



Making local energy transitions work

How municipalities and energy actors can succeed together

Wednesday, 30 September 2026 | 11:00 – 12:30 | EN | Les Ateliers des Tanneurs, Room Gamay

Local energy transitions across Europe are accelerating — and with them, the need to rapidly expand and modernize energy infrastructure: from renewable energy production, electricity grids, to heating and cooling networks. While municipalities often coordinate energy planning and take responsibility for public services and social equity, energy production, grid expansion and heating and cooling networks are usually developed and operated by (public) utilities, grid operators, and other market actors, e.g. citizens energy communities.

These different responsibilities can lead to diverging priorities and conflicting interests. How can municipalities and local energy actors work together effectively to deliver a just, resilient, and climate-neutral energy system? And how can citizens be involved in achieving this goal?

The workshop explores barriers energy transitions face in these fields. It will show practical examples, strategies and solutions from different European cities and regions to overcome these challenges. Four key areas of energy transitions will be presented at thematic tables. Participants will discuss these examples and exchange their experiences and knowledge.





Agenda

11:00	Setting the scene: Local energy transitions and key obstacles they face (Climate Alliance Team)
11:10	Overcoming the challenges: Best practices from four projects (Short pitches by table moderators)
11:20	Thematic tables (see detailed description below) • Table A: Local authority-led grid planning • Table B: The role of citizen-led energy communities • Table C: Municipal heating and cooling plans • Table D: Positive energy planning processes (Two rounds / Each participant can choose two tables)
12:20	Reports from the tables and closing discussion





Thematic tables

Table A

Local authority-led grid planning

Exploring ways that Distribution System Operators and local authorities can work together to build a local electricity system of storage and flexibility.

Discussion points:

- Why cities and DSOs need to work more closely to address the challenges of the energy transition and grid congestion
- Different models for effective City–DSO collaboration and how they support the implementation of local energy ambitions
- Practical insights from a Dutch or Belgian case study, including common points of friction and successful interventions

Speaker: Bram Roelant (Ghent, **COPPER**),
Leon van den Beemt (Bax Innovation, **COPPER**)

Moderator: Dominic Stephen (Bax Innovation)

Table B

The role of citizen-led energy communities in developing and operating district heating networks – and how municipalities can support such cooperatives.

Discussion points:

- How can municipalities stimulate citizens engagement for heat transition during heating planning activities?
- Which are the drivers and success factors for initiating an energy community for a heating network project in smaller municipalities? Which are typical operation models for ECs, also in collaboration with municipalities?
- Practical insights, Do's and Don't's based on experiences from energy communities running heating networks in Germany

Speaker: Janina Kosel (Bündnis Bürgerenergie, **HEATit!** project)

Moderator: Edgar Bazing (Climate Alliance, **HEATit!** project)

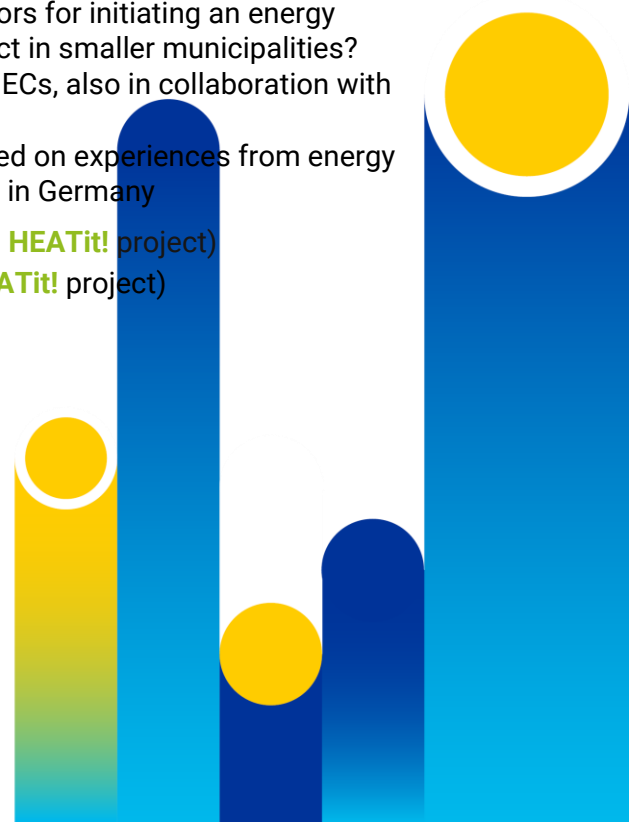




Table C **Developing and implementing municipal heating and cooling plans** in collaboration with local energy actors.

Discussion points:

- What role should the municipality play in the context of cooling and heating planning?
- Which other stakeholders should be involved, and for which issues?
- How can successful collaboration be achieved?

Speaker: tbc

Moderator: Climate Alliance, **Plan4COLD** project

Table D **Positive energy planning processes** to empower vulnerable communities to become active participants in achieving climate neutrality.

Discussion points:

- Talking about how we can design the renovation process in a just way, so existing inequalities are not deepened
- Discussing what strategies can reach vulnerable households and presenting best practice examples from project experience
- Is creating positive energy districts a realistic approach to tackle energy vulnerability?
- Sharing knowledge gathered from our pilot districts and findings from surveying energy vulnerable citizens

Speaker: University of Utrecht (tbc)

Moderator: Axel Veitengruber (Climate Alliance, **Just PEPP** project)

