

C4T

**Community
of Practice**



Technical Assistance Inspiration Catalogue

Technical Assistance Catalogue for implementing Sustainability Transitions with Cohesion Policy under Policy Objective 2

COHESION FOR TRANSITIONS (C4T) COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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The Purpose of the Inspiration Catalogue

The Cohesion for Transition (C4T) Technical Assistance Catalogue outlines the tailored support types of GROUNDWORK provided to regions and organisations aiming to achieve sustainability transitions. These services address key challenges and opportunities in aligning with EU frameworks like the European Green Deal, Fit for 55, and REPowerEU , Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) and Climate Adaptation Strategy.

The Catalogue showcases previous examples from the first phase of the C4T to illustrate the services that can be expected from the Technical Assistance (TA) provided by the C4T. The purpose of this Catalogue is to provide inspiration for (potential) applicants by showing concrete examples of assistance previously provided to different C4T beneficiaries. The TAs can take various forms and approaches; thus, the activities listed here represent common GROUNDWORK efforts but are not exhaustive of all the potential support types.

Thematic Area of support

The technical assistance can cover key thematic areas under PO2 *“A greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe”* under the ERDF and/or CF programmes:

The thematic areas are centred around:

- **Energy efficiency:** Supporting energy efficiency measures in enterprises and production processes, and construction and renovation of energy efficient buildings (residential and public).
- **Renewable energy:** Deployment of renewable energy production and distribution (wind, solar, biomass, marine, geothermal, among others), and renewable energy communities.
- **Climate Change Adaptation:** Support for climate adaptation and disaster risk prevention and resilience, focusing on ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions
- **Smart energy grids and storage:** Access EU funds and the received technical assistance to deploy and identify projects which help to accelerate the development of smart energy systems/infrastructure, and energy storage.
- **Water and sustainable water management:** Support for drinking water extraction, treatment, storage and/or distribution, to water management and water resource conservation (e.g., River Basin Management), as well as to wastewater collection and treatment.
- **Circular economy and resource efficient economy:** A particular focus will be given to measures related to waste management, municipal waste collection and

treatment, commercial and hazardous waste and management, and reuse and recycling.

- **Protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity, and green infrastructure:** Support to reduce all forms of pollution (e.g., environmental or noise pollution), and to C4T GROUNDWORK Guidelines 4 protect and preserve nature, biodiversity. A particular focus will be given to measures related to Natura 2000 sites covered by protection and restoration measures.

Target groups

Primary Target Group:

- Managing authorities – responsible for the implementation of programmes, selection of projects, and monitoring of implementation of EU Cohesion Policy funds.
- Implementors – Intermediate bodies and implementing bodies include local and regional environment and energy authorities and development agencies are also part of this group.
- Monitoring committees - comprise national, regional, local and urban authorities, economic and social partners and relevant bodies representing civil society.

Secondary Target Group:

- Multipliers - include sectoral associations, regional agencies, relevant networks, civil society organisations, academia and knowledge brokers at European, national and regional levels.

Scope of support

The scope of the support covers the following areas of intervention.

- Sustainability transition governance (strategies, programming, planning and engagement) and project identification, preparation and implementation
- Development/update of strategies and roadmaps for sustainability transitions
- Support to monitoring and improvement of strategies, programmes and plans
- Engagement and dialogue with stakeholders around sustainability
- Promotion of cooperation with other regions and cross border cooperation
- Support to preparation of project pipelines, project calls, and prioritisation of projects
- Support to project development, preparation and implementation set-up
- Assistance with the identification of funding and co-funding for projects as well as financial instruments
- Provision of capacity building activities to public authorities and beneficiaries project preparation and programme implementation

Technical Assistance types and modalities

The following list provides an overview of key support modalities and types of expertise provided under C4T GROUNDWORK Technical Assistance. Please note that this list is non-exhaustive and often modalities are combined in TA assignments:

- Support for projects calls
- Identification of financing
- Development of tools and methods
- Learning from peers/sharing best practices
- Training/Workshops
- Guidance and communication
- Analysis and benchmarking
- Stakeholder engagement

Examples of GROUNDWORK - Technical Assistance

Eight examples illustrate potential types or modalities of support. For more details on the featured technical assistance projects, please visit: [Inforegio - Knowledge Repository](#)

I: Support for project calls

Support for the development of calls for projects under PO2 can include assistance in planning, designing and implementing calls for applications, and processes. This includes securing that calls inter alia:

- integrate climate, disaster and introducing environmental proofing into designing and developing project calls.
- align with EU frameworks such as the European Green Deal, Fit for 55, and REPowerEU.
- promote environmental sustainability, the do-no-significant-harm principle, biodiversity proofing, and green public procurement.
- reflect relevant selection criteria (inter alia thematic, or general: feasibility, sustainability and cross-sector collaboration).

EXAMPLE: SMART GRIDS DEVELOPMENT IN PORTUGAL

In preparation for the launch of a call for ERDF funded smart grids projects in Portugal, the C4T conducted an analysis and documented calls of other EU Member States (MSs). The experiences of other MS were used as a basis for the call design.



The C4T supported call design through:

- **A mapping of smart grids projects** developed in other EU Member States and regions. The TA documented the content of various calls, e.g., type and size of projects, criteria used, and more.
- **Developed requirements and criteria for the call** through an in-depth analysis of interventions, detailing intervention types, targeted beneficiaries, delivery methods, achieved outcomes, success factors and potential risks as basis for the list of criteria.

The key outcomes included **tailored guidelines for preparing effective calls to support Portugal's energy transition** based on a comprehensive analysis of smart grid interventions across EU Member States, lessons learned for call design and implementation.

II: Identification of Financing

Identification of financing includes exploring funding opportunities, developing and updating financial instruments and models to leverage sustainability investments. C4T's support extends inter alia to:

- assisting in identifying complementary sources of financing for projects.
- assessing and designing financial instruments, identifying financing modalities
- developing bankable projects that attract diverse funding opportunities, ensuring long-term financial viability and impact.

EXAMPLE: FINANCING ENERGY RENOVATIONS - PLOVDIV'S ONE-STOP SHOP MODEL

The Energy Agency of Plovdiv (EAP) in Bulgaria received assistance to support the establishment of a one-stop shop (OSS) for residential building renovation in the Plovdiv Region as a self-sustaining service. The assistance addressed the lack of financing options for residential renovation in Bulgaria looking into possible financial



instruments and methods to fund energy efficiency (EE) renovation processes, reduce complexity and encourage private investments.

Key support activities included:

- **Best practices in energy efficiency financing:** analysis of EU and Member State national funding mechanisms, such as the EU Renovate initiative, cohesion policy resources and private financing models. Best practices from EU Member States such as France, the Netherlands and Estonia showcased effective financial strategies for energy renovation.
- **Financing models and pricing options:** three workshops introduced financing models and strategies for OSS services, featuring insights from EU Member States: Slovenia, Latvia, Spain and Belgium, emphasising innovative approaches like property-linked financing, pre-financing grants, and energy performance contracting.

The support enabled the EAP **to design and implement innovative and practical financial models**, based on a compendium of financing options tailored to the Bulgarian context. This approach will enhance the access to energy renovations, mobilises private investments and supports the Plovdiv Region's energy transition goals.

III: Development of tools and methods

Development of tools and methods can support the implementation of strategies that integrate environmental and climate considerations into concrete strategies, programme or project calls. This can entail:

- development of e.g. option analysis to evaluate regional opportunities and potential, criteria setting for project selection, monitoring frameworks and systems, estimates of costs etc.
- provide strategies and frameworks for innovative solutions, such as nature-based projects or decarbonisation approaches as well as to mature specific projects.
- introducing and designing methodologies, methodologies for environmental integration.

EXAMPLE: NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR CYPRUS

The Cyprus Energy Agency (CEA) received TA for the development of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for flood risk management projects in the Pedieos River region. The aim is to mitigating flood risks in two municipalities, where flooding has been identified as a significant climate risk. The measures include creating riparian buffer zones, river re-naturalization, and afforestation to enhance resilience and biodiversity. The TA aimed to mature project proposals for funding applications to Cohesion funds.



Key support activities included:

- **Development of a monitoring concept:** design of impact chains to map Inputs, Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts for project sites. These were used to create tailored indicators to monitor the effectiveness of the NbS measures during and after implementation.
- **Cost estimation methodology:** mapping and analysis of best practices across Europe and reviewed cost-benefit analyses for similar NbS projects. This approach helped outline expected costs and provided CEA with a repository of resources for further refinement.

The TA enabled the Cyprus Energy Agency to develop a methodological framework and cost estimation tools for the NbS projects. CEA is now in a position **to mature the proposals, pursue funding and implement** the first large-scale NbS flood management projects in Cyprus, thus promoting sustainable climate adaptation practices.

IV: Learning from Peers/sharing best practices

Learning from peers involves the identification, analysis and presentation of successful strategies and good practices from peers in other EU regions to inspire beneficiaries through hands-on experience and advice. The assistance can include:

- identification of relevant peers with relevant and suitable experience for peer-to-peer events and transfer.
- benchmarking and analysis of best practices.
- organising and facilitating regional knowledge exchange events to share successful strategies and inspire action.
- promote cross-region and cross-border cooperation for knowledge exchange on sustainability transitions.

EXAMPLE: ADVICE TO THE ESTONIAN ISLANDS' ENERGY AGENCY

The Estonian Islands' Energy Agency was created in 2023 to provide professional assistance to project developers, long-term energy planning and funding distribution for the archipelago of islands off the west coast of Estonia. The C4T workshops served as platforms for practical guidance from other EU energy agencies sharing similar challenges (islands, accessibility issues).



Saaremaa Island and lighthouse.

- **Peer Learning:** A workshop featured the Slovenian energy agency KSSENA, that shared insights on how to design and implement programmes to support of hydrogen, district heating systems, and solar energy projects. These examples provided inspiration to adopt similar solutions in Estonia. The second workshop included a presentation by COWI on energy islands and by the former director of the Balearic Island Energy Agency on renewable energy projects in island communities.
- **Workshop on funding insights:** based on the development of a comprehensive funding database tailored for the Energy Island Energy Agency, detailing Estonian, EU, and international funding opportunities.

The workshops equipped the Estonian Islands' Energy Agency with inputs for actionable strategies, funding tools, and peer-proven solutions to drive the region's clean energy transition effectively.

V: Training/Workshops

The purpose of training/workshops is to develop the capacity of public authorities and beneficiaries through tailored workshops and skills training in English and/or local languages. This type of support covers:

- skills (and train-the-trainer) development in for example implementing EU frameworks for clean energy and climate (e.g. DNSH, NbS).
- training in project and application preparation for beneficiaries – general or in specific topics (e.g. water management)
- identification of financing and co-financing for programme and project managers.
- Stakeholder workshop to build consensus and generate a shared vision for sustainability transitions.

EXAMPLE: CLIMATE-PROOFING TO REGIONAL ENERGY AND CLIMATE AGENCY OF NW CROATIA - REGEA

In order to expand the REGEA experience and knowledge in various energy-related projects, the technical assistance was focused on improving the climate-proofing procedures at both the strategic level and the level of concrete infrastructural investments in the City of Zagreb. A specific focus was on the climate adaptation processes, especially in relation to the urban development strategic planning.



Key supported activities included:

- **Pilot infrastructural project** selected from the project pipeline as a learning example for procedures and best practices in relation to climate-proofing of investments (including how to include this in EIAs). The renovation of Paromlin building as an old industrial heritage site, into the public library and cultural centre of Zagreb). The activity resulted in the revised climate-proofing
- **A training for REGEA** on the procedures of the climate-proofing of the strategies and investments. The training was organised over two days: the first day was the train-the-trainer session with REGEA staff, and on the second day, the representatives of the various departments of the City of Zagreb joined the training with REGEA.

REGEA is now in position to **transfer this knowledge** and relevant regional and local stakeholders. REGEA plans to continue delivering these climate-proofing workshops with other municipalities in the region (NW Croatia). For this purpose, a set of presentation slides to facilitate the training was delivered.

VI: Strategic analysis, benchmarking

The support provided under this modality can include assessing the effectiveness of strategies, roadmaps, and action plans and supporting the evaluation of potential environmental and social impacts of investments. Support can inter alia entail:

- background analysis of for example, regional needs, opportunities and vulnerabilities to climate impacts.
- benchmarking analysis of best practices with other regions
- identification of regional needs, evaluating existing strategies, and assessing environmental and social impacts to guide investments.

EXAMPLE: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR PROJECT PRIORITISATION AND IMPACT MEASUREMENT IN ÎLE-DE-FRANCE

A core element of the support provided by C4T to Île-de-France focused on an analysis of project prioritization and impact measurement for circular economy initiatives funded under the ERDF programmes in other EU Members States.

The analysis resulted in recommendations for designing assessment and selection methodologies for circular economy calls.



The key activities included:

- **Project Prioritisation Analysis:** Benchmarking of approaches for selecting high-potential projects in circular economy through desk research and interviews with authorities from different EU Member States. The analysis resulted in recommendations for designing scoring methodologies that prioritise feasibility, sustainability, and cross-sector collaboration. It also emphasised engaging applicants early to refine proposals.
- **Impact Measurement Analysis:** analysis of methodologies from other regions to measure the progress and impact of circular economy projects. This included adopting innovative indicators, incorporating life-cycle analyses (LCAs), and capturing broader impacts beyond waste reduction.

The analysis provided Île-de-France with actionable frameworks to **enhance project selection and effectively measure** the outcomes of circular economy initiatives, improving the region's capacity to achieve its sustainability goals. It also emphasised engaging applicants early to refine proposals. Overall, this work directly contributed to the design of future calls for circular economy projects.

VII: Guidance and communication

Guidance and communication can include (but not limited to) tailored documentation and materials for programme and project implementation, and are often delivered in local languages and adapted to local circumstances, such as:

- technical guidance and instructions on how to align projects with EU climate, energy, and environmental goals (DNSH, NbS).
- tailored documentation for e.g. strategy development, and energy agency creation (one-stop-shop concepts)
- guidance on costing of programme and projects.

EXAMPLE: HOLISTIC WATER MANAGEMENT - GUIDANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR EASTERN MACEDONIA-THRACE

Support to the Managing Authority for the ERDF-Programme in Eastern Macedonia-Thrace aimed to assist local water providers in planning and preparing water management projects with a holistic approach, addressing key challenges such as drinking water supply, wastewater management, flood risk, and digital transformation. These projects align with the broader regional goals for sustainability and resilience while promoting innovative methodologies for project prioritization and implementation.



Workshop, Komotini, Greece, 26/9/2024

The support key activities included:

- **Development of guidance materials:** Guidance materials were provided to simplify and operationalize the holistic approach (EIB JASPERS), including templates, tables of contents, and step-by-step methodologies for project analysis, option evaluation, and simplified cost options (SCOs). The materials helped prioritise and prepare comprehensive water projects effectively.
- **Capacity-building workshop:** A one-day workshop introduced the guidelines for the holistic approach for water project design and preparation (Implementation Guide in Greek). It featured presentations, demonstrations, and Q&A sessions to strengthen the understanding and encourage best practices.

The framework for designing and evaluating holistic water projects equipped local water providers and regional authorities with a **tool to prepare sustainable water management projects** aligned with EU standards and funding requirements.

VIII: Stakeholder engagement/processes

Support to stakeholder engagement can include:

- facilitation of collaboration between impacted groups and fostering consensus on sustainability goals to drive meaningful progresses
- workshops and events to engaging and include communities and stakeholders in project design and implementation

EXAMPLE: COLLABORATIVE RIVER REHABILITATION - STAKEHOLDER-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS FOR VALONGO'S CLIMATE RESILIENCE

The Valongo Municipality received support to address the significant environmental challenges impacting its river systems, particularly the Rio Ferreira. These challenges include pollution, urban sprawl, erosion and biodiversity loss exacerbated by climate change. The TA aimed to transform the municipality's Municipal Plan for Climate Change Adaptation and the River Rehabilitation Strategic Plan (PERLA) into actionable bankable projects.



The key activities included:

- **Collaborative workshops for stakeholders:** involving environmental agencies and community groups. This engagement ensured that diverse perspectives shaped the projects objectives, highlighting critical challenges and opportunities for Rio Ferreira rehabilitation.
- **Building consensus for project actions:** Stakeholder collaboration was integral to defining project priorities such as riverbank restoration, nature-based flood mitigation solutions, and sustainable land-use practices. The TA delivered the tools and frameworks for the collaborative prioritisation of the river rehabilitation projects.

By fostering stakeholder engagement, the project aligned local needs and EU funding objectives under P02. The inclusive and collaborative approach **enhanced local commitment to the process** and strengthened the municipality's capacity to address climate resilience and environmental sustainability goals effectively.

Contact Information and Social Media

If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact us directly via secretariat@cohesion4transitions.eu.

Other information regarding C4T Groundwork, application and selection process can be found on our website: [Cohesion 4 Transition](#)

For newer updates, C4T can be found on Linked-In: [C4T Community of Practice](#)