RESCOOP.EU

cVPP-ECCO

Online workshop

08 December 2021

Interreg North-West Europe cVPP
European Regional Development Fund

Interreg North-West Europe ECCO
European Regional Development Fund

Facilitators: Myriam Castanié (REScoop.eu) and Daan Creupelandt (REScoop.eu)

Speakers: Daan Creupelandt (REScoop.eu), Myriam Castanié (REScoop.eu), Thomas Hoppe (Technical University Delft) and Michiel Fremouw (Technical University Delft)

Minutes: Daan Creupelandt (REScoop.eu)

Recordings: the session has been recorded with the approval from the participants.

1. Context

The European federation of citizen energy cooperatives (REScoop.eu) is a partner in cVPP and ECCO, Interreg North-West Europe projects through which we aim to accelerate the energy transition to energy democracy and speed-up the further professionalisation of the European community energy movement. As a European network we try to foster exchange between the two projects, hoping that they can learn from one another and further improve the tools and resources that they have produced so far. In addition, we want to integrate their tools into the European one-stop-shop that we're currently building here in REScoop.eu.

In the first phase of the cVPP project, the partners have produced and tested the so called "Mobilisation and Replication (MoRE) model". It is a tool designed to support energy communities and help them become community-based virtual power plants, energy communities that move beyond renewable energy generation and thus take on other activities such as electric car-sharing, district heating and cooling, energy savings, energy monitoring, etc. In the capitalisation phase of the cVPP project we now want to upgrade the MoRE model as it stands and feed it with new territorial insights. We want to make it coherent with the new European Clean Energy for All Europeans legislative package and add more tools and features to it so that it can be used by energy communities to accommodate their further growth and further professionalisation.

Capacity-building will be key if we are to speed-up the energy transition and keep it in the hands of local actors. There are many European projects out there currently develop tools for energy communities. Some of those aim to inspire starters, while others are rather technical of nature. REScoop.eu is involved in many of these projects. As European federation of citizen energy cooperatives, we keep an eye out for potential synergies and we try to avoid duplication or double-work for as much as possible. We also identify missing pieces that may be used as opportunities for future project ideas. The tools that have been created so far and that provide practical use for energy communities on the ground are now being gathered into a European ones-stop-shop, an online repository filled with guides, tools and resources that can support energy communities to set-up energy communities and make them more effective and resilient. The creation of this one-stop-shop has part of our work in both ECCO and cVPP.

REScoop.eu made good progress on the European one-stop-shop but there's still a few things we want to test and check with community energy experts from our network. This is where the two validation cVPP and ECCO workshops come in play. REScoop.eu signed up to organise two online workshops with the cVPP network (08/12/2021) and the ECCO network (18/01/2022) to present the basic outline of the one-stop-shop and collect input for the further its set-up and design. We also want to use these sessions to validate the so called "maturity scale", a framework that allow us to point energy communities to relevant tools based on the community development stage they find themselves in.

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Welcome and quick energizer
Myriam Castanié, REScoop.eu

Myriam welcomed the participants to the workshop. We started off with a small energizer to set the right tone for the workshop and to get people's attention. We asked the participants to grab something from their rooms that represented their mood. Some people came up with surprising items. We saw beer, tea, bunnies, niffy, etc.

Current state of affairs on community energy
Daan Creupelandt, REScoop.eu

REScoop.eu is the European federation of citizen energy cooperatives. We are a growing network of nearly 2.000 energy cooperatives who jointly represent about 1.25 million European citizens. REScoop.eu was founded in the course of an EU project back in 2013 and represents the voice of energy cooperatives and their respective members to EU decision makers (representation). We also support starters and established energy cooperatives, provide networking opportunities and we promote the cooperative business model in the energy sector. For us an energy cooperative is not restricted to a certain legal form, it is the way that you do business that makes you a co-op. Energy cooperatives are groups of citizens that take joint action on energy transition projects and that organise themselves in a cooperative way.

The REScoop.eu network comprises energy cooperatives from across Europe, ranging from very small initiatives to fairly large ones. Most of our members are making joint investments in renewable energy projects but we see growing interest in other activities too. These activities include but are not restricted to energy supply, flexibility and demand response, storage, energy monitoring, grid management, district heating and cooling, energy savings, electric car sharing, etc.

Over the past years REScoop.eu has been pushing hard for a European legislative framework that provides opportunities for local actors to take up an active role in the energy system. The publication of the Clean Energy for All European legislative package features definitions for energy communities through the revised renewable energy directive (cf. renewable energy community) and the electricity market design directive (cf. citizen energy community). The two definitions are similar but not exactly the same. The Renewable Energy Community (REC) provides opportunities for local actors (citizens, local authorities and SMEs) to take ownership in RES projects whereas the Citizen Energy Community (CEC) as featured in the Electricity Market Design Directive opens the scope to other activities such as renewable energy generation, distribution and supply, consumption, aggregation, storage, energy efficiency services, energy services such as charging services for electric vehicles. In that sense, the Citizen Energy Community is similar to the community-based virtual power plant and the local energy community cooperatives concepts as outlined by the cVPP and ECCO project.

All EU Member States have to transpose these directives into national legislation, including the definitions. REScoop.eu recently published an EU transposition tracker featuring an assessment of how well the transposition of the definitions is getting along in this stage of the process. Member States also have to identify the potential for community energy within their respective territories, look out for and remove potential barriers for energy communities and develop an enabling framework

that allow local actors to take up an active role in the future energy system. The enabling framework is often referred to as a 'community energy bike lane" where specific rules and measures for energy communities apply.

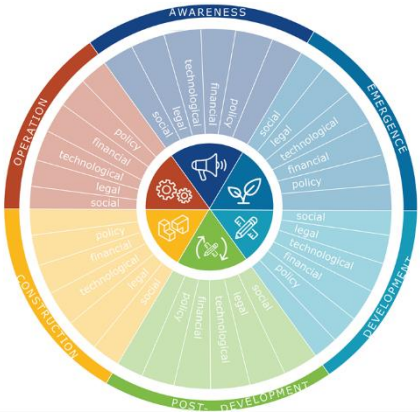
At the same time, the potential for community energy in Europe is great. A study commissioned by REScoop.eu, Friends of the Earth European and Greenpeace revealed that shifting to 100% renewables by 2050 is not only feasible, it also holds great potential prosumers. By 2050 half of the European population (cf. 264 million EU citizens) could become a prosumer and produce energy from renewable sources individually or collectively. Energy cooperative account for 37%. More recent studies showed that citizens have positive aspirations towards renewable energy and energy cooperatives too. 86% of Europeans would support new wind and solar projects in their local area, 61% of Europeans said they would be willing to join an energy cooperative in their local area if one were set up.

The network is there, the models are there, the policy framework is there, the potential is there. Unfortunately, there are a few more things that stand in the way of a true community energy revolution. There's obviously the transposition in the Clean Energy Package and the design of enabling framework at the national level but there's a great need for tools and capacity-building to speed-up the professionalisation of our movement. That's exactly where the European one-stop-shop comes in play.

The European One-Stop-Shop
Myriam Castanié, REScoop.eu

REScoop.eu is involved in many European projects and their involvement often results in the creation of a sensible set of tools to support energy communities on the ground. The problem however is that many of those tool get stuck on a project website, making it hard for energy communities to find and use them. To counter this, REScoop.eu already published a first prototype of the one-stop-shop which gathers tools, publications and resources that can support decision makers, local authorities, energy communities or researchers. We now we want to further expand the one-stop-shop and make it even better. The new one-stop-shop will go live by April 2022 and it will be featured on a completely new website.

The design of the one-stop-shop will be built around the Explore-Shape-Act model and the different stages of community development. Our model assumes that energy communities run through a certain set of stages throughout their lifetimes ranging from the awareness stage all the way up to operation. Each stage comes with a set of challenges and needs that energy communities have to overcome in order to move on to the next stage. Although the names of those stages are not final yet, the new one-stop-shop will be designed around this growth model.



Challenges that energy communities are facing can either be social, legal, technological, financial of nature but they can also relate to policy aspects. We will most likely use those categories to structure the one-stop-shop and to redirect people to the right tools. The image on the left gives a first sense of what the design of the OSS could look like. The stages nor the visualisation are final yet. We are now working with an external graphic designer to finalise the concept.

Break-out rooms

Myriam Castanié, REScoop.eu
Daan Creupelandt, REScoop.eu

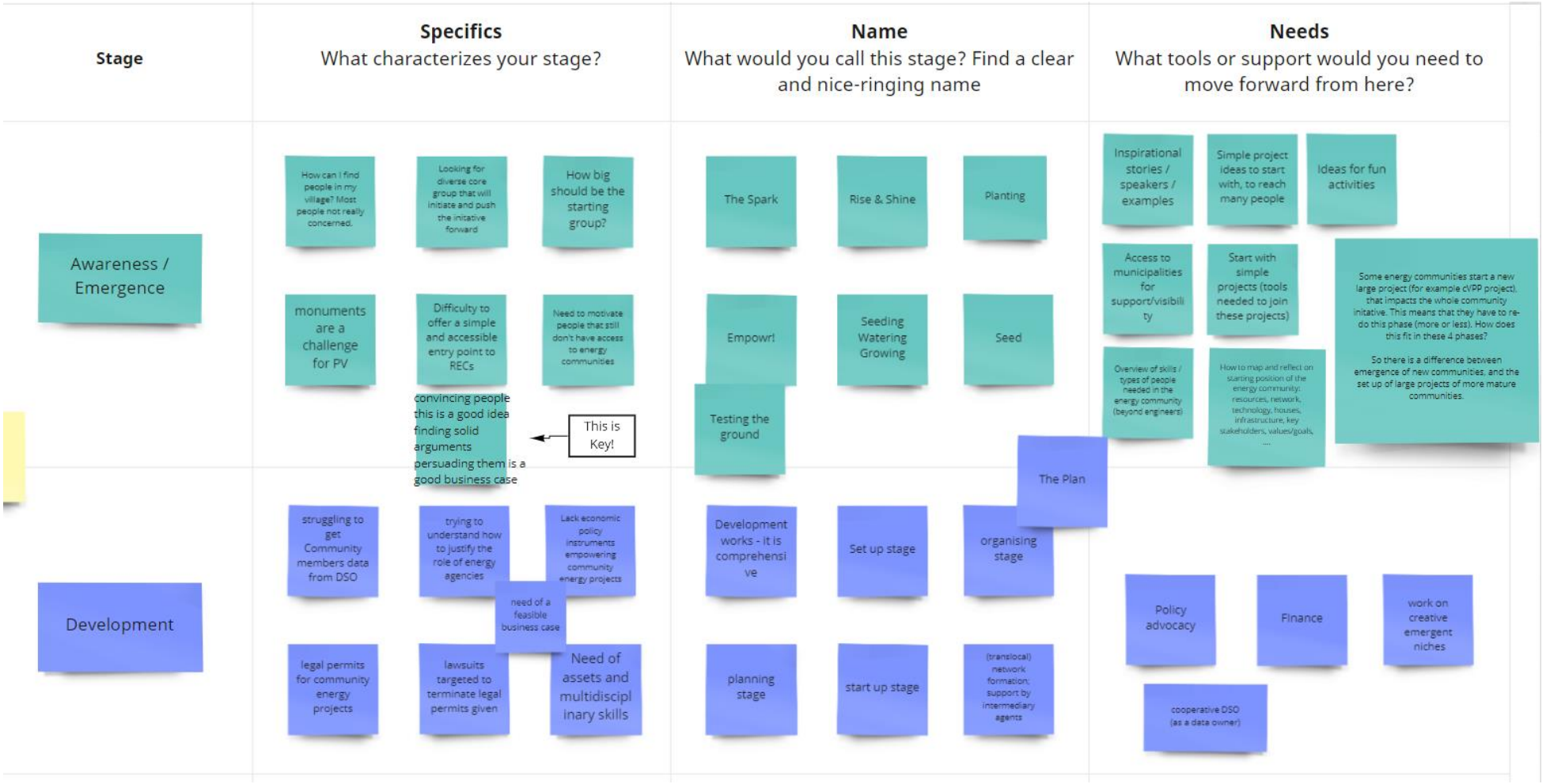
We let's get active! The participants went into small break-out reams. Each break-out focussed on one of the stages for community development. To support and visualise their work we used a Miro board. Participants were asked to have a discussion around the following questions:

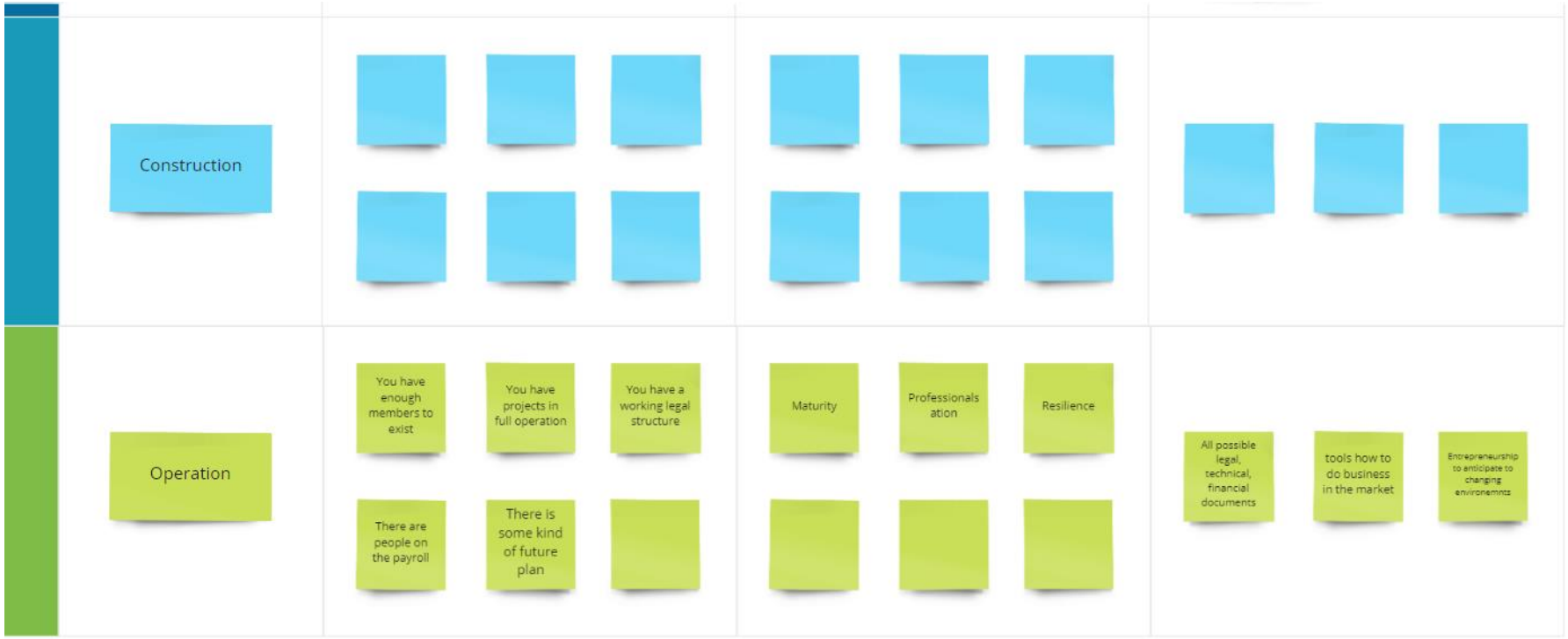
Specifics - what characterizes your stage?
Name – what would you call this stage? Find a clear and nice-ringing name.
Needs – what tools or support would you need to move from forward in this stage?

After a fruitful discussion in the break-out rooms, the participants returned back to the main room where the rapporteurs of each group shared the main talking points.

Rapporteur Awareness : Luc van Summeren (TU Eindhoven, Netherlands)
Rapporteur Development: Thomas Hoppe (TU Delft, Netherlands)
Rapporteur Operation : Jeroen Baets (EnerGent, Belgium)

Below you will find the outcome of the discussions. This information will now be used by REScoop.eu to further improve the design and set-up of the European one-stop-shop.


Stage
Specifics
What characterizes your stage?
Name
What would you call this stage? Find a clear and nice-ringing name
Needs
What tools or support would you need to move forward from here?
Awareness / Emergence
Development
How can I find people in my village? Most people not really concerned.
Looking for diverse core group that will initiate and push the initative forward
How big should be the starting group?
monuments are a challenge for PV
Difficulty to offer a simple and accessible entry point to RECs
Need to motivate people that still don't have access to energy communities
convincing people this is a good idea finding solid arguments persuading them is a good business case
This is Key!
struggling to get Community members data from DSO
trying to understand how to justify the role of energy agencies
Lack economic policy instruments empowering community energy projects
need of a feasible business case
legal permits for community energy projects
lawsuits targeted to terminate legal permits given
Need of assets and multidisciplinary skills
The Spark
Rise & Shine
Planting
Empowr!
Seeding Watering Growing
Seed
Testing the ground
Development works - it is comprehensive
Set up stage
organising stage
The Plan
planning stage
start up stage
(translocal) network formation; support by intermediary agents
Inspirational stories / speakers / examples
Simple project ideas to start with, to reach many people
Ideas for fun activities
Access to municipalities for support/visibility
Start with simple projects (tools needed to join these projects)
Some energy communities start a new large project (for example cVPP project), that impacts the whole community initative. This means that they have to re-do this phase (more or less). How does this fit in these 4 phases?
So there is a difference between emergence of new communities, and the set up of large projects of more mature communities.
Overview of skills / types of people needed in the energy community (beyond engineers)
How to map and reflect on starting position of the energy community: resources, network, technology, houses, infrastructure, key stakeholders, values/goals, ...
Policy advocacy
Finance
work on creative emergent niches
cooperative DSO (as a data owner)


Construction
Operation
You have enough members to exist
You have projects in full operation
You have a working legal structure
There are people on the payroll
There is some kind of future plan
Maturity
Professionals ation
Resilience
All possible legal, technical, financial documents
tools how to do business in the market
Entrepreneurship to anticipate to changing environemnts

Literature study
Thomas Hoppe (TU Delft)

SCCALE 203050 refers to Sustainable Collective Citizen Action for a Local Europe (SCCALE) 203050. It is a Horizon 2020 project that wants to bring Europe closer to its citizens by fostering the creation of energy communities and by taking full advantage of the favourable legal framework at the EU level for citizen energy. Both TU Delft and REScoop.eu are involved in this project. TU Delft just produced a literature study on the maturity and scaling-up of energy communities. Although the report is not public yet, Thomas Hoppe explained the background of the report and how it adds up to the one-stop-shop. The study covers chapters such as "development and scaling-up of energy communities", "preconditions for collective citizen action at the neighbourhood level", "community actions: suggestions and best practises" and finally the "evaluation and monitoring". The literature study will soon be published through the channels of REScoop.eu.

Monitoring Tool
Michiel Fremouw (TU Delft)

TU Delft recently developed a so called "maturity scale", a framework that allows to track progress and growth of energy community throughout their lifetime. The methodology is built around a set of key performance indicators (N=90) that is linked to the stages for community development. Through this, energy communities will be able to identify the stage they find themselves in, what characterises this stage and what they need to put in place to move on to the next stage in the community development cycle. The final framework is still under review with the European Commission so it is not publicly available yet but it will be the basis for the design of the one-stop-shop.

Final conclusions and wrap-up
Myriam Castanié (REScoop.eu)

Myriam thanked the speakers and the participants for joining the sessions. She reminded that the session was recorded and that the presentation and the minutes would be shared. The input from the breakout rooms will now be used by REScoop.eu to further improve the one-stop-shop.