



D6.3 Report on sustainability, replication and exploitation activities

February 2024

Introduction

Sustainability, replication and exploitation are fundamental principles of LIFE LOOP and are vital to ensuring the long-term impact and legacy of the project. Over the past 16 months, LIFE LOOP has initiated a wide range of activities aimed at embedding long term sustainability, replication and impact. These activities have included:

- **LIFE LOOP toolkit** which provides key resources in pilot languages and includes templates for contractual agreements such as Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs).
- **Capacity building** which has now been conducted in all pilot and satellite areas. This has enabled participants to develop sustainable business plans and community energy roadmaps.
- **Citizen-led initiatives:** while many are still in the development stage, some projects have already started to be implemented, such as community solar projects in Crete. All initiatives have long term sustainability at their heart, including robust financial models developed from the toolkit.
- **Sharing best practice:** this has happened at local, national and European level, through for example, workshops and presentations at the EU Sustainable Energy Week.
- **Community Energy Accelerator:** this was kicked off in 2023 with a Good Energy tour and community energy meetings in ten cities in Croatia.

This report outlines the status of each of these actions in further detail. A final sustainability, replication and exploitation report will be published at the end of the project in September 2025, aimed at ensuring the long-term replication and exploitation of LIFE LOOP well beyond the funded period.

Toolkit and contractual models

In the first few months of LIFE LOOP, a detailed analysis was undertaken of a wide range of community energy guidelines and information, including for example, the 120 resources listed on the Energy Communities Repository website. Through this process the most relevant guides and information for the LIFE LOOP pilots and satellites were selected and translated into the 3 pilot languages.

This process also included gathering different contractual and financial models for citizen-led and community energy initiatives. These models have been used and adapted by the pilot and satellite authorities to develop and implement their local projects. [The toolkit](#) and models are available for any European municipality to access freely, helping to increase replication and exploitation of LIFE LOOP. The toolkit has been promoted widely through the consortium's extensive networks and has also been shared with other LIFE CET ENERCOM sister projects to increase access and replication.

Policy recommendations are being compiled throughout the project and will be included in LIFE LOOP's final report at the end of the project.



Capacity building

A tailored capacity building programme was delivered in the three LIFE LOOP pilot areas (see deliverable D2.5 for more detail) and has now been completed in the five satellite areas. This has equipped participating municipalities and public officers with the skills, understanding and motivation needed to support the development of new citizen-led and community energy partnerships, focussing on long-term sustainability. The capacity building programme culminated in the publication of municipal community energy roadmaps which outline the steps municipalities will be taking to achieve their targets.

The capacity building programme will now be replicated in the associated partner municipalities, including peer to peer learning opportunities, building on the experience of the pilots and satellites. The programme has also been shared with the LIFE CET ENERCOM sister projects to enhance replication and exploitation. Elements of the capacity building activities and roadmap sessions are also feeding into the Espresso training course being developed as part of LIFE LOOP's community energy accreditation programme, further detailed below.



New citizen-led initiatives

Following on from the capacity building programme conducted with pilot and satellite partners, a range of new citizen-led initiatives are currently being organised and implemented, primarily focussed on solar and energy saving refurbishment. The toolkit and capacity building programme provided participants with a variety of financial models and templates and the LIFE LOOP team are working closely together to ensure the long-term viability of all resultant projects.

The report on municipal roadmaps and action plans, deliverable 2.4, outlines in detail the range of citizen-led initiatives that are being organised under LIFE LOOP. Highlights include:

- In Crete, Minoan Energy are currently installing 1MW of community solar, with several large community solar projects planned over the next 6 months.
- In Zagreb, the city is further developing its solarisation plan, LIFE LOOP is enabling the city to aim for 50% community investment in the programme through green bonds.
- In Bistrita, the municipality is developing a new programme of community engagement to empower citizens to actively engage in the refurbishment of multiapartment buildings.

In all cases, a sustainable business model is being embedded to ensure that the projects are financially robust and can continue well beyond the LIFE LOOP project timeline, inspiring others to follow suite.

Community Energy Friendly training and accreditation

The LIFE LOOP team have been working hard over the last few months to develop the Community Energy Accreditation and training programme for municipalities. Further details are outlined in deliverable 4.5, Community Energy Friendly accreditation report, which also includes information on how the programme will be effectively disseminated to maximise impact and participation.

In summary, the accreditation programme comprises four main components:

- Self-assessment tracker for municipalities
- Espresso Community Energy on-line training moodle
- Asset match-making tool
- Community Energy Supporter Charter

A [dedicated page for the accreditation scheme](#) has been added to the LIFE LOOP web page and is being promoted widely. Once municipalities sign the charter and send it back to the LIFE LOOP team (a dedicated email address has been created for this purpose: contact-lifeloop@energy-cities.eu), they are encouraged to move on to key activities linked on this page, including the self-assessment tracker, Espresso training, and Asset Match-Making tool.

The self-assessment test has been designed to give municipalities the opportunity to track their progress when it comes to community energy deployment and engagement. It also highlights areas the municipalities can enhance to further progress and support their community energy supporter status.

The on-line Espresso training program is tailored to actively involve municipalities and their civil servants in the scheme and enables participants to choose the modules that are most relevant to them. This training will serve as a catalyst for successful participation, ensuring that



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stakeholders are well-equipped to navigate and benefit from the accreditation process. An additional module on public procurement to support community energy has recently been added to ensure the training is as comprehensive as possible. Participating municipalities can choose to complete at least two modules, according to their fields of expertise and interest, to meet the criteria for the accreditation scheme.


The third component of the scheme is the [match-making tool](#), allowing municipalities to list their assets and explore opportunities with community energy groups in an attractive and dynamic manner.

By showcasing the tangible benefits, the accreditation's communication strategy aims to create a compelling narrative that motivates municipalities to join the first ever community energy accreditation scheme for local authorities all over Europe.

The accreditation scheme, training programme and asset matchmaking tool have huge replication and exploitation potential. The communication and dissemination plan will ensure that these valuable resources widely promoted, significantly enhancing the replication and exploitation impacts of LIFE LOOP and creating momentum that the LIFE LOOP team hopes will continue well beyond the project end.



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Charter for Municipalities Community Energy Supporters

By signing this charter the municipality of:
shows its commitment to empower and speed up the creation of energy communities in its area.

What is an Energy Community?

An energy community is a way to 'organise' citizens that want to cooperate together in an energy-sector related activity based on open and democratic participation and governance, so that the activity can provide services or other benefits to the members or the local community. Renewable energy communities can be composed of natural persons, local authorities as well as micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises.

Our municipality of wants to drive a socially just and climate-friendly energy system with renewables and people at its core. During the energy crisis, energy communities have played a vital role in shielding consumers from volatile market prices. They embody democratic principles by prioritising direct participation, inclusivity, collective decision-making and bringing out new non-profit-driven economic models based exclusively on consumer interest.

What better time than now for local authorities like ours to be more involved in community energy projects? All over Europe, many cities have already been testing multiple ways to initiate, support and facilitate such projects.

As we want to see where we stand, get inspired and advance on community energy, we decided to participate in the LIFE LOOP accreditation scheme through which we commit to:

- **Assessing our state of the art with the self-assessment tracker:** How community energy friendly is our municipality and what is missing.
- **Encouraging capacity-building:** Providing staff time to enable civil servant colleagues to complete at least 2 of the 4 modules of the Community Energy Espresso course (selected according to relevance and need).
- **Listing our municipal assets** on the LIFE LOOP asset match-making tool and linking with new or existing energy community to explore potential projects for community energy.

(Name and complete address of the signing authority)


(Name and title of person signing this commitment)

(Name, e-mail and phone number of the contact person)

Mandated by the
(Municipal council or equivalent)

(dd/mm/yy)

(Official signature)


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LIFE LOOP accreditation charter

Sharing Best Practice

As well as sharing best practice during the capacity building programme, LIFE LOOP technical partners, pilots and satellites have participated in a wide range of best practice sharing events. In 2023 this included showcasing LIFE LOOP at EUSEW, including a LIFE LOOP presentation by Minoan Energy Community, as well as at REScoop's Spring Gathering in Athens, attended by over 180 people, and Energy Cities annual conference in Modena attended by over 350 municipalities and elected officials.

Linking with sister LIFE Projects

In addition to sharing best practice experiences in external events, LIFE LOOP's coordination team also organised a programme of collaborative meetings with LIFE ENERCOM sister projects that were funded under the same cohort as Life LOOP. This includes LIFE Tandems, LIFE Beckon, LIFE CoManage, LIFE ConnectHeat. The aim of such collaboration was to explore possible geographic and activity synergies in order to avoid working in silo and maximise the impact of projects and resource savings. Since then, a collaborative folder has been created to exchange contacts and materials. Periodic cross-pollination meetings were established:

- Every 4 months: Project coordinators and communication referents meet to share updates on projects and discuss possible joint actions and cross-promotion.
- Every 8-10 months, a large meeting including consortium members from all partners is organised with a specific objective, such as sharing best practices on capacity building. So far, two meetings have been organised: one on June 15, 2023, focussed on a general presentation of projects, and the second on February 1, 2024, with a focus on capacity building.

This has helped to enhance partnership working and synergies, reducing competition and increasing replication and exploitation.

Community Energy Accelerator programme

The accelerator programme was kicked off via ZEZ's Good Energy Tour around Croatia from May to December 2023. Good Energy Tour workshops were undertaken in 14 cities: Samobor, Sisak, Biograd Na Moru, Drniš, Rijeka, Labin, Medulin, Pleternica, Umag, Dubrovnik and Zagreb, Čakovec, Pazin, Pula.

The tour came to each city for one day and included a free lecture for citizens "How to get your own solar power plant?" and a Sunny living room in the public space - an information place where citizens could drink coffee brewed with the help of the solar system, familiarise themselves with the Solar Literacy digital course, make an approximate calculation of the investment in a solar power plant and understand the basics of community energy. Over 100 citizens participated in the workshops. In addition to activities for citizens, ZEZ carried out activities to strengthen the capacity of city representatives on the same day to develop community solar energy projects and provide support to citizens in investing in solar energy.

In addition, the Good Energy Tour also organised workshops in 10 local districts in Zagreb with over 150 participants in total.





Summary and conclusion

As can be seen, the activities undertaken over the last 16 months have helped to ensure that long term sustainability is embedded into all the projects being developed under LIFE LOOP. The toolkit provides a strong basis for not only LIFE LOOP pilots and satellites, but other municipalities around Europe to develop robust, sustainable business plans for community energy. Other key activities such as the capacity building programme, community energy accelerator and the sharing of best practice have helped to significantly increase the number of municipal actors and citizens empowered to develop new partnerships and projects.

The accreditation scheme has huge replication and exploitation potential, enabling municipalities to equip themselves with the skills needed, listing their assets on the matchmaking tool to speed up the development of local community energy partnerships and incentivising participating authorities to undertake the steps needed to fully support and benefit from community energy in their area. The accreditation scheme has the potential to become a high-profile pan-European programme, incentivising and empowering municipalities to replicate the LIFE LOOP approach across Europe, boosting the European community energy movement and maximising local benefits.