European Commission

Clean energy for EU islands **Engagement guide**

Eight examples of successful stakeholder engagement on islands

ENERGY

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FROM CLEAN ENERGY VISION TO CLEAN ENERGY ACTION

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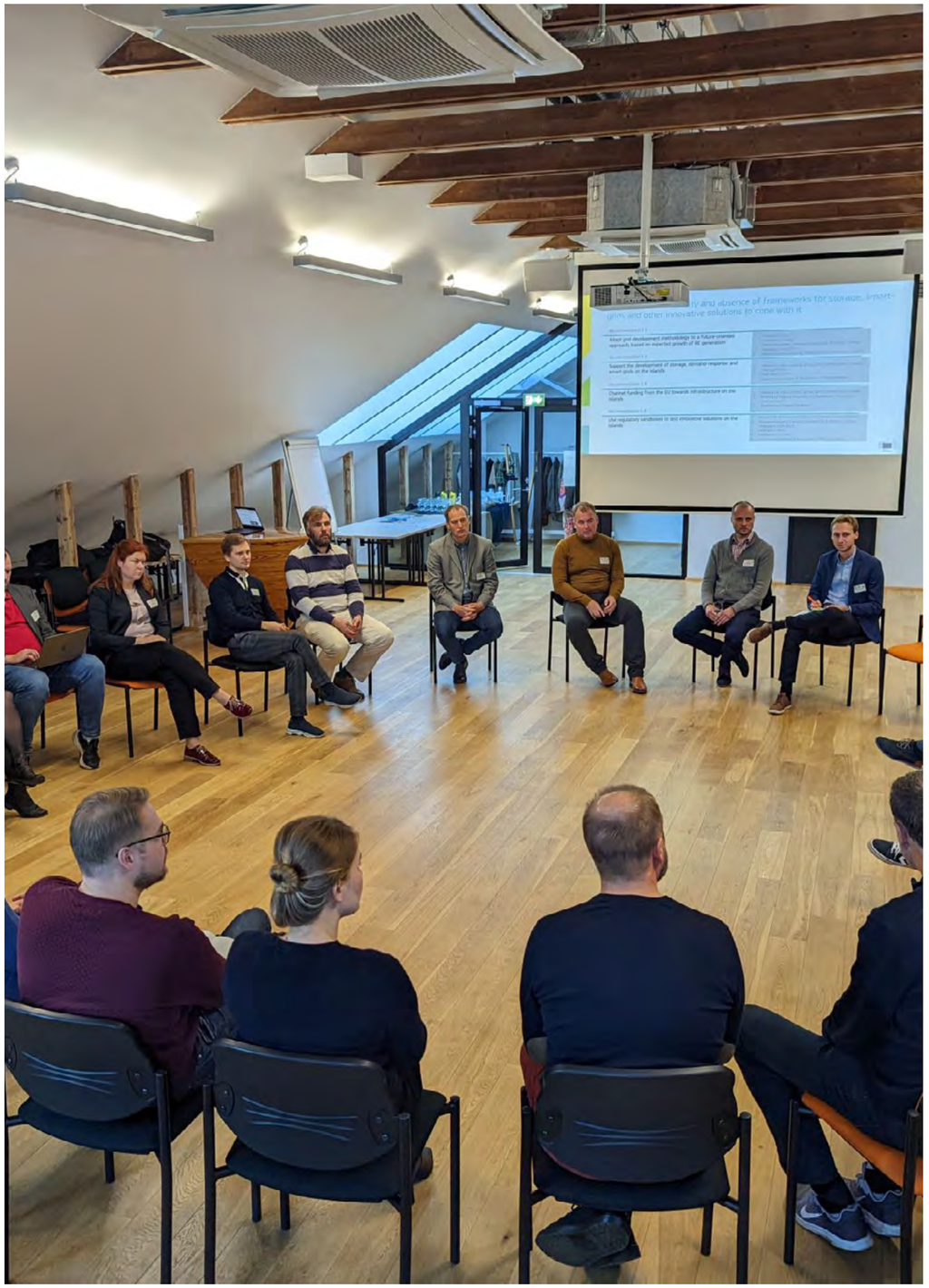


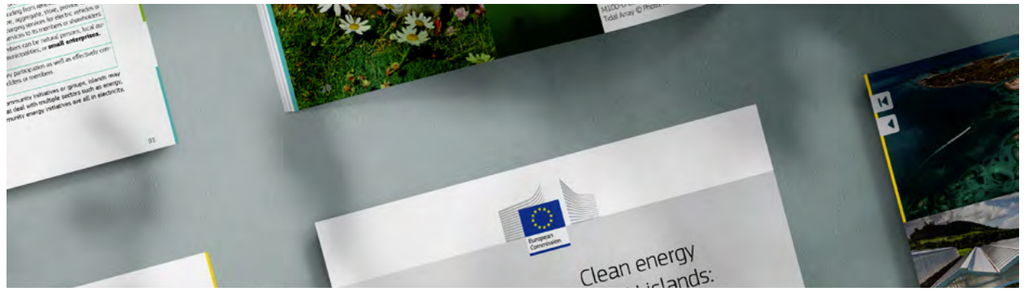
↑ On the 30th September 2022 the secretariat brought together representatives from the national government and islanders to engage in constructive discussion on solutions for the clean energy transition on the Estonian islands. © Photo by Clean energy for EU islands secretariat

Introduction

This engagement guide aims to provide island transition teams with tips, guidance, and inspiration on how to involve, liaise, and include stakeholders in all stages of the clean energy transition process. Effectively engaging with the relevant actors that could be affected by the transition is a key for its success. This prominently involves the local stakeholders on the island, but also regional, national, and European organisations.

Our engagement guide starts with an overview of the EU islands landscape, highlighting the two European programmes that support clean energy on EU islands: the Clean energy for EU islands secretariat and the Islands Facility NESOI. We then proceed to highlighting how islands can participate in regional and national policy, based on the conclusions that we have gathered via our legal and regulatory analysis – which has involved interviews, focus groups and National Stakeholder Meetings with Ministries, DSOs, TSOs, regional governments, and island representatives of a variety of EU countries. Finally, we deepen the understanding of the local island actors, and how to engage them. To this end, we provide examples of best practices and successful ways in which European islands have managed to involve the local community.

This engagement guide complements the Islands secretariat Methodological Handbook: From vision to action: how to tackle the transition on EU islands?—a step-by-step guide on how to develop and implement clean energy projects on islands—and the Technology Solutions booklet—which offers a catalogue of clean technology solutions currently available for islands.



↑ Technology Solutions booklet offers a catalogue of clean technology solutions currently available for islands. © Photo by Clean energy for EU islands secretariat

Overview of the EU islands landscape

Two European projects are focused on the clean energy transition on European islands: the Clean energy for EU islands secretariat and the Islands Facility NESOI.

Clean energy for EU islands initiative and secretariat

The Clean energy for EU islands initiative was launched in 2017 as part of the 'Clean energy for all Europeans' package. It builds on the Valetta political declaration, which was signed by the European Commission and 14 EU countries with large island populations: Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden.

The initiative recognises the challenges that islands face with climate change while also identifying the potential for island regions in the clean energy transition, thanks to their large access to natural resources to produce renewable energy. The initiative provides a long-term framework to help islands generate their own sustainable, low-cost energy.

The Clean energy for EU islands secretariat was first set up in 2018—following the Valetta declaration—by the European Commission in cooperation with the European Parliament with the aim of delivering the objectives of the Clean energy for EU islands initiative. The secretariat acts as a platform to exchange best practices, provides dedicated capacity building and advisory services to islands, and advises the Commission on policy and regulatory issues for clean energy transition on islands.

The pilot phase of the secretariat took place between 2018 and 2020, and it focused on developing the methodology around the Clean Energy Transition Agenda (CETA). The CETA is a strategic roadmap for an island's clean energy transition, developed by and for the island community. It involves, first, understanding the current island dynamics (how energy is consumed, who are the main stakeholders and how they interact) and second, elaborating an island vision and the transition pathways to achieve it.

Providing a long-term framework to help EU islands generate their own sustainable, low-cost energy (europa.eu)

The second phase of the secretariat runs between February 2021 and February 2023. Its objective has been twofold: first, to continue providing capacity building to island communities, still including CETA development but also going beyond with more advanced projects such as feasibility studies, and financing and regulatory advice. Second, the islands secretariat has worked on a legal and regulatory analysis consisting of a publicly available inventory and a study on legal and regulatory obstacles including the recommendations to overcome them. This was performed together with national, regional, and island stakeholders of seven member states with islands (Spain, Greece, Italy, Croatia, Ireland, Estonia, and Sweden).

NESOI Islands facility

The EU Island Facility NESOI (New Energy Solutions Optimised for Islands) is a four-year Horizon 2020 project funded under call topic LC-SC3-ES8-2019 (European Islands Facility –Unlock financing for energy transitions and supporting islands to develop investment concepts). It began on 1 October 2019 and will finish on 30 September 2023. NESOI is made up of a multi-disciplinary consortium consisting of 10 partners from 9 EU member states. It has a total budget of €10 million of which approximately €3 million is dedicated to a cascade funding mechanism to provide direct financial support to EU Islands. Coupled to consortium capacity-building activities, the facility aims to mobilise more than €100 million of investment in sustainable energy projects to inhabited EU islands by 2023.

A total of sixty projects have been selected by NESOI Island Facility over two competitive calls: the first one was launched in October 2021 and the second one in October 2022.

www.nesoi.eu

Participation of islands in the regional and national policy – tips and recommendations

The Green Deal and REPowerEU have increased the need for the decentralisation of energy policy and the need for multilevel governance. Regional and local governments are best suited to understand the local needs and priorities of islands and should therefore play a role in energy policy.

During 2022, the Clean energy for EU islands secretariat has carried out a detailed analysis of regulatory barriers for the clean energy transition of islands of seven member states[1]. After multiple consultations with national, regional, and local stakeholders, the Islands secretariat has proposed recommendations for overcoming these barriers. Thanks to this work and the wide collaboration of the secretariat with European islands through the rest of our activities (such as the technical assistance, capacity building, etc.), the following recommendations have been concluded for local governments and stakeholders to influence energy transition policy.

→ **Prepare local energy transition plans**
The Clean Energy Transition Agenda (CETA) or any sort of strategic transition plan is a valuable document which can help to assess the current energy needs of the island and investigate transition pathways, eventually leading to a pipeline of optimal projects. A detailed discussion of the CETA methodology, its format and process can be found in the Clean energy for EU islands Methodological Handbook.

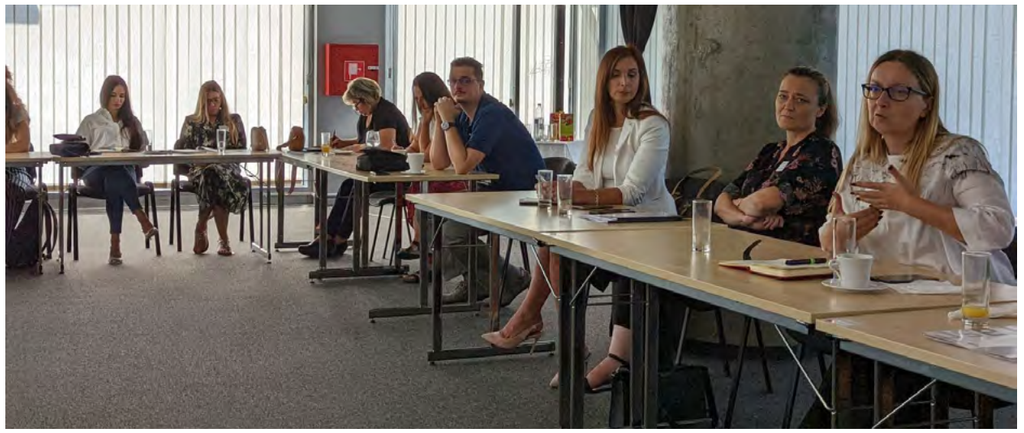
→ **Communicate and lobby for the local needs and priorities to the national level**
Local and regional stakeholders are more aware of the island's needs both for funding and for capacity building. The needs and priorities of the local citizens and stakeholders should be clearly communicated to the regional and national government in order to ensure their integration in the strategic planning.

[1] Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Ireland, Italy and Sweden

→ **Create a supporting community for energy transition**
Local government and stakeholders play a vital role in building up a supporting environment for the energy transition. This can be done through, e.g., awareness raising campaigns, or local information offices where stakeholders may learn more about their rights, clean energy technologies, procedures, and best practices. Moreover, the local government can lead the way with best practices using public buildings, public vehicles, public land, etc.

→ **Encourage or even mandate engagement of local stakeholders in island energy projects**
The local and regional government are, if not involved, typically informed about energy projects on their island, as they provide specific authorisations and permits. In this process, they have the opportunity to require engagement of local stakeholders in energy projects and lobby for legislation that requests this for all energy transition projects.

→ **Expand networks and energy transition support systems**
In order to share best practices and collaborate with other islands, we recommend that the local and regional governments expand their communication networks through initiatives such as the Clean energy for EU islands, the Covenant of Mayors or EU projects. This type of support system can also give local community a feeling that they are part of the bigger EU-wide change and provide useful inspiration.



↑ On October 21-22 2022, the Clean energy for EU islands secretariat organised its second Energy Academy focusing on Croatian islands. © Photo by Clean energy for EU islands secretariat

Engagement of local stakeholders in the island's clean energy transition

Engaging citizens in the clean energy transition means actively involving them in the island's decision-making process: addressing their needs and ensuring that their voice is heard when planning the required changes for decarbonising the island.

Making sure that citizens actively participate in the transition might initially feel challenging. However, effectively engaging the community will minimise opposition to change and result in a more robust transition. Often, the involvement of citizens is planned at the early stages of the transition. Nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that stakeholders are crucial during the entire process. The examples provided below are proof of this.

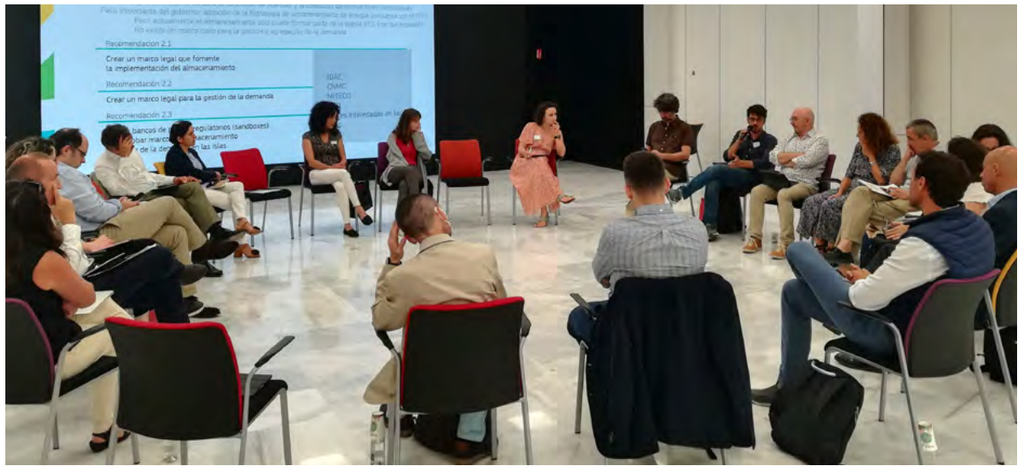
Why is the involvement of local stakeholders important?

Citizen engagement can help to:

→ Better understand the concerns, fears, and needs of citizens

→ **Increase transparency** in the implementation of projects, therefore boosting the trust of the local community in the public administrations

→ Empower citizens by actively involving them in the energy transition: a lasting commitment from the community is possible if the island stakeholders feel that the transition is somehow 'theirs' and they understand the advantages that it will have for them in the long term. The will and motivation to commit to a change are compromised if stakeholders feel that the transition agenda is just another plan thought of or imposed by the politicians in power at the moment that could change whenever there is a change in government.



↑ Spain National Stakeholder meeting © Photo by Clean energy for EU islands secretariat.

→ Unite the community towards a common goal: if everyone understands the long-term advantages for the well-being of the island's inhabitants and for the conservation of the island, opposing visions may find common ground in the interest for the better good.

→ Improve cost and resource efficiency, by identifying earlier on in the process, the elements in a project that could be controversial for (a part of) the community and could generate opposition in its implementation later on.

→ Encourage multi-level governance and political alignment: when stakeholders agree and pledge for a good cause, political leaders feel the urge to align and support the initiative.

Who should be involved? The quadruple helix stakeholders

Since its pilot phase, the Clean energy for EU islands secretariat has worked with the quadruple helix framework to categorise and involve island stakeholders in the clean energy transition. As described in the Island's Methodological Handbook, according to the quadruple helix, there are four main stakeholder groups as described in the following paragraphs.

Public authorities are the entities that hold the legal responsibility for providing basic services on the island. They oversee general rules regarding land use and energy planning. At a local level, their support can be critical for the success of the island's clean energy transition. Smaller islands do not always have their own public administration and will therefore need a good relationship and commitment from their nearest public administration office, either on the mainland or neighbouring island. On larger islands, there is often more than one public administration, e.g., numerous municipalities, each with their own offices.

Civil society organisations are well suited to achieve the broad support and outreach needed to safeguard the transition. They are key to ensuring a transition process tailored to the dynamics, history, and culture of the island. Citizens' organisations usually operate voluntarily, and they are often highly engaged in serving the community with a fast feedback loop of both positive and negative impressions.

Academia has the potential to push local engagement via teaching as well as using the integrity of the school as a local role model for change. There are examples of universities and research centres that (even if based on the mainland) have also shown leadership in promoting an island's clean energy transition or have adopted a neutral role as intermediaries if there was tension between the local island's stakeholders – see the example of Politecnico di Torino in Pantelleria here: "The drafting of Pantelleria's Clean Energy Transition Agenda (Italy)" on page 17.

Local business associations and relevant private businesses on the island are a vital part of the local socio-economic ecosystem that will be affected by the transition. Including local business associations at an early stage will help identify the opportunities the clean energy transition can bring to local entrepreneurs and business owners. Local tourism can play an important role in mobility, energy efficiency, as well as renewable energy. Furthermore, the involvement of local craftsmen and service providers is recommended to face new opportunities but they may need to upgrade their training and methods.

How to ensure the participation of the island stakeholders in the clean energy transition

Every European Island community has its own history, background, and culture. This diversity and richness also mean that there is no specific general set of recommendations that would serve to engage citizens in any island. The procedures and measures to be used depend on the island's context: the existing dynamics between stakeholders, the possible tensions, the questions it could raise based on previous experiences, etc.

The tools and information compiled in Table 1 have been adapted from the report Structured overview on optimised energy-efficiency interventions for Energy Communities and Collective Energy Actions published by DECIDE H2020 project. The table provides an overview of actions and tools that can be used by island transition teams, leaders, municipalities, etc. to engage with the community. They are classified according to their level of interaction and involvement.

Table 1 Tools for island citizen engagement, categorised according to the order of interactivity and involvement

	Intervention type	Description
Low interactivity and involvement	Flyers/postcards	Informing and answering questions (e.g. on rights/obligations or financial aspects). Making the project accessible to a broad public.
	Newsletter	Sent with regularity they serve to disseminate information, follow-up on activities, and engage with subscribers.
	Promotional video	If kept concise and catchy they can be effective as part of a media campaign or to be shown at events, conferences, etc.
	Media campaign	Both as part of local media (local radio, TV) or as social media, they can help raise interest among stakeholders.
	Comparative feedback information	By providing feedback on certain metrics and behaviours (e.g., energy performance compared to neighbours), they can promote behavioural changes.
Medium-low interactivity and involvement	Semi-structured interviews	Allow identifying target groups and finding out about citizen's concerns and needs.
	Surveys	Can have several purposes: for feedback, better understanding the target group, realising the group's limitations and motivations, etc.
	Information sessions	To inform or explain a project, an initiative, a model, etc. By allowing enough time for questions, the audience can also participate.
	Site visits	Can serve to motivate and foster participation: people's interest is usually triggered once they can see how a project is implemented and its advantages.
	Citizens hearings/ committee	Offer a space where a dialogue with citizens can be established, and questions can be addressed.
Medium-high interactivity and involvement	Consensus workshop	Allows collecting and reflecting the views/opinions of a large group. Could serve either for collective decision making or to receive feedback.
	Engagement event/ drop-in event	For a project/initiative to be accessible for all stakeholder groups. This event can serve as the kick-off of a project or to outreach to the wider community.
	Focus groups	A limited number of people participate in a discussion on a predetermined issue. This may serve for scoping a problem or to investigate the community's concerns/needs. Tool especially suitable when the topic is not previously well known.
	Serious gaming	By playing a game (selected by the facilitator/organiser), participants are exposed to a simulation of a real-life process or event. Hence, serious gaming serves as a training environment to stimulate/develop problem-solving skills.
	Hackathon	A friendly, fair competition to solve a specific challenge or question. A large space is often required (e.g., a fair or exhibition area), which allows gathering of smaller working groups. It is recommended to establish an organisational committee and sponsor partners.
	Commitment pledge	A public commitment (by local authorities or citizens) which can be announced/disseminated locally to trigger attention and motivate other groups. The Clean energy for EU islands secretariat offers its own pledge to formally involve island stakeholders in the initiative and show commitment to develop a Clean Energy Transition Agenda.
High interactivity and involvement	Island/ municipality meetings	The Island transition team, or the leaders of clean energy projects may organise meetings open to the island community/ group of citizens (depending on the size of the island) to explain and discuss about e.g. business or social models.
	Working groups/ forums	Working groups may be set up for groups of citizens to collaborate on specific topics (such as mobility, energy communities, water, etc), fostering a continuous dialogue and promoting joint learning.
	Interactive webportals/ networks	To foster interactions between community members, reinforce neighbour-to-neighbour interactions, and provide information and energy-saving tips.
	Participatory community workshops	If adapted and customised to the specific stage of a project and its participants, they are key to bring together stakeholders to e.g., define the island vision, transition pathways, governance and economic models, best practices, etc. Community workshops are recommended during the Clean Energy Transition Agenda process, especially for Part II of the Agenda as explained in the Islands Methodological Handbook.

In the following pages, examples of practices and procedures that have been successful in a variety of European islands are explained in detail. Each of these cases includes a combination of the tools included in Table 1. The presented cases are summarised in the points below and involve:

→ Co-creating strategic documents like the Clean Energy Transition Agenda (CETA) serves to map all stakeholder groups, include and discuss everyone's viewpoint, and align on a common vision, see example of Pantelleria (Italy) here: "The drafting of Pantelleria's Clean Energy Transition Agenda (Italy)"

→ Influencing regulation and taking ownership of the transition. Local governments may not have the competences to develop policies. However, they can lobby and influence the regional and national governments for policies that respect the island's ecosystems, see example of Samothrace (Greece) here: "Influencing regulation and lobbying for the priorities of the local community:
Samothrace island (Greece)".

→ Organising a Citizens' Climate Assembly: an innovative tool already used in mainland Europe with a twofold goal: to reach consensus on highly complex issues, and to promote citizen participation in the political process. See the example on the Balearic Islands (Spain) for the first Citizens' Climate Assembly on an archipelago in Europe here: "The Citizen's Assembly on the Balearic Islands (Spain)".

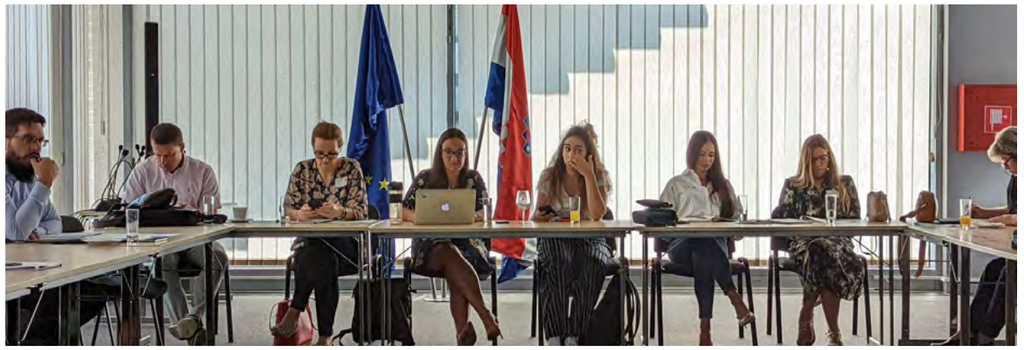
→ Consulting the community from the initial project idea helps citizens and stakeholders feel like an active part of the project. See example on Inis Meáin (Aran Islands, Ireland) where the energy cooperative has used communication channels such as social media (Facebook, Twitter), newsletters, emails, posters, and the local radio to reach out to as many island inhabitants as possible.

→ Engaging citizens while planning and developing clean energy projects is crucial to prevent opposition from the local community and ensure that everyone is onboard. See example of the Ballen marina on Samsø (Denmark).

→ Financially contributing and co-owning the island's clean energy development. As the example of the crowdfunding on Cres-Lošijn (Croatia) shows, islanders may be eager to own the facilities to provide the energy they consume. Crowdfunding, and establishing energy communities offer possibilities for this.

→ Awareness raising by offering free and independent advice on energy issues as Gotland's Energicentrum (Sweden) does. Energicentrum's mission is to raise the general level of knowledge to accelerate the energy transition on the island

→ Providing guidance and empowerment. See example of the Green Offices on the Canary Islands where stakeholders can gather information on topics such as fiscal benefits for climate actions, Covenant of Mayors, NextGenerationEU, etc.



↑ On October 21-22 2022, Energy Academy focusing on Croatian islands. © Photo by Clean energy for EU islands secretariat

The drafting of Pantelleria's Clean Energy Transition Agenda (Italy)

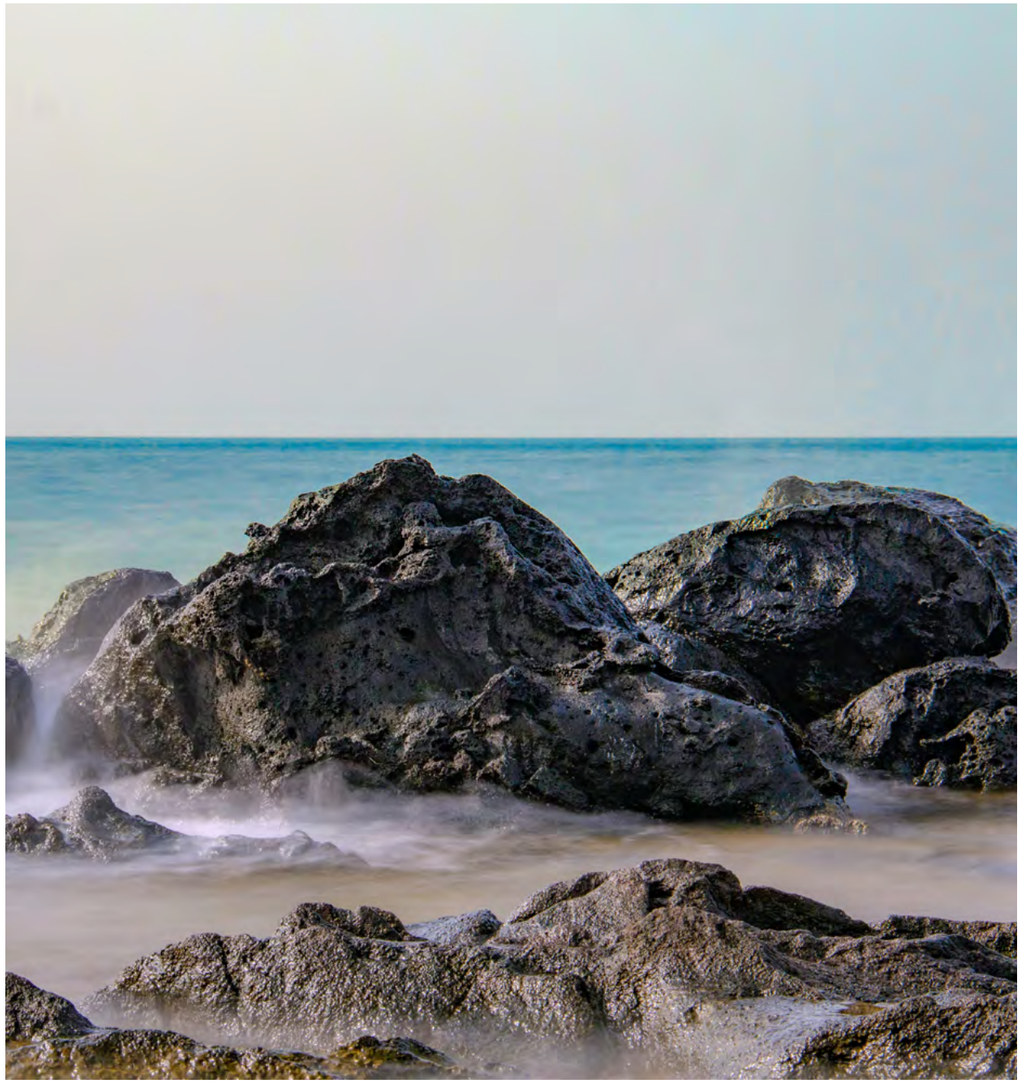
The development of the Pantelleria Clean Energy Transition Agenda (CETA) required finding a compromise between the—at times, conflicting—positions and needs of the different island stakeholders. The stakeholders that actively participated in the drafting of the CETA, and their different visions for the island are described below.

- The **Municipality of Pantelleria** envisages a future energy system with a high number of prosumers and where most of private consumption is covered by self-production. They anticipate the organisation of citizens, public institutions, and energy companies in an energy community capable of optimising the use of RES and gradually reducing dependence on fossil fuels imported from the mainland.
- The **National Park "Isle of Pantelleria**" wants to support sustainable decarbonisation in every aspect. However, the use of renewable energies must be compatible with the conservation of Pantelleria's ecosystem and landscape, which are among the island's greatest assets. Among the most important tasks of the park are: managing and applying rehabilitation methods suitable to integrate human activities and the natural environment, and promoting the use of sustainable energy sources The agricultural-sylvo-pastoral and agro-tourism activities must therefore be developed with the aim of preserving the territory and protecting its great natural values.
- **S.MED.E. Pantelleria S.p.A. (DSO)** is the private company that manages Pantelleria's electricity distribution network (which is not connected to the mainland) and the island's diesel-fuelled power plant. It envisions a future energy system efficiently managed via the centralised production of renewable energy—from large photovoltaic (PV) and wind power plants—in combination with storage. SMED.E is concerned that a high injection of decentralised energy into the grid could lead to regulation problems for grid services.
- **S.O.F.I.P. S.p.A. (ESCo)** is the company that owns S.MED.E. Pantelleria and directly manages the desalination plants to produce fresh water. It envisages a process of decarbonisation in which energy efficiency, the reduction of consumption, and self-consumption play a central role.
- **Resilea A.P.S. (Social Promotion Association)** sees the energy transition in Pantelleria as an opportunity to implement a participatory process that goes beyond the decision-making phase and continue into the implementation phase of the Clean Energy Transition Agenda. Key elements of the future energy system for Resilea are the involvement of the citizenry as an active party, promotion of self-production, and the creation of an energy community.
- **Politecnico di Torino** has been present on the island for several years to carry out activities related to wave-powered energy generation and has recently started working on modelling the island's energy system. The team consists of multidisciplinary researchers who aim to integrate hardware and software tools for simulating future energy scenarios while taking into account environmental constraints and socio-economic aspects. The researchers are in close contact with public administrations and industries in the energy sector, supporting energy planning and the industrialisation of cutting-edge technologies. Politecnico di Torino intends to make Pantelleria an international best practice example of energy transition planning and a site for testing innovative technologies in the field of energy production and rational energy use.

By analysing the above stakeholders' perspectives, overlapping interests for Pantelleria's energy can be identified. First, the management of the territory of Pantelleria is entrusted to two public bodies: the municipality, which holds all administrative and political functions, and the National Park, whose objective is to protect the environment, the island territory, and its historical and cultural heritage. Even though the functions of the two bodies are defined by law and separated from each other, there are areas of common interest that have led to some antagonism between the two in the past. Second, the management of the island's distribution network and the operation of the main power plant have been transferred to a private company, which raises concerns among some stakeholders about the readiness to achieve the goals of sustainable energy supply. However, the company has developed some important renewable energy installations in recent years.

Despite the opposition between the different actors, everyone enthusiastically participated in the elaboration of a common decarbonisation strategy. Politecnico di Torino was identified as the leader of the CETA drafting process. The researchers involved had a proven scientific background and were also a third party with regard to the dynamics already existing between the actors on the island. Pantelleria's CETA was eventually published in October 2020 with the consensus of all the stakeholders. The success of the CETA working group was achieved thanks to regular, collective meetings between all the actors, alternating with personal discussions with Politecnico di Torino. The inevitable contrasts and different points of view were managed by promoting a dialogue and the search for common solutions, as well as by a scientific analysis of the solutions proposed by the partners. In addition, each stakeholder was asked to write their own concluding paragraph to highlight the different perspectives that contributed to the Agenda: this allowed everyone to make their ideas public while defining a common strategic path.

Nowadays, the stakeholders that contributed to Pantelleria's CETA are following a set of implementation projects for the realisation of small – and medium-sized energy plants, also by making use of the financing opportunities provided by the Italian Recovery and Resilience Plan.



↑ Pantelleria © Photo by Adelio Zanotti on Unsplash

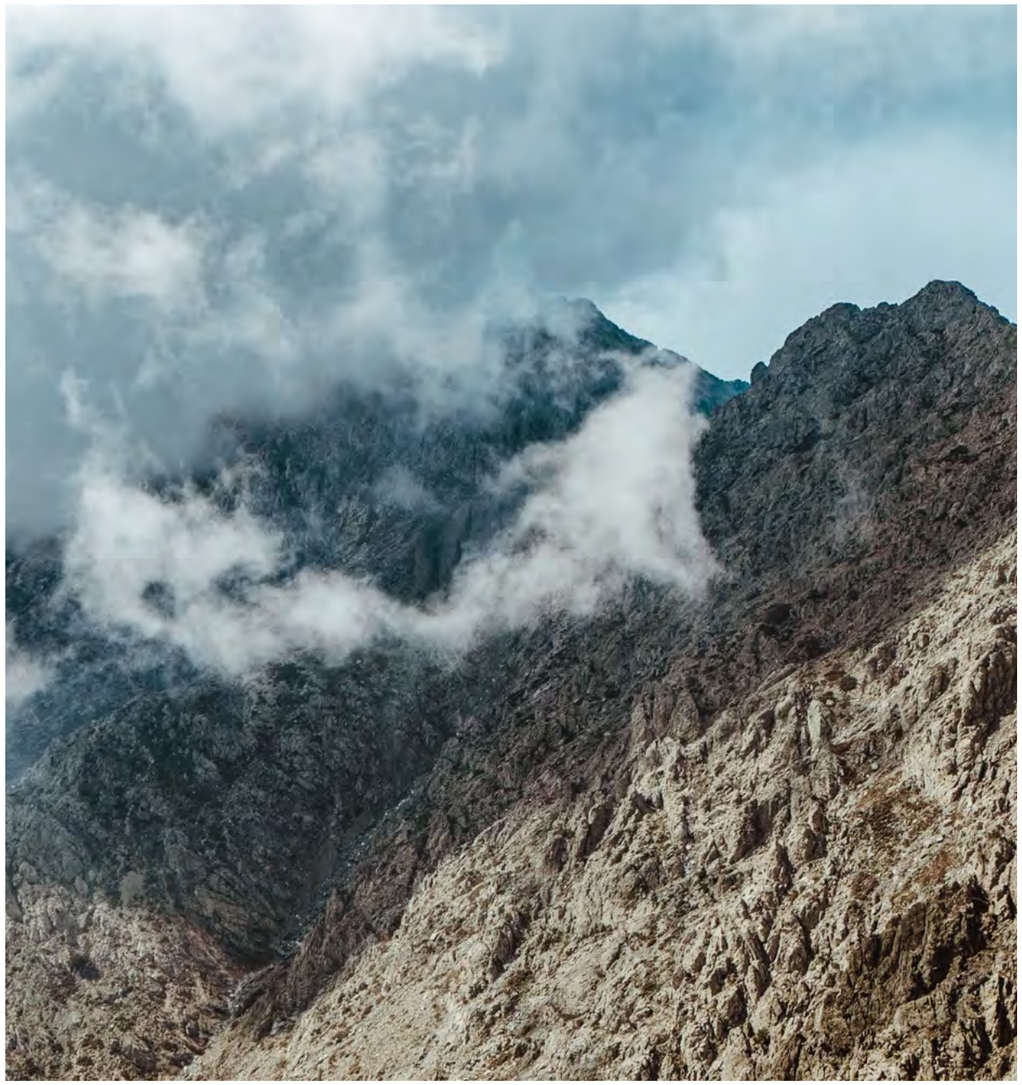
Influencing regulation and lobbying for the priorities of the local community: Samothrace island (Greece)

Samothrace's local government – as all other local governments in Greece, – is not responsible for energy policy development. However, they are a good example of how a local government can communicate and lobby the priorities and needs of the local stakeholders to the national government.

While the energy transition requires both large-scale and small-scale RES projects, island stakeholders and local governments should have a say in how and where these projects are implemented. Samothrace's government brought an initiative to the Greek national government to find optimal locations and types of renewable energy projects tailored to the unique cultural identity and landscape of the island—which includes archaeological sites, mountains, fresh springs, waterfalls, and rich vegetation. The municipality succeeded in lobbying to stop the implementation of a large-scale renewable energy projects, specifically, a wind farm on the Mount Saos. This mountain, together with other five mountains, was officially declared "pristine mountain" by a newly implemented Greek law, based on the study by the Biodiversity Conservation Lab of the University of Ioannina.

Samothrace's local government simultaneously started the preparation of the local energy transition plan through NESOI funding, focusing on technologies and solutions based on the island community's needs and resources. Biomass and geothermal energy will be key to fight the high heating costs, while distributed PVs can contribute to cover the municipal electricity demand and support energy poor households. Participatory business models like energy communities are also examined in an effort to maximise the benefit of the local community. In this way, the municipality and local stakeholders are involved from the planning stage and can, together with future investors, agree on the locations for RES projects on their island.

↖ The 8 Pristine Mountains of Greece Where Construction Is Banned



↑ Samothrace's local government simultaneously started the preparation of the local energy transition plan through NESOI funding. Pictured: Fengari, Samothraki, Greece © Photo by Maria Teneva on Unsplash

The Citizen's Assembly on the Balearic Islands (Spain)

The Balearic Islands will hold a Citizens' Climate Assembly between 2022 and 2023. These assemblies are an innovative tool already used in mainland Europe with a twofold goal: to reach consensus on highly complex issues, and to promote citizen participation in the political process. The Citizens' Climate Assemblies combine deliberative democracy and sortition to complement traditional representative democracy in the decision-making process around climate change, which involves intricate topics and requires long-term public policy.

The Balearics Citizens' Climate Assembly will be the first in the world to be held in an archipelago and one of the first regional assemblies in Europe. It aims to answer the following question:

What do we need to do in the Balearic Islands before 2030 to confront the climate emergency in an effective and just way?

This question will be addressed through several sessions that will touch upon different matters such as mobility, marine and terrestrial ecosystems, or energy generation. During these sessions, the participants will hear both scientific experts on climate change and the energy transition, as well as key stakeholders on the matter. It is crucial to differentiate between the former, who are requested to provide objective scientific information and analysis, and the latter, which are invited to present their particular vision on the matter. The participants will then engage in a constructive and facilitated reflection and a debate process.

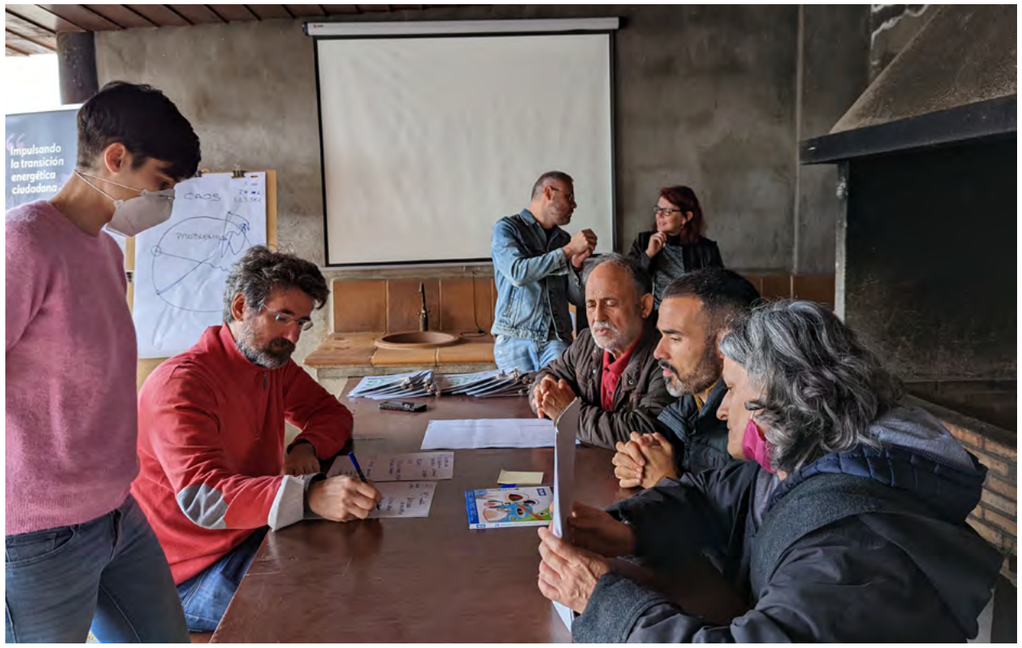
The participants are randomly selected through a process called civic lottery, that seeks to identify a sample of people representative of the socio-demographic reality of the territory in which the assembly is held. The relevant criteria during the selection process are: gender, age, level of education, income level, and municipality. The size of each assembly will vary depending on the population of the island.

The Balearic Citizens' Climate Assembly stems as an initiative from The Interdisciplinary Laboratory on Climate Change of the University of the Balearic Islands, who thanks to a grant from the European Climate Foundation carried out a preliminary diagnostic work to develop a proposal that takes into account the specificities, challenges, and opportunities of islands.

A total of five assemblies will be held: one on each Balearic Island (Formentera, Ibiza, Mallorca, and Menorca) each consisting of five sessions. Thereafter, a regional assembly will be held with representatives of all four islands. The assemblies will work in collaboration with each island council, as well as the Government of the Balearic Islands. The process has now started in the Island of Mallorca, as a pilot experience, which will extend until February 2023. It is expected that the assemblies on the other islands will start in 2023 and 2024.

Què és una assemblea ciutadana?

Resultados y documentación



↑ What if La Palma runs out of petrol in 5 years time? That was the question stakeholders discussed during the workshop with La Palma Renovable on the Canary Islands. © Photo by Jan Cornillie

The extreme risk of the climate crisis as well as the profound changes that are needed to tackle that crisis in an appropriate and responsible way, necessarily call for the active participation of citizens in the definition of the decarbonisation paths that need to be followed. There are two main reasons that support the necessity of such participation. On the one hand, the transformation of our societies that is needed is so profound that citizens must have the right to have their say on how to design that transformation. From both a democratic and a moral point of view, people should participate in the political conversation that is needed to decide what goals and actions leading to these goals should be prioritised. This is not only a technical question, but a political one that will have serious implications for generations to come. On the other hand, taking decisions without seriously involving the people that will have to abide by those decisions can lead to a profound misunderstanding of the need to carry out certain measures or even to reach certain targets. More concerning, not involving people in a constructive way may even lead to strong opposition to climate policies that are so desperately needed to limit global warming to avoid runaway climate change.

Creating the space for people with different views and backgrounds; providing them with scientific, up to date and comprehensible scientific knowledge; facilitating a constructive discussion that is aimed at creating consensus regarding the way forward. These are conditions that will allow not only for a successful climate assembly, but also to improve our imperfect and fragile political systems and to increase the cohesion and resilience of our societies. And, of course, to adequately respond to the biggest challenge humanity is facing.

↑ What do we need to do in the Balearic Islands before 2030 to confront the climate emergency in an effective and just way? Pictured: Cala Morellon Menorca. © Photo by Pelayo Arbues Unsplash

Consulting the community from the initial project idea: The 650 kW community-owned wind turbine on Inis Meáin (Aran Islands, Ireland)

Since its inception in 2012, one of the fixed aims of the Aran Islands energy cooperative Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Árann (CFOAT) has been to gradually reduce and eventually eliminate the islands' dependency on fossil fuels and install a source of renewable energy which the islanders would own. In ten years, a huge amount of work has been done across all three islands in preparation for the transition to clean energy. This includes the retrofitting of older housing stock, electrifying the transport and heating systems on the islands, and installing small scale electricity generation in the form of rooftop PV panels on homes and businesses on all three islands.

The cooperative is non-profit and solely owned by the community, with membership being reserved for island residents and businesses. Therefore, it is important that the residents of the three islands are listened to at every stage of proposed project developments and that the plans of the energy cooperative remain transparent. Every form of communication has been used, including posters, newsletters, email, Facebook, Twitter, and regular interviews and announcements on Raidió na Gaeltachta. In addition to this, various consultations and public meetings have been held throughout the years with island residents. Meetings specifically about wind turbines have taken place between 2016 and 2018.

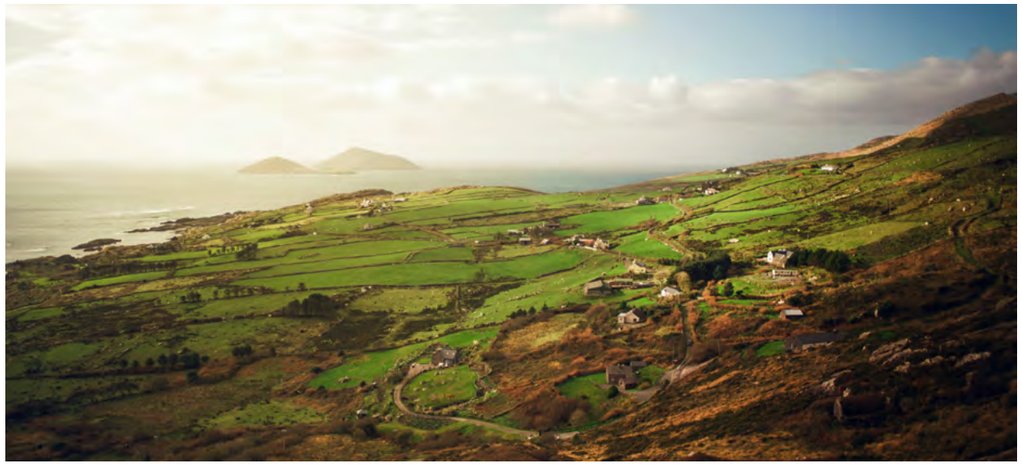
The Aran Islands energy cooperative also contributed to a project led by John Aston for the Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland (SEAI) called 'Earning Local Support for Wind Energy Projects in Ireland'.

In early 2021 the Aran Islands energy cooperative applied to ESB Networks (Ireland's DSO) to assess the feasibility of a grid connection for a 2 MW wind energy project on the Aran Islands, later reduced to 650 kW. From that moment on, the residents have been invited to contact the cooperative with their questions and concerns about the two proposed sites (one on Inis Mór and another one on Inis Meáin). The Planning Authority in Galway County Council advised to concentrate on the site on Inis Meain, as it had already been used as a location for three small wind turbines (now dismantled and sold).

When a grid connection was granted in March 2022, letters were sent to each household on Inis Meáin, as they would be most affected by the turbine and its construction. They were invited to a public meeting on the island in April 2022 as well as to contact the energy cooperative privately with any concerns or questions they might have.

This offer from ESB is valid until February 2024, by which the planning permission must be granted or else the offer is no longer available. This two-year timeline is hard to meet for community wind projects so the Aran Islands energy cooperative, together with other groups around the country, are already lobbying ESB to extend this deadline.

In the meantime, the energy cooperative is carrying out a feasibility study which will allow to have more information in relation to the project: the expected costs of construction, the necessary environmental reports and the expected benefit to the community. This pre-planning phase is funded by the SEAI. Plan Energy has been appointed as the trusted adviser. The Aran islands energy cooperative also successfully applied for the second call for technical assistance from the Clean Energy for EU islands secretariat in March 2022. The secretariat is providing technical support in the area of finance, monetising benefits and stakeholder engagement. The islands secretariat and Plan Energy are working together to have this study ready by the end of 2022.



↑ Aran Islands energy cooperative applied to ESB Networks to assess the feasibility of a grid connection for a 2 MW wind energy project on the Aran Islands, later reduced to 650 kW. © Photo by Nils Nedel on Unsplash

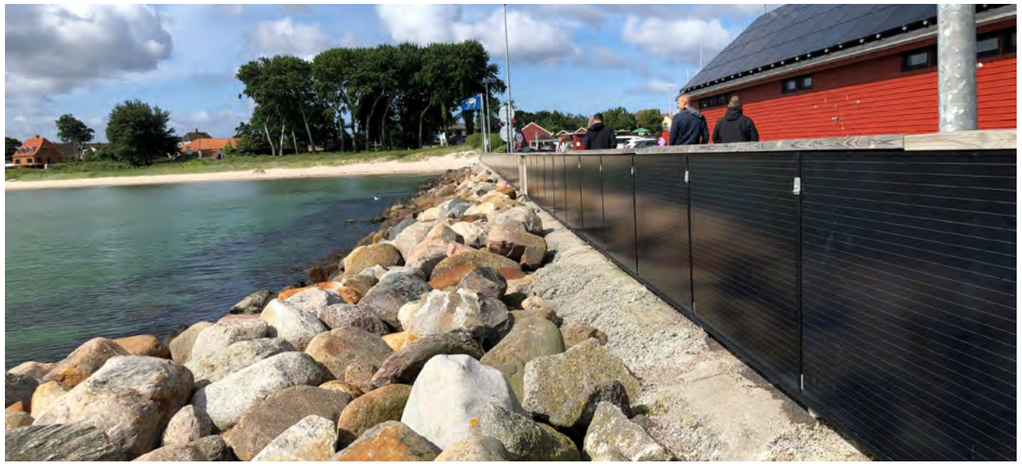
Engaging citizens before initiating and while planning innovative projects: Samsø and the smart Ballen marina (Denmark)

As part of the activities of the H2020 SMILE project, the marina at Ballen village on Samsø has been upgraded with a solar PV and battery installation, which allow the harbour to produce its own renewable electricity, store it, and reduce the demand peaks. Following the installation of the solar PV and battery, the charging system for docking at the Ballen marina has been changed to reflect the real consumption of each individual boat: a discounted tariff is now offered for boat-owners who charge when the demand on the grid is low. The marina acts as a smart microgrid, helping to balance the electricity grid of that side of the island.

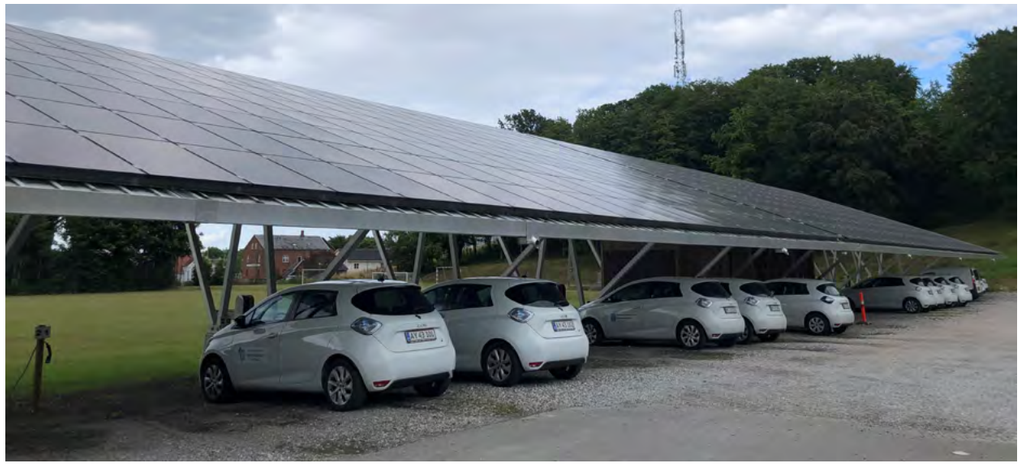
This upgrade of the Ballen marina has had a positive impact on the island's grid and has prevented the need for an alternative costly upgrade. The SMILE project has therefore enabled better managing the island's energy system, benefitting the island consumers in the long run. Ballen's case has become a model for the other marinas on the island and beyond.

A long engagement process took place at the preparation phase of the project. The three local project partners were the municipality of Samsø (the investor for the PV system), Samsø Energy Academy (the technical advisor), and Samsø Electro (a local electricity company). Other local stakeholders that were included in engagement activities were the harbour master, the homeowners and businesses in Ballen village, the Ballen district heating plant (which burns local straw), and the general population.

As it is customary on Samsø, the project idea was introduced to stakeholders and there was a discussion about whether there is room for such a project. The numbers behind the technical and financial aspects of the project were presented and the calculations on different project sizes were publicly announced. A debate took place on which renewable energy technology would be preferred at the harbour, including how much visual impact is acceptable. The benefits were also presented and a process was opened during which questions from the public and from the press were answered and the Q&A was published with free access. This participatory process lasted for more than a year and resulted in the approval of the project with changes in the original plan. As a matter of fact, the consultation process actually shaped some project components, so that the project could eventually go ahead. The main lesson learned is that no matter how good a project looks on paper from a technical, financial, or environmental point of view, it is actually only as good as stakeholders see it. People are often resistant to change and consultation processes with stakeholders should not take the realisation of a project as a given. On the contrary, they should be invited in at an early stage and be allowed to co-design it.



↑ The marina on Samsø has been upgraded with a solar PV and battery installation allowing the harbour to produce its own renewable electricity. © Photo by Marina Montero Carrero



↑ The municipality of Samsø believes that citizens should be invited in at an early stage and be allowed to co-design it. © Photo by Marina Montero Carrero

Financially contributing and co-owning the island's clean energy development: Apsyrtides crowdfunding for a solar PV plant on Cres-Lošinj (Croatia)

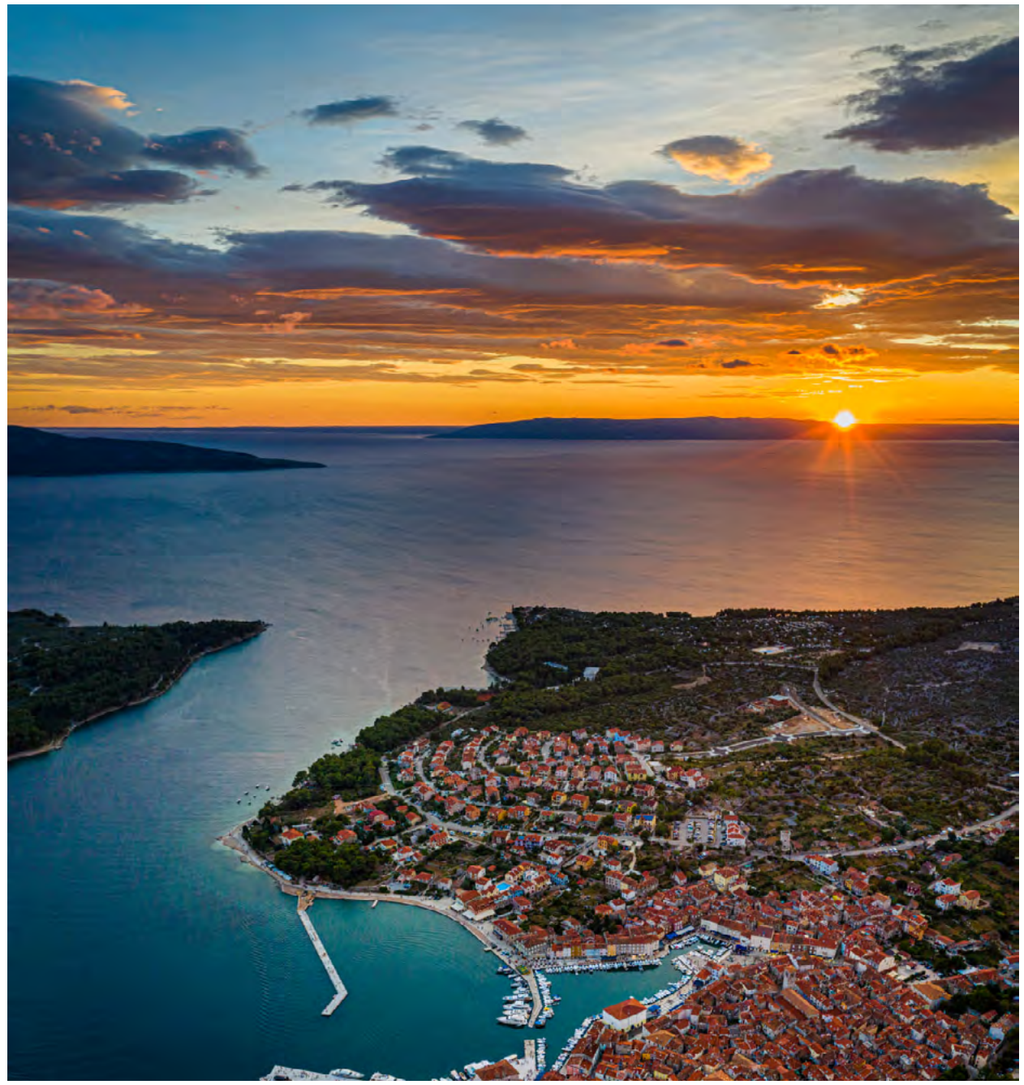
In April of 2021, the energy cooperative Apsyrtides was founded on the Cres-Lošinj archipelago. With 29 founding members, this cooperative is unique in Croatia due to the variety of stakeholders involved, which includes two municipalities, the town of Cres and the town of Mali Lošinj, local private and public businesses, associations, and individual citizens. Since the beginning of its activities, stakeholders on the archipelago have shown an interest in Apsyrtides energy cooperative, which in November 2022 already counted a total of 62 members.

The first flagship project of the cooperative is the 500 kW Filozići solar power plant. After conducting the required feasibility studies, the cooperative's assembly took the decision to purchase the land in 2022. The total investment costs for the Filozići solar power plant are estimated at €648 000 according to the feasibility study. The cooperative is planning to collect 30% of these costs via crowdfunding campaigns, and the rest via a loan.

The first round of the crowdfunding campaign aimed at raising €65 000 needed to buy the land from the private owners and to proceed with the elementary technical documents to get the building permit. This first campaign took place in mid-September 2022 with outstanding results. It was first estimated that it would take two months to raise the €65 000. However, in only three weeks more than €100 000 were collected from both cooperative founders and new members.

As the cooperative manager Franjo Toić declared to EnergyCities: *"We have been communicating for over a year about our idea of building a solar power plant in the north of the island. We always thought we'd finance it through a joint investment of citizens and island companies. Nonetheless, we were surprised by the speed of the reaction and the great interest to invest in the project. Citizens clearly want to become owners of at least part of the energy consumed on the island, and the energy cooperative is one way they will be able to do so".*

Following this successful campaign, the purchase of the land was formalised in October 2022. As a future step, the road accessing the land of the future PV plant will be constructed, depending on when the necessary permissions will be issued. At the same time, the cooperative will continue to pursue that many different documents that should be issued by the public authorities for the implementation of the project.



↑ Cres-Lošinj (Croatia) © Photo by Robi Sablić

Awareness raising: Energicentrum Gotland (Sweden)

Energicentrum Gotland (Sweden) provides free and independent advice on energy issues to all island stakeholders: citizens, local businesses, large technology providers, etc. It is 100% owned by Region Gotland and it is one of Sweden's 16 regional energy offices.

The mission of Energicentrum is to raise the general level of knowledge of the island's citizens and at the same time accelerate the energy transition on the island. Commitment within the island community is promoted thanks to active and up-to-date communication to the island's businesses and the public. The centre plans activities, initiatives, and projects aiming for a fully renewable energy system by 2040.

Gotland's Energicentrum steering group includes individuals and organisations from all four groups of the quadruple helix:

- → Public authorities are represented by Region Gotland, Gubis (umbrella organisation for Gotland development), the County's Administrative Board, and Sweden's Energy Agency
- → Civil society is represented by the Citizen's Chair (a representative from the public with a one-year mandate)
- → Academia is represented by Uppsala University
- → Businesses are represented by Tillväxt Gotland (business organisation), GEAB (energy company), companies LRF (represents 39 local offices with affiliated farmers)

Below we present two examples of the projects that Energicentrum is currently running.

Gotland's Energicentrum

Energy conversion for Gotland companies aims to inspire and coach Gotland's business community in the energy transition, and thereby increase their competitiveness. Small and medium-sized companies are offered a review of their entire energy use and then receive suggestions for possible improvements based on their current situation. These improvements must generate both environmental and financial benefits. The project''s goal is for 70 companies to participate, and for more than half of them to reduce their energy use by at least 15%. Most of the work will consist of outreach advice as well as activities within the business network.

Energy transition Gotland is a collaborative project led by the University of Uppsala whose main goal is to map the necessary measures to make Gotland's energy system 100% renewable. To this end, a long-term commitment has been established for a new research area connecting Gotland's context, system needs, and main challenges for an effective energy and social transition. The project is divided into three main topics (each of which is being developed as a PhD Thesis)

- → Identifying the renewable energy resources on and around Gotland, with a specific focus on wind power, namely detailed simulations of wind turbines and their control strategies.
- → Identifying, modelling, and visualising the current energy demand on Gotland. Estimating scenarios on how the island's energy demand might evolve in the future and proposing measures to reduce it.
- → Investigating how people perceive, understand, and relate to energy systems and the energy transition, as well as how social perspectives on energy issues can add to the understanding of a traditional technical research and contribute to better tools for politicians and social planners.

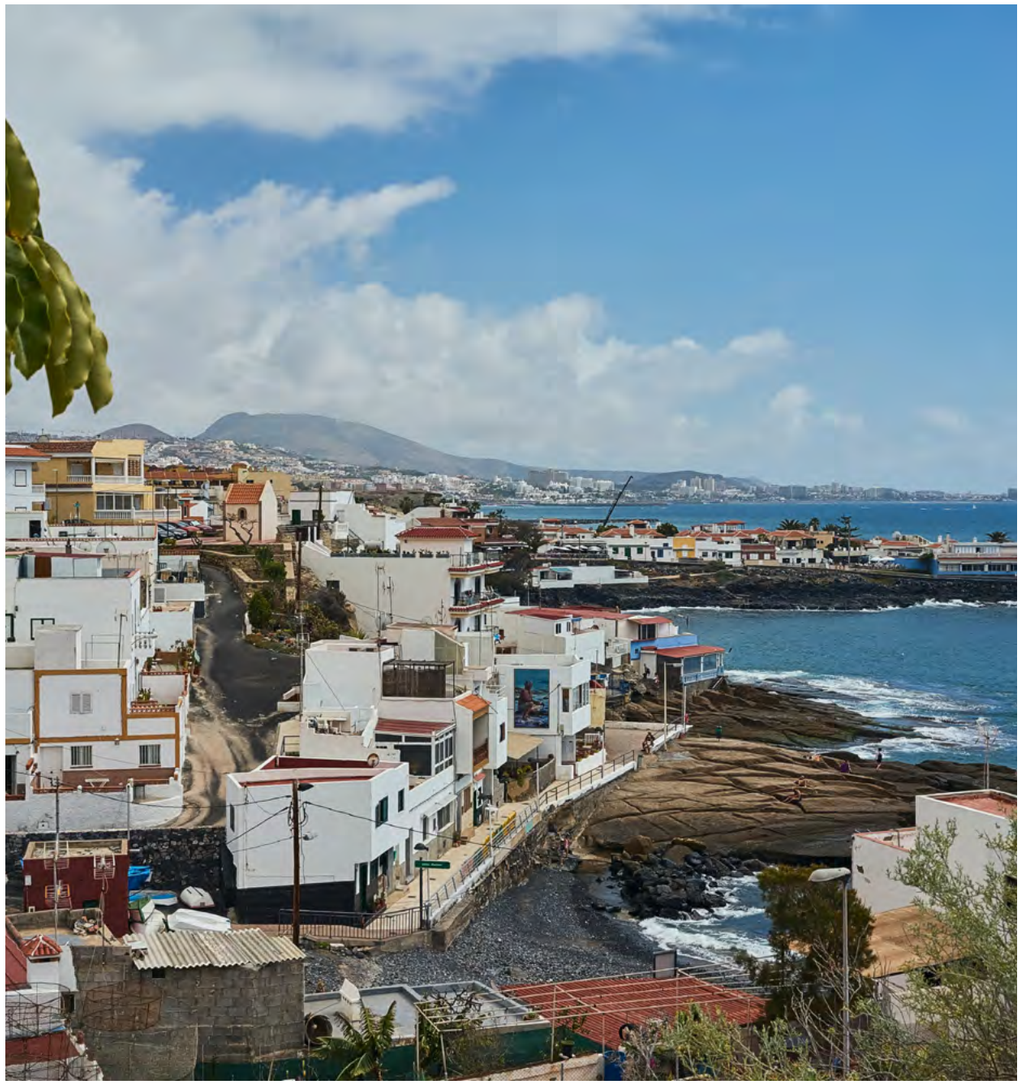
Providing guidance and empowerment: Green offices on the Canary Islands (Spain)

The Green Offices of the Canary Islands (Oficinas Verdes de Canarias – OVC) are a network of delegations at the service of the citizens, companies, entities, and public administrations of the eight Canary Islands. Their objective is to provide island stakeholders with personalised access to aids, subsidies, strategies, and any type of initiatives which they can get involved in to be an active part of the ecological transition and the fight against climate change.

The Green Offices are an initiative of the Ministry of Ecological Transition, Fight against Climate Change and Territorial Planning of the Government of the Canary Islands. They were born with the purpose of becoming the reference instrument in the preparation, distribution, and dissemination of information and practical services for the archipelago's clean energy transition. Among other topics, the Green Offices provide advice on:

- → The measures of which island stakeholders can take advantage within the Canary Islands Recovery Plan.
- → The fiscal benefits that the Canary Islands City Councils offer in climate action topics.
- → The advantages of education and training in the field of green employment.
- → Advice on the calculation of the carbon footprint for public and private entities.
- → For representatives of city councils, advice related to Covenant of Mayors and information and events organised by and for it.
- → Information about NextGenerationEU for companies, the temporary recovery instrument endowed with more than €800 000 million that will help repair the immediate economic and social damage caused by the coronavirus pandemic.
- → Information on aid and subsidies from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and from the LIFE and Interreg programmes.
- → An information service also offered through an itinerant campaign on the effects of climate change on the islands.

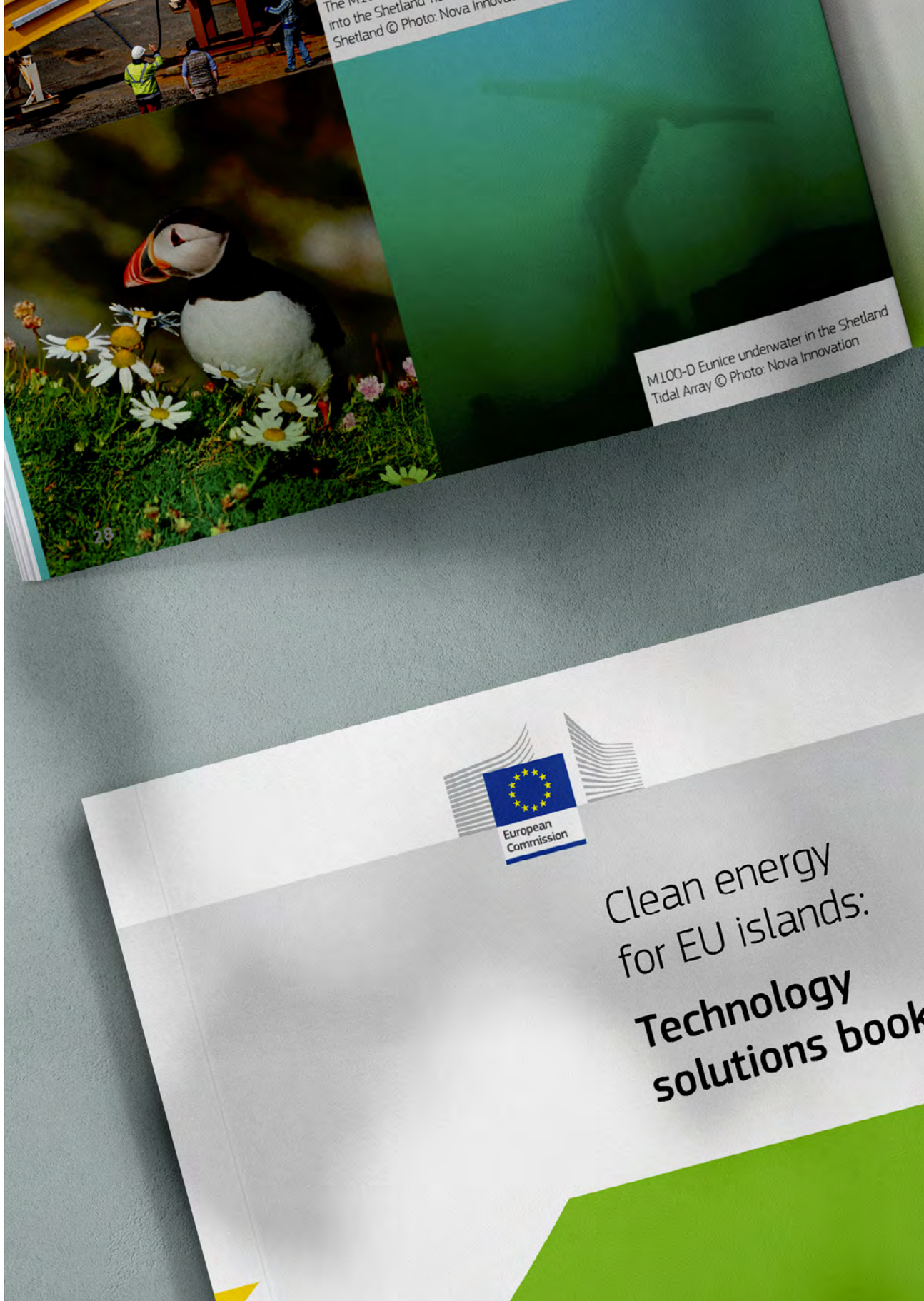
Oficinas Verdes Canarias



↑ The Green Offices of the Canary Islands (Oficinas Verdes de Canarias – OVC) are a network of delegations at the service of the citizens, companies, entities, and public administrations of the eight Canary Islands. © Photo by Bastian Pudillon Unsplash

Further reading

- Citizen Engagement Solution Booklet, April 2020, Smart Cities Information System
- Compile Toolkit: Stakeholder engagement guide
- Sara Tachelet, Sara Giovannini. Community energy communications guide April 2022, Rescoop and EnergyCities
- Mona Bielig, Celina Kacperski, Sonja Klingert, Florian Kutzner. Structured overview on optimised energy-efficiency interventions for Energy Communities and Collective Energy Actions, May 2022, DECIDE H2020 project.
- Marina Montero Carrero, Christina Protopapadaki, Andries De Brouwer, Lucija Rakocevic, Leandro Vaz, Wannes Vanheusden. Clean energy for EU islands. From vision to action: how to tackle the transition on EU islands? Methodological Handbook. July 2022, Clean energy for EU islands secretariat
- Asamblea Ciutadana pel clima (in Spanish).
- Citizens' Climate Assembly in the Balearics. Universitat de les Illes Balears
- Energicentrum Gotland (in Swedish)
- Oficinas Verdes de Canarias (in Spanish)



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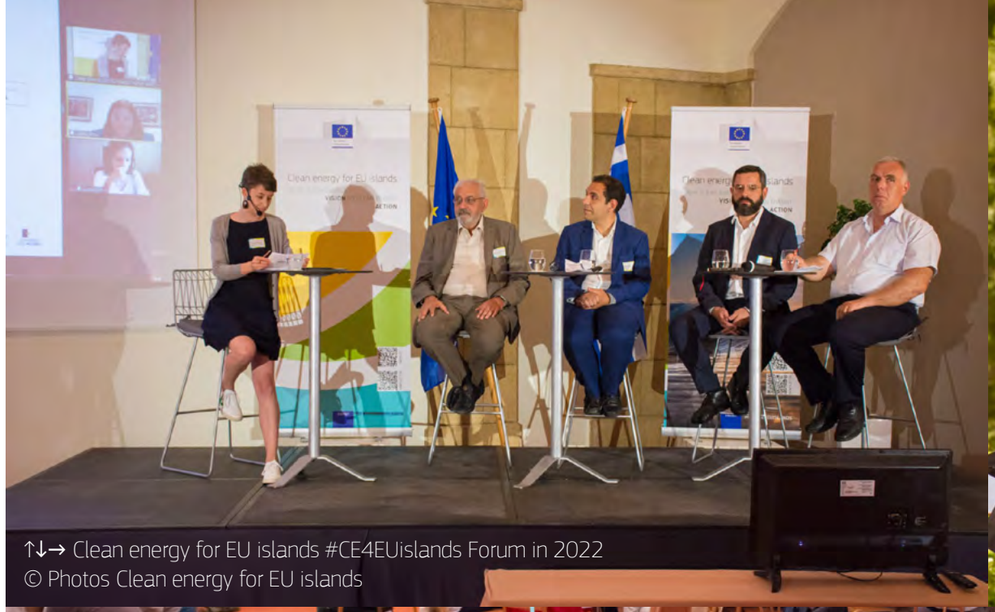

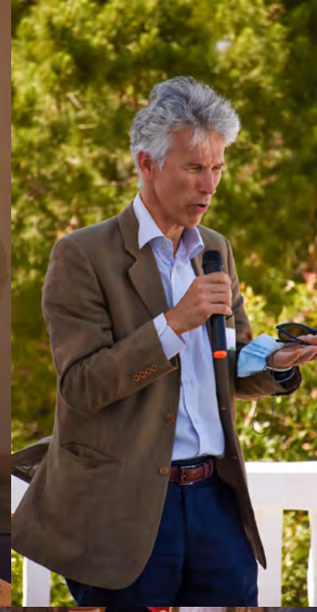

↑↓→ Clean energy for EU islands #CE4EUislands Forum in 2022
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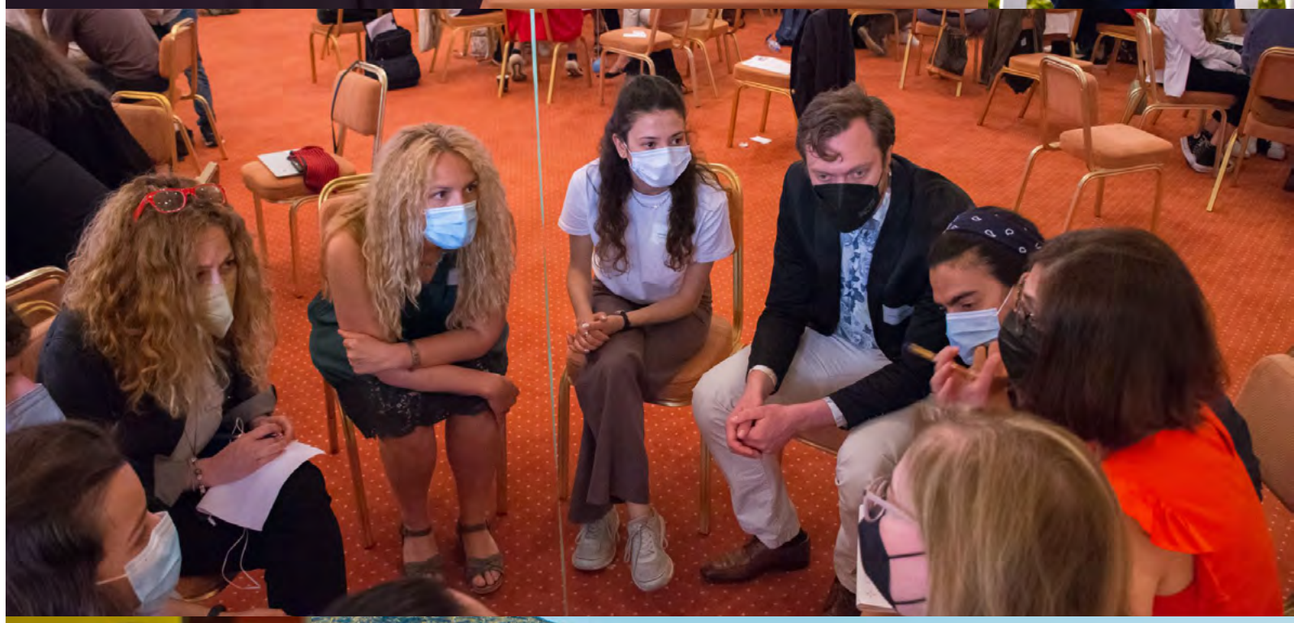
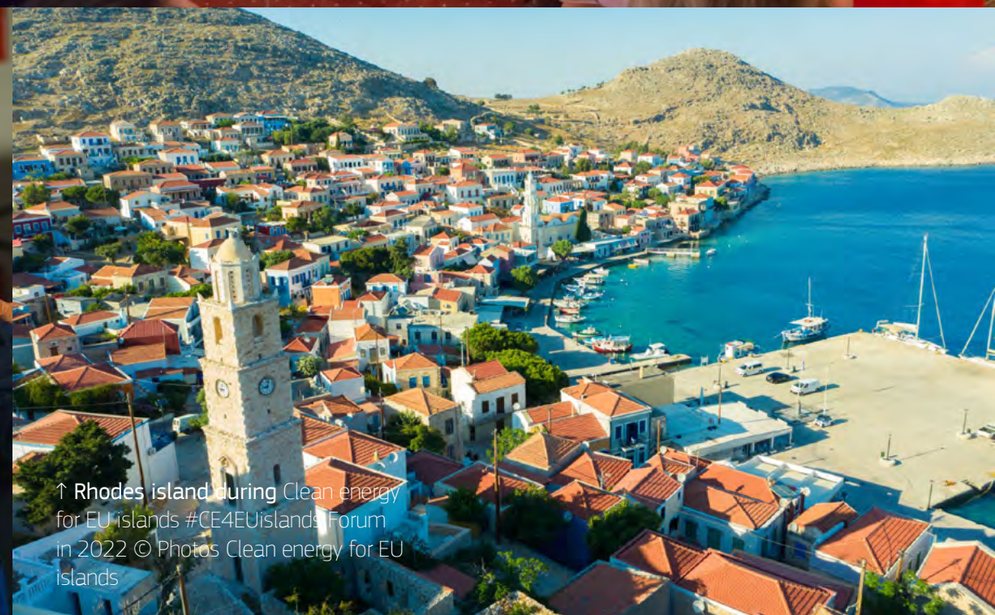


↑ Project director Jan Cornillie © Photo Instituto para la Diversificación y Ahorro de la Energía (IDAE).



↑ **Rhodes island during** Clean energy for EU islands #CE4EUislands Forum in 2022 © Photos Clean energy for EU islands

The Clean energy for EU islands secretariat is managed by the European Commission
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