



European  
Commission

# Final Report

## Support to the management of the Just Transition Platform

REGIO/2021/OP/0008

### Executive Summary

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*Regional and  
Urban Policy*

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## Abstract

The European Green Deal, introduced in 2019, aims to transition the EU towards a sustainable, climate-neutral future. To address the transition challenges in coal and carbon-intensive regions, the Just Transition Mechanism was established in 2020, along with the Just Transition Platform (JTP), which provides guidance and support. This project involved supporting JTP activities, setting up Working Groups, and providing analytical work. It was structured in three tasks. Task 1 included developing an online platform and helpdesk, providing communication activities, and organising five major JTP events, focusing on various just transition aspects and garnering significant participation. Task 2 involved engaging stakeholders in discussions about a just transition in carbon-intensive sectors through Working Groups, which underwent phases such as needs assessment, scoping, and Action development. Task 3 focused on providing analytical support, collecting policy approaches, creating project fiches and case studies, and responding to ad-hoc Commission requests. Key activities included scoping interviews, data collection, analysis of policy approaches and projects, and developing a methodology for mapping employment consequences in carbon-intensive sectors. Our efforts aimed to offer valuable insights and guide regions in implementing effective transition strategies.

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

The European Green Deal (EGD), introduced by the European Commission (EC) in 2019, aims to steer the European Union (EU) towards a sustainable future, targeting a 55 % reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and the achievement of climate neutrality by 2050. This ambition, however, presents significant challenges, particularly for regions dependent on carbon-intensive industries. To mitigate potential economic and employment impacts, the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) was established in 2020, comprising the Just Transition Fund (JTF), the InvestEU scheme, and the Public Sector Loan Facility. Additionally, the Just Transition Platform (JTP) was launched to provide guidance, information, and support for this transition. This project acted as the Secretariat to the Platform, including supporting the activities of the JTP (Task 1), setting up and animating four Working Groups (Task 2) and providing analytical work and knowledge management (Task 3). The contract was implemented between July 2021 and January 2024, over a period of 30 months.

## Task 1 – Support for the activities of the JTP

The **development of a comprehensive online platform** and helpdesk for the JTP was one of the primary outputs of this task. This included creating a new JTP website within the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO)'s Inforegio website infrastructure, updating and incorporating pre-existing content, adding new content, and creating and populating a knowledge repository of useful resources. Successfully launched in May 2022, the site has provided a single online access point to support and became a key resource for JTP-related information and communication.

During the contract period, **five major JTP events were organised (two events per year)**, each providing ample networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities for stakeholders. In response to the constraints provided by the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to adapt to first virtual and later hybrid formats, while ensuring continued engagement and participation. Each event benefited from the presence of one or more Commissioners, with speakers including high-level Commission representatives up to the level of Vice-President. The first two events under this contract were implemented in a mostly virtual format, with some hybrid sessions, while the focus of the third, fourth and fifth event was on physical attendance with online participation. The preparation for each event began three to four months in advance, involving various activities such as setting up a virtual platform and registration system, making logistical arrangements, drafting invitations and thank-you messages, preparing agendas and concept notes in collaboration with DG REGIO and other DGs, managing speakers, preparing promotional materials, and organising briefings and technical checks.

The **first event under this contract (4<sup>th</sup> JTP Meeting)** took place online, focusing on updates on JTF programming and Territorial Just Transition Plans. Sessions also included the launch of the JTP Working Groups and a high-level panel discussion with EU representatives. The **second event (5<sup>th</sup> JTP Meeting)** discussed the role of cohesion policy in the climate transition and energy security in the EU. It updated stakeholders on the progress of Territorial Just Transition Plans and included thematic sessions on just transition challenges and the role of youth. The **third event (6<sup>th</sup> JTP Conference)** – the first large-scale in-person and online event since COVID-19 – marked a shift from preparation to implementation of the JTM. Topics included project pipeline development, fossil fuel phase-out, clean energy technologies, and the importance of skills and life-long learning. The **fourth event (7<sup>th</sup> JTP Conference)**

focused on the implementation of the JTF, highlighting the ambitions of Territorial Just Transition Plans. Sessions covered energy security, the international dimension of just transition, governance mechanisms, and technical assistance. The **fifth event (8<sup>th</sup> JTP Conference)** looked at the progress so far in delivering a just transition, showcasing good practices and financing opportunities. Sessions discussed the importance of empowering vulnerable groups, effective communication, the role of universities, long-term energy storage, and technical assistance. Between 980 and 1 381 people registered for each event, with final attendance rates ranging between 503 and 711 participants.

Communication activities for the Platform were also delivered under this task. They involved producing and disseminating information through various channels, such as the **JTP website, newsletters, social media, and other promotional materials**. Notably, the JTP Newsletter was launched, its first 15 issues published, and its subscriber base grown to 1 405. In addition, 14 news articles for Inforegio and the EC press corner were drafted, along with 106 social media posts across X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook, which significantly enhanced stakeholder engagement.

The JTP events, JTP website and communication activities aimed to build a robust community around the JTP, share information and knowledge, and provide networking opportunities to all stakeholders involved in the transition.

#### *Recommendations for the future of the JTP*

- *Further encourage interaction and engagement*
- *Improve the visibility of just transition projects during the events*
- *Strengthen the focus of feedback collection on the impacts of the events on participants*
- *Post regular, impactful content to be visible among the target audience and increase impact*
- *Prioritise shorter, more concise newsletters, which tend to have more impact*

## Task 2 – Set-up and animation of Four Working Groups

This task focused on engaging stakeholders in discussions about just transition challenges and strategies, particularly in carbon-intensive sectors such as steel, cement and chemicals. This task facilitated the selection of **146 Working Group (WG) members**, distributed among three ‘circles’ based on their level of involvement in the groups. The JTP Secretariat provided comprehensive support, including strategic, thematic, operational and logistical assistance. The WGs underwent the following phases:

1. **Needs Assessment** (October 2021– February 2022): Surveys and interviews with WG members were conducted to identify needs and expectations for the WGs.
2. **Scoping Phase** (February–May 2022): WG members defined specific challenges and focus areas, leading to the creation of Scoping Papers, which were published and presented in May 2022.
3. **Development of Actions** (June 2022 – April 2023): WGs identified specific actions to address the just transition challenges set out in their Scoping Papers, culminating in a common Implementation Plan with 17 actions and related outputs.

A total of **seven meetings** were organised to foster collaboration and achieve the JTP WGs’ objectives. They covered various stages of the WGs’ work, from the establishment of working arrangements and discussions on priority themes to reviews of progress in the implementation of actions and reflections

on the achievements and future of the WGs. These activities enhanced synergies and collaboration across the WGs and with other initiatives, including by merging the WGs' implementation plans, identifying cross-sectoral actions, and organising joint meetings. **Outputs from the work of the WGs** and their respective actions include recommendations, strategy papers, guides and toolkits.

Since the outputs from the WGs have only recently been published on the JTP website, their positive contribution to solving local challenges and mitigating the adverse effects of the transition at the local level cannot be fully assessed yet. Nevertheless, practical solutions and tools developed by the groups, if further disseminated properly, are likely to have a positive impact on capacity building of actors involved in the transition process at the regional and local level.

The JTP Secretariat also played a key role in preparing WG sessions at the JTP Conferences, contributing to concept notes and presentations, and coordinating member interventions.

#### *Recommendations for the future of the JTP*

- *Improve exchanges of results and learning from the WGs between the WGs and JTF regions*
- *Strengthen ownership and commitment of the WG members to the WGs' activities*
- *Enhance collaboration between WGs and external initiatives and other just transition stakeholders*
- *Reduce the number of WG circles (from three circles to two)*

### Task 3 – Analytical work and knowledge management

The objective of this task was to provide analytical intelligence and support to the JTP. This involved researching and producing policy approaches, project fiches and case studies, and responding to ad-hoc requests for analytical support from the DG REGIO. Work focused on identifying successful practices, projects and strategies that could inspire regions undergoing the transition. Key activities and findings included:

- **Scoping interviews:** Interviews were conducted with representatives of various Directorates-General of the European Commission to gather initial insights about regional initiatives and projects.
- **Data collection and database development:** An Excel database was created to store information about policy approaches and projects. Four rounds of data collection were performed, with each round resulting in five information sheets on policy approaches (20 in total across the contract) and a varying number of project fiches (30 in total). Policy approaches focused on high-level strategies (national or regional, including non-EU examples), while project analysis aimed to identify successful individual projects, emphasising economic diversification, skills development, stakeholder involvement, and innovative technologies.
- **Case studies:** Initially planned to be based on projects covered in the information sheets, the scope of case studies was later expanded to include policy approaches, due to the early stage of several projects. This work resulted in 12 case studies, based on both policies and projects.
- **Ad-hoc analytical support:** Analytical support was provided to DG REGIO, including assessing the eligibility of additional JTF regions, and assessing industrial decarbonisation commitments and understanding their socio-economic impacts. This involved creating databases, analysing decarbonisation plans from various EU countries, and assessing the timelines of decarbonisation and coal phase-out commitments.

- **Technical note on employment mapping:** A technical note was developed to present a methodology for mapping employment consequences in carbon-intensive sectors. This was an output of Action 9 of the JTP WGs (under Task 2), led by IndustriAll European Trade Union and the European Chemical Employers Group.
- **Assessment of additional sectors:** This activity assessed the relevance of the glass and paper sectors in JTF-eligible regions, identifying regions requiring special action strategies and examining technological options for decarbonisation.

The goal of these activities was to provide valuable insights and guidance for regions undergoing just transitions, focusing on replicable and effective strategies and projects.

#### *Recommended actions for the future of the JTP*

- *Make good practices linked to the just transition more visible among stakeholders, taking into account that knowledge on many relevant projects and policies has already been collected*
- *Include projects funded by the JTM in the JTP knowledge repository in the future*

## Concluding assessment

The JTP has been supporting the EU regions undergoing the transition to a sustainable, climate-neutral economy. It has effectively addressed the needs of EU Member States (MS) by offering guidance on transition-related policies and support mechanisms, particularly through the JTM. The Platform has increased awareness and understanding among stakeholders about the socio-economic aspects of the energy transition, as demonstrated by the high participation and positive feedback in JTP events. Despite some challenges linked to efficiency and certain stakeholders' involvement, the JTP has been effective in creating a vibrant and consistently growing community for knowledge exchange and best practice sharing, fostering internal and external coherence with other initiatives in the process. Its greatest value lies in bringing together stakeholders from across the EU to share knowledge and experiences, proving especially vital in maintaining momentum and decarbonisation commitments during the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent geopolitical challenges.

The following table provides an overview of the key strengths of the JTP and considerations for its improvement, as identified through the work of this project.

Strengths	Considerations for improvement
<p><b>A robust, motivated and diverse community:</b> The JTP has cultivated a motivated and diverse community, effectively uniting stakeholders from various geographical and organisational backgrounds, enhancing inclusivity and commitment in transition processes.</p> <p><b>An integrated approach:</b> The Platform recognises the cross-sectoral and multi-dimensional nature of the transition, which covers aspects such as energy and climate, technology, regional economic development, social inclusion and education, and it adeptly incorporates these themes into its activities.</p> <p><b>A collaborative approach:</b> The Platform excels in fostering collaboration among a wide spectrum of stakeholders. This collaborative ethos spans governments, regions, businesses, civil society, and local communities. The Platform also emphasises the significance of building partnerships and collaborative efforts to achieve collective goals in the just transition process, recognising that collaboration is a cornerstone of success.</p> <p><b>A knowledge and support hub:</b> The JTP serves as a central hub for guidance and knowledge exchange, the platform facilitates the sharing of best practices and experiences, enhancing information access and support.</p> <p><b>Alignment with EU policy objectives:</b> Aligned with EU policy objectives, particularly the EGD, the Platform significantly contributes to advancing EU strategic priorities linked to energy transition and regional development. This has been demonstrated by high and continued commitment across EC services, including by various Commissioners.</p> <p><b>Ability to maintain momentum:</b> In challenging times, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic and energy crises, the Platform has played a vital role in maintaining commitment and dialogue among MS, ensuring steadfast progress in decarbonisation efforts.</p>	<p><b>Increase direct participation of industry:</b> Despite recognising the need for industry inclusion in the Platform, direct industry participation has been limited. The Platform needs to develop strategies to improve industry and private sector engagement, considering their potential focus on other EU initiatives like the transition pathways for European industrial ecosystems and the Green Deal Industrial Plan.</p> <p><b>Further increase direct participation of youth and vulnerable groups:</b> The Platform has yet to achieve substantial involvement of vulnerable and underrepresented groups and youth, especially in the activities of the WGs. Their engagement is vital in order for the transition to be just.</p> <p><b>Increase outreach to diverse audiences in the regions:</b> There is a risk of consistently engaging the same individuals from the same regions without effectively reaching out to other stakeholders. The Platform should implement targeted outreach strategies to broaden its audience and ensure diverse representation.</p> <p><b>Address the challenge of monitoring the impact of the Platform</b> Assessing the Platform's impact on the implementation of Territorial Just Transition Plans, regional capacity, knowledge gaps, cross-regional collaboration, and policy influence is challenging. Developing effective monitoring mechanisms could help quantify and highlight its contributions.</p>



