

## 3.3.1. Final Report on Focus Groups Activities



WP N 3 - Testing

Activity N 3.3 – Joint Actions Implementation

**Deliverables N 3.3.1.** Final Report on Focus Groups Activities

History of the document

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# 1. Introduction

ENERJ - Joint Actions for Energy Efficiency is an Interreg MED modular project and aims at enhancing and improving the coordination of Sustainable Energy Action Plans (SEAP's) and other relevant energy Efficiency Plans. The project will develop and test a technologically oriented methodology for increasing cooperation among public authorities through Joint Actions transferring the most promising methods in the partner regions.

Eleven partners in nine Mediterranean countries are active to increase in their regions and EU-wide energy efficiency in public buildings.

- Context analyses in the partner regions provide the basis for a common methodology for Joint Action on Energy Efficiency. It will contain the foreseen efficiency measures in existing energy plans (SEAPs), financing schemes and a selection of buildings in each partner region that will undergo energy audits.
- The energy data of the audits will go onto the web platform together with the EE measures already adopted by the municipalities, a methodology on how to design and implement joint actions and guidance on financing strategies. The collaborative platform is one of the two main strategies of ENERJ.
- The second one is the Joint Action coordinator, modelled along the lines of the municipal energy managers. At the centre of his or her activities will be to liaise with authorities at the local and district level and to develop supra-municipal interventions with an adequate project design, mobilization of EU structural and other funds and the involvement of ESCOs and other stakeholders.

## 2. Focus Group

In the project ENERJ – Joint Actions For Energy Efficiency all the partners had to organize at least 4 focus group meetings. The main objective of the focus groups is to join a group of relevant entities of the territory that can contribute to the definition of the joint actions to implement in each one of the countries (9 pilot actions foreseen in the project) for the successful implementation at the local level.

### 2.1. Why we need Focus Group?

Community involvement in sustainable local energy planning can raise support for, and improve the quality of development. It can raise awareness of the need for sustainable energy and can contribute to actual project delivery. It is crucial that citizens and stakeholders groups

are fully involved from the beginning. All key players should share a common vision and find ways of combining skills and other resources in order to maximize their impact on the delivery of SEAP's goals.

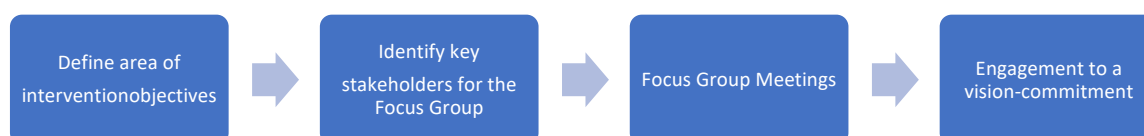
The participation of all interested parties in the decision making process can reduce conflicts and lead to outcomes that had better reflect the citizens' needs and prospects.

It is highly unlikely that the effort of putting together a Local SEAP can be implemented successfully, if it does not meet with broad public acceptance. On the contrary, significant benefits can be derived from genuine participatory approaches including: reaching an agreement on identified energy management issues; incorporating the experience, the knowledge and concerns of the community in the plan; minimizing or even avoiding potential conflicts.

If all stakeholders are involved, then and only then, the SEAP has chances to be realistic and acceptable.

It's widely known that the most successful sustainable planning efforts have scored the commitment of all the community's stakeholders. Involving many players from the beginning ensures that everyone's voice is heard, that all worthy ideas have been taken into account and that concerns or oppositions are understood and resolved at an early stage of the process.

Local authorities have to acknowledge the value of the key stakeholder groups' consensus and support for the efficient accomplishment of the local action plan. The contribution of a Focus Group to energy efficiency measures implementation process is critical for the achievement of the targets set. Therefore, their active engagement should be of priority, in order to incorporate the genuine community needs and to assure the broadest possible support.



*Figure 1 – Formulating and Operating Focus Group*

**Focus Group main role is twofold: To provide expertise and support during the Sustainable Energy Plan implementation in the respective Municipality/Region and to ensure that all different aspects/consideration within the community are heard and taken into account.**

All members of local communities have a key role in addressing the energy and climate challenge within their local authorities. Involvement of local stakeholders including the public's ideas, visions, experiences and expectations are important for the successful implementation of sustainable energy projects at local level.

Focus Groups are important for the following reasons:

- Participatory policy-making is more transparent and allow authorities to build on trust and confidence of the involved actors
- A decision taken together with many stakeholders is based on more extensive knowledge broad consensus improves the quality, acceptance, effectiveness and legitimacy of a project;
- The under development project may get strong support from external stakeholders;
- May strengthen the role of different actors using a "bottom-up" approach involving the public sector, consumers and energy providers.

The main objectives of Focus Group constitution and operation are:

- To provide knowledge, expertise, support to the pilot projects implementation and to ensure that all different aspects/consideration within the community are heard and taken into account;
- To increase knowledge, awareness and capacity of key actors and employees in public authorities, and to strengthen the implementation of local public policies and plans related to energy efficiency;
- To form a long-term basis for better cohesion at the local level that will last even after the ENERJ project:
- To promote effective renewable energy and energy efficiency plans, creating in parallel economic benefits for the local area including job creation and reduction of GHG emissions;
- To support the authorities to claim and get funding through achieve 2020 targets;

## 2.2. Form a competent Focus Group

The formation of the Focus Group is crucial for its efficient and sustainable operation. To have a successful project, it is highly recommended to seek the most appropriate actors and to engage them. The first step is to identify the main stakeholders:

- Whose interests are affected by the action?
- Whose activities affect the actions?
- Who control information, resources and expertise needed for strategy formulation and implementation?
- Whose participation/involvement is needed for successful implementation?

There are various degrees of involvement: 'informing' is at one extreme whilst 'empowering' is at the other. The key stakeholders' representation should be well balanced. On the other hand, a Focus Group has to be flexible in the decision making process. A 2 levels' Focus Group may be considered based on the nature and the implementation phase of each pilot project (more broad at the initiation/planning phase, less broad during the development/implementation of the action). A wider consultation process may be decided depending on the specific requirements of the project to be implemented.



*Figure 2 – Levels of interventation of Focus Group*

The different nature of each energy efficiency project, its requirements, level of impact to the different stakeholder groups should be taken into account during the selection of the appropriate Focus Group members.

Figure above presents the key stakeholder groups and Table lists a pool of potentially important stakeholders to be involved in the Local Partnerships, as members of the Focus Groups.



*Figure 3 - Indicative Stakeholder Groups for Sustainable Energy Projects in a Local Community*

<b>Actors to be engaged through the decision-making and implementation processes</b>	
Key Actors to be engaged to the Focus Group activities (1st level involvement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local/regional policy makers - Municipalities</li> <li>• Municipal departments and related companies (municipal energy utilities, transport)</li> <li>• Technology/product providers</li> <li>• Financial partners such as banks, private funds, ESCOs, charities</li> <li>• Institutional stakeholders like chambers of commerce, chambers of architects and engineers</li> <li>• Energy agencies Knowledgeable persons (experts, consultants, etc) Representative from the end users group which will be directly affected by the planned energy efficiency measures</li> <li>• Where relevant, representatives of national/regional administrations and/or neighbouring municipalities, to ensure coordination and consistency with plans/actions that take place at other levels of decision</li> </ul>
Actors with whom to work out Renewable Energy Sources (RES)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electricity Regulators and Grid operators - Utilities</li> <li>• RES technology suppliers</li> <li>• Associations of RES installers</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research institutions; Knowledgeable persons (e.g. experts, consultants)</li> <li>• Associations/clusters of building/land owners; Land owners (i.e. public, church, etc.)</li> <li>• Agricultural organizations;</li> <li>• Institutional stakeholders like association of engineers, installers</li> <li>• ESCOs</li> </ul>
Actors with whom to work out Energy Efficiency plans	<p>In the building sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building companies, developers</li> <li>• Architects and engineers</li> <li>• Technology/product providers</li> <li>• ESCOs (Energy Services Companies)</li> <li>• Associations of installers</li> <li>• Association of building owners; clusters of business sectors</li> <li>• Research institutes, experts in EE applications;</li> </ul> <p>In the industry sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilities incl. district heating companies</li> <li>• Manufacturers</li> <li>• ESCOs</li> </ul> <p>In the transport sector (if applicable to GP pilot projects):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility planners</li> <li>• Transport/mobility players: private/public transport companies</li> <li>• Cycling organizations</li> <li>• Freight transporters/organizations</li> <li>• Vehicle manufacturers</li> <li>• Energy suppliers</li> </ul>

<b>Actors important to be informed and provide their feedback and consent :</b>	
End Users and Local Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens/consumers associations; Citizens Volunteers' groups</li> <li>• NGOs and other civil society representatives</li> <li>• Building managers; Building employees; building users</li> <li>• Local and regional energy agencies</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chambers of Commerce, SMEs associations</li> <li>• School Communities (teachers, pupils)</li> <li>• Media Representatives</li> <li>• Representatives of tourism sector (where this sector is of key importance)</li> </ul>
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### 2.3. Focus Group – Consultation Process

As mentioned in the project ENERJ – Joint Actions For Energy Efficiency all the partners had to organize at least 4 focus group meetings. The main objective of the focus groups (4) is to join a group of relevant entities of the territory that can contribute to the definition of the joint actions to implement in each one of the countries (9 pilot actions foreseen in the project) for the successful implementation at the local level. So, all the partners had in consideration the following assumptions about the Focus Group involvement:

- Identification of energy plan priorities and development of projects to match the local needs
- Contribution to the preparation of Local Joint Actions
- Preparation of technical solutions for the realization of the realization of the pilots and support their implementation
- Support the capacity building activities in municipal level
- Identification of efficient tools to increase public awareness and disseminate the project's derivable
- Monitoring and assessment of the progress of the pilots experiences
- Contribution to improvement of local energy strategy

### 2.4 Consultation and Discussion Topics

What was the agenda during the meetings of the Focus Group? It has to be well targeted in order to have productive meetings:

- Local Energy Strategy – What kind of parameters do they take into consideration
- Priorities and existing local potentials; tailor the priorities to the local needs
- Solutions that would fit the local community

- Obstacles hindering the efficient implementation of the identified projects
- Propose and prepare suitable workshops/capacity building for the municipality technical staff
- Technical solutions for future investments
- Funding opportunities and other financial issues – this is the most important topic for discussion.

## 2.5 Motivation and engagement of Focus Groups

The involvement of key stakeholders from the initial planning phase to the strategic decisions and the development process will be the “driving force” behind it.

Actual participation implies a dynamic, interactive process. This was based on building trust and confidence that all views will be taken into account during any energy project development. Of course, participation does not just happen.

How the potential members of the Focus Group were convinced to participate? What kind of arguments do we use to ensure their cooperation? Such questions should be adequately addressed before contacting them. A list of the possible arguments follows:

- Initiate actions for a “greener” city and set up the groundwork for sustainable local and regional development;
- Be part of a European network to exchange ideas and practices with other EU regions;
- Reduce de CO2 emissions and the energy footprint of the public administration;
- Reduce operational cost of the public buildings and achieve substantial savings in energy use;
- Increase the energy self-sufficiency of public buildings;
- Gain increased awareness on protection of the environment and energy use;
- Be part of the decision making process;

### 3. The ENERJ Project Experience

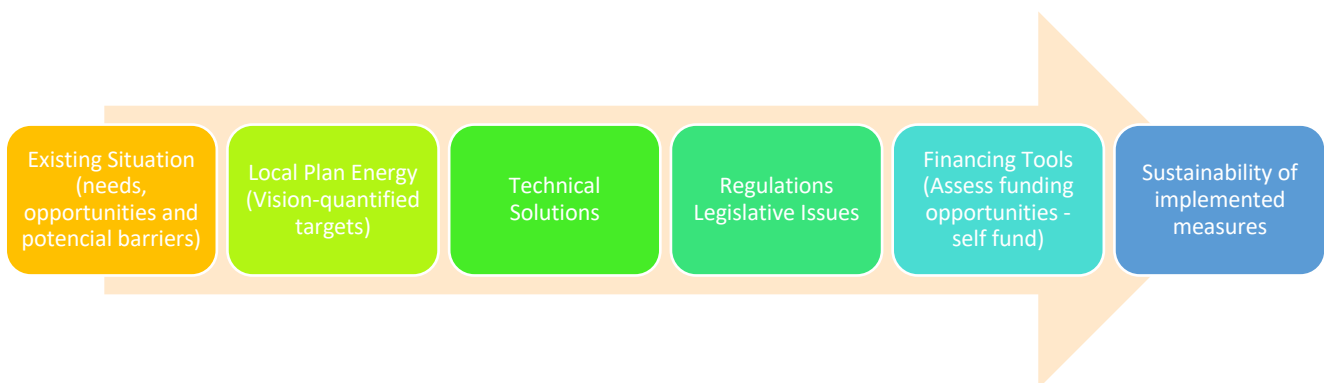
According to the application form, all the partners had to organize at least 4 focus group meeting according to the topic 2.3 of this derivable.

The strength of Focus Groups relies on allowing the participants to agree or disagree with each other so that it provides an insight into how a group thinks about an issue, about the range of opinion and ideas, and the inconsistencies and variation that exists in a particular community in terms of beliefs and their experiences and practices.

Focus Groups can be used to explore the meanings of survey findings that cannot be explained statistically, the range of opinions/views on a topic of interest and to collect a wide variety of local terms. In bridging research and policy, Focus Groups can be useful in providing an insight into different opinions among different parties involved in the change process, thus enabling the process to be managed more smoothly.

Considering the specificities of each territory the focus groups had to be slightly adapted to the realities of each country but maintaining its essence and the subjects to be approached. A focus group discussion is a good way to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. In the ENERJ case, a moderator who introduces topics for discussion and helps the group to participate in a lively and natural discussion amongst themselves guided the focus group of participants on ENERJ.

So, the Focus Groups meetings involved almost 262 participants from eight different countries.



*Figure 1 – Main Topics Discuss in the Focus Groups*

### 3.1 Stakeholders Involved in ENERJ Focus Groups

All the ENERJ partners identified the stakeholders they would invite to participate in focus group meetings. These stakeholders were identified taking into account the following relevant groups:

1. Local and Regional Public Authority - In this group we consider individuals and entities with responsibility for public management, infrastructure and investments;
2. Energy Agencies and Departments of Energy – In this group were included energy agencies, energy related associations and specialized departments;
3. Knowledgeable Persons - this group included external experts, teachers, consultants, the public with expertise and sensitivity in the area of energy and energy efficiency;
4. Financing - In this group were included banks, entities promoting ESCOS and other types of entities that finance energy investments.

In this way, in the following tables it is possible to analyze the dates of the focus groups, the subject of the meeting, and the main stakeholders involved according to the previously defined groups.

#### *Focus Group – Anatoliki*

Partner	1 <sup>st</sup> Focus Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Focus Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Focus Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Focus Group
<b>date</b>	01/02/2018	24/07/2018	27/11/2018	01/02/2019
<b>subject</b>	ESCOS	Energy Communities	Financing of Joint Actions	Energy Communities Final
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	Local Authorities Financing Energy Agencies	Local Authorities Knowledgeable Persons	Local Authorities Knowledgeable Persons Financing	Local Authorities Energy Agencies

#### *Focus Group – GOLEA*

Partner	1 <sup>st</sup> Focus Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Focus Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Focus Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Focus Group
<b>date</b>	15/01/2018	19/01/2018	20/02/2018	08/06/2018
<b>subject</b>	Local authorities public	Financing	Knowledgeable persons	Energy agencies
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	Local Authorities	Financing	Knowledgeable persons	Financing

### Focus Group – IRENA

Partner	1 <sup>st</sup> Focus Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Focus Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Focus Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Focus Group	5 <sup>th</sup> Focus Group
<b>date</b>	13/03/2018	27/03/2018	18/05/2018	17/06/2018	07/05/2019
<b>subject</b>	Definition and presentation of Joint actions for EE	Cultural heritage restoration problems	JA possibilities; starting procedure with municipalities	Financing JA, possible financing tools and next steps	Methodology for implementing JA and the stakeholder
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	Local Authorities	Local Authorities Knowledgeable Persons	Local Authorities Knowledgeable Persons	Local Authorities Knowledgeable Persons Energy Agencies	Local Authorities Knowledgeable Persons

### Focus Group – FAMP

Partner	1 <sup>st</sup> Focus Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Focus Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Focus Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Focus Group
<b>date</b>	16/01/2018	15/02/2018	09/05/2018	07/11/2018
<b>subject</b>	Identification of the main problems in the management of Andalusian energy public buildings	Analysis and selection of the possible solutions and best practices to what was identified in the 1st Focus Group as main problems	Definition and analysis of the possible joint action to boost	Identification of the operations and measures to include in REDEMA as Joint Action, for its implementation
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	Local Authorities Energy Agencies Knowledgeable Financing	Local Authorities Energy Agencies Knowledgeable Financing	Local Authorities Energy Agencies Knowledgeable Financing	Local Authorities Energy Agencies Knowledgeable Financing

### Focus Group – MIE

Partner	1 <sup>st</sup> Focus Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Focus Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Focus Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Focus Group
<b>date</b>	26/04/2018	09/05/2018	23/05/2018	01/06/2018
<b>subject</b>	Energy Agencies and joint Action for EE	ESCOS	Financing tools of EE	Local Authorities and Joint Action
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	Energy Agencies	Knowledgeable	Financing	Local authorities

### Focus Group – MCR

Partner	1 <sup>st</sup> Focus Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Focus Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Focus Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Focus Group
<b>date</b>	13/02/2018	16/05/2018	07/19/2018	14/02/2019
<b>subject</b>	Solutions for financing energy efficiency	Data on buildings for ESCOs interest. SEAPS	Gathering the interest of the municipalities for a Joint Action	Starting procedure for Joint action whit municipalities
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	Local Authorities Energy Agencies Knowledgeable Financing	Local Authorities Energy Agencies Knowledgeable	Local Authorities Energy Agencies	Local Authorities Energy Agencies

### Focus Group – CEA

Partner	1 <sup>st</sup> Focus Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Focus Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Focus Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Focus Group
<b>date</b>	17/04/2018	22/11/2018	28/02/2019	27/03/2019
<b>subject</b>	Joint Procurement Opportunities - Local Public Authorities	Joint Actions Methodology - Government Bodies, NGOs and Business Representations	Joint Actions Methodology - Ministry of Energy Industry and Commerce	Joint Action Financing - Banks
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	Local Authorities	Local Authorities Energy Agencies Knowledgeable	Local Authorities Knowledgeable	Local Authorities Knowledgeable Financing

### Focus Group – AreanaTejo

Partner	1 <sup>st</sup> Focus Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Focus Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Focus Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Focus Group
<b>date</b>	01/03/2018	16/01/2019	07/05/2019	14/05/2019
<b>subject</b>	Interactive Work Session: The Implementation of Joint Actions	Low Voltage Network Concession - Opportunities, Challenges and Actions integrated between Municipality	Implementation of local joint actions	Implementation of local joint actions
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	Local Authorities Energy Agencies Knowledgeable Financing	Local Authorities Energy Agencies Knowledgeable Financing	Local Authorities Energy Agencies Knowledgeable Financing	Local Authorities Energy Agencies Knowledgeable Financing

## Focus Group – CIMAA

Partner	1 <sup>st</sup> Focus Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Focus Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Focus Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Focus Group
<b>date</b>	02/04/2019	04/04/2019	10/04/2019	16/04/2019
<b>subject</b>	Implementation of local joint actions – project introduction	Joint Actions Methodology	Joint Actions Methodology	Joint Actions Methodology
<b>Stakeholders Involved</b>	Local Authorities Knowledgeable	Local Authorities Energy Agencies Knowledgeable Financing	Local Authorities Energy Agencies Knowledgeable	Local Authorities Knowledgeable

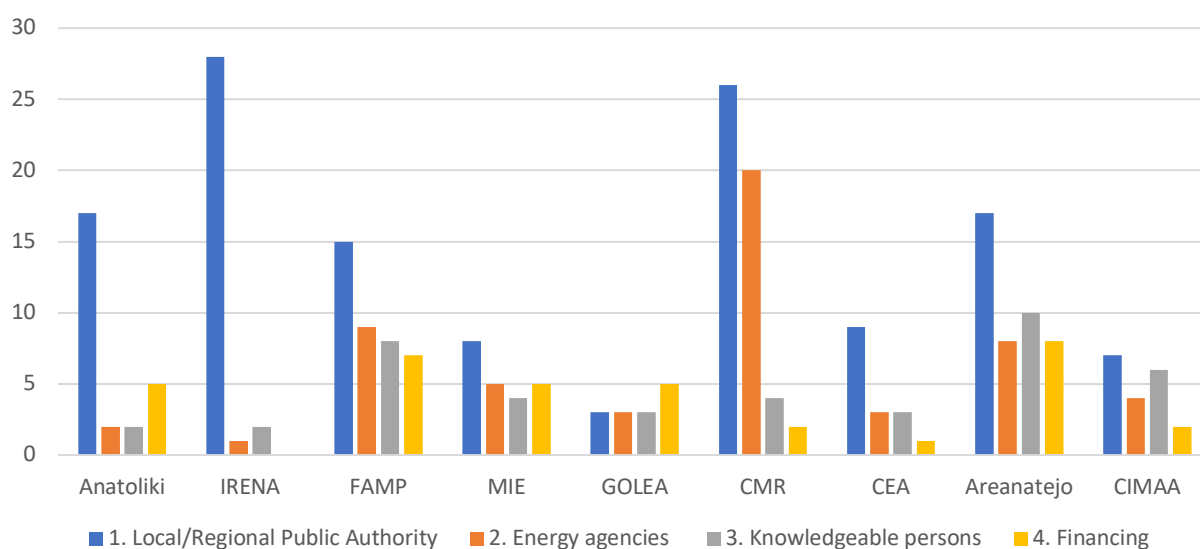
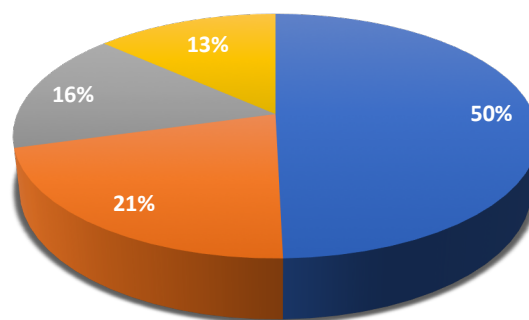


Figure 2 - participation by stakeholder groups

The chart above represents the stakeholders who participated in focus group meetings by partner. As can be seen, there is a predominance of local authorities' participation in focus group meetings. It is recalled that by "local authority" were included individuals and entities with responsibility for public management, infrastructure and investments. The least representative entities at the meetings were the "financing" group.





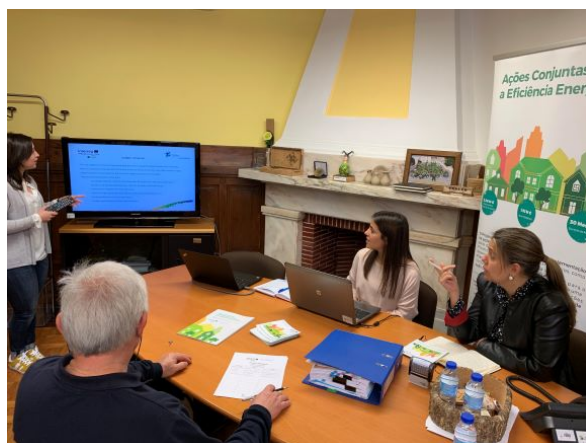
- 1. Local/Regional Public Authority
- 2. Energy agencies
- 3. Knowledgeable persons
- 4. Financing

### 3.2 Focus Groups Photos









### 3.3 Main Topics Discuss

The agenda during the meetings of the Focus Groups was well target in order to have productive meetings. Some of the themes discuss:

- Local Energy strategy – What kind of parameters do they have to take into consideration;
- Priorities and existing local potentials; tailor the priorities to the local needs;
- Solutions that would fit the local community;
- Obstacles hindering the efficient implementation of the identified projects;
- Technical solutions for future investments;
- Funding opportunities and other financial issues;



*Figure 3 – Main topic discuss in the focus group meeting*

Other topic discuss was the evaluation, as with any other project, evaluation is an essential step towards improvement. Indicators of means must be distinguished from indicators of results. Amongst the latter, it can be useful to estimate change. Behavior change is usually gradual and can see from looking at specific action undertaken by the stakeholders concerned, from information on the topic through to a significant, lasting change in behavior.

### 3.4 Focus Groups Results

- Knowledge and capacity gaps are of the main obstacles for the local authorities to efficiently implement the local energy action plan.
- Capacity building and awareness-raising activities empower local communities to enhance energy efficiency and renewable energy best practices.
- Activities to build awareness, improve understanding, raise interest and build capacity will enable local governments (decision makers, technical staff) to address the challenge of putting in practice the sustainable energy strategies and will equip them with the information they need to consider when taking decisions, and when developing/ implementing/ monitoring energy efficiency interventions and the SEAP's implementation.
- Furthermore, education and awareness-raising activities for households and public employees play a key role in understanding why it is necessary to act locally and what can be done by individuals in home. Municipalities or regional authorities can take a leading role, putting in practice a communication strategy on sustainable energy use, including practical advice on how energy savings can be achieved in daily life.
- Through targeted capacity building activities, local authorities will strengthen the skills, competencies and abilities of the involved staff, the decision makers and local stakeholders, so they are able to handle the problems and manage all issues associated with the implementation of LSEAPs, enhancing thus their abilities that will allow them to achieve measurable and sustainable results.
- The various tasks and subtask required for the implementation of a LSEAP call for a wide range of skills and competences. In addition, new skills and new ways of thinking and working -usually outside the traditional pattern- are required from those involved in the SEAP's delivery.
- The capacities may be distinguished as 'hard and soft'. Hard capacities are generally considered to be technical, functional, tangible and visible, and include:

- Technical skills, focus on knowledge and methodologies;
  - Organizational capacity to function: appropriate structures, systems and procedures for management, planning, finance, human resources, monitoring and evaluation, the ability to mobilize resources;
  - Laws, policies and strategies;
- Soft capacities are generally considered to be social, relational, intangible and invisible and may distinguish in operational (i.e. organizational culture, leadership, political relationships, negotiation, teamwork, conflict resolution, problem solving skills, etc.) and adaptive capacities (i.e. willingness to learn from experience, ability to adapt, readiness and motivation to act, etc.).
  - Capacity building activities should address both types of capacities.
  - When the local action plan is drafted and targets are set the capacity building strategy and plan needs to be developed. The capacity building activities ought to have targeted topics, related to the foreseen local energy action plan and based on the needs of identified participants with emphasis on creating capable local partnerships.
  - There is not a specific approach to capacity building that will work in every case; each region and each local authority has different situations and different needs that need to be specifically addressed and met. At first, the local capacity assets and specific needs have to be identified in order to form a fertile capacity building plan that defines
  - Communities play an important role in addressing and implementing targets for increasing energy efficiency and promoting the use of renewable energy sources.
  - Unfortunately, smaller local communities are not always able to cope with the challenge of climate change mitigation. Therefore, timely and effective implementation depends on policies and cooperation at all levels. Projects that establish complementary partnerships in the sector, supported through project logics, present a solid approach. They help enable all partners to benefit from their experiences to date in the use of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency.
  - In addition, they can establish a platform for specialized support at transnational level, establishing initiatives of local stakeholders, initiating initiatives, increasing their capacity for planning and implementing projects for the use of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency.
  - For such projects, it is extremely important that decision makers from different sectors can contribute in a complementary way to the identification of potentialities for the

implementation of projects for the use of renewable energy sources and for improving energy efficiency, working together through the sharing of experience, knowledge and the exchange of good practice.

- A good partnership is characterized by a participatory and co-development approach in which the partners contribute to the common objective with their suggestions and clearly define the results they intend to achieve in the partnership.
- Local (or hierarchically superior) authorities can contribute to implementation with different incentives, either financially or in cash, and may also be a public partner in a public-private partnership.
- The legal and administrative aspects of project implementation are often neglected, poorly planned, and often there are no alternatives for project implementation - although the existing legal framework precludes the implementation of a good project. Changes in administrative and legal procedures often take a long time and can represent a major obstacle not only for private investors but also for public investors. Analyzing the latest developments in the legal/administrative environment is sometimes the most important aspect of the implementation process of a renewable energy or energy efficiency project.
- Good evaluation counts for one good expert.
- Evaluation is often an overlooked part of project implementation and seen as an administrative burden. Many times so because we are not focusing enough on its use value. Evaluation is a systematic review of the past activities where we are basically asking ourselves what we did, with how much resources in what time and with what effect. Getting answers to these questions helps us improve or put in more attractive terms it can make us more efficient and effective, which means reaching more with less. So why is evaluation as a tool so overlooked? This could be assigned to several causes of which the most common are:
  - Lack of cross sector communication in project development
  - Addressing RES and EE projects as predominantly technological projects
  - Lack of initial research work in the environment, environment and stakeholder potential analysis and application of RES and EE project results
  - Not seeing RES and EE projects as business development projects but rather as cost reducing measures

After initial steps have been implemented and the project is running we need to set up criteria to evaluate the performance of the project, which are in direct correlation with the defined goals we have set in the previous steps. Although monitoring and evaluating is the second to last step its results can be used to improve the whole planning process in next iteration and can further contribute to identify and improve technology and socio-economic aspects of RES and EE projects, making it more attractive to investors and therefore improve possibilities to be implemented:

#### 1. Vision for the Energy Policy

- Integrated promotion of energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources
- Reduction of the degree of external dependence
- Focus on strengthening and developing European regional interconnections
- Main objectives to be achieved:
  - Meeting European targets for 2020 at the lowest cost to the economy
  - Achieving Energy Efficiency Goals
  - Reducing energy dependency by enhancing security of supply
  - Energy at the service of the economy and households, guaranteeing price sustainability
  - Empowering liberalized, competitive and sustainable energy markets

#### 2. Key Goals

- Energy Audits & Diagnosis
- Get to know the energy consumption;
- Accounting for energy consumption;
- Have data to decide;
- Act to optimize;
- Control situations.

#### 3. Implementation measures

#### 4. Funding Opportunities

Critical success factors and potential local drivers toward:

#### **Critical success factors**

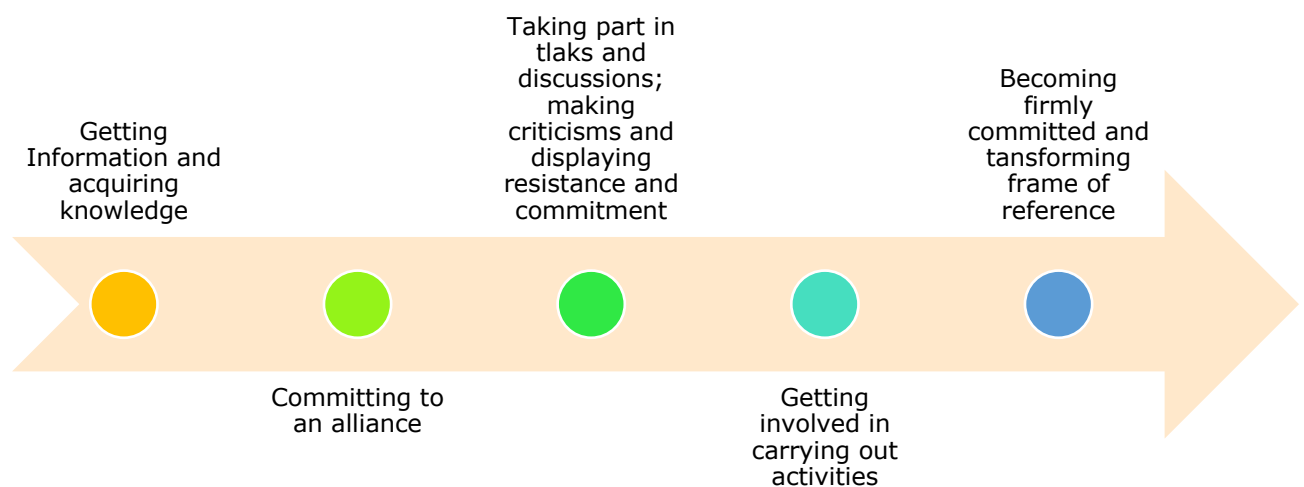
- Clear implementation concept with realistic goal
- Municipality's political willingness to deal with resolutions dealing with energy and climate
- Municipality's organizational/technical capacity to implement the measures of the local energy plan



- Appropriate funding tools and supporting mechanisms
- Secure long-term financing
- Engagement of local stakeholders and building on local partnerships

### Potential local drivers

- Local/regional potential for renewable energy
- Local environmental considerations
- Convincing vision with broad public appeal that can unify local actors and citizens around it Target towards energy self-sufficiency, or CO2-neutrality society
- Local jobs and substantial growth
- Direct financial savingsCO2 compensation policies
- Improve the image of the municipality as environ-mentally friendly



### 3.5 Local Conferences

Also at WP3, the partners organized a set of local conferences with the purpose of promoting the project and contributing to the definition of Local Joint Actions.

Partner	Local Conference	Theme
ANATOLIKI	01/11/2018	<i>"Institution of the energy communities that have been recently established in Greece"</i>
AREANATEjo/CIMAA	16/01/2019	<i>"Energy Efficiency as a Tool for Sustainable Development"</i>
CMRC	14/02/2019	<i>"Knowledge and experiences of energy efficiency"</i>
CYPRUS	5/04/2019	<i>"Policies and Recommendations for Energy Efficiency"</i>
FAMP	12/06/2018	<i>"Joint Actions for Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings"</i>
GOLEA	8/06/2018	<i>"Meeting of businessmen and entrepreneurs of Soča Valley region"</i>
IRENA	03/04/2019	<i>"Local Conference in Croatia for the Joint Action implementation"</i>
MIE	20/09/2018	<i>"Local Cooperation for Energy Efficiency"</i>

### 3.6 Defined Local Joint Actions per Country

With the development and contribution of the participants in the focus group of each country it was possible to define the local joint actions for each of the partner countries in the project.

In this way, the context by region was analyzed, based on the common methodology developed. The local joint actions contain the information already existing in the SEAPS, financial scenarios and challenges. These outputs will be analyzed in their own report.

**GREECE: Anatoliki S.A. - Development Agency of Eastern Thessaloniki's Local Authorities**

Joint Actions Identification: "Energy Upgrade of Municipal Buildings"

**SPAIN: FAMP - Andalusian Federation of Municipalities and Provinces**

Joint Actions Identification: "REDEMA Andalusian Municipalities Energy Network"

**CROATIA: IRENA - Istrian Regional Energy Agency L.t.d**

Joint Actions Identification: "Creating a synergistic effect on the use of local resources in the renovation of public buildings"

**CYPRUS: Cyprus Energy Agency**

Joint Actions Identification: "Energy Upgrade of Public Buildings"

**MALTA: Gozo Development Agency – Gozo Regional Committee**

Joint Actions Identification: "Joint preparation of ELENA project for the Energy retrofit of public buildings in Gozo"

**ITALY: Metropolitan City of Capital Rome**

Joint Actions Identification: "Metropolitan Energy Efficiency Actions on Public Buildings"

**SLOVENIA: GOLEA - Goriška Local Energy Agency**

Joint Actions Identification: "Refurbishment of sports hall lightning systems in Primorska region"

**ALBANIA: Albania Ministry of Energy and Industry**

Joint Actions Identification: "Improvement of Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings"

## **PORTUGAL: AREANATEjo -Regional Energy and Environment Agency from North Alentejo**

Joint Actions Identification: "Improvement of Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings"

### **3.7 Future Challenges**

Cooperation between stakeholders on different levels and the implementation of local joint actions is a good practice example for policy decision-makers as well as for local and regional administrations, committed for future preparation of their strategic documents. New financing issues are especially important for the non-EU countries, where they are faced with the lack of funding options. Private-public partnerships and green procurements keep confronting with such problems as unfair trade, competition by fossil fuels and imported materials and sometimes regulations, which make little sense at the local or regional level. For the further cooperation and better functioning of the energy policies, the following recommendations should be taken into account:

- Bottom-up approaches to regional/ local energy cooperation should be allowed, facilitated and promoted.
- Communicate with policy decision-makers about the bottlenecks and try to find the tools for their elimination.
- Enhance capacities to strengthen the local / regional economies for higher energy independence.