for CET planning (involved in Wave 1 and Wave 2 in Figure 1). (IES)
9. **Steering group** is a group within the consortium tasked to lead the implementation of the Wave 1 and Wave 2 of the program, and is formed of the disseminator, trainer and technology provider (primarily involved in Wave 1 in Figure 1).
10. **Action plans** are defined as high level plans for the project implementation. These refer to the main items of activities, resources, groups of people – including stakeholders and steering groups in context of Step-WISE, required to execute these activities. These are tailored to each use case, taking into account individual training requirements for the capacity building programmes as well as the local contexts. These activities are mapped against the timeline of the project when the Wave 1 (Training of the trainers/disseminators) and Wave 2 (Training of the adopters) takes place.
11. **Step-WISE toolkit** refers to a digital toolkit that empowers LRAs to develop their own CET plans using a dynamic model, providing key requirements identified through the project to overcome major barriers, facilitating easier and more accurate plan creation. (See no. 11 in Figure 1)
12. **Virtual Knowledge Offices (VKO)** refer to knowledge repositories that will act as amplifiers to increase the sustainability and replicability of the Step-WISE approach across Europe and beyond the identified use case regions.

1.2 Task 4.1: Methodology for stakeholders' engagement for capacity building programme and relation to the 2 Stakeholders' engagement wave (T4.2 and T4.5)

Task 4.1 focuses on developing a robust methodology for engaging stakeholders in a capacity building program aimed at promoting low-carbon energy systems. Led by R2M, with contributions from IESRD, SINLOC, EAP, CERES, and CEA, this task aims to ensure that local perspectives and concerns are thoroughly incorporated into energy planning policies. The deliverable will outline strategies for fostering broad ownership of interventions related to low-carbon energy, emphasizing public inter-departmental engagement to align local opportunities with project implementation. Through practical, hands-on, and co-design dynamics, the training program will enable stakeholders to actively participate in shaping energy planning policies at both vertical and horizontal levels. Concrete and actionable approaches will be developed to facilitate engagement with relevant stakeholders, fostering collaboration among actors and driving sociocultural change necessary for sustainable energy transitions. This task seeks to bridge the gap between local priorities and national targets by

connecting energy planning policies with community needs and aspirations, ultimately contributing to the successful implementation of clean energy strategies.

T4.1 builds on the surveys and interview results reported in D1.1 and the use cases and action plans developed in D.2.2, and sets the methodology for T4.2: First wave engagement for the planning and establishment of the network of “future trainers” (Replicators) and T4.5: Second wave engagement for the planning and establishment of local network of potential future adopters (Followers), as schematised in the below Per Chart of the Step-WISE Project.

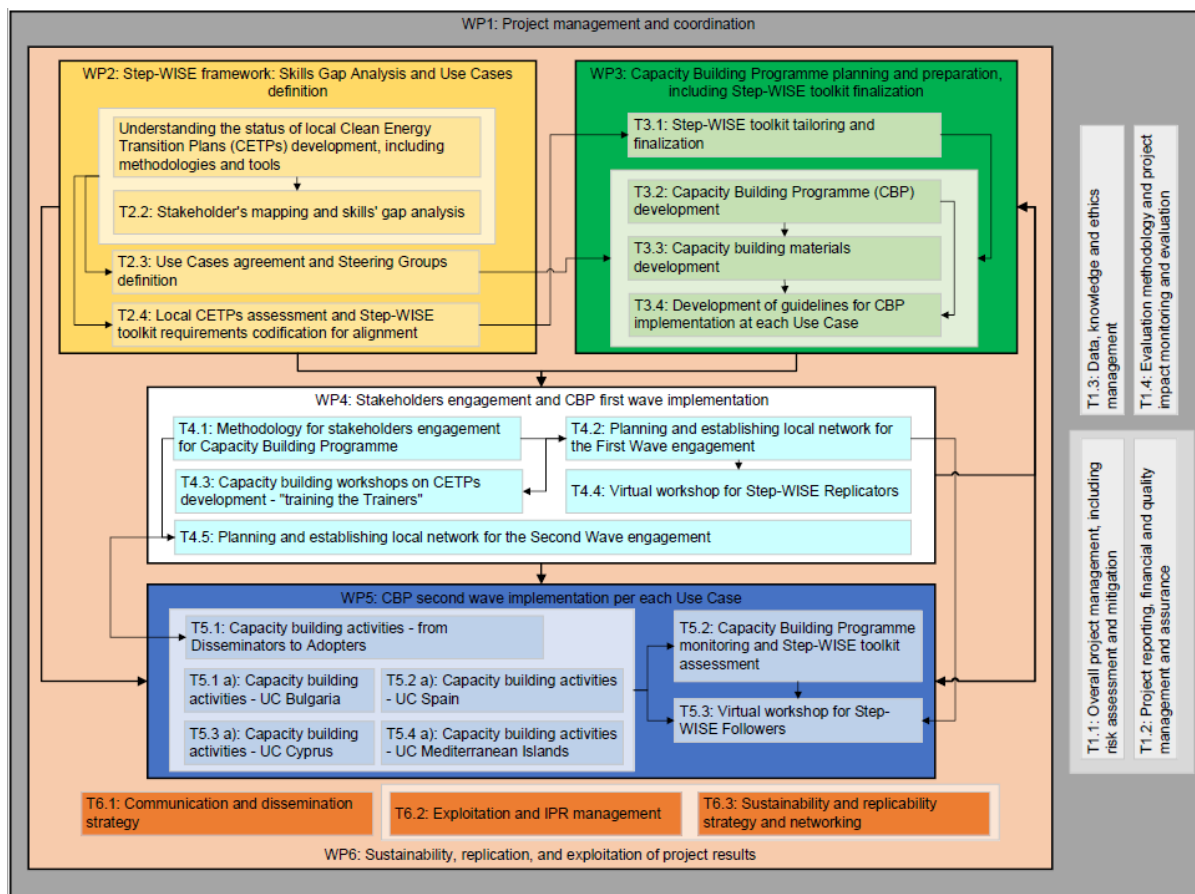


Figure 2 Step-WISE Per Chart

1.3 Task 4.1 motivation

Effective stakeholder engagement is paramount to the success of any capacity building program aimed at driving sustainable change. A well-designed strategy plan serves as the cornerstone for orchestrating meaningful interactions, fostering collaboration, and ensuring the active participation of diverse stakeholders. In the context of Step-WISE capacity building program for clean energy transition plans, the development and implementation of a strategic engagement plan are essential for several reasons.

Firstly, a strategic engagement plan provides clarity of purpose and direction, outlining the objectives, priorities, and methodologies for engaging stakeholders throughout the program lifecycle. By establishing clear goals and delineating the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, the plan sets a roadmap for action, guiding decision-making processes and resource allocation efforts.

Moreover, a strategic engagement plan facilitates alignment with the overarching mission and values of the project, ensuring coherence and consistency in messaging and approach. By articulating the project's vision and value proposition, the plan enhances stakeholder understanding and buy-in, fostering a sense of shared purpose and commitment.

Furthermore, a well-crafted engagement plan enables the identification and prioritization of key stakeholders, recognizing the diverse interests, needs, and perspectives that characterize the clean energy transition landscape. By segmenting stakeholders based on their level of influence, interest, and impact, the plan enables targeted and tailored engagement efforts, maximizing the effectiveness of communication and outreach initiatives.

Additionally, a strategic engagement plan serves as a mechanism for managing risks and mitigating potential challenges that may arise during the stakeholder engagement process. By anticipating and addressing barriers to participation, such as conflicting interests, power imbalances, or cultural differences, the plan enhances resilience and adaptability, fostering constructive dialogue and collaboration.

Furthermore, a well-executed engagement plan facilitates the establishment of feedback mechanisms and monitoring frameworks, enabling the continuous evaluation of engagement efforts and the measurement of impact. By soliciting input from stakeholders, tracking progress against predetermined metrics, and adjusting strategies in response to emerging insights, the plan fosters accountability and transparency, driving iterative improvement and learning.

In summary, the development and implementation of a strategic engagement plan are essential for maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of stakeholder engagement efforts within Step-WISE capacity building program. By providing a structured framework for action, alignment, and adaptation, the plan empowers stakeholders to contribute meaningfully to the clean energy transition, ultimately advancing the shared goal of a more sustainable and resilient future.

1.4 Task 4.1 methodology

The methodology employed for Step-WISE stakeholders' engagement for capacity building program is guided by a systematic approach aimed at fostering meaningful collaboration and participation. Key principles of engagement strategy design inform the methodology, ensuring alignment with the objectives of the project and the needs of the stakeholders.

Central to the methodology is the consideration of three fundamental questions:

- **Who - Target Stakeholders:** The process begins by identifying the diverse array of stakeholders relevant to the clean energy transition within the local and regional context. This includes but is not limited to LRAs, energy agencies, ESCOs, SMEs, community organizations, and residents. Understanding the specific interests, concerns, and roles of each stakeholder group is essential for tailoring engagement strategies effectively.
- **What - Value Proposition:** Understanding the needs, aspirations, and challenges of the target stakeholders is achieved through value proposition workshops and stakeholder analyses. By articulating the value proposition of the capacity building program, the aim is to communicate the benefits and relevance of participation, thereby enhancing stakeholder buy-in and commitment.
- **How/Why - Engagement Strategies/Rationale:** Drawing on insights from the literature review and best practices, a repertoire of engagement strategies tailored to the characteristics and preferences of the target stakeholders is developed. These strategies encompass a range of approaches, including workshops, training sessions, online platforms, community outreach initiatives, partnership development efforts, and innovative communication campaigns. Each strategy is selected based on its potential to facilitate dialogue, build trust, promote collaboration, and empower stakeholders to contribute meaningfully to the clean energy transition. The rationale behind these chosen engagement strategies is articulated, considering their strengths, limitations, and suitability for different stakeholder contexts. Emphasizing the importance of participatory decision-making processes and inclusive

governance structures aims to foster a sense of ownership and accountability among stakeholders, thereby ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of clean energy initiatives.

By systematically addressing these key questions, the methodology provides a structured framework for designing and implementing stakeholder engagement activities throughout the capacity building program. This approach enables the fostering of a collaborative ecosystem wherein stakeholders are empowered to co-create solutions, drive innovation, and collectively advance the goals of the clean energy transition.

1.5 D4.1 structure

D4.1 reports the activities performed in T4.1 and is structured in 8 sections as follows:

- **Section 1** introduces the deliverable giving an overview of the project's context and aim, the task description as defined in the project's grant agreement and then explains briefly the methodology defined for the stakeholders' engagement in the two waves of its capacity building programme;
- **Section 2** gives a literature review on some general existing engagement strategies and then summarises the workshop conducted with the partners to collect best practices from past relevant projects;
- **Section 3** summarises the **identification of the different targeted stakeholders** in the 4 use cases performed within WP2 which is key to the definition of the engagement strategy plan;
- **Section 4** summarises the **value proposition** workshop conducted to understand how to meet the stakeholder's needs with what Step-WISE will provide;
- **Section 5** summarises the brainstorming session conducted with the consortium to list, compare and define jointly **actionable engagement approaches**, their advantages and disadvantages for their related relevant use cases and stakeholders to lead efficiently the 2 waves of engagement of first the potential future trainers (Replicators) and secondly the potential Adopters and its main outcomes;
- **Section 6** describes the initial outline of plan for the first and second wave of engagement of potential future trainers (Replicators) and adopters (Followers);
- **Section 7** introduces the means of verification to assess the good success of the engagement plans;
- **Section 8** summarises the **key findings** and draws the **conclusions** from the work conducted, and gives recommendations and guidelines for the detailed planning and establishment of the engagement waves that will be conducted in T4.2 for the engagement of future Replicators and in T4.5 for the engagement of future Adopters.

2 Literature review on Stakeholder Engagement Methodologies and Approaches

This chapter provides a literature review on stakeholder engagement methodologies and approaches, followed by an analysis of insights gathered from a workshop conducted with project partners. The first subchapter offers an overview of existing engagement strategies, examining various models and their applicability to Step-WISE Stakeholders' Engagement Waves. The second subchapter delves into the practical aspects of stakeholder engagement by summarizing the outcomes of a collaborative workshop. This workshop was designed to collect best practices and experiential knowledge from partners, emphasizing the importance of incorporating real-world insights into the engagement strategy. The methodology employed for the workshop, including the key questions posed, and a synthesis of the partners' contributions, are detailed to highlight the collective findings and conclusions drawn from this collaborative effort.

2.1 Stakeholders Engagement Strategies

Stakeholders' engagement strategies aim to involve stakeholders members in decision-making processes, problem-solving, and policy development. Here's an overview of some existing community and stakeholders' engagement strategies:

- **Just Engagement Process (Voicer Model):** Developed by Breukers et al., this model focuses on ensuring fairness and justice in engagement processes. It involves providing opportunities for all stakeholders to voice their opinions, concerns, and perspectives, ensuring inclusivity and equity.
- **Participatory Action Research (PAR):** PAR involves collaborative research between researchers and community members to identify and address issues relevant to the community. It emphasizes collective action and social change, with the community actively involved in all stages of the research process.
- **Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR):** Similar to PAR, CBPR emphasizes collaboration between researchers and community members. It prioritizes community strengths, local knowledge, and shared decision-making, aiming to produce culturally relevant and sustainable solutions to community issues. In the energy transition context, CBPR could involve partnerships between academic institutions, energy agencies, and local communities to study energy-related challenges and develop solutions together.
- **Deliberative Democracy:** This approach involves bringing together diverse stakeholders to discuss and deliberate on complex issues. Deliberative processes aim to foster informed decision-making, consensus-building, and mutual understanding among participants. Thus, can be valuable for engaging stakeholders in energy policy development and decision-making. Forums such as citizen juries, consensus conferences, and deliberative polling can facilitate informed dialogue and consensus-building on complex energy issues.
- **Community Organizing:** Community organizing involves mobilizing community members to collectively address social, economic, and political issues. It focuses on building grassroots power, fostering leadership development, and advocating for systemic change. Community organizing strategies can empower grassroots movements and advocacy groups to mobilize support for renewable energy, energy justice, and climate action initiatives. By building coalitions and grassroots networks, community organizers can amplify the voices of affected communities in the energy transition.
- **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD):** ABCD focuses on identifying and mobilizing community assets, such as local talents, resources, and networks, to address community needs. It emphasizes strengths rather than deficits and promotes community self-reliance and resilience. In the energy transition context, ABCD can involve leveraging community resources, knowledge, and skills to implement renewable energy projects, energy efficiency initiatives, and sustainable development programs.
- **Community-Led Development (CLD):** CLD empowers communities to lead their own development initiatives, with external support provided as needed. It prioritizes local ownership, capacity-building, and sustainability, aiming to create long-term positive change from within the community. In the energy transition context, CLD approaches can involve capacity-building, skills training, and community-driven planning processes to promote local ownership and sustainability in energy projects
- **Digital Engagement:** With the increasing use of technology, digital engagement strategies involve using online platforms, social media, virtual workshops and digital tools to facilitate stakeholder participation, feedback gathering, knowledge sharing and engagement across

geographical boundaries. Digital engagement can enhance accessibility, reach, and inclusivity in engagement processes.

These are just a few examples of community and stakeholders' engagement strategies, each with its own principles, methods, and goals. The choice of strategy depends on factors such as the nature of the issue, the goals of engagement, and the characteristics of the community involved

Given the scope of engaging relevant stakeholders in a two-wave training program with practical, hands-on, and co-design dynamics, a combination of participatory action research (PAR) and asset-based community development (ABCD) strategies could be most suitable, as:

- PAR emphasizes collaboration between researchers (or in this case, trainers) and community members (adopters) throughout the research and action process. It allows for co-designing interventions, such as the stepwise toolkit and approach, and ensures that the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders are considered. PAR also encourages hands-on learning and practical application of knowledge, aligning well with the objectives of the training program and;
- ABCD focuses on identifying and mobilizing existing assets within the use cases, such as the expertise of energy agencies, private companies, and regional/local authorities. By recognizing and leveraging these assets, the training program can empower stakeholders to take ownership of the Clean Energy Transition Plans and build capacity for sustainable implementation.

Combining PAR and ABCD approaches will create a synergistic effect, fostering collaboration, empowerment, and sustainability throughout the engagement process.

Three other fundamental strategies for stakeholder engagement and decision-making processes are the top-down, bottom-up and peer-to-peer approaches, each with distinct characteristics and applications.

- **Top-Down Approach:** This approach involves decision-making and directives coming from higher levels of authority and then being implemented by lower levels within an organization or community. It is often associated with hierarchical structures where leaders set goals, strategies, and policies that are executed by subordinates. The top-down approach is beneficial in scenarios requiring quick decision-making, clear direction, and uniformity in action. It can be effective in ensuring compliance with regulatory frameworks, achieving policy alignment, and maintaining control over complex processes. In the context of energy transition initiatives, a top-down approach can facilitate the dissemination of expert knowledge, provide clear guidelines, and ensure alignment with broader regional, national, and European policy contexts. It is particularly useful in settings where governance structures and institutional arrangements are already well-defined.
- **Bottom-Up Approach:** Contrastingly, the bottom-up approach emphasizes grassroots participation and local-level decision-making. This strategy involves stakeholders at the community or organizational base contributing ideas, feedback, and solutions, which are then integrated into broader plans and policies. The bottom-up approach fosters inclusivity, local ownership, and empowerment, as it leverages the insights and capacities of those directly affected by the issues. It encourages innovation, adaptability, and responsiveness to local needs and conditions. In the energy transition context, a bottom-up approach can empower local stakeholders, such as small municipalities and community organizations, to initiate and drive their own sustainable energy projects. This approach ensures that solutions are tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities of specific locales, enhancing the relevance and sustainability of initiatives.

- **Peer-to-Peer Approach:** Peer-to-peer (P2P) engagement involves direct interaction and collaboration between individuals or groups at the same level, facilitating the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and best practices. This approach fosters a sense of community and mutual support, as stakeholders learn from each other's successes and challenges. In the context of energy transition initiatives, P2P engagement can enable the sharing of practical insights and innovative solutions among communities, organizations, and individuals. For example, peer mentoring programs, peer-led workshops, and collaborative networks can enhance capacity-building and problem-solving by leveraging the collective expertise and experiences of participants. By creating a supportive environment for open dialogue and collaboration, P2P engagement can drive the adoption of sustainable energy practices and the development of locally relevant solutions.

The literature on these approaches highlights their complementary nature. For instance, the integration of top-down directives ensures coherence and alignment with larger policy goals coming from Energy Agencies like EAP and CEA in their respective geographical areas, while the bottom-up engagement fosters local innovation and tailored solutions coming from local association like CERES. Combining these approaches aligns well with the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), ensuring a balanced strategy that promotes both expert guidance and grassroots empowerment. The P2P approach complements both top-down and bottom-up strategies, as well as participatory action research (PAR) and asset-based community development (ABCD), by fostering horizontal learning and empowering stakeholders to take an active role in the clean energy transition. This dual approach will be instrumental in addressing the diverse needs of stakeholders across the four use cases, ensuring both strategic alignment and local relevance in the clean energy transition.

2.2 Best practices workshop

In any project, especially those involving complex processes like clean energy transitions, the identification and application of best practices are crucial for success. Best practices are established methods or techniques that have consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and they can be used as benchmarks. By leveraging the collective experience and insights of all partners, the aim is to adopt these proven methods to improve the stakeholder engagement strategy.

Engaging stakeholders effectively is pivotal to ensuring the successful implementation and sustainability of clean energy initiatives. Best practices in stakeholder engagement include strategies that have been tried, tested, and refined over time to yield the best possible outcomes. These practices help in understanding stakeholder needs, fostering collaboration, and driving collective action towards common goals. By focusing on proven engagement methods, the project can ensure that all stakeholder groups are adequately represented, and their input is effectively integrated into the project's planning and execution phases.

The workshop on best practices for stakeholder engagement provided an opportunity to systematically gather and evaluate these methods. Participants were encouraged to explore and share their experiences related to communication, involvement, motivation, and resource allocation. This structured approach facilitated a thorough examination of what works best in different contexts, allowing for the adaptation of these strategies to suit the specific needs of the project.

The process of collecting and analyzing best practices is beneficial as it leads to the development of a more effective and efficient engagement strategy. It helps in identifying gaps and opportunities, ensuring that the engagement efforts are targeted and impactful. Furthermore, it promotes a culture of continuous improvement and learning within the project team and among stakeholders.

2.2.1 Methodology and key questions that conducted the discussions

To structure the discussion, the workshop was organized around a Miro board with four key questions (listed below), each targeting a specific aspect of stakeholder interaction: communication methods, active involvement techniques, motivational strategies, and necessary resources for successful engagement (Figure 3).

1. What are the best ways to communicate with each type of stakeholder?

Explore preferred channels of communication and most effective modes of interaction to engage each stakeholder group.

- Local authorities might prefer face-to-face meetings or formal briefing sessions.
- Local communities might be more involved through public meetings, online forums or door-to-door awareness campaigns.
- Local industries could be reached through trade associations or dedicated sectoral meetings.

2. What active involvement methods are available to stakeholders?

Evaluate different opportunities for stakeholder involvement, such as:

- Participatory workshops for co-designing local projects;
- thematic working tables on specific issues of interest;
- individual interviews;
- online surveys to gather feedback from the community;
- working groups for developing local energy policies.

3. How can we encourage and motivate stakeholders to actively participate?

Explore strategies to incentivise stakeholder participation, like:

- Incentives;
- public recognition;
- free training opportunities on sustainable energy topics;
- free trial licence for the application of digital tool within the duration of Step-Wise project;
- partnerships for the development of pilot projects that provide tangible benefits to the local community.

4. What resources and support are needed to successfully implement engagement strategies?

Assess resources and logistical support needed:

- Financial resources to organise meetings and workshops;
- logistical support to ensure the participation of all stakeholders;
- dedicated staff to coordinate involvement activities;
- information resources and materials to facilitate understanding of the issues involved.

Partners provided their insights on communication methods, active involvement techniques, motivational strategies, and the resources needed for successful engagement. This collaborative effort not only highlighted effective practices but also facilitated the exchange of innovative ideas to strengthen the overall engagement approach. The insights gained from this workshop are instrumental in refining the methodology, ensuring that the engagement efforts are both inclusive and impactful.

	<p>Explore preferred channels of communication and most effective modes of interaction to engage each stakeholder group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -> Local authorities might prefer face-to-face meetings or formal briefing sessions -> Local communities might be more involved through public meetings, online forums or door-to-door awareness campaigns -> Local industries could be reached through trade associations or dedicated sectoral meetings. 	<p>Evaluate different opportunities for stakeholder involvement, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -> participatory workshops for co-designing local projects, -> thematic working tables on specific issues of interest, -> individual interviews, -> online surveys to gather feedback from the community, -> working groups for developing local energy policies. 	<p>Explore strategies to incentivise stakeholder participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -> incentives, -> public recognition -> free training opportunities on sustainable energy topics -> partnerships for the development of pilot projects that provide tangible benefits to the local community, -> etc. 	<p>Assess resources and logistical support needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -> Financial resources to organise meetings and workshops, -> logistical support to ensure the participation of all stakeholders -> dedicated staff to coordinate involvement activities -> information resources and materials to facilitate understanding of the issues involved.
PARTNERS	What are the best ways to communicate with each type of stakeholder?	What active involvement methods are available to stakeholders?	How can we encourage and motivate stakeholders to actively participate?	What resources and support are needed to successfully implement engagement strategies?

Figure 3 Best Practices collection Miro board

2.2.2 Summary of the session and best practices gathered from partner's insights

The following section summarizes the responses collected from partners regarding stakeholder engagement in clean energy transitions in the Miro board (Figure 4). Each question's answers are outlined, followed by conclusions drawn from these insights. This summary highlights key strategies and best practices to enhance stakeholder participation and collaboration.

1. Best Ways to Communicate with Each Type of Stakeholder

The partners emphasized the importance of tailored communication strategies for different stakeholder groups:

- Local communities benefit from working with existing citizen organizations, local associations, and using face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and emails. Online meetings can be effective if there is prior commitment.
- Massive mailing lists are generally ineffective unless the project has been presented beforehand.
- Publishing targets via online platforms and delivering presentations at specialized conferences and events were also noted.
- Print materials such as brochures, newsletters, fact sheets, and rate notices remain useful.
- Engagement should be more in person and in the local language for better involvement.
- Direct contact through mail and phone calls works well for all stakeholders, emphasizing the need to build trust.
- Local authorities often have good contacts with Regional Energy Agencies and benefit from personal relationships and networking activities.
- Citizens respond well to eye-catching brochures, street questions, and door-to-door visits.
- Invitation to participate in Step-WISE events is a way to maintain communication.

2. Active Involvement Methods for Stakeholders

Partners suggested various methods for active stakeholder involvement:

- Webinars and structured training sessions are valuable, though interviews can be too demanding at the start.
- Questionnaires, public meetings, forum/group meetings, round table discussions, facilitated workshops, seminars, conferences, and focus groups were all recommended.
- Digital options are less effective for some local authorities; door-to-door questionnaires or council-mailed surveys are preferred.
- Thematic webinars and hybrid events help reach more people.
- Collaborative boards and facilitation tools like storytelling, games, and co-creation dynamics are effective.

- Intergenerational workshops and networking spaces foster engagement and trust.
- Business opportunities for replicators and practical workshops were highlighted.

3. Encouraging and Motivating Stakeholders

To motivate stakeholders, partners recommended:

- Solving a problem they have and explaining the opportunity for them.
- Increasing the benefit of each meeting for stakeholders and building trusting relationships.
- Ongoing training ensures understanding of processes, goals, and strategies, fostering a culture of learning.
- Regular updates and access to a range of tools help maintain interest.
- For citizens: education on government grants.
- For local authorities: consultation for funding opportunities and participation in EU projects.
- Incentives such as access to toolkits, training, public recognition, and free licenses.
- Breakfast, light lunches, and drinks work well with local authorities and companies, while informal drinks and cultural/sport activities engage citizens.
- Parallel activities for children can increase women's participation.
- Energy parties and cool, inspiring case videos also help.
- Practical and useful information and learning from best practices were noted as effective.

4. Resources and Support for Engagement Strategies

Successful engagement strategies require:

- Utilizing existing materials and events as much as possible.
- Logistical support from local contact points and financial resources to organize meetings and workshops.
- Dedicated staff to coordinate activities and leveraging local networks.
- Free licensing and financial resources to initiate and participate in relevant events.
- Excellent digital tools and structured databases for simulation of energy consumption and scenario development.
- Educational materials, with financial resources needed particularly for these.
- Capitalizing on events organized by local authorities or groups.
- Diverse communication materials such as posters, informative leaflets, infographics, and PowerPoints.
- Identifying contacts who are enthusiastic and willing to participate.

Conclusion and Outcomes from Responses

The insights gathered from the partners emphasize a multifaceted approach to stakeholder engagement, highlighting several key conclusions and outcomes:

1. **Tailored Communication:** Effective communication requires understanding the specific needs and preferences of different stakeholder groups. Utilizing face-to-face meetings, direct contact, and leveraging local networks builds trust and enhances engagement. Digital communication can complement traditional methods, especially when there is prior commitment.
2. **Active Involvement:** Providing various platforms for active involvement, such as webinars, workshops, and thematic meetings, ensures stakeholders can contribute meaningfully.

Interactive and participatory methods, including storytelling and co-creation dynamics, foster a deeper connection and commitment to the initiatives.

3. **Motivation and Incentives:** Clear communication of the benefits and opportunities for stakeholders is crucial. Offering tangible incentives like free training, public recognition, and practical tools increases motivation. Tailoring these incentives to the specific needs of each stakeholder group enhances participation.
4. **Resource Allocation:** Successful engagement strategies depend on adequate resources, both financial and logistical. Ensuring dedicated staff, leveraging existing events, and providing excellent digital tools are essential for effective implementation. Diversifying communication materials and capitalizing on local networks further supports these efforts.
5. **Building Trust and Relationships:** Establishing trust through consistent and transparent communication, personal relationships, and ongoing training promotes a culture of learning and continuous improvement. This trust is the foundation for long-term engagement and collaboration.

By integrating these best practices into the stakeholder engagement strategy, the overall process will be more inclusive, effective, and sustainable. The feedback highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach that considers the diverse needs and preferences of all stakeholders involved in the clean energy transition initiatives.

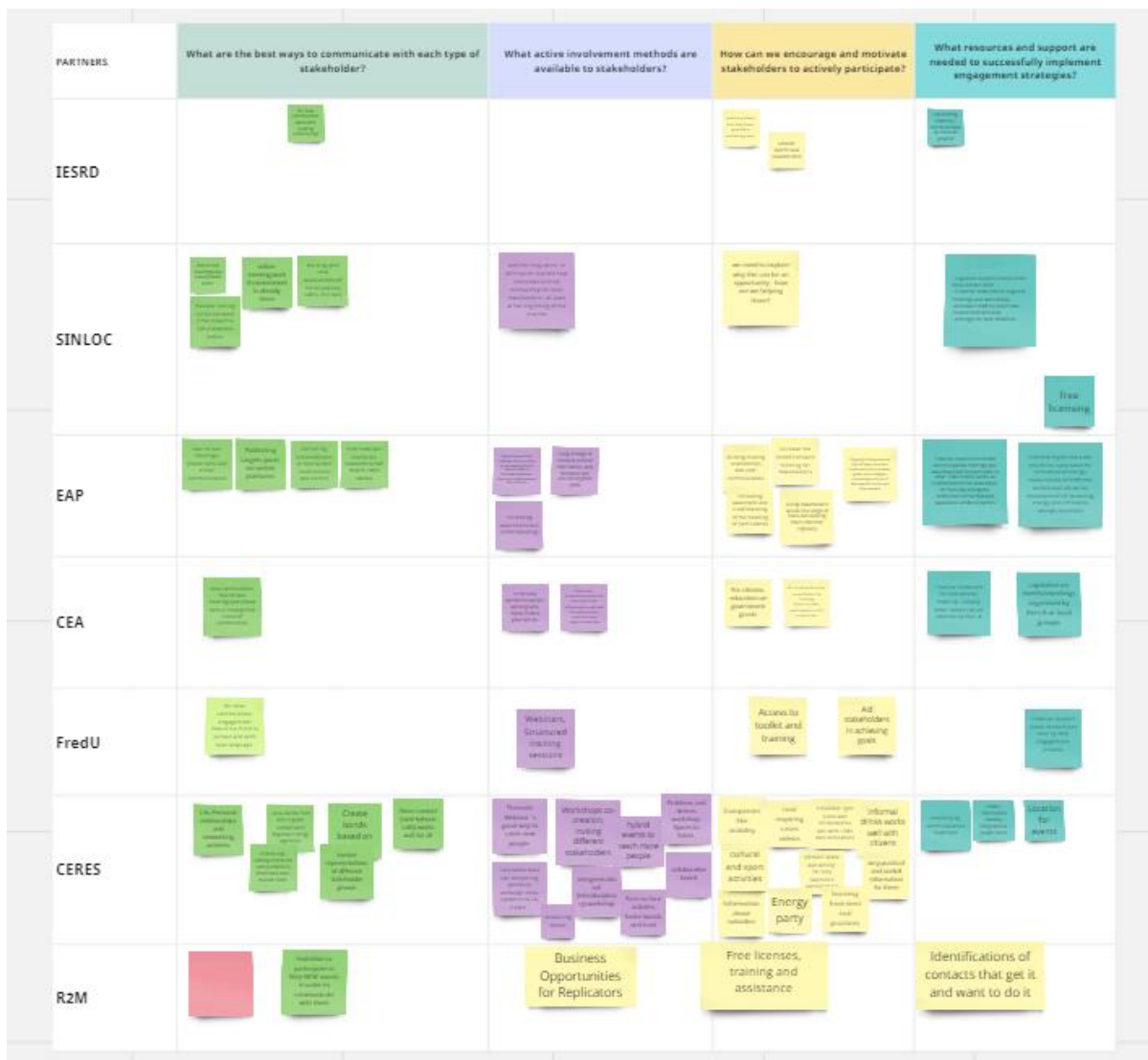


Figure 4 Miro board with partners responses on stakeholder engagement best practices

3 Who - Stakeholders identification

The identification and analysis of stakeholders is a fundamental step in tailoring the engagement strategy to effectively meet the needs and expectations of the project's diverse target audience. Recognizing the importance of this step, the project team embarked on a comprehensive stakeholder identification process within WP2, which serves as the bedrock for all subsequent engagement activities. Understanding who the stakeholders are, their interests, influence, and potential impact on the project is crucial for developing a nuanced and effective engagement plan.

Stakeholder identification is more than just listing names; it involves a deep dive into the various categories of stakeholders, analyzing their roles, motivations, and the dynamics of their interactions. This step ensures that the engagement strategy is not only inclusive but also strategically focused, enabling the project to prioritize efforts and resources effectively. By accurately mapping stakeholders, the project can tailor its communication and engagement efforts to resonate with the specific needs and priorities of each group.

In the context of the Step-WISE project, stakeholder identification is pivotal for understanding the landscape of actors involved in clean energy transition planning. It allows the project to align its tools

and resources with the distinct needs of different stakeholders, ensuring that the engagement strategy is relevant and impactful. This tailored approach helps in building trust, fostering collaboration, and driving meaningful progress towards the project's goals.

This chapter outlines first the general methodology employed in the stakeholder identification process, detailing the key questions to categorize stakeholders and assess their influence and interest. Then it provides a comprehensive overview of the key stakeholder groups identified within WP2, offering insights into their roles and potential contributions to the project. By presenting this analysis, the chapter sets the stage for a targeted and effective stakeholder engagement strategy, which is essential for the success of the Step-WISE project in advancing clean energy transition initiatives.

3.1 Methodology and key questions

1. Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests and objectives?

To answer this question, the main stakeholders in the geographical areas involved need to be identified and then their motivations and priorities regarding the programme should be analysed.

- ➔ Stakeholders could include local authorities, energy agencies, local communities, environmental non-governmental organisations, local industries, educational institutions, etc. Interests could range from increased energy security to economic opportunities related to sustainable energy, environmental protection and public health.

2. What are their concerns and potential resistance to the programme?

It is essential to investigate stakeholders' concerns and potential resistance and develop strategies to address and mitigate them.

- ➔ Local authorities may be concerned about the availability of funding and resources, while communities may fear a negative impact on their traditional activities. Local industries may resist changes that entail additional costs or regulatory restrictions.

3. What are the combinations and underlying motivations of how trainers and trainees will come together?

One simple way to view the Step-WISE project is to divide the world into two categories: 1) People that will receive capacity building (Trainees) (Adopters & Followers in the terminology of the Step-WISE project) and 2) People providing capacity building (Trainers) (Disseminators & Replicators in project terminology). A collaborative workshop was made to brainstorm and map several very basic questions. How could we think about and partition people receiving training? What would they be after in such training and would we target each partition / grouping with the design of the capacity building program? Would the engagement strategies or engagement channels be different? Considering the trainers as the project seeks to empower "Replicators" to learn, skill-build and also deliver capacity building programs and activities as part of what they do – why would they want to do that? How would it relate to their core business, organizational values or activity types? Would the Step-WISE capacity building program be designed for each of them and what types of engagement strategies and engagement channels would resonate with each of them?

The result of this "Trainee meets Trainer" or Capacity Building Program design workshop is summarized in the accompanying figure / whiteboard.

People Receiving Capacity Building (Trainees) (Adopters & Followers) <i>What do they need / what should the CBP have?</i>	People Providing Capacity Building (Trainers) (Disseminators & Replicators) <i>Why would an organization deliver capacity building?</i>
<p>1. Municipalities that want to outsource SECAP actions (development or reporting)</p> <p>Specifications to include in public tenders so that digital tools are utilized</p> <p>2. Municipalities that want basic training, knowledge and skills on SECAP actions</p> <p>Specifications Non-expert training Licensing Validation support</p> <p>3. Municipalities that want to develop in-house skills directly for SECAP actions</p> <p>Expert training Licensing</p>	<p>For profit companies – Using the Digital Toolbox to deliver value added services to municipalities and or LRA stakeholders to make profit on SECAP consulting, project development, or R&D activities. Consortium partners R2M and SINLOC are examples.</p> <p>Energy Agencies - Using the Digital Toolbox to sharpen and better deliver their core services on the territory and to be more competitive in raising funding for the delivery of their core services. Energy Agency Plovdiv and the Cyprus Energy Agency are examples in the consortium.</p> <p>Non-Profits / Associations – to deliver value or services to their members or local territories. CERES is an example in the consortium.</p> <p>Universities - to upskill professors, increase scientific excellence and to make possible strengthened collaborations on the territory. Frederick University is an example in the consortium.</p>

Figure 5 Capacity Building Program Design Workshop Summary

People receiving capacity building (trainees) were grouped into those that would want to outsource SECAP actions (not attaining expertise), those that would want basic awareness and training on digital tools (attaining some expertise) and those that would want to develop in-house skills for direct use in SECAP actions (attaining advanced expertise). During the workshop, it became clear that what these different partitions would want out of a capacity building program is quite different and consequently engagement strategies and communication methods would need to adapt to the value proposition offered to each one.

With respect to people delivering capacity building (trainers), the partitions included for profit companies, energy agencies, non-profits and associations and universities. Potentially, these groupings could be combined, but leaving them separate allows better thinking on what makes each one of them unique or how some actors such as universities do different types of activities for different purposes. In making the mapping, it became clear that training can be delivered for very different purposes (for profit, not for profit, to have the ability to directly deliver services, to empower others to deliver services or results).

The line of thinking in this workshop will be continued as work continues in the design of the capacity building program and it is noted its natural linkage with respect to exploitation strategies and business models. It also impacts project strategy. One potential simple conclusion is that LRAs that want to outsource SECAP actions – that they are simply not a target for project capacity building activities. A different conclusion can be that these LRAs are most interesting for the project because they are those that will want to pay for outsourced activities – and as such they need capacity building on how to include the use of digital tools (or the KPIs and quantitative results that they produce) in tendering specifications.

3.2 Stakeholders identified in each Use Case in WP2

D2.2 outlines the identified stakeholders for the four different use cases: Bulgaria, Spain, Cyprus, and the Mediterranean islands. Here is a summary of the identified stakeholders for each use case with their main challenges and needs. These summaries highlight the specific challenges and needs of

various stakeholders involved in each use case, underscoring the tailored approach required to effectively engage and support them in the Step-WISE project.

3.2.1 Use Case 1 – Bulgaria (EAP)

1. Local and Regional Authorities (Non-Technical Staff and Policy Officers):
 - Lack of support and interest in energy planning.
 - Varying involvement across municipalities.
 - Lack of understanding of how energy planning benefits other municipal goals.
 - General lack of knowledge and experience in CETP/SECAP planning.
2. Local and Regional Authorities (Technical Staff):
 - Lack of tools for energy and emission inventories.
 - Limited knowledge and capacity to use tools for CETP/SECAP planning.
 - Insufficient expertise in energy and climate planning topics.
3. Other Stakeholders (Primarily Energy Agencies):
 - Lack of climate-oriented datasets and tools.
 - Need for integrated tools for energy, climate, and environmental assessments.
 - Insufficient tools for data management and processing, scenarios development and simulations for target objectives achievement

3.2.2 Use Case 2 – Spain (CERES)

1. Local Authorities:
 - Enhancing production of renewable energy.
 - Increasing energy efficiency in buildings.
 - Raising public awareness and knowledge about energy and climate change.
2. Technical and Non-Technical Municipal Staff:
 - Need for efficient digital infrastructure to support energy planning.
 - Overcoming legislative constraints and rigid regulatory frameworks.
 - Addressing digitalization challenges to carry out effective energy planning efforts.
 - Need for inter-departmental coordination within Municipality.

3.2.3 Use Case 3 – Cyprus (CEA)

1. Local and Regional Authorities (Non-Technical Staff):
 - Prioritization of matters other than energy planning.
 - Insufficient human technical resources.
 - Lack of funding to implement and maintain SECAPs.
2. Local and Regional Authorities (Technical Staff):
 - Difficulty translating technical expertise into practical actions.
3. Other Stakeholders (Energy Consultants, Construction Companies):
 - Not enough awareness within municipalities to understand and implement SECAPs.

3.2.4 Use Case 4 - Mediterranean Islands (SINLOC)

1. Local and Regional Authorities (Non-Technical Staff):
 - Lack of specific tools for SECAP planning and monitoring.
 - Collaborative efforts needed for implementing unified CETPs/SECAPs.
 - Limited decision-making at the municipality level due to dual-tiered political structures.
2. Local and Regional Authorities (Technical Staff):

- Lack of technical expertise.
 - Need for increased collaboration with energy communities.
 - Addressing the lack of a centralized structure for collaboration and knowledge sharing.
3. Other Stakeholders (Energy Suppliers, Universities):
- Need for mechanisms to be in close contact with citizens to increase awareness on energy planning.
 - Collaborative projects with entities like EnerMalta, ERA, and universities to raise environmental awareness.
 - Addressing issues like diesel reliance, green hydrogen adoption, and waste-water management.

4 What - Value Proposition Workshop

A Value Proposition Workshop was conducted with the partners and served as a critical juncture in the project's journey, marking a concerted effort to refine the engagement strategy with stakeholders. Understanding the intricacies of stakeholder needs and aligning them with the project's offerings is paramount to fostering meaningful collaborations and driving impactful outcomes.

A value proposition is the essence of what an organization offers to its stakeholders, encapsulating the benefits they can expect and why they should engage. It delineates the unique value a project, product, or service brings to its target audience. In the context of Step-WISE project, the value proposition is pivotal in articulating how Step-WISE offerings address the needs and aspirations of stakeholders involved in clean energy transition planning.

The Value Proposition Workshop was a proactive measure to delve into stakeholder requirements and delineate how Step-WISE tools and resources can meet those needs effectively. By conducting this workshop, the aim was to lay the groundwork for a robust stakeholder engagement methodology across various use cases. This approach ensures that the project's efforts are directed towards delivering tangible value to stakeholders and fostering sustainable partnerships.

In this chapter, a summary of the key insights garnered from the Value Proposition Workshop is outlined, shedding light on stakeholder needs and the corresponding provisions the project offers. By elucidating these aspects, the aim was to forge a pathway towards more targeted and impactful stakeholder engagement, ultimately driving progress in clean energy transition initiatives.

4.1 Methodology and Value Proposition template

The Value Proposition Workshop was a pivotal action item stemming from the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy Workshop. The objective was clear: to refine and articulate the value proposition for stakeholders, addressing what Step-WISE offers and what stakeholders truly need. Conducted through a Miro board, the session delved into crucial aspects of the project's offerings and how they align with stakeholder requirements.

The discussion was initiated by dividing the value proposition into two key components: **what stakeholders need** and **what Step-WISE project provides** on a Miro board (Figure 6). Through the grant agreement, it was established that stakeholders would gain access to a digital toolbox and licensing during the project duration. However, the specifics of what stakeholders require and how those needs can be met were explored in detail.

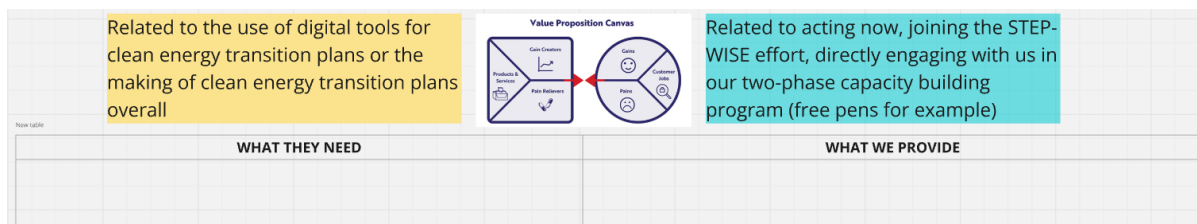


Figure 6 Value Proposition template

4.2 Summary of session’s outcomes

Figure 7 below reports the insights from the partners during the session.

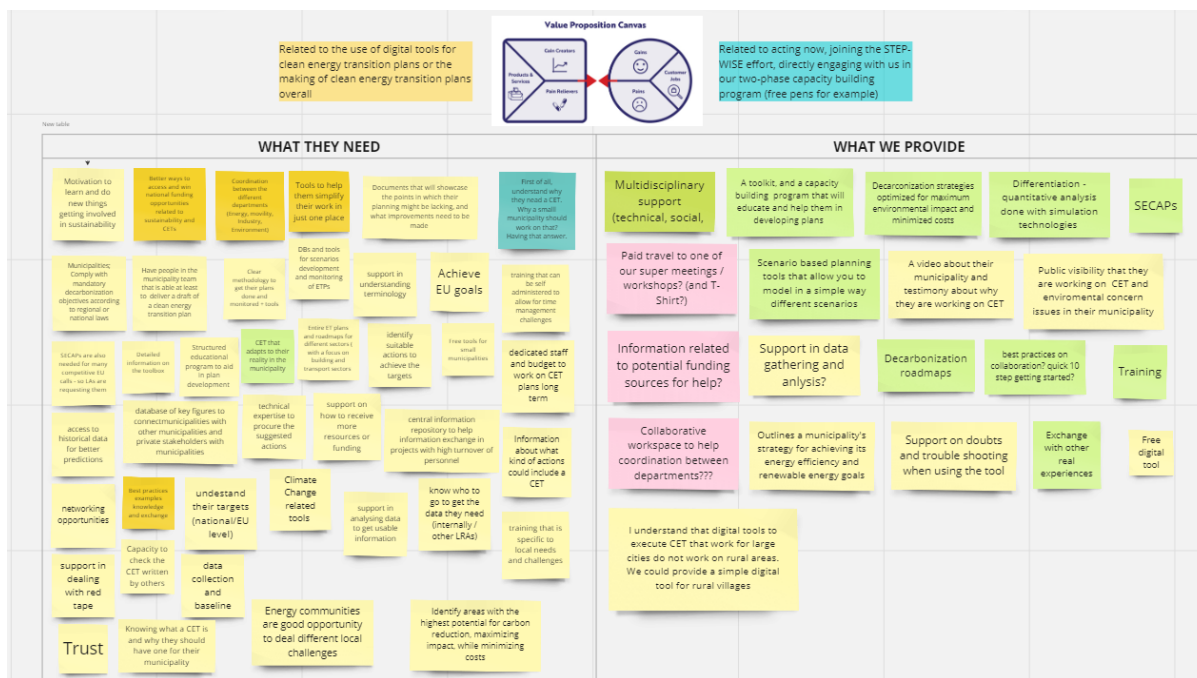


Figure 7 Answers collected in the value proposition workshop

From the Miro in the board, a comprehensive list of **what stakeholders need** in relation to the use of digital tools for clean energy transition plans or overall clean energy transition planning emerged:

- Motivation to learn and engage in sustainability initiatives.
- Access to national funding opportunities related to sustainability and clean energy transition.
- Coordination between different municipal departments such as Energy, Mobility, Industry, and Environment.
- Integrated tools that streamline their work processes into a single platform.
- Documents highlighting areas of improvement in their planning processes and suggestions for enhancements.
- Understanding the necessity and benefits of implementing Clean Energy Transition plans.
- Compliance with mandatory decarbonization objectives set by regional or national laws.
- Capacity within the municipality team to draft clean energy transition plans.
- Clear methodology and tools for developing, implementing, and monitoring clean energy transition plans.
- Access to databases and tools for scenario development and monitoring of Energy Transition Plans (ETPs).
- Support in understanding technical terminology related to clean energy transition.
- Achievement of European Union sustainability goals.
- Training that can be self-administered to allow for time management challenges.

- Structured educational programs to aid in plan development.
- Customization of clean energy transition plans to adapt to local municipality realities.
- Detailed information on the toolbox and technical expertise for procurement of suggested actions.
- Support in dealing with bureaucratic processes and red tape.
- Trust and capacity to check clean energy transition plans written by others.
- Climate change-related tools and data analysis support.
- Identification of areas with the highest potential for carbon reduction while minimizing costs.

On the other hand, the workshop also identified **what Step-WISE project provides** in terms of addressing stakeholders' needs:

- Multidisciplinary support through technical and social avenues.
- A toolkit and capacity-building program to educate and assist stakeholders in plan development.
- Decarbonization strategies optimized for maximum environmental impact and minimized costs.
- Differentiation through quantitative analysis using simulation technologies.
- Sustainable Energy Climate Action Plans (SECAPs).
- Scenario-based planning tools for modeling different scenarios.
- Public visibility for municipalities engaged in clean energy transition.
- Information on potential funding sources and support in data gathering and analysis.
- Decarbonization roadmaps, trainings, and best practices on collaboration.
- Collaborative workspace to aid coordination between municipal departments.
- Support and troubleshooting assistance when using the tool.
- Exchange of real-life experiences and free access to digital tools.

In conclusion, the workshop provided valuable insights into aligning project offerings with stakeholder needs. Moving forward, a concerted effort is required to balance holistic support with existing tool capabilities, ensuring effective stakeholder engagement throughout the project. This collaboration between stakeholders and our project will lead to more impactful clean energy transition initiatives.

5 How - Brainstorming and Strategy Development

Engagement strategies play a pivotal role in ensuring the success of the capacity building program. Different stakeholders require tailored approaches to maximize participation and commitment.

A brainstorming session on **how to create a good stakeholder engagement plan / what are the important points for good stakeholder engagement** at each use case has been conducted among the project's partners. The questions that conducted the discussions are summarised in chapter 5.1, then chapter 5.2 gives a few examples of engagement strategies with their advantages and disadvantages, and finally chapter 5.3 summarises the outcomes from the brainstorming session.

5.1 Key questions of the brainstorming session

Below are reported the key questions posed, the aim of the question, how they were discussed and some of the main responses obtained during the strategy development process.

1. What are the best ways to communicate with each type of stakeholder?

With this question, the aim was to explore the preferred communication channels and the most effective ways of interaction to engage each stakeholder group.

- ➔ Local authorities might prefer face-to-face meetings or formal briefing sessions, while local communities might be more engaged through public meetings, online forums or door-to-door

awareness campaigns. Local industries could be reached through trade associations or dedicated sectoral meetings.

2. What are the opportunities for active stakeholder involvement?

This question allowed to evaluate different opportunities for stakeholder involvement, such as participatory workshops, thematic working tables, individual interviews, etc.

- ➔ Involvement opportunities could include **participatory workshops** for the co-design of local projects, thematic working tables on specific issues of interest, **online surveys to gather feedback** from the community, and working groups for the development of local energy policies.
- ➔ Involvement in case studies on SECAPs/CETPs and decarbonisation roadmaps

3. How can we encourage and motivate stakeholders to actively participate?

Explore strategies **to incentivise** stakeholder participation, e.g. through incentives, public recognition or training opportunities.

- ➔ Incentives could include public recognition for stakeholder contribution to the programme, **free training opportunities** on sustainable energy issues, **partnerships for the development** of pilot projects that provide tangible benefits to the local community, etc.

4. What resources and support are needed to successfully implement engagement strategies?

Assess the resources and logistical support needed to implement stakeholder engagement strategies effectively and sustainably.

- ➔ Financial resources may be needed to organise meetings and workshops, logistical support to ensure participation of all stakeholders, dedicated staff to coordinate involvement activities, and information resources and materials to facilitate understanding of the issues involved.

5.2 Examples of engagement strategies

Below are several engagement strategies, each with its advantages and disadvantages:

1. Workshops and Training Sessions:

Advantages: Provide hands-on learning experiences, foster collaboration among stakeholders, and allow for immediate feedback.

Disadvantages: Require significant time and resources for organization, may be limited in scalability.

2. Online Platforms and Webinars:

Advantages: Reach a wider audience, facilitate asynchronous participation, and enable easy dissemination of information.

Disadvantages: Lack face-to-face interaction, may require technical proficiency, and could face connectivity issues in some regions.

3. Community Outreach and Public Consultations:

Advantages: Foster community involvement, promote transparency, and build trust among stakeholders.

Disadvantages: Time-consuming to organize, may face resistance from certain groups, and require careful facilitation to ensure diverse voices are heard.

4. Partnership Development and Networking Events:

Advantages: Forge alliances with key organizations, leverage resources and expertise, and enhance project credibility.

Disadvantages: Require ongoing relationship management, may encounter challenges in aligning priorities among partners, and could exclude smaller or less connected stakeholders.

5. Innovative Communication Campaigns:

Advantages: Capture attention through creative messaging, mobilize public support, and generate buzz around the project.

Disadvantages: Require specialized skills in marketing and communication, may be costly to implement, and effectiveness can be difficult to measure.

6. Pilot Projects and Demonstrations:

Advantages: Showcase tangible benefits of clean energy initiatives, inspire confidence among stakeholders, and serve as learning opportunities.

Disadvantages: Initial investment may be high, require buy-in from local authorities or landowners, and results may take time to materialize.

7. Policy Advocacy and Stakeholder Engagement Forums:

Advantages: Influence decision-making processes, shape policy agendas, and create a platform for dialogue among diverse stakeholders.

Disadvantages: Can be politically sensitive, require navigating complex bureaucratic processes, and may lead to conflicts of interest among stakeholders.

8. Surveys and Questionnaires:

Advantages: Gather quantitative data on stakeholder preferences and opinions, cost-effective method for collecting feedback, and allows for anonymity, encouraging honest responses.

Disadvantages: Limited in-depth insights compared to qualitative methods, potential for low response rates, and may not capture the nuances of stakeholder perspectives.

9. Co-creation Workshops and Design Thinking Sessions:

Advantages: Promote co-ownership of solutions, encourage creativity and innovation, and foster a sense of empowerment among stakeholders.

Disadvantages: Require skilled facilitators, time-intensive to organize and implement, and may encounter challenges in aligning diverse stakeholder interests.

10. Social Media Engagement and Online Communities:

Advantages: Reach a wide audience, facilitate ongoing dialogue, and provide a platform for sharing resources and experiences.

Disadvantages: Require active management and moderation, risk of misinformation or inappropriate behavior, and may exclude stakeholders with limited internet access or digital literacy.

11. Field Trips and Site Visits:

Advantages: Offer firsthand experiences of clean energy projects, build trust through direct interaction, and enhance understanding of local contexts.

Disadvantages: Logistics can be challenging, especially for large groups, limited scalability, and may require permission from project owners or local authorities.

12. Gamification and Interactive Activities:

Advantages: Make learning fun and engaging, increase motivation and participation, and appeal to diverse learning styles.

Disadvantages: Design and development can be resource-intensive, effectiveness may vary depending on cultural preferences, and may not suit all stakeholder groups.

13. Multi-stakeholder Platforms and Roundtable Discussions:

Advantages: Bring together diverse perspectives, facilitate consensus-building, and promote collaborative decision-making.

Disadvantages: Require skilled facilitation to manage power dynamics and conflicting interests, may prioritize dialogue over action, and can be time-consuming.

14. Mobile Applications and Interactive Tools:

Advantages: Provide accessible and convenient ways for stakeholders to engage, enable real-time data collection, and support ongoing communication.

Disadvantages: Development and maintenance costs, potential for technical glitches, and may exclude stakeholders without access to smartphones or internet connectivity.

Each of these strategies offers unique opportunities and challenges, and selecting the most appropriate ones will depend on the characteristics of your target stakeholders, project objectives, and available resources.

Tailoring engagement strategies to the specific needs and preferences of stakeholders will be crucial in fostering meaningful participation and ensuring the success of the capacity building program.

5.3 Outcomes from brainstorming session

The following conclusions have been drawn from the brainstorming sessions:

- **Tailored Communication:** Different stakeholders respond better to specific communication methods. Local authorities might prefer face-to-face meetings, local communities might be more engaged through public meetings or online forums, and local industries could be reached through trade associations or sectoral meetings.
- **Diverse Involvement Opportunities:** Providing multiple avenues for stakeholder involvement increases engagement. Participatory workshops, thematic working tables, and online surveys are effective methods to gather diverse input.
- **Effective Incentives:** Stakeholder participation can be significantly boosted by offering incentives such as public recognition, free training on sustainable energy, and tangible benefits from pilot projects.
- **Comprehensive Resources:** Successful implementation of engagement strategies requires adequate resources, including funding for events, logistical support, dedicated staff, and educational materials.

6 Engagement Plan Guidelines

The aim of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive guideline for developing and implementing an effective engagement plan tailored to the Step-WISE project. Recognizing the critical role of stakeholder engagement in the success of clean energy transition initiatives, this chapter outlines the methodology and provides a structured template to ensure all relevant stakeholders are actively involved and committed throughout the project's lifecycle.

The chapter begins by presenting the methodology used to design the engagement plan, ensuring it is aligned with the project's objectives and responsive to stakeholder needs. Following this, it introduces a detailed template for the development of the engagement activities plan, for executing the plan effectively. This structure helps in systematically addressing the various aspects of stakeholder engagement, from initial identification and analysis to ongoing communication and feedback mechanisms.

In the subsequent sections, the chapter elaborates on the stakeholder engagement process and strategy tailored to each use case, providing specific examples and tailored approaches. This targeted strategy aims to address the unique needs and contexts of the different stakeholder groups involved in the clean energy transition within the four use cases.

6.1 Recommendations for the stakeholder's engagement plan development

Based on the outcomes from the previous steps, the following recommendations are provided for developing a successful stakeholder engagement plan:

1. Develop Tailored Communication Plans:

- Identify the preferred communication channels for each stakeholder group.
- Utilize a mix of face-to-face meetings, online forums, public consultations, and sector-specific meetings.
- Ensure clear and consistent messaging across all channels.

2. Create Diverse Involvement Opportunities:

- Organize participatory workshops to co-design local projects.
- Set up thematic working tables focused on specific issues.
- Conduct online surveys to gather broad community feedback.
- Establish working groups to develop local energy policies.

3. Implement Motivational Strategies:

- Offer public recognition to stakeholders who contribute to the program.
- Provide free training opportunities on sustainable energy topics.
- Develop partnerships for pilot projects that deliver tangible community benefits.

4. Allocate Sufficient Resources:

- Secure financial resources for organizing meetings and workshops.
- Ensure logistical support to facilitate stakeholder participation.
- Assign dedicated staff to coordinate engagement activities.
- Prepare informative materials to aid stakeholders' understanding of the issues.

6.2 Methodology and Engagement Plan template

A structured template designed to facilitate the development of comprehensive engagement activities plans for each use case is proposed below (Table 1). This template provides a standardized framework to outline and document various engagement strategies, ensuring a cohesive and systematic approach across different contexts of the 4 use cases. It includes sections for identifying key stakeholders

(target), defining engagement objectives (goal), planning communication activities (Activity/Tool), and detailing logistical requirements (location, etc.).

Table 1 Engagement activities plan template

Date	Activity/Tool	Goal	Target	Organiser	Location	Challenges	Comments
ex: June 2024	Email	Introduce Step-Wise	Network of Energy communities	CERES	Spain		

6.3 Stakeholder's engagement process, approach and strategy at each Use Cases

6.3.1 Use Case 1 – Bulgaria (EAP)

In the context of UC1 Bulgaria, the engagement process is designed to foster active participation from local stakeholders, ensuring that the capacity-building program aligns with the region's specific needs and dynamics. The engagement strategy will focus on establishing strong, collaborative relationships with local authorities, communities, and industries through a multi-faceted approach offering support to SECAPs/CETPs and decarbonisation roadmaps development.

The initial phase involves conducting a thorough stakeholder mapping to identify key actors, including municipal leaders, local business representatives, community groups, and energy sector professionals. This mapping exercise was performed within WP2 and helped in understanding the stakeholders' interests, influence, and potential contributions to the clean energy transition.

The engagement approach in Bulgaria emphasizes direct, face-to-face interactions complemented by digital communication tools to maintain continuous dialogue. Regular workshops and formal briefing sessions will be organized to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaborative planning. These workshops will serve as platforms for co-designing local projects, where stakeholders can voice their concerns, provide input, and develop a shared vision for sustainable energy initiatives. To ensure inclusivity, public meetings and online forums will be utilized to engage broader community participation, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and collective responsibility towards the project's goals.

The strategy for motivating stakeholder participation includes offering incentives such as public recognition for contributions, opportunities for specialized training in sustainable energy practices, and involvement in pilot projects that demonstrate tangible benefits. These incentives aim to build long-term commitment and enthusiasm among stakeholders. Additionally, partnerships with local trade associations and sectoral meetings will be leveraged to reach industrial stakeholders, ensuring their active involvement and support.

Resource allocation is a critical component of the engagement strategy. Financial resources will be earmarked for organizing events, while logistical support will be provided to facilitate stakeholder attendance and participation. Dedicated staff will be appointed to coordinate activities, ensuring smooth execution and effective communication. Informational resources, such as brochures and digital content, will be developed to enhance stakeholders' understanding of the project's objectives and benefits.

By implementing this comprehensive engagement process, the strategy in Bulgaria aims to create a collaborative environment where stakeholders are empowered to contribute to and benefit from the clean energy transition. The structured involvement of diverse groups will not only enhance the

quality and relevance of the energy plans but also ensure their sustainability and success in the long term.

6.3.2 Use Case 2 – Spain (CERES)

The engagement process for UC2 Spain is tailored to effectively integrate diverse stakeholder groups into the capacity-building program, ensuring that the initiatives are well-suited to the local context. The process begins with a comprehensive stakeholder mapping to identify key participants such as local government officials, community leaders, industry representatives, and energy experts. This mapping will provide a clear understanding of each stakeholder's influence, interests, and potential contributions, facilitating targeted engagement efforts.

The engagement approach in Spain is designed to be both inclusive and adaptive, employing a combination of direct and digital interactions to reach a wide audience. Regular face-to-face meetings and formal briefing sessions with municipal leaders and industry representatives will be key components, fostering direct dialogue and collaboration. Additionally, public consultations and online forums will be utilized to engage community members, ensuring their voices are heard and incorporated into the planning process, building on the work done by the Community Transformation Office to promote energy communities. This multi-channel approach ensures that all stakeholder groups can participate meaningfully, regardless of their preferred communication methods.

To motivate stakeholders and ensure sustained engagement, the strategy includes various incentives. Public recognition of stakeholder contributions will highlight their importance to the project, while specialized training opportunities in sustainable energy practices will provide valuable skills and knowledge. Furthermore, stakeholders will be invited to participate in pilot projects that offer tangible benefits and demonstrate the practical impact of clean energy initiatives. These incentives are designed to build long-term commitment and enthusiasm among all participants.

Resource allocation is a critical aspect of the engagement strategy. Adequate financial resources will be secured to support the organization of meetings, workshops, and public consultations. Logistical support will ensure that all stakeholders can attend and participate in these events. Dedicated staff members will be appointed to coordinate the engagement activities, ensuring effective communication and smooth execution. Informational materials, both printed and digital, will be developed to help stakeholders understand the project's objectives and benefits, further facilitating their active involvement.

By implementing this structured and inclusive engagement process, the strategy for UC2 Spain aims to foster a collaborative environment where all stakeholders are empowered to contribute to the clean energy transition. This approach not only enhances the relevance and quality of the energy plans but also ensures their sustainability and success in the long term. The involvement of diverse stakeholder groups is crucial for creating robust and effective energy policies that meet the specific needs of the Spanish context.

6.3.3 Use Case 3 – Cyprus (CEA)

In the context of UC3 Cyprus, the engagement process aims to actively involve local stakeholders, ensuring the success of the capacity-building program tailored to Cyprus's specific needs. The engagement process begins with an in-depth stakeholder mapping to identify key local players, including government officials, industry representatives, community organizations, and academic institutions. Understanding their interests, influence, and roles is crucial for targeted engagement.

The engagement approach in Cyprus is multi-faceted, combining direct interaction with innovative digital solutions. Initially, local workshops and town hall meetings will be organized to establish a direct connection with stakeholders. These face-to-face sessions are essential for building trust and facilitating open communication. Alongside these, digital platforms such as webinars, online surveys,

and interactive forums will be used to reach a broader audience, including those who may not be able to attend in person.

To ensure robust stakeholder participation, the strategy includes tailored incentives. Public acknowledgment of stakeholder contributions and achievements will foster a sense of recognition and value. Additionally, offering specialized training programs in sustainable energy practices will enhance stakeholders' skills and knowledge, aligning their interests with project goals. Pilot projects demonstrating practical benefits and innovations in clean energy will also be showcased to motivate engagement and illustrate potential positive outcomes.

Resource allocation for UC3 Cyprus will focus on securing financial support for organizing engagement activities and ensuring logistical arrangements for stakeholder participation. Dedicated personnel will be tasked with coordinating these activities, ensuring smooth implementation and effective communication. Informational resources, such as detailed brochures, educational videos, and digital content, will be developed to provide stakeholders with a clear understanding of the project's objectives, benefits, and progress.

The strategy emphasizes continuous engagement and feedback. Regular updates and open channels for feedback will be maintained to ensure stakeholders remain informed and involved throughout the project lifecycle. This approach not only addresses stakeholder concerns and suggestions but also fosters a collaborative environment conducive to innovation and shared success.

By implementing this comprehensive and adaptive engagement process, the strategy for UC3 Cyprus aims to foster a collaborative environment where all stakeholders are actively involved in the clean energy transition. This approach ensures that the capacity-building initiatives are relevant, sustainable, and tailored to the unique socio-economic and cultural context of Cyprus. Through continuous dialogue and adaptive strategies, the project aims to create lasting partnerships and a shared commitment to achieving its clean energy goals.

6.3.4 Use Case 4 – Mediterranean islands (SINLOC)

The engagement process for UC4 Mediterranean islands is designed to harness the collective knowledge and experience of stakeholders from isolated regions, facilitating the development and implementation of Clean Energy Transition Plans (CETPs). The process will be spearheaded by SINLOC, which will organize peer learning exchanges and training sessions. These sessions will bring together "knowledge champions" from various isolated areas to share their experiences, challenges, and best practices in CETP development.

The approach focuses on peer-to-peer engagement, fostering a collaborative environment where stakeholders can exchange knowledge and learn from each other. This method emphasizes the importance of mutual learning and support, as stakeholders from similar contexts share insights and practical solutions. The peer learning exchanges will serve as a platform for interactive discussions, allowing participants to delve into the specifics of their challenges and jointly explore innovative solutions.

The strategy aims to build a robust community of practice among stakeholders. This community will be a dynamic network where knowledge champions can continuously engage in mentorship and collaborative problem-solving. By fostering such a community, the project seeks to create a sustainable model of knowledge sharing that extends beyond the initial engagement activities. Stakeholders will be encouraged to co-create solutions, addressing common challenges through shared expertise and collective action.

To support this strategy, a variety of materials will be developed, including case studies, success stories, and toolkits derived from the lessons learned during the peer exchanges. These resources will be tailored to capture practical insights and strategies that can be replicated or adapted by other

stakeholders. Additionally, the comprehensive Virtual Knowledge Offices (VKO) that will be established along the Step-Wise toolkit will in particular in this use case facilitate the peer-to-peer engagement with ongoing collaboration and support, ensuring that the community of practice remains active and connected. These platforms will enable continuous dialogue, resource sharing, and peer support, thereby enhancing the overall impact of the engagement process.

Through this structured engagement process, the project aims to empower stakeholders across the Mediterranean islands to take an active role in their energy transitions. By leveraging the collective knowledge and experiences of isolated regions, the strategy seeks to develop effective and context-specific CETPs. The peer-to-peer approach ensures that stakeholders are not only recipients of knowledge but also contributors, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the project's objectives.

Overall, the engagement process for UC4 Mediterranean islands is designed to create a resilient and knowledgeable stakeholder community capable of driving sustainable energy transitions. The focus on collaboration, continuous learning, and practical resource development ensures that the capacity-building efforts are effective and enduring. Through this approach, the project aims to achieve a significant and lasting impact on the clean energy initiatives across the Mediterranean islands.

7 Means of verification

Establishing means of verifying the effectiveness of engagement strategies is crucial for evaluating their impact and ensuring that stakeholder engagement efforts contribute meaningfully to the objectives of the capacity building program. By systematically measuring engagement outcomes and assessing stakeholder perceptions and behaviors, the success of the strategies can be gauged and the areas for improvement can be identified.

The following means of verification, including measurable indicators and methods for assessing engagement outcomes could be employed.

- 1. Quantitative Metrics:** Utilizing quantitative metrics provides a way to objectively measure the reach, frequency, and impact of engagement activities. Examples of quantitative indicators include:
 - Attendance Rates: Tracking the number of participants in workshops, training sessions, or events provides insights into the level of interest and engagement among stakeholders.
 - Surveys and Questionnaires: Administering pre- and post-engagement surveys allows for the collection of quantitative data on stakeholder perceptions, knowledge, and behavior change.
 - Online Analytics: Monitoring website traffic, social media engagement metrics, and email open rates can provide quantitative insights into the effectiveness of online engagement efforts.
- 2. Qualitative Assessments:** Qualitative assessments offer valuable insights into the depth, quality, and impact of stakeholder engagement activities. Qualitative methods include:
 - Focus Groups: Conducting focus group discussions allows for in-depth exploration of stakeholder perspectives, experiences, and attitudes towards the capacity building program.
 - Interviews: Interviewing key stakeholders, including program participants, facilitators, and community leaders, provides rich qualitative data on engagement outcomes and process dynamics.
 - Participant Observations: Observing stakeholder interactions and behaviors during engagement activities can reveal valuable insights into engagement dynamics and effectiveness.
- 3. Feedback Mechanisms:** Establishing feedback mechanisms enables ongoing dialogue and continuous improvement of engagement strategies. Feedback mechanisms may include:
 - Feedback Forms: Providing participants with feedback forms or suggestion boxes allows for the collection of feedback on the relevance, effectiveness, and accessibility of engagement activities.
 - Post-Event Surveys: Sending follow-up surveys after engagement activities solicit feedback on participants' satisfaction, perceived value, and suggestions for improvement.
 - Ongoing Communication Channels: Maintaining open communication channels, such as email newsletters, online forums, or community meetings, facilitates ongoing feedback and dialogue with stakeholders.
- 4. Behavioral Changes:** Assessing changes in stakeholder behavior provides a tangible measure of engagement outcomes and impact. Examples of behavioral changes include:
 - Adoption of Clean Energy Practices: Monitoring the adoption of clean energy technologies, practices, or policies by participating LRAs or community members indicates the influence of engagement efforts on real-world outcomes.
 - Policy Advocacy and Action: Tracking the involvement of stakeholders in advocating for clean energy policies or initiatives at the local or regional level demonstrates the influence of engagement activities on policy outcomes.
- 5. Longitudinal Evaluation:** Conducting longitudinal evaluations allows for the assessment of engagement outcomes over time, capturing both short-term and long-term impacts. Longitudinal evaluation methods may include:

- Follow-up Surveys: Administering follow-up surveys at regular intervals allows for tracking changes in stakeholder perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors over time.
- Case Studies: Documenting and analyzing case studies of successful engagement initiatives provides insights into the factors contributing to their success and sustainability over time.

By employing a combination of quantitative metrics, qualitative assessments, feedback mechanisms, and longitudinal evaluation methods, a robust means of verification can be established for assessing the effectiveness of the engagement strategies. These verification methods enable to monitor progress, measure impact, and adapt the strategies to maximize the success of the capacity building program and advance the goals of the clean energy transition.

Therefore, to monitor and validate the process of the two waves of engagement, the disseminators will fill the template in Table 2 which takes into account the Participation rate parameters (attendance rates, participation in co-design sessions, and completion of training modules) which measure the level of engagement and participation from both replicators (future trainers) and followers (future adopters) in the training program, and collects feedback from participants to assess the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the engagement activity, through surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews to gather qualitative and quantitative data.

The following template will help use cases to track progress and evaluating the effectiveness of engagement activities, ensuring that all efforts are aligned with the overarching goals of the capacity-building program. By using this template, project teams can ensure consistency, transparency, and efficiency in their engagement efforts, ultimately enhancing the success of the clean energy transition initiatives.

Table 2 Engagement activities follow up template

Summary and follow up of engagement activities	
Activity ID	
Session Agenda	
Photos	
Materials (ppt, flyers, etc.)	
List of attendees/ people reached	
Dissemination if any	
Description on how it went	
Feedback/ Observation/ Suggestions made by participants	
Other	

8 Conclusions

The Step-WISE project is designed to support local and regional authorities in implementing CET plans effectively. This deliverable focuses on establishing a robust stakeholder engagement methodology, identifying the key stakeholders, and outlining preliminary strategies for stakeholder engagement across four use cases: Bulgaria, Spain, Cyprus, and the Mediterranean islands. The goal is to create a

solid foundation for the forthcoming capacity building activities and ensure that the diverse needs of stakeholders are addressed from the outset.

Main Outcomes

- **Stakeholder Identification and Analysis:** The project team conducted a comprehensive stakeholder identification and analysis process, identifying the key actors involved in CET across the four use cases. This process highlighted the importance of understanding stakeholder needs, interests, and influence to tailor engagement strategies effectively.
- **Engagement Strategies:** Preliminary engagement strategies were developed for each use case, focusing on the unique challenges and opportunities within each context. These strategies emphasize the need for continuous communication, collaboration, and capacity building to ensure successful CET implementation.
- **Value Proposition Workshop:** A Value Proposition Workshop was conducted to refine the engagement strategy, aligning it with stakeholder needs and project objectives. The workshop provided valuable insights into stakeholder requirements and how Step-WISE tools and resources can meet those needs effectively.
- **Template for Engagement Activities Plan:** A detailed template for developing the engagement activities plan was introduced, providing a structured approach for planning and executing stakeholder engagement activities. This template ensures consistency and comprehensiveness across different use cases.

Key Insights:

- **Effective Communication:** Identifying the best ways to communicate with different types of stakeholders is essential. This includes understanding their preferred communication channels and the most effective methods for interaction.
- **Opportunities for Involvement:** Evaluating various opportunities for active stakeholder involvement is critical. This could include participatory workshops, thematic working tables, and individual interviews.
- **Motivation and Incentives:** Strategies to encourage and motivate stakeholders to participate actively were explored. Incentives such as public recognition, training opportunities, and partnerships for pilot projects were highlighted.
- **Resource Allocation:** Assessing the resources and support needed to implement engagement strategies successfully is fundamental. This includes financial, logistical, and human resources.

Conclusions

This deliverable has laid the groundwork for a robust stakeholder engagement methodology, which is critical for the success of the Step-WISE project. By identifying key stakeholders and developing tailored engagement strategies, the project is well-positioned to foster meaningful collaborations and drive impactful outcomes. The insights gained from the Value Proposition Workshop and the structured approach provided by the engagement activities plan template will guide the project's efforts in the next phases.

Future Recommendations

- **Continuous Stakeholder Engagement:** It is essential to maintain regular communication and feedback loops with stakeholders to keep them engaged and informed throughout the project's lifecycle. This will help in building trust and ensuring that the project remains responsive to stakeholder needs.

- **Capacity Building:** The next phase of the project should focus on developing and deploying the capacity building program. Tailored training sessions, workshops, and knowledge-sharing platforms will be crucial in equipping stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement CET plans effectively.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework will be vital in tracking the progress of stakeholder engagement activities and the overall impact of the project. Regular assessments will help in identifying areas for improvement and ensuring that the project remains on track to achieve its objectives.
- **Adaptability and Flexibility:** The project should remain adaptable and flexible to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. Continuous learning and iterative improvements will be key in refining the engagement strategies and ensuring their effectiveness.

In conclusion, this deliverable has set a strong foundation for the Step-WISE project by establishing a comprehensive stakeholder engagement methodology. As the project moves forward, the focus on continuous engagement, capacity building, and adaptability will be essential in driving successful CET initiatives and contributing to a sustainable energy future for Europe.