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STEP-IN

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Abstract: This deliverable provides an overview of the stakeholder consultation and engagement plan, as well as actions taken so far at local level in the three Living Lab areas (communities) of STEP-IN.

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Glossary

Abbreviation / acronym	Description
KYP	Kashmir Youth Project
MIRC	Metsovion Interdisciplinary Research Center
NTUA	National Technical University of Athens
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

1. Executive Summary

The document summarises the local stakeholder network development and engagement aspects of the STEP-IN project. STEP-IN uses Living Labs to alleviate energy poverty in three locations across Europe and a critical part of this is the involvement of local stakeholders as they provide crucial information on the local context, can drive local policy making and also increase the potential access to citizens who may wish to take part in STEP-IN. Therefore, they represent a key part of the reflexive approach that is critical to the success of Living Labs. This document presents a summary of the local stakeholder engagement and consultation plan for each of the Living Lab locations (United Kingdom, Greece and Hungary) along with a list of stakeholders who have been involved in the process. It also summarises the actions taken so far.

The deliverable is relevant for others wishing to develop similar Living Labs as it provides an indication as to how to engage with stakeholders as well as providing a suggestion as to the range of stakeholders that should be involved. It is also relevant for national and EU policy makers seeking to gain a better understanding as to which local stakeholders to involve when drafting and/or implementing policies.

2. Introduction

The STEP-IN project aims to help tackle energy poverty across Europe through the provision of three Living Labs and to drive local, national and EU policy through networking with stakeholders. One critical part of this work involves engaging with local stakeholders, not only those that are involved in operating the Living Labs but also external organisations which can help take the results of the project forward and drive policy. During the development of the project, STEP-IN attracted 37 letters of support from organisations and individuals who have an interest in tackling energy poverty.

This deliverable outlines the process undertaken with local stakeholders at the three Living Lab locations. These stakeholders range from international organisations through local NGOs, energy providers and public authorities (local councils, and agencies). Local stakeholders are vital to STEP-IN as they can provide additional advice, support and context to the problems faced by particular communities. They also provide potentially access to more citizens who may benefit from the Living Labs that are operating within STEP-IN and influence policies within their locality. Stakeholder engagement therefore represents an important part of the overall Living Labs methodology in that it strengthens the involvement of local communities, provides a feedback mechanism and ensure that the STEP-IN actions remain relevant and respect local values.

The work presented in this deliverable forms part of the wider stakeholder networking and communications strategy that are reported in D6.1 (Strategy and planning) and D6.4 (Progress Report of Stakeholder Network).

The deliverable contains an overview of the steps taken so far and the range of stakeholders involved in each Living Lab. As part of this, it also makes reference to the consultation and engagement plans for each location. Finally, a conclusion is presented which summarises the work to date.

3. Main section

3.1 Community development in the STEP-IN Living Lab areas

3.1.1 Community development – the Manchester Living Lab

Local stakeholder consultation plan

The stakeholder consultation plan at the Urban Living Lab in Greater Manchester identifies the key stakeholders that fit the objectives and scope of the proposed engagement plan, which was determined by the general methodology of the STEP-IN project.

The first step has been to prepare a list of relevant stakeholders – i.e. groups, organisations, and people within Greater Manchester who are relevant to the Living Lab's activities.

Three categories of key stakeholder groups were identified below (details are in Table 1):

- Residents of Greater Manchester, especially those in vulnerable situations who may be affected (directly or indirectly) by the Living Lab actions;
- Local organisations, such as NGOs and businesses, particularly those whose activities relate to energy poverty or vulnerable consumers;
- Public service organisations.

Category	Stakeholder	Description
Residents/consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All participants who receive a visit from a STEP-IN home energy advisor • Attendees at energy cafés 	
Local organisations	Groundwork	Provides home energy advice to vulnerable households in Greater Manchester
	Kashmir Youth Project (KYP)	Kashmir Youth Project (KYP), a community organisation operating in Rochdale, Greater Manchester. KYP focuses on enhancing community development and opportunity in the Rochdale area via the provision of a range of services and activities. It has a strong focus on training, education and advice services. It specialises in working with ethnic minority and vulnerable households.
	Carbon Coop	The Carbon Coop is a not-for-profit social enterprise operating in Greater Manchester. It specialises in home energy advice and training, and energy efficiency retrofits.
Public sector	Oldham City Council	Council operating in the town of Oldham within Greater Manchester.

Table 1 List of Stakeholders in Manchester.

Local stakeholder engagement plan

The engagement process aims to incorporate input from stakeholders to the Living Lab process and to achieve best practice in engagement.

We directly *communicate* with local stakeholders to inform them about the progress of the Living Lab and key research findings. This process will be carried out via a number of communication channels: (i) the STEP-IN website and social media accounts; (ii) the project newsletter; (iii) energy cafés and face-to-face meetings.

Where relevant we will also directly *consult* with the local stakeholders, aiming to establish an iterative and interactive process that will enable stakeholders to provide feedback on the Living Lab. This process will allow the Living Lab research team to systematically capture the views and opinions of the stakeholders and will, consequently, influence the design and implementation of the Living Lab activities and the proposed actions towards mitigating the energy poverty problem.

Actions taken so far and results

Table 2 provides a summary of the actions undertaken.

Action	Stakeholder(s) engaged	Outcome
Energy café #1, Manchester, January 2019	Groundwork	Detailed development of home energy advisor visits for iteration 1 of Living Lab
Energy café #2, Salford, April 2019	Local residents; Oldham City Council	Conveyed energy advice; feedback on challenges faced by fuel poor households
Face-to-face meeting, Rochdale, May 2019	KYP	Provided information about project. Made arrangements for a future energy café on KYP premises

Table 2 Actions Undertaken in Manchester.

3.1.2 Community development – the Metsovo Living Lab

Local stakeholder consultation plan

The stakeholder consultation plan at the mountain Living Lab aims at identifying the key stakeholders that would fit in the objectives and scope of the proposed engagement plan, which was determined by the general methodology of the STEP-IN project.

The first step to this direction, provided that the objectives and the scope are predetermined, was to prepare a list of relevant groups, organisations, and people from the Municipality of Metsovo and the wider area, who could have an impact on the Living Lab's activities (e.g. people who are necessary in order to have it running). Further, in order to understand stakeholders' perspectives and relevance, different criteria such as potential contribution to the Living Lab, influence of the stakeholders (e.g. "who" they influence), necessity of involvement, legitimacy and potential willingness to participate in the Living Lab were considered.

Based on the above remarks, three local key stakeholder groups from the civil society and the public and private sector were identified, as follows:

- Community members who are most affected by the mountain Living Lab actions, namely households living in Metsovo settlement.

- Local organisations, e.g. NGOs, business associations, etc.
- Policy and public service organisations, mainly local and regional with some formal responsibility.

In all groups, priority was given to those with the most commitment and presence in the area. To this end, the following local stakeholders have been mapped at the beginning of the operation of the Living Lab:

- Community members: households residing in Metsovo (and in particular vulnerable ones).
- Local organisations: Pindos Perivallontiki (NGO); and Metsovo Trade Association (business association).
- Policy and public service organisations (apart from the Municipality of Metsovo that participates in the project as partner): Epirus Regional Authority, Directorate of industry, energy and natural resources; Municipality of Zitsa; and Municipality of Georgios Karaiskakis.

A list of the stakeholders is provided in Table 3.

Stakeholder	Category
Local households	Community members
Pindos Perivallontiki	Local organisation
Metsovo Trade Association	Local organisation
Epirus Regional Authority	Policy/public service organisation
Municipality of Zitsa	Policy/public service organisation
Municipality of G. Karaiskakis	Policy/public service organisation

Table 3 List of Metsovo Stakeholders.

In order to recruit them, direct contacts were made on their ground. As regards future activities of the Living Lab, these stakeholders will be invited in working groups meetings, energy cafés, presentations, panel discussions, and round tables. Inevitably, the local households will have a more active role in the Living Lab, through the two (baseline and assessment) social surveys, and the monitoring activities of the project. Finally, all stakeholders will be invited to attend the national conference organised by NTUA (Month 26).

Local stakeholder engagement plan

The engagement process aims to incorporate input from stakeholders to the Living Lab process and to achieve best practice in engagement. To this direction, stakeholders will be kept informed about the progress of the Living Lab's activities and, if and whenever possible, will be educated about energy saving issues (the latter stands particularly for the households of Metsovo). Communication will be carried out by the STEP-IN website and social media, the energy cafés, and face-to-face meetings during working group meetings, panel discussions, round tables, presentations, etc.

The communication plan will be combined with a consultation plan. The latter aims to establish an iterative and interactive process during of which the stakeholders will be provided with information, and they will be given the opportunity to discuss their opinions and ideas with the Living Lab research team. This process will allow the Living Lab research team to systematically capture the views and opinions of the stakeholders and will, consequently, influence the design and implementation of the Living Lab activities and the proposed actions towards mitigating the energy poverty problem.

Actions taken so far and results

So far, given that the Living Lab has started just three months ago, the local stakeholders have been invited to participate in the energy café that was organised in Metsovo. The event took place on Wednesday 13th of March, 2019, at the facilities of the Metsovion Interdisciplinary Research Center (MIRC). Many people from the Metsovo town (i.e. local households), among them the Mayor and members of the Municipal Council, joined the energy café. Furthermore, the event was attended by representatives of the Pindos Perivallontiki and the Metsovo Trade Association. The first energy café was related to energy savings and reduction of energy expenses and its aims were twofold:

(a) to introduce the project and the activities of the Living Lab to the local stakeholders so as to facilitate the engagement of local actors to STEP-IN

(b) to recruit households that would be willing to participate in the Living Lab actions (e.g. receive visits from the Energy Advisors, accept the installation of monitoring equipment, etc.). To this end, three presentations were given from researchers of NTUA and RAE, covering the following topics:

- Understanding of electricity bills on what should consumers pay attention when switching electricity provider;
- Easy, low cost methods for reducing thermal energy expenses;
- Collective actions for reducing energy costs, with emphasis on energy communities/collectives.

The discussion during the energy café was used mainly to develop ideas and processes, prior to the experimentation phase. Nevertheless, it is envisaged that as the Living Lab progresses and results from the surveys and monitoring campaigns become available, they will be more active, and their role will be more important.

3.1.3 Community development – the Nyírbátor Living Lab

Local stakeholder consultation plan

The stakeholder consultation plan at the rural Living Lab aims at identifying the key stakeholders that would fit in the objectives and scope of the proposed engagement plan, which has been determined by the general methodology of the STEP-IN project.

The first step was to prepare a list of relevant stakeholders – i.e. groups, organisations, and people within Nyírbátor area who are relevant to the Living Lab's activities. Level of potential contribution to the Living Lab, influence of the stakeholders (e.g. "who" they influence), necessity of involvement, legitimacy and potential willingness of participation were considered when selecting relevant stakeholders.

Four categories of key stakeholder groups were identified below (further details are in Table 4):

- Residents of Nyírbátor, especially those in vulnerable situations who may be affected (directly or indirectly) by the Living Lab actions;
- Local organisations, such as NGOs and businesses, particularly those whose activities relate to energy poverty or vulnerable consumers;
- Public service organisations;
- Regional Energy Utilities (electricity, gas).

Stakeholder	Category
Local households	Residents/consumers
Báthori István Elderly Club	Local organisations
Community house of Nyírbátor	Local organisations
Youth and family Snug	Local organisations
Vöröskereszt (Red Cross)	Local organisations
Employment Centre	Public sector
Nyírbátor city council	Public sector
Social Service Office	Public sector
TIGÁZ	Energy Utility

Table 4 List of Stakeholders in Nyírbátor.

Local stakeholder engagement plan

The engagement activities of stakeholders aim to collect all necessary inputs to develop the Living Lab service round by round. Máltai is the main contact holder with the local stakeholders (except TIGÁZ – in their case E.ON is the responsible partner). Máltai communicate with the stakeholders directly. They inform the stakeholders about any progress, involve them in Energy Cafés, and other local activities. The primary communication channel is face-to-face discussion, as all the relevant partner work in Nyírbátor, or close to Nyírbátor. The STEP-IN website and social media account also provide a channel for communication.

Two-two focus groups will be conducted after the first and second Living Lab cycle. To these focus groups discussions local stakeholders (consumers, representative groups of local organisations) will be invited to evaluate the results of the STEP-IN service and shape the future directions.

Actions taken so far and results

As Máltai has a strong local presence, it was easy to initiate communication with the local partners. As a first step we organised a meeting with the Mayor of Nyírbátor. He welcomed the project and offered support. The project was advertised through the local media, and we were given a venue for the first Energy Café. We introduced the project to the local organisations. Báthori István Elderly club helped us to organise the Energy Café. The experts of TIGÁZ participated in the training of Energy Advisors and they also participated in the first Energy Café. Other local partners assured us that they will advertise the project within their communities.

4. Conclusions

STEP-IN aims to alleviate energy poverty in three Living Labs locations across Europe, to drive policymaking decisions to help tackle this problem and for its methodologies and results to be adopted by others. A critical part of developing the Living Labs approach and the success of the project is engagement with local stakeholders such as public authorities, energy providers and NGOs. These organisations provide feedback, a local context and additionally can help drive the uptake of the Living Labs approach.

STEP-IN has already enjoyed a significant level of support from organisations across Europe. This deliverable indicates that this is also true at the local level. It has provided an indication of the actions taken so far and the range and type of stakeholders involved. In doing so, it provides for others interested in working in the field suggestions on how to work with stakeholders and the possible range of stakeholders involved.