BECoop
UNLOCKING THE COMMUNITY BIOENERGY POTENTIAL

D6.5 BECoop synergies with similar initiatives - First

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Legal Notice

About

Over the last years, the EU has witnessed some remarkable steps in Renewable Energy (RE) deployment. However, at the same time, we see an increasingly uneven penetration of RE across the different energy sectors, with the heating and cooling sector lagging behind. Community bioenergy schemes can play a catalytic role in the market uptake of bioenergy heating technologies and can strongly support the increase of renewables penetration in the heating and cooling sector, contributing to the EU target for increasing renewable heat within this next decade. However, compared to other RES, bioenergy has a remarkably slower development pace in the decentralised energy production which is a model that is set to play a crucial role in the future of the energy transition in the EU.

The ambition of the EU-funded BECoop project is **to provide the necessary conditions and technical as well as business support tools for unlocking the underlying market potential of community bioenergy.** The project's goal is to make community bioenergy projects more appealing to potential interested actors and to foster new links and partnerships among the international bioenergy community.

The project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 952930.

Project partners

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Abbreviations

WP	Work Package
CMS	Content Management System
EU	European Union
H2020	Horizon 2020 programme - EU Research and Innovation programme, funding programme running from 2014 to 2020

Executive summary

This deliverable presents the strategy that the BECoop project followed to establish partnerships with relevant EU projects. Since early 2021, a group of relevant initiatives has been established, gathering, as of April 2022, **15 projects** in regular calls and activities. These projects have joined forces to produce common newsletters and campaigns, organise events presenting their results, or share links on their websites, newsletters, social media accounts and more.

The BECoop consortium, aiming to maximise project's impact and exchange experiences and knowledge with other similar national and international initiatives, led the activities of the created group (namely the sister projects group), as thoroughly described in this report. The main implemented actions of the group focused to increase outreach and to organise collaborative events, while many more upcoming activities are scheduled to take place during the next 18 months. The partnership has led to very positive interactions and synergies and has proven that sometimes even a small, but motivated team can organise great things, with the most recent being the event of April the 26th, 2022, co-organised by 9 sister projects, focusing on different tools that can be used to support energy communities.

The report, in its first version (M18 – to be finalised by M36), presents the collaborating projects, the agreed partnerships, activities and ideas, how these synergies can support BECoop activities, and which are the benefits from this collaboration for BECoop but also for the other projects. The report further investigates additional possible synergies of a great potential and links that could be developed with other European projects and initiatives.

1 Introduction

Many projects compete for attention in a world where work has been increasingly moving to virtual formats during the past two years. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, valuable outputs and policy recommendations that need to reach targeted stakeholders have been generated. When preparing the BECoop project workstreams, the project's consortium had the idea that gathering projects / initiatives in a partnership - as soon as the project would start - would be a solution to ensure the attention of our audiences is grasped while not tiring them with many sources of information. A dedicated task was, therefore, added to the communication and dissemination activities, with the aim to gather 10 projects around BECoop (goal achieved).

In a world where the pace of news makes stakeholders' attention difficult to grasp, the idea to gather projects' activities into clustered ones, sharing news and actions to increase outreach, appears as a great one.

Projects gathered in a group can build on each other's strength and knowledge, sharing results or links on their websites, newsletters, social media accounts or organising activities in a collective effort. The BECoop consortium, believing in the high value to start such partnerships with key projects, often called "sister projects", led the activity following several steps and leading to successful activities, described in the document.

The goal to gather initiatives is to share ideas and workforce/outreach for dissemination and communication activities, yet research activities benefit from projects' synergies with the idea to, when possible, combine forces to produce papers, briefings or newsletters together.

This report – and all the activities of the partnership – belongs to task 6.2. This task aims to ensure that, throughout the implementation of the project, the partners will develop, coordinate and benefit from synergies with other relevant initiatives and actions.

"*A continuous communication pathway and synergies between these complementary projects will be established by IEECP with the help of other partners when necessary. The synergies and how these may be forged to benefit the BECoop project activities will be decided based on discussions with representatives of these projects (e.g. undertaking joint communication and dissemination activities, provision of feedback on and cross participation in project activities, exchange of contacts and collaboration to reach a higher number of stakeholders participating in BECoop activities, etc.).*"

By the time of initially defining this activity in the project Grant Agreement and in D6.1 – The communication and dissemination plan, it was assumed that the main tools to be used for clustering activities would entail social media and the website. These first 18 months have proven that the partnership led to many more than these, all of which are described underneath.

This report will summarize the BECoop approach and all activities that have been deployed with a view to create synergies with similar national and international initiatives.

2 Clustering activities: concept and methodological approach

The concept of clustering activities is not new. Many projects have started gathering into so-called *sister* projects group, for various reasons, the main one being to increase outreach potential. IEECP, as responsible for the task, presented the approach that would be undertaken at the very project beginning, in the kick-off meeting, agreeing with partners on the first steps to be followed. All partners brainstormed and agreed to the following.

2.1 Concept and objectives

Gathering into a group of sister projects is something that has been done for many years, in order not to work on Horizon 2020-funded projects (or projects from other programmes) in isolation. Both outreach potential and research actions can benefit from shared strategies across projects. Focus can be put on a mechanism to create **multiplicative effects** by creating synergies with other projects and initiatives with relevant H2020 projects and related activities under Erasmus +, LIFE, INTERREG and other EU funded initiatives. Competition for attention is tough, especially as more projects get funded and GDPR rules have changed the way organisations work and reach out to target audiences - forbidding the use of organisations' own lists with the need to start gathering databases of contacts from zero for all projects. In addition, the COVID-19 crisis has also moved many activities online, making people more tired of attending digital events, receiving news and it appears more and more difficult to attract recipients.

Therefore, the idea of sharing interesting results between projects and using each project's tools and audience (by including news items from the other projects for instance) is key.

We can summarise the objectives as follows:

- Discover other projects working on similar topics,
- Feeding into our literature review and knowledge base,
- Share ideas and workforce / outreach for dissemination and communication activities,
- For research, combine forces to produce papers, briefings or publications together,
- Supporting each other on specific needs (i.e. a recent example where one project 'lost' a pilot and BECoop helped recruit a replacement).

In practice the projects' websites can for instance contain a "Knowledge-sharing" or "Related projects" page, where existing work of other platforms and interesting related projects will be added. Newsletters can include work from other projects, and many more ideas, explored together with BECoop partners and the sister projects. More collaboration areas are exploited, such as organising events together, writing papers or briefs and disseminating policy recommendations as a group. A continuous communication pathway and synergies between these complementary projects is established by IEECP (task leader, deliverable author) with the help of other partners when necessary.

A difficulty that could potentially be faced is a future lack of reaction / involvement from the spotted projects and initiatives. Yet, until now, projects have been actively participating in the shared activities (even if not all at the same time). In the potential case that motivation drops, BECoop communication and dissemination manager (IEECP) will be a force of initiative to gather them again.

2.2 Approach and strategy

A first list of projects identified by IEECP was presented to partners in November 2020 at the Kick Off Meeting of BECoop.

The following methodology was presented to project partners:

1. CLUSTERING - Mapping projects and initiatives, identifying synergies (IEECP and all partners, into an Excel document, see figure 1)
2. RESULTS – Projects are identified and contacted, initiating dialogue, and listing potential collaboration activities
3. ACTIVITIES - Involving partners, if need be, all along the partnership (if collaborative papers, events, etc.). Identification of resources for potential synergies actions.

Table 1 - Actions, responsibilities, and timing

Actions *Which are the planned activities? What do you need from partners involved?*	Who *Partners Involved*	When *Due Date/ Duration*
Listing projects and initiatives	All to provide input and share with IEECP	By December 15, 2020
Contacting them	IEECP, partners who know them	By January 15, 2021
Drafting a short strategy (part of the C&D plan)	IEECP	M3 – by December 31, 2020
Listing potential activities	IEECP	By December 31, 2020

After the project's kick-off meeting, where the methodology was approved by all, partners were invited to feed in the Excel table of sister projects ideas: dates, funding programmes, and indicate existing links with BECoop partners.

Selection criteria included:

- projects having the same timeframe, or at least ending from 2022 onwards,
- projects working on energy communities mainly, and if possible, on bioenergy,
- projects were BECoop partners were also involved being equally a plus.

A first batch of projects was, therefore, selected based on the above criteria, including **COME RES, DECIDE4Energy, W4RES, COMETS, and mPOWER**. A presentation email was sent early January 2021 to these projects. The DECIDE project suggested inviting more projects - **UP-STAIRS, eCrew, RENergetics and NRG2peers**, which were in turn contacted. All four projects accepted the invitation and joined the group. Synergies activities were, therefore, initiated with the 9 projects listed, while keeping the other projects identified in mind.

Figure 1 - Excel file of potential projects

Another listing which helped refine the selection was the table of all projects funded by the same umbrella topic (SC3 Energy - market uptake support) over the last 3 years.

Figure 2 - Excel of projects funded under same topic

By early July 2021 and thanks to continuous contacts, 3 new projects joined in: **COMPILE, BRANCHES and NEWCOMERS** and were added to the list of projects. Moreover, NRG2peers offered to join a first event together, at the *Sustainable Places 2021*, which kicked off the collaboration with a first call on July 19, 2021 to discuss this first activity.

3 BECoop and the synergies with other projects

12 projects so far positively replied, got engaged to the BECoop call and have been gathering in monthly calls as of July 2021 and on. There is a great potential of increasing the synergies number within the upcoming months.

First actions were discussed, such as participating together in an event (i.e. Sustainable Places) and sharing the involved projects' logos on all websites.

3.1 Synergies matrix

The projects who are part of the group, with higher or lower involvement or regularity in the participation to calls and activities, are listed in this chapter, including information about their objectives, work programme and links to their websites.

More projects then joined the group, either after being contacted by BECoop by email or on social media, or contacting us themselves directly: EC², RES4LIVE, RHC (and again the week when this report is written: SCCALE203050).

Figure 3 - Agreed sister projects logos as of March 2022

Table 2 - Sister projects information (April 2022)

Sister Projects (as of April 2022)	Short summary	Website
DECIDE4Energy	Developing Energy Communities through Informative and collective actions – the project aims to gain a better understanding of how energy communities and energy efficiency services are established and managed. It also intends to identify which kind of communications and interactions work best to encourage participation in energy communities for specific types of individuals and groups, and to test and transfer knowledge in pilot projects across Europe.	https://decide4energy.eu/
mPOWER	The project will enable an in-depth, wide-scale and systematic peer-to-peer learning programme among at least 100 local public authorities, in order to replicate innovative best practices in municipal energy and developing ambitious energy transition plans.	https://municipalpower.org/about-mpower/
BRANCHES	BRANCHES aims to implement the implementation of new cost-effective technologies; mobilize more biomass and create innovative business opportunities in rural areas by improving and strengthening the links between bioeconomy practice and science. The project will ensure communication through the two-way flow of information for the transfer of ideas and technologies between scientists and professionals from agriculture and forestry in rural areas. The valuable knowledge produced by research and development should always be shared far beyond the scientific community.	https://www.branchesproject.eu/
eCREW	establishing Community Renewable Energy Webs - Rolling out a business model and operational tool creating webs of households that jointly manage energy to improve efficiency and renewables uptake – the project will coordinate the implementation of an innovative scheme of household cooperation in energy management. Specifically, it will develop community renewable energy webs allowing households to optimise energy efficiency and reduce expenditures. It will test the community webs on households, establishing some 200 webs with 15 000 participants. The system will be set up in such a way as to ensure that monetary benefits from the	https://ecrew-project.eu/

Sister Projects (as of April 2022)	Short summary	Website
	community renewable energy webs are distributed among the prosumers, traditional consumers and administrative entities.	
RENergetic	The project empowers people – engaging them from the beginning – with a higher level of control over the energy infrastructure surrounding them. RENergetic demonstrates that urban energy islands increase the share of renewables in local areas and the energy efficiency of the local energy systems. To reach this endeavour, innovative technologies are considered e.g., AI-based smart control algorithms and digital twins' creation.	http://www.renergetic.eu/
UP-STAIRS	UP-lifting Communities: Structuring collective Action for Sustainable local Transition and Identifying Regulatory Solutions for adopting frontier technologies and disruptive business models.	https://www.h2020-upstairs.eu/
NRG2peers	NRG2peers is a 3-year European project funded under the Horizon2020 framework. We want to establish and run real local energy communities of peer-to-peer energy traders and share lessons in different European Member States. There is a need for clear guidance, education and support for the set-up and take-off of successful energy communities on both local and EU level. The main aim of NRG2peers is therefore to support a next generation of European peer-to-peer Energy Communities. We want to support attractive financially legal and technical viable user-centred energy communities.	https://nrg2peers.com
COME RES	Community Energy for the uptake of renewables in the electricity sector. Connecting long-term visions with short-term actions – is a project under the EU's Horizon2020 programme, aimed at facilitating the market uptake of renewable energy sources (RES) in the electricity sector. Specifically, the project focusses on advancing renewable energy communities (RECs) as per the EU's recast Renewable Energy Directive. COME RES takes a multi- and transdisciplinary approach to support the development of RECs in nine European countries; Belgium, Germany, Italy Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal and Spain.	https://come-res.eu/

Sister Projects (as of April 2022)	Short summary	Website
COMPILE	The main aim of COMPILE is to show the opportunities of energy islands for decarbonisation of energy supply, community building and creating environmental and socioeconomic benefits.	https://www.compile-project.eu/
NEWCOMERS	The NEWCOMERS project (New clean energy communities in a changing European energy system) will deliver practical recommendations about how the European Union as well as national and local governments can support new clean energy communities to help them flourish and unfold their potential benefits for citizens and the Energy Union.	https://www.newcomersh2020.eu/
W4RES	WOMEN FOR MARKET UPTAKE OF RENEWABLE HEATING AND COOLING W4RES #Women4RES is a 3-year-EU-funded project, which aims at scaling-up the involvement of women in the market deployment and uptake of Renewable Heating and Cooling (RHC) solutions via replicable support measures tested and validated across the 8 respective countries.	https://w4res.eu/
EC²	The transition to a low-carbon society needs empowered energy citizens at its centre. EC²'s aim is to discover what it takes for energy citizenship and energy communities to thrive. EC² gathers empirical evidence on how the set-up of energy communities fosters or hinders energy citizenship. Based on an inter- and transdisciplinary conceptualization of energy citizenship, EC²deliberates economic trends, identifies economic conditions, business model innovations, public support policies and legal regulations that are needed for the emergence of energy citizenship and its potential contribution to the low-carbon energy transition.	https://ec2project.eu

3.2 Sister projects and BECoop related workstreams

IEECP is leading, on behalf of BECoop, this partnership, manages the inclusion of project news into the newsletter, on the website and social media, and is leading the monthly calls. All projects who express interest are contacted and join the regular calls, yet specific projects can be approached according to the planned activities – if something has a focus on bioenergy for instance (see chapter 5). The table below describes, as for now, which Work Package(s) are related to the partnership, the type of collaboration activities and increased potential reach (number of followers on social media).

Table 3 – Sister projects and relation with BECoop

Sister Projects (as of April 2022)	Relation to a specific BECoop Work Package	Type of collaboration activities	Potential reach
DECIDE4Energy	WP6, WP2, WP5	Adding BECoop results in the DECIDE knowledge hub, sharing results and policy recommendations, organising events	267 Twitter followers, 571 on LinkedIn
BRANCHES	WP6, WP3, WP4	Research exchange on bioenergy	21 followers on Twitter
eCREW	WP6, WP3	organising events, sharing information into communication tools	300 Twitter followers, 116 on LinkedIn
RENergetic	WP6	organising events, sharing information into communication tools	47 Twitter followers, 55 on LinkedIn
mPOWER	WP6	organising events, sharing information into communication tools	1158 followers on Twitter
UP-STAIRS	WP6, WP3	organising events, sharing information into communication tools	154 Twitter followers, 75 on LinkedIn
NRG2peers	WP6	organising events, sharing information into communication tools	265 Twitter followers, 222 on LinkedIn
COME RES	WP6, WP3	organising events, sharing information into communication tools	628 Twitter followers, 264 on LinkedIn

Sister Projects (as of April 2022)	Relation to a specific BECoop Work Package	Type of collaboration activities	Potential reach
COMPILE	WP6, WP3	organising events, sharing information into communication tools	648 Twitter followers, 923 on LinkedIn
NEWCOMERS	WP6, WP5	organising events, sharing information into communication tools, sharing results and policy recommendations	395 Twitter followers, 279 on LinkedIn
W4RES	WP6	organising events, sharing information into communication tools	104 Twitter followers, 162 on LinkedIn
EC²	WP6, WP3 and 4	organising events, sharing information into communication tools sharing results and policy recommendations	385 Twitter followers, 117 on LinkedIn

3.3 Non-formal partnerships

Some projects are not included as "members", yet are very supportive of all activities, sharing items in their newsletters or on social media. That is the case of the projects listed in table 4, which we could refer to as "supporters".

Table 4 - Supporting projects, potential future sister projects

Supporters	Short summary	Website
CEES	Community Energy Solidarity - CEES aims to validate EC actions that uphold energy justice and alleviate energy poverty. The CEES consortium creates a unique opportunity to work with – and learn from – EU citizens facing energy poverty across diverse countries and local contexts. To support the overarching aim of analysing the validity of solidarity mechanisms to address energy poverty, CEES will survey existing mechanisms and measures by which ECs support energy-poor households and develop ways to validate the most promising approaches; pilot selected approaches across a wider number of projects and programmes; assess the pilots using frameworks established during the survey and	https://www.energysolidarity.eu/

Supporters	Short summary	Website
	promote boarder deployment of effective approaches through the Energy Solidarity Toolkit.	
mPower	mPOWER will enable in-depth, wide-scale and systematic peer-to-peer learning programme between at least 100 local public authorities with a view to replicate innovative best practice in municipal energy. mPOWER will map existing municipal energy policy and identify innovations, best practice, as well as obstacles and barriers. The action will enable participant authorities across Europe to (a) learn from replicable best practices, (b) recognise risks, obstacles and blockages, (c) identify and commit to replication pathways that best suit local needs, (d) incubate at least 30 new and improved municipal energy policies and projects within the project duration. Lessons learnt will be disseminated publicly and through target networks in easily accessible format for replication.	https://municipalpower.org/about-mpower/
AcceptH2020	The Core of the ACCEPT project is the concept of "energy communities" with the collective approach to bring citizens, local businesses and organizations together, to produce and consume locally generated, renewable energy. The EU-funded project intends to develop and deliver a digital toolbox, that allows such energy communities to offer innovative digital services to reduce the dependency on fossil fuels, save energy in the users households and thus be able to reduce their electricity bill without compromising the quality of living, but ideally increasing the comfort in their homes through smart devices. In ACCEPT, these developed tools will be demonstrated and validated in four pilot sites in Greece, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland involving more than 3.000 people and 750 residences.	https://www.accept-project.com/
Lightness	The Lightness project aims to empower citizens to generate, share and sell renewable energy and thereby contribute to making the European energy sector more sustainable and democratic.	https://www.lightness-project.eu/
RHC	The European Technology and Innovation Platform on Renewable Heating & Cooling (RHC-ETIP) brings together experts on biomass, geothermal, solar	https://www.rhc-platform.org/

Supporters	Short summary	Website
	thermal, and heat pumps, as well as the related industries such as district heating and cooling (DHC) and thermal energy storage (TES), to define a common strategy for increasing the use of RE technologies for H&C in Europe.	
RES4LIVE	RES4LIVE will and bring into the market integrated cost effective and case sensitive Renewable Energy Sources (RES) solutions towards achieving fossil free livestock farming. RES4LIVE will last 48 months from 1st October 2020 to 30th September 2024	https://res4live.eu/
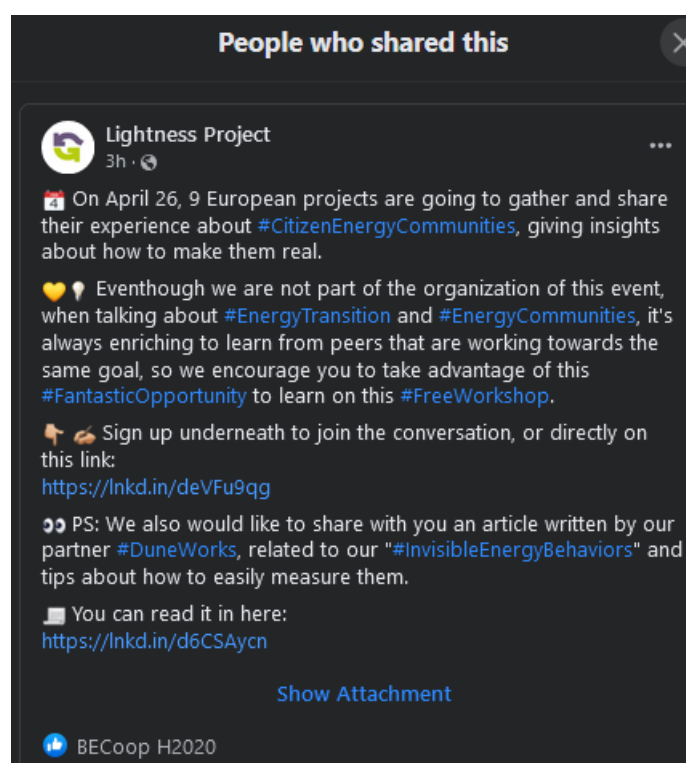
Figure 4 - The Lightness project spontaneous share

3.4 Potential projects to increase the group

The projects described in chapter 3.3 (supporting projects) could be considered as potential partners in future months. BECoop will make sure to contact them.

In addition, we have managed to build **a list of additional potential projects to contact**, based on:

- The Excel listings done at the beginning of the partnership,
- Events where BECoop participated or attended and where new projects were presented,

- Projects suggested by existing sister projects.

The projects that fit into these 3 categories are included in table 5.

Table 5 – Additionally identified (April 2022) potential sister projects

Potential sister projects	More information
SCCALE 203050 	The project coordinator has contacted the BECoop communication manager, introduced by a sister project (UP-STAIRS). Sustainable Collective Citizen Action for a Local Europe, it intends to bring Europe closer to its citizens by fostering the creation of energy communities, taking full advantage of the favourable EU legal framework on citizen energy. You can be part of the energy transition – get involved! https://www.sccale203050.eu/
POWERPOOR 	The project joined the April 26, 2022 event focusing on tools. POWERPOOR aims to develop support programmes / schemes for energy poor citizens and encourage the use of alternative financing schemes e.g. establishing energy communities / cooperatives, crowdfunding). https://powerpoor.eu/
AgroBioHeat 	It aims to produce a mass deployment of improved and market ready agrobiomass heating solutions in Europe. Agrobiomass is a large, underexploited and indigenous resource, which can support the achievement of the European Energy and Climate targets, while promoting rural development and circular economy. https://agrobioheat.eu/
Sun4all	Access to affordable renewable energy is important in Europe's green transition and meeting the Paris Climate Agreement goals. While the share of renewable energy has more than doubled between 2004 and 2019, not all households are able to afford renewable energy systems. In this context, the EU-funded Sun4All project will design a financial support scheme for renewable energy access for energy-poor households. Specifically, it will offer vulnerable consumers the opportunity to subscribe to community solar. The beneficiaries of the programme will be co-owners of a local photovoltaic plant, and the revenues produced through the generation and selling of the energy will be used to reduce energy bills. https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101032239

A new call for project ideas among partners will be launched towards M20 to complete the list above.

4 Collaborative activities M3-M18

The partnership, as described in the previous chapters, kicked off officially in July 2021 with regular calls, and the appeal to join an event collaboratively, *Sustainable Places*, in a dedicated stream focusing on energy communities.

All activities that were organised since the first invitation email are described in the next sub-chapters, including how calls are led, the events, digital support, and more, until April 2022. The next chapter will present planned and potential activities until the end of the project.

IEECP/BECoop gathers projects into **monthly calls** on TEAMS or Zoom to present actions and imagine new ones collaboratively. **Minutes** are taken at each event by IEECP. A **Google drive** was set up to host logos, short project summaries, an excel with key contacts, and any other needed material.
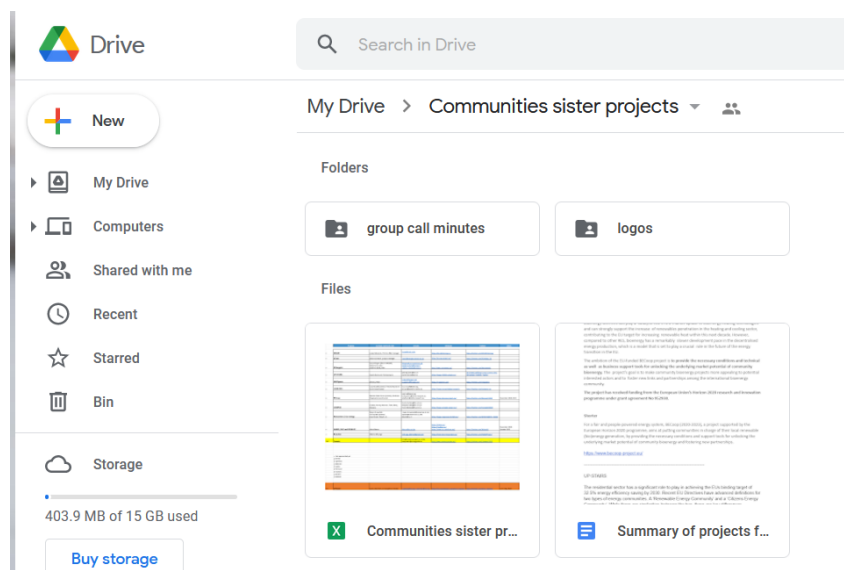
Figure 5 - Sister projects Google drive

4.1 Regular calls and updates

A first discovery call

On behalf of BECoop, IEECP organised a first "discovery" call in July 2021 with a few projects participating: DECIDE, RENergetic, NRG2peers and UP-STAIRS. eCREW and COME-RES were not available but mentioned they would join the following calls. This first call allowed all projects to introduce what they are focusing on, the first months' findings and discuss potential collaboration areas. Other projects who could fit the partnership were also discussed. A group participation in *Sustainable Places* was brought forward by NRG2peers.

The follow up calls

Since then, 8 calls have been organised, with more projects joining (W4RES, RES4LIVE, RHC, Compile, BRANCHES and mPOWER for instance in September 2021).   separate call and emails were organised to discuss the events organisation while regular calls continue to take place, focusing on project updates, coming activities and potential areas for collaboration.

The calls' structure generally focuses on important agenda items followed by a round table discussion.

The minutes of each call are stored in our Google drive, created by BECoop for this purpose.

In December 2021, the idea emerged to organise together an event focusing on either all tools our projects are developing, or on administrative and legal aspects for energy communities. The next calls were therefore mostly focusing on this idea and how to move forward.

4.2 Events (Sustainable places, presenting BECoop at projects GA, etc)

NRG2peers invited the sister projects to join the *Sustainable Places* event, as a first collaborative activity. This 2021 yearly event had a dedicated stream on energy communities, with 3 sessions: on business models, where BECoop applied, on enabling technologies, and on social engagement. Many of the sister projects were happy to participate. The stream business models gathered H2020 BECoop, DECIDE, SocialRES, WHY, Drimpac, Newcomers and Compile, which shared a variety of approaches, ideas, and insights. The event was organised from September 28 to October 1, as hybrid due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. The BECoop project participated digitally. Our session gathered 40 participants.

The recording was then shared on YouTube (46 views as of April 4, 2022), and proceedings were written by participants:

Breukers, S.; Schibline, A.; Pressmair, G.; Barnes, J.; Perrio, M.F.; Calatayud, E.P.; Rakocevic, L. *A Business Model Fast Track on Energy Communities—Key Lessons Learned from H2020 EU Projects. Environ. Sci. Proc. 2021, 11, 19. https://doi.org/10.3390/environsciproc2021011019.*

All information was shared, including a summary of the event and key findings, in an article for the website.

Figure 6 - Sustainable Places Banner - Energy communities' stream

Figure 7 - Projects participating for each session

Another event where the sister projects combined forces was the *eCREW General Assembly and project meeting*. BECoop was invited by the project coordinator to join for a dedicated session on sister projects, presenting the partnership, the projects and the actions.

Figure 8 - eCREW 2nd General Assembly

Other events have been planned for the coming months and are described in chapter 5.

4.3 Digital support: websites and hubs, newsletters, social media

The main ideas and objectives behind starting a partnership were to support each other's communication, for instance:

- including news from the other projects into newsletters,
- on the websites' news section,
- following other projects' social media accounts,
- sharing social media posts,
- creating joint campaigns,
- organising collaborative events,
- applying together at events,
- and more

We describe in these next sections the activities that took place.

Websites

BECoop has shared the idea to host information about all related projects on the partnership websites, and many have responded positively to the call. BECoop also developed such a page.

Some of our sister projects' websites "related projects" pages / sections are listed below:

- https://www.newcomersh2020.eu/related-projects
- https://www.compile-project.eu/energy-communities/
- https://ec2project.eu/resources/related-projects
- https://come-res.eu/related-projects
- https://decide4energy.eu/related-projects
- https://www.becoop-project.eu/resources/related-projects/

Figure 9. BECoop website related projects page

Figure 10 - Example - COMPILE sister projects page

Other features include sharing news into articles or adding specific items into the projects' hubs or platforms. The DECIDE platform has been used a lot by BECoop to add relevant information for visitors, such as the technical and financial catalogues and factsheets, all project tools, the video, and more. BECoop communication manager regularly shares information with the project partners and has for instance suggested including all sister projects' tools, if relevant, into the BECoop toolkit.

Figure 11 - Insertion of BECoop resources into the DECIDE Knowledge hub

Newsletters

Following the same approach, projects have been keen into sharing each other's results into their newsletters, as indicatively depicted below.
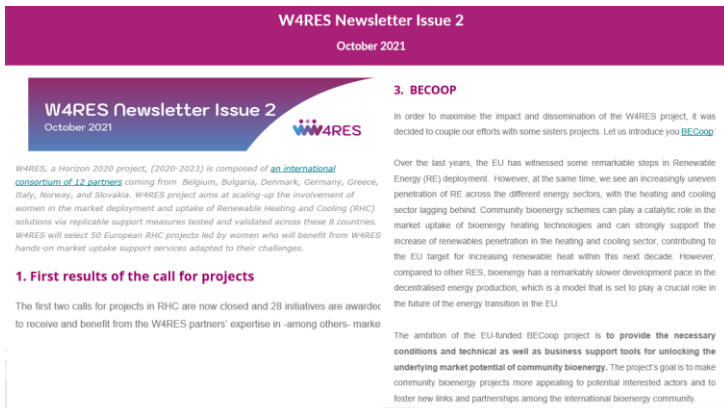
Figure 12 - October 2021, W4RES newsletter insertion

Figure 13 - March 2022 Newcomers newsletter insertion

At the same time, BECoop happily includes items from different projects in each issue, as it supports the partnership and allows sharing more relevant news to our readership.

BECoop newsletters have therefore included news from EC², DECIDE, Newcomers, COMPILE: https://www.becoop-project.eu/newsletter/

Social media

Finally, all projects regularly share content from the synergies partnership on their social media platforms, increasing the potential reach of all posts and ensuring the news reaches more stakeholders, the projects, even though related, having different scopes or approaches and target countries.

Just looking at the project's profiles, one can see the numerous shares, for instance on BECoop's Twitter account: BECoop H2020 (@BecoopH2020) / Twitter

Figure 14 - BECoop latest notifications highlighting projects' involvement

A Twitter list (depicted below) with the energy community projects was also recently created, allowing the users to see all updates from the projects gathered there.

Figure 15 - Tweet announcing the list
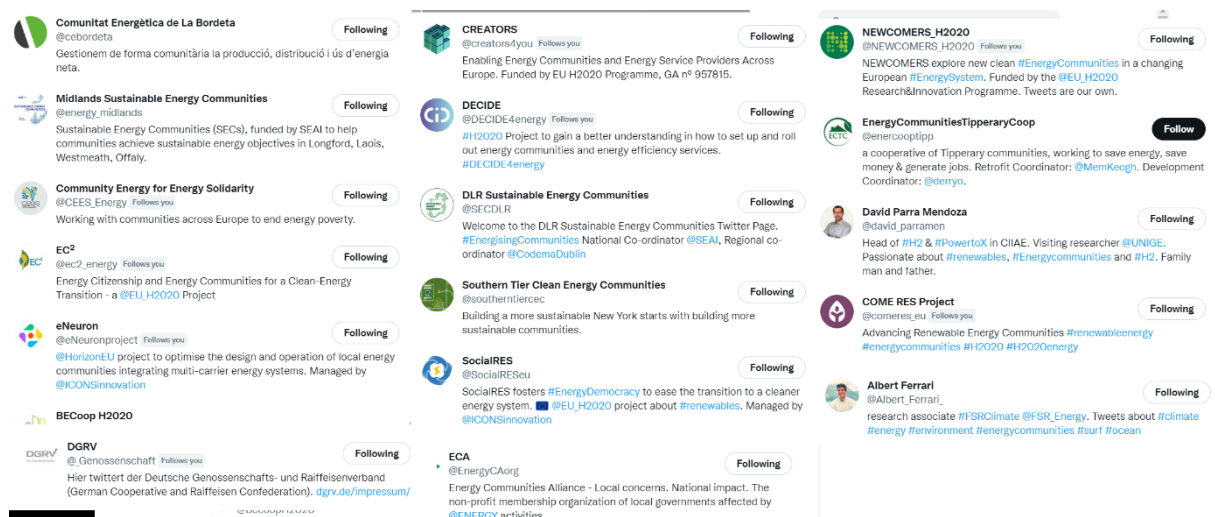
Figure 16 - Twitter list members

5 Collaborative activities M18-M36

As presented in chapter 4, in less than a year of the BECoop synergies partnership, many activities have already been organised, while additional ones are being in the pipeline.

Events already planned and "approved" as well as some not necessarily officially confirmed yet but preliminarily planned events are also presented herein.

It is to be noted that BECoop has been and will continue hosting the synergies monthly calls, taking minutes, and managing the partnership drive, until the end of the project.

At the end of 2021, an idea was brought up to organise an event in collaboration with all sister projects, or several events. Ideas emerging included a focus on social and legal approaches and / or all tools supporting energy communities. The discussion led to a decision for the event on energy communities' tools to take place on April 2022.

BECoop is planning, with the other projects, to develop a briefing, presenting all tools that will be showcased during the event. More information on these aspects is included in the subchapters below.

5.1.1   Energy communities' tools event

One of the highlights of the partnership so far is this planned event, organised by all, with a strong core group involving EC², BECoop and DECIDE. The 3 projects have organised separate calls and worked on a concept note, agenda, a banner, and organisational aspects: preparing a template for the presentation, speakers' guidelines, sending information to speakers, arranging a rehearsal session, etc.

We include here more information on the event and the storytelling concept chosen.

From setting up energy communities to making them thrive: what are the tools available?

This event, organised by 9 projects funded by the European programme H2020 and working on the topic of energy communities, will showcase in an interactive manner 15 tools they are making available to people setting up / managing / growing energy communities: citizens, future and existing energy communities, policymakers, other projects / initiatives, RESCoops, etc.

Many EU projects work on the topic of energy communities and develop tools useful for various stakeholders at different stages of community energy initiatives and for different end goals (research, policymaking, business models, technology assessment, energy sharing etc.). This event will cluster 15 tools in 3 groups (which are also our event sessions), to make sure stakeholders know where to go when they have a need, based on which stage of developing a community energy initiative an actor is:

- **Inform yourself** – Prior to starting a community energy initiative – understanding the basic concepts, researching and information collection
- **Test your market, your ideas, technologies** – Organising and planning a community energy initiative – testing the market, which technologies to use, which business model and legal framework and how others have been doing

- **Let's act – get people involved and grow** – Growing and improving an existing community initiative – Getting more people involved, engaging different social groups, data and energy sharing, one-stop shops.

The workshop will present tools in a simple and easy to understand way, in a 3-min pitch format for each tool, ending each session with a discussion with the audience. This will be an opportunity to hear from participants and receive valuable feedback for the tools developers.

The workshop follows a simple storytelling concept. Andrea, a fictional character we follow during the event, is a resident* of the EU who would like to take ownership of her/his energy consumption and production and is interested in starting, better managing or growing her community energy initiative. Andrea would like to learn which tools are publicly available to help her achieve this goal. *Andrea could be an independent citizen or someone representing a group / working for an entity (municipality, ESCO, supplier) depending on which stakeholder the tool is made for.

So far (by the time this report is being drafted), the event has gathered 51 registrations, with participants belonging mainly to the following categories:

- Research
- Existing energy community participant / owner
- Interested in setting up / joining an energy community

Massive promotion is ongoing on social media, BECoop also contacted RESCoop.eu, eCREW printed and distributed flyers at the World Sustainable Energy Days taking place during early April. To promote further the event, BECoop has shared the event information with the following platforms/ newsletters:

- Construction 21
- Build UP
- EU Agenda
- The Coalition for energy savings news
- Eceee
- The Fleishman Hillard Energy Vista
- Inclusion in IEECP's newsletter
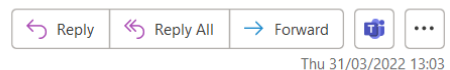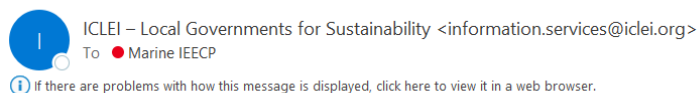
Figure 17 - ICLEI promotion of the event

Figure 18 - Tools event banner

More information and the event page can be found on the BECoop website: https://www.becoop-project.eu/project-events/from-setting-up-energy-communities-to-making-them-thrive-what-are-the-tools-available/

5.1.2   EUSEW 2022 proposal

In February 2022, BECoop offered the sistership to join forces and submit a policy conference proposal to EUSEW 2022 (the EU Sustainable Energy Week) organised in a hybrid format on 26-29 September 2022.

EUSEW is a conference organised yearly in Brussels (or digitally in the times of COVID-19) focusing on sustainable energy. This year's theme is Going Green and digital for Europe's energy transition. The event is located in the European district, and events selected benefit from free rooms in the EU Commission buildings. The application is for policy conferences: they must focus on sustainable energy issues, and debate new policy developments, best practices and sustainable energy ideas. Alongside the conference, networking opportunities gather the EUSEW community onsite and online to forge alliances while the EUSEW Awards celebrate outstanding individuals, projects and ideas.

eCREW and W4RES responded positively, whereas the WECF – Women Engage for a Common Future, agreed to co-host the event. The topic chosen was as follows:

More women in renewables and energy communities: safeguarding an enabling policy framework

Concept

Women's representation in the renewable energy sector (RES) and energy communities (ECs) is still too low: the event wants to understand their behaviours and motivations to safeguard an enabling and inclusive legal framework. For the energy transition and EU Green Deal to be realised, they need

to be inclusive and participatory. Everybody is talking about engaging more women: we want to make it happen! We will draw attention to women in energy communities and in the Renewable Heating and Cooling sectors, empowering them to reclaim energy. To understand and highlight the barriers they face, especially to enter or be represented in the energy sector, as well as their behaviours and perceptions, we will look at gender equality in RES and ECs from a societal perspective, exploring different survey results and outlining inclusive policies. A first part will explore what obstacles women must overcome and what needs to change, with key figures supporting our discussion. A second panel will examine the legal framework for better gender-balanced policy formulation. Instruments and strategies to draft inclusive supporting policies and ensure an enabling legal framework will be discussed: technical assistance and capacity building, financial support, and the implementation of gender-sensitive work policies. The last part will showcase projects and initiatives that support women in the RES and ECs, examining the need for systems and procedures changes so that power can be shared across all levels of decision-making, implementation and monitoring. We will present ideas on how women can drive the energy transition and how they can improve the community energy consumption. We will discuss the importance of training and programmes in raising awareness and increasing energy literacy. eCREW, W4RES, BECoop and WECF will share survey results with policymakers (at EU, national and local levels), energy utilities and prosumers in particular. The focus will be on women and RHC technologies, bioenergy heating and energy communities. The session mixes approaches for interactivity: a keynote speech, panel discussions, a Q&A session and video testimonials.

Relevance of the topic

Equitable access to and control over sustainable energy services for all is an essential right. This session raises awareness and discusses a supportive framework to put women as cornerstones of the energy transition. Women are agents of change and a key role in behavioural change for energy consumption, reinforcing the need for more integration in RES and ECs. There are, however, a number of factors that limit their participation. The EU sustainable energy policy agenda (through initiatives such as Fit-for-55 and REPowerEU) is looking for equality and integrating women into facilitating policies: our event will feed into the current policy debate by discussing the barriers, initiatives to overcome them and the needed supporting framework. The organisers will provide insights based on their research, opening the floor to discuss an adapted policy framework. To deliver on the clean energy transition, no one should be left behind: that is exactly the purpose of our session.

Follow up

We submitted the application late March and are waiting for an answer by Mid-May 2022. The 3 projects decided that the event would be organised outside the EUSEW framework if we didn't get in, considering the work done and the interesting concept.

5.1.3 Additional ideas and timeline of all actions

As described above, 2 events are already in the pipeline between April and October 2022, and many more actions can and will be considered. Participation in sister projects' own events and posts on social media, common infographics, common end of project summaries, etc.

Until now, all actions described have mainly focused on energy communities as a general concept. Further actions could focus on bioenergy, for instance being organised with the BRANCHES and Agrobioheat projects.

Table 6 considers activities already planned as well as new ideas currently being under discussion and preliminary planning.

Table 6 - Activities in the pipeline

Activity	Timing
Tools workshop	April 26, 2022
Briefing on sistership tools	May 15, 2022
Contacting additional sister projects	From May onwards
Foresee a shared newsletter?	Summer 2022
EUSEW event (organised nevertheless)	End of September 2022
After-event briefing, highlighting key aspects	October 2022
Potential policy briefing	After October 2022
Bioenergy focused briefing with BRANCHES and others	November – December 2022
Final BECoop event involving the partnership	2023

6 Conclusions

Ever since the project started, BECoop has at heart to engage with related initiatives and projects and to build on each other's knowledge and resources. **So far, a synergies group of 12 to 15 projects has emerged, also referred to as "sister projects", which meet monthly to share results and draft potential collaboration ideas.**

The main actions have led to increased outreach and collaborative events. Many more actions can still be considered, with a strong involvement or leadership by BECoop, within the next 18 months.

The synergies partnership has led to very positive exchanges and interactions and has proven that sometimes a well-motivated team can organise remarkable action with an important appealing and impact to all EU relevant stakeholders and the general public.

This report has further presented our investigations towards additional possible synergies and links that could be developed with other European projects and initiatives.