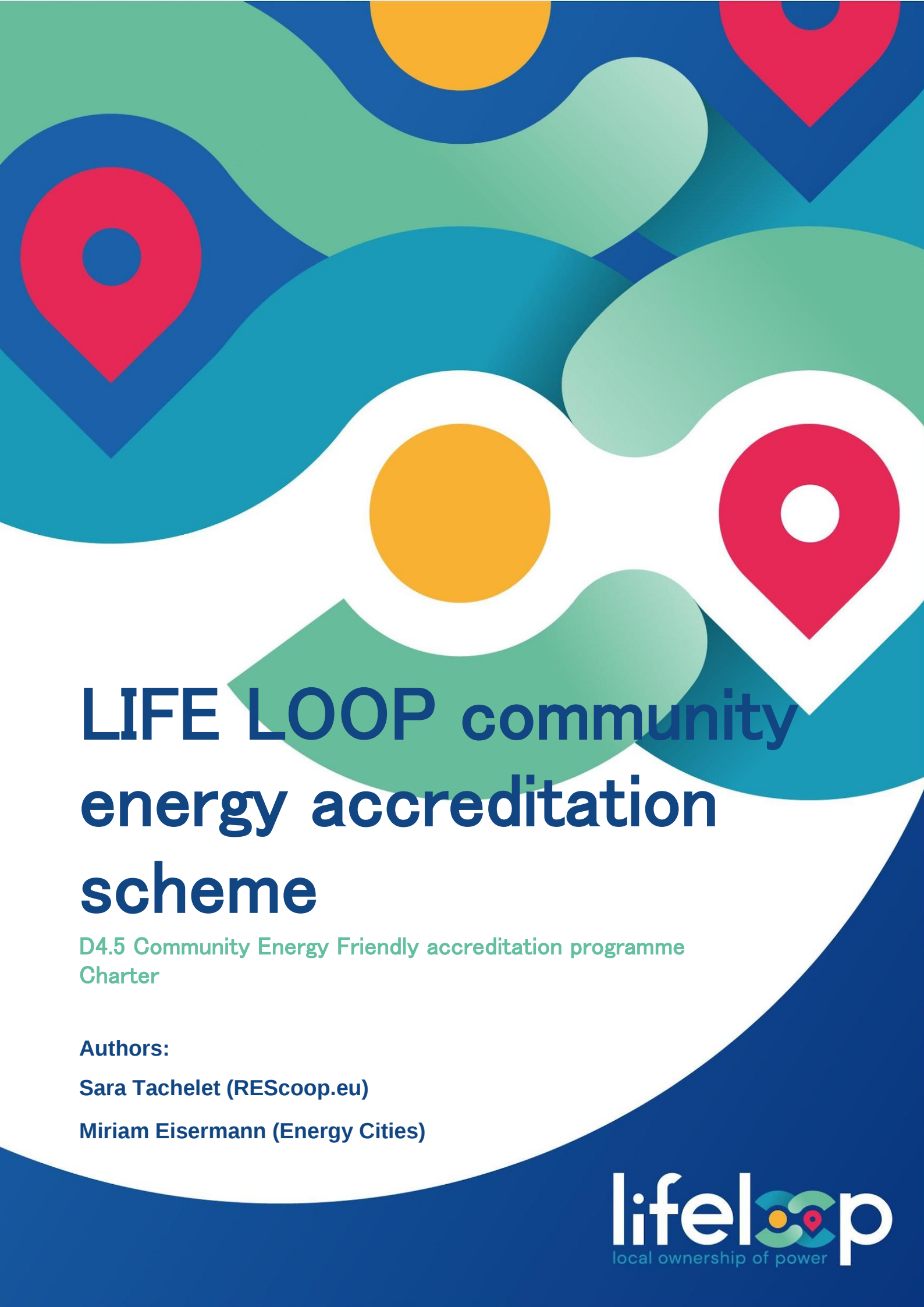




LIFE LOOP community energy accreditation scheme

D4.5 Community Energy Friendly accreditation programme
Charter

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REVISION HISTORY

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

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PROJECT INFORMATION

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Executive summary

This deliverable contains the charter of the LIFE LOOP community energy accreditation scheme.

Moreover, as we want to attract the highest possible number of municipalities to the scheme, we will do extensive and targeted promotion thanks to a solid communication strategy and outreach. This strategy is included in this deliverable. The main focus is to create demand for our attractive training offer that will actively engage municipalities and their civil servants for the first run of the scheme. Communication will be targeting different players, highlighting the benefits of participating in the scheme.

The present strategy defines the means to get to a successful scheme participation and visibility. This deliverable presents the Charter for the LIFE LOOP community energy accreditation scheme, the very first entry point to the scheme for a municipality.

Key elements of the strategy include the development of an appealing training program (the Espresso training) tailored to actively involve municipalities and their civil servants in the scheme. This training will serve as a catalyst for successful participation, ensuring that stakeholders are well-equipped to navigate and benefit from the accreditation process. Moreover, a self-assessment test will be designed giving the municipality an opportunity to track its progress when it comes to community energy deployment and engagement. The third component of the scheme is the match-making tool, allowing municipalities to make municipal assets available to energy communities in an attractive and dynamic manner.

By showcasing the tangible benefits, the 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..



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1. Purpose and structure of the scheme

The scheme acknowledges municipalities that demonstrate foresightedness and provide support in energy community matters. It is the first of its kind in Europe facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the benefits and processes behind energy communities for everyone in a local authority. . By participating in this scheme, delivered by the LIFELOOP Energy Community Partnership (Energy Cities and REScoop.eu), we encourage municipalities all over Europe to adhere to agreed standard in

- How they politically commit to community energy
- How they engage with local stakeholders around local energy
- How they support or run an energy community
- How they step up know-how within the local administration

The ambition of the scheme involves:

- A test run with the LIFE LOOP pilots and satellites.
- In a second step, the scheme will be expanded to other local authorities.
- Ultimately, the scheme could officially certify municipalities implementing energy community projects in their area, potentially verified by third party national partners or integrated into existing solid certification schemes like the European Energy Award or Covenant of Mayors.

A robust communication strategy is crucial to generate interest among civil servants and ensuring the highest possible participation in all components of the LIFE LOOP accreditation scheme.



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2. Charter



Community Energy Accreditation Scheme Charter for municipalities

By signing this charter the municipality of: _____

shows its commitment to empower and speed up the creation of energy communities in its area.

What are energy communities?

An energy community is a way for citizens, SMEs, local administrations, associations, etc. to co-organise their engagement in an energy-sector related activity. The energy activity is meant to provide services or other benefits to the members or the wider local community. Renewable energy communities can be composed of natural persons, local authorities as well as micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises. An energy community is based on open and democratic participation and governance.

Our municipality of _____ wants to drive a socially just and climate-friendly energy system with renewables and people at its core. As shown during the energy crisis, energy communities have the potential to play 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, build skills 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 much of a community energy supporter is our municipality and what is missing?
- **Encouraging in-house capacity-building:** Providing staff time to enable civil servant colleagues to benefit from the self-paced Community Energy Espresso course running between 1 April and 14 June 2024. Modules and civil servants can be freely chosen by the municipal decision-makers according to relevance and local needs.
- **Listing our municipal assets** on the LIFE LOOP asset match-making tool and linking with new or existing energy communities in their area. Those assets can then be allocated to local project developers following local legal requirements.

(Name and title of person signing this commitment)

Mandated by the _____

(Name and complete address of the signing authority)

(Municipal council or equivalent)

on _____

(dd/mm/yy)

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

(Official firmature)



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3. Accreditation Scheme communication strategy

3.1. Communication objectives

Main objective of LIFE LOOP communication activities:

- To enhance awareness among local authorities and community energy advocates about the scheme

Specific objectives:

- **Encourage participation** of local authorities, especially incentivising municipalities who are currently not active in community energy
- **Promote the scheme benefits** in terms of self-evaluation, collaboration potential and learning opportunities.
- **Provide visibility** to participating municipalities and recognise their efforts
- **Engage** national partners and sister projects for effective dissemination and exploitation of outputs.
- **Highlight** the added value from EU-funded projects

3.2. Target audience

The LIFE LOOP primary target audience for communication aligns with the scheme's intended audience.

Local authorities and related public bodies (e.g. energy agencies) with a low level of community energy involvement. Messages will be tailored for

- the organisational (city administration) and
- individual (Mayor, elected person or civil servants, contractual staff) levels.

As a secondary audience, community energy advocates, such as local associations, cooperatives, citizen groups will be targeted. These groups have a vested interest in their local governments being better trained and supportive for shared local energy initiatives.

Finally, national partners such as city networks will serve as relays for dissemination of the scheme.



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3.3. Geographical scope

Communication and dissemination efforts will cover the whole of Europe, with a particular focus on the countries of our pilot cities (Croatia, Greece and Romania) and the satellites (Romania, Italy, Bulgaria and Cyprus) as indicated in figure 1.



FIGURE 1 – MAP SHOWING THE GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE OF THE LIFE LOOP PROJECT

List of potential cities participating in the scheme

- LIFE LOOP pilots (see map above)
- LIFE LOOP satellites (see map above)
- Cities participating (or having participated in related projects), i.e. LIFE LOOP sister projects or the [Balkan Solar Roofs](#) project
- Cities in the Energy Cities network interested in energy communities
- Cities that have already contacts with members of the REScoop.eu network
- National city partners

3.4. Messaging

A local authority has the mission to provide the best possible public service. In a challenging and sometimes competitive environment, cities can enhance their profile, but also their resilience on the long run by gaining a competitive edge through

- Leadership in energy community matters



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- Skills-building within their local administration

LIFE LOOP offers a scheme co-designed with cities for cities.

Across Europe, groups of citizens are joining forces to establish clean energy projects together ranging from energy cooperatives to renewable energy communities and citizen energy communities. The LIFE LOOP accreditation scheme provides municipalities with a unique opportunity to connect with these initiatives in the municipality's area, fostering collaboration and contributing significantly to the achievement of local climate and energy goals.

By participating in the scheme, cities can actively engage in the broader movement towards sustainable and community-driven energy solutions, ensuring a more resilient and vibrant future for their communities.

Target audience	Role	Most relevant scheme component	Message	Call to action
Local authority leaders (starting with local and regional authorities in target countries: Croatia, Greece Romania, Italy, Bulgaria and Cyprus)	Local authority leaders, such as the Mayor or City Council members are a key target group as the participation of a municipality depends on their goodwill.	Charter & self-assessment tracker	There are many benefits to taking part in the scheme: The scheme will advance your city on community energy. This will raise your profile and improve resilience in the long run. It will also help your team save some time.	Sign the charter Back (and provide the resources) for the training of your civil servants Give visibility to your efforts on community energy, notably by showcasing your scheme certification
Local authority employees – civil	They are a key target group as	Espresso training	You will be equipped with	Participate in the Espresso training



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servants or contractual staff – of diverse services interested in community energy or in building new skills	they have chances to personally benefit from the scheme. The success of a city's participation partly also depends on the civil servant's collaboration in the different components. Moreover, civil servants are an entry point to make the scheme known in a municipality.	Asset & match-making tool	know-how that allows you to play a role in your city's renewable and efficient energy initiatives. .	Feed the Asset Match-making tool
Community groups and citizens in the target countries	They are a secondary target group who can help putting pressure on their local government to participate in the scheme.	Asset match-making tool	Your experience and knowledge are precious for building long-lasting partnerships and tools. LIFE LOOP will make your municipality fit to become a community energy supporter. The scheme also includes the asset match-making tool that you can use to collaborate with	Encourage your local authority to participate in the scheme. Use the asset match-making tool to find or offer assets or partners in your area.



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			your local government on renewable projects.	
Relay organisations such as National partners (e.g. city networks) and sister projects	This group is an information relay more than a target group: Especially city networks have a great dissemination potential and usually offer spaces for knowledge sharing and inspiration.	Self-assessment tracker & Charter	Your network is precious to reach out to local governments in your country and to increase the number of community energy fit municipalities.	Encourage local authorities in your region or country to participate in the scheme.

Table 1 – target audiences, their link to the scheme, messages and calls-to-action

	Messages per scheme component
Charter	By signing this charter, a municipality demonstrates a dedicated commitment to empower and speed up the creation of energy communities in its area. This kicks off very targeted actions to support community energy within the local administration, actively contributing to the advancement of sustainable initiatives in the area.
Self-assessment tracker	Assess your state of the art in community energy support using the self-assessment tracker: Understand the extent to which your municipality supports community energy initiatives and identify areas for improvement This tool serves as a valuable compass in guiding your municipality towards a more robust and comprehensive engagement with community energy.

Espresso training	Within the framework of LIFE LOOP, local authorities can access tailored training to help them start new partnerships and projects, advancing their local energy, climate and social objectives. Encourage in-house capacity-building by allocating staff time to enable civil servant colleagues to benefit from the self-paced Community Energy Espresso course, fostering a knowledgeable and proficient administration.
Asset match-making tool	LIFE LOOP acts as a catalyst for collaboration between local authorities and their local community members, including citizens, small- and medium businesses and entrepreneurs. This is achieved by connecting them through a dynamic platform that facilitates the discovery and exchange of assets such as roofs, land or retrofit possibilities. The asset match-making tool serves as a key enabler in fostering synergies and maximising the collective potential of community resources.

Table 2 – messages per scheme component

3.5. Interconnecting and creating coherence between the SCHEME components

The accreditation scheme is composed of different components. Each of them has its own distinctive visual identity. When communicating about the scheme in its full extension, we will make sure we create visual, organisational and editorial coherence between all parts. This will succeed thanks to:

- Coherent visual appearance in the scheme communication
- Central place describing the scheme: [LIFE LOOP accreditation portal](#)
- Cross-referencing between components
- Joint communication



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3.6. Visual identity

Based on the LIFE LOOP branding and visual elements the digital scheme materials have been developed (page, charter, badge, certificate, .)

Concept

The idea of the branding for the accreditation scheme is to build further on the existing LIFE LOOP branding but to give it a more official ‘ceremonial’ aspect.

Logo



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Disclaimer

We will make sure promotion of the scheme includes:

- the EU emblem and
- the following text:

“THIS ACCREDITATION SCHEME HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION’S LIFE PROGRAMME UNDER GRANT AGREEMENT No 101077085 ”

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We will place the LIFE logo whenever possible in the scheme components with a funding acknowledgement sentence. The EU funding will also be mentioned in the articles part of the EU and national media work, in the registration form for project events, etc.

4. Action plan and communication channels used

Ahead of the scheme launch: getting charters signed

Action	Target group	Channel	Timing	Hook	Responsibility
Prepare scheme visual elements	All	All communication supports	January/February	–	REScoop.eu
Define catchy campaign claim(s)	All	All including newsletter & social media	January/February	tbd	REScoop.eu & Energy Cities
Tease the scheme and its different components starting with the match-making tool	All	Social media Personal emails Via National Partners Sister projects Specialised media	February, incl 14 February	Valentine’s Day	REScoop.eu , Energy Cities Electra
Promote scheme – only 1 month left for a municipality to get organised	All	Social media Personal emails	March, incl 19 March first day of Spring	Springtime – let your community energy blossom –	REScoop.eu & Energy Cities



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		Via National Partners Sister projects		develop new buds and foster collective growth	
The Espresso training kicks off – you can still join if you hurry up or benefit from the other components	All	Social media	April	1 April – it's not a joke	REScoop.eu & Energy Cities

During the scheme: motivating and profiling cities that are running the scheme.

Action	Target audience	Channel	Timing	Hook	Responsibility
Tease the scheme and its different components	European Energy Communities Forum (EECF) REScoop.eu	Events	May	Present the scheme to your local authority, they might become your biggest supporter	REScoop.eu
Present the scheme as a tool in achieving policy objectives, (broader awareness)	EUSEW – EU policy makers Energy Cities' Annual Forum in Valencia	Events & social media	June	Session input – accreditation scheme as a tool to reach RES targets under RepowerEU + locally.	REScoop.eu
The Espresso training just ended – highlight some students if they are ok?	Civil servants	Social media, esp. social media Sister projects	September	New skills in a city – talk about it in your municipality	Energy Cities
Final stretch before end of the scheme – visibility	Civil servants and community groups	Social media Sister projects	Autumn (Sept–Nov)	You missed the participation? Contact us and we'll	Energy Cities and REScoop.eu



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				keep you posted about follow-up actions	
Present the scheme as a tool in achieving policy objectives (broader awareness)	EU regions week – policy makers		October	Session input – accreditation scheme as a tool to reach RES targets under RepowerEU	REScoop.eu (TBC)

After closure of the scheme test run: provide visibility to the accredited municipalities

Action	Target audience	Channel	Timing	Hook	Responsibility
Highlight accredited cities in LIFE LOOP comms	Municipalities, civil servants	Blogs, social media – including via sister projects	December	Christmas run-up – advent calendar	All partners
Promote the asset match-making tool	Civil servants and community groups	Social media	1st semester 2025	New year's resolution	All partners
How did you progress? Renew the self-assessment	Municipalities having participated in the scheme	Email – LinkedIn	January 2025	Candidate for Awards in May	RESC and ENC
Officially award cities during a ceremony	Municipalities and energy communities, civil society (e.g. partners in sister projects)	Event Social media Specialised media	May 2025	Ceremony – celebrating community energy supporters	All partners

4.1. Project website

A [dedicated page for the accreditation scheme](#) will be added to the website in early February. This new addition will outline the purpose, advantages, and components of the accreditation scheme. Once municipalities sign the charter and send it back to the LIFE LOOP team (a dedicated email address has been created for that 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.

4.2. Social media

Social media will be used for the promotion of the accreditation scheme. The existing hashtag **#LifeLoopEU** will be complemented by a hashtag dedicated to the scheme:

#LifeLoopAccreditation. This targeted approach aims to create a distinct online presence for the accreditation initiative, allowing for focused tracking, discussion, and amplification across various social media channels.

To effectively communicate the key messages and capture the audience's attention, specific social media cards have been crafted. They will also be shared with relay partners such as LIFE LOOP sister projects.

Social media will be used throughout the Accreditation Scheme period (see Action Plan above).

4.3. National level promotion

The LIFE LOOP pilot and satellite municipalities are not only encouraged to be the early adopters of the scheme, but also take an active role in the promotion of the LIFE LOOP Accreditation Scheme at the national and local levels. WP4 leaders will propose to the national partners a multifaceted approach, including translation of the charter, targeted communication, and collaboration with local stakeholders.

Actions may include:

1. Translation of the Charter:

Pilots and satellites will get the opportunity to translate the accreditation scheme's charter into the local language(s) of the respective regions. This ensures that the information is easily accessible and comprehensible to a broader audience, but also ensuring engagement by local leaders.



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2. Possible targeted communication actions include:

- presenting the scheme to local media outlets (interlinked with the overall target on local media outreach)
- presenting the scheme in workshops and events.
- presenting the scheme in community centres, town halls, or educational institutions linked up with broader awareness-raising on renewable energy and citizen energy (f.e. posters).
- Social media messages in the local language to disseminate information about the accreditation scheme and a city's efforts in participating in it.
- Create localised content, such as sharing their own experience with the scheme to encourage other fellow municipalities to join the scheme

3. Collaboration with other local stakeholders:

Our LIFE LOOP municipalities can be considered as our local ambassadors. They could further identify individuals within the pilot and satellite regions who are passionate about community energy. We will encourage them to spread the word and engage with their networks.

4.4. Outreach via related projects

Sister and other related projects will be informed f.e. during the joined capacity building session organised in February 2024. Existing contacts with sister projects f.e. TANDEMS will be leveraged to further promote the accreditation scheme towards the identified target audiences or present similar learning offers in the same communication (e.g. Comanage training or LIFE BECKON platform)..

4.5. Participation in events

Promotion of the scheme at events such as the RESCoop.eu's European Community Energy Forum or the Energy Cities annual conference. Moreover, the scheme will be presented during the LIFE LOOP EUSEW session (in case accepted). Additionally, a LIFE LOOP session at the EU regions week will be explored to enable once more a more high level communication around the scheme (targeting policy makers across Europe).

Target audience	Task	Timeframe	Task leader	Contributor
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All target groups	T4.6	Month – 36 (May 2024, September 2025)	RESC	All partners
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POLICY EVENTS

4.6. Award Ceremony and Final dissemination event

We plan to celebrate community energy efforts by accredited municipalities at an in-person award ceremony early Summer 2025. This ceremony would be organised during the final dissemination event in Brussels (targeting at least 100 participants from all relevant stakeholders' groups). This event will showcase the project's achievements, including success and impact of the accreditation scheme. We may use it as well to engage more cities in the programme after the end of the project.

Target audience	Task	Timeframe	Task leader	Contributor
All target groups, with focus on local leaders representing their municipality	T4.6	Month 36 (September 2025) the latest	RESC	All partners

5. Monitoring

The impacts and effectiveness of the Accreditation Scheme strategy will be subject to continuous monitoring.

5.1. Indicators

We will evaluate the impact of the communication activities' around the scheme through the following key indicators:

Between February and April

- Engagement on social media
- Traffic on the Accreditation Scheme page of our project website;
- Traffic on the Self-assessment tracker webpage;
- Traffic on the Asset match-making tool website;
- Traffic on the Espresso training course page



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Between April and November

- Number of municipalities signing the Charter;
- Number of people going through the complete questionnaire of the self-assessment tracker
- Number of civil servants signing up to the Espresso training
- Number of civil servants completing the Espresso training (at least 2 modules and LIFE LOOP live classes)
- Number of municipalities providing data to the Asset Match-making tool
- Number of cities with participation in all components and getting accredited

This set of quantitative check points should allow us to properly monitor and evaluate LIFE LOOP's communication activities, and to adjust them if need be.

5.2. Smart goals

What	Amount	Means of verification
Accreditation scheme		
Municipalities participating in the accreditation scheme	50	Signed charters
Amount of civil servants signing up to the espresso training	50	Number of registered Espresso students coming through the scheme – data stored on Espresso moodle platform
Civil servants taking the self-assessment test	50	data stored on the Community Energy Platform
Civil servants registering their municipality to the matchmaking platform	50	data stored on matchmaking platform
Assets added to the matchmaking platform	20	data stored on matchmaking platform



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Social media messages posted to promote the accreditation scheme	20	Social media analytics
Policy events showcasing the Accreditation Scheme	2	Events programmes, related presentation
Capacity building events showcasing the Accreditation Scheme	1	EECF programme
Participants attending the award ceremony (final event)	100	participants lists

