



Just Transition Platform – Project fiche:

COMMUNITIES FOR FUTURE

This document is part of a series presenting information and lessons learned on policy approaches at national, regional or local level supporting a just transition to a climate-neutral economy. The Just Transition Platform (JTP) assists EU Member States and regions to unlock the support in this transition. Visit the JTP website: Visit the JTP website: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/just-transition-fund/just-transition-platform_en

Member State:

Belgium

Region:

N/A

Sector:

Community engagement

Total project budget (€):

No information on total budget

Financing conditions (co-financing rate):

No information on financing conditions

Sources of funding:

Mainly private funding, with some Horizon Europe project funding; no further information on EU funding

National funding:

No national funding

Regional funding:

No regional funding

Duration:

2019 – (no planned end date)

Responsible Managing Authority/Agency:

The European network for community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability (ECOLISE)

Summary

Communities for Future (Cff) is an initiative to support the mainstreaming of community-led action on climate change and sustainability. Cff provides a platform for mutual support, cooperation, and collaboration between the thousands of communities across the EU that are already taking action. There are many good practices, projects, and a wealth of experience and resources on the platform that can be shared more widely.

Type of activities:

The focus of Cff is on inspiring and mobilising communities to take action and then providing them with the resources and the support they need to make it happen. The platform collects examples of community-led initiatives that are selected by the contributing organisations and seen as interesting stories about community-led action that could inspire other communities to follow. Those shared 'stories' are meant to be close to the people as they are selected by the organisations that are active in the respective region.

Goals and approach:

The platform collects and presents different kinds of community-led initiatives from all 27 EU Member States. The examples are selected by the member organisations of ECOLISE, the initiator of this initiative. The shared examples encompass successes as well as failures, going beyond 'best practices' to provide real learnings, tell a story and provide inspiration. The members of ECOLISE are mainly networks with differing objectives. However, all members share a common interest in supporting community-led action on climate change and sustainability. The main goal of Cff is to facilitate community-led action on climate change and sustainability. It aims to do this by cultivating and supporting a network of change makers and expanding public and political awareness of the power of communities in reaching ambitious climate and environmental goals.

Important outputs, results or achievements:

Cff is still in development. However, there are already several relevant outputs, including: the European Day of Sustainable Communities and the Communities of Practice.

ECOLISE launched the European Day of Sustainable Communities in 2017, which precedes the launch of Cff. This Day is based on an invitation to members, partners, and communities across Europe to organise events and showcase the work they are doing to combat climate change and ecological breakdown. Every year in September thousands of events across Europe take place to raise awareness and inspire communities to act. The Community of Practice (CoP) on Community-led Local Development (CLLD) is currently being set-up by ECOLISE and partners.

This CoP on CLLD is meant to foster the exchange between local authorities, Local Action Groups and community-led initiatives. In this CoP, the focus is mainly on how to efficiently use the EU CLLD programme to support transition processes at community level.

Scalability¹ and transferability²:

The local community level is at the core of Cff. It already includes member organisations covering all EU Member States. However, many communities in the EU are still not actively engaged in climate action, so the challenge is to reach and mobilise more community-led initiatives. To achieve this, more organisations and partners are needed.

¹ Scalability entails that a policy approach can be adapted to a bigger scale than just the local context.

² Transferability entails that a policy approach can be applicable to a similar setting and replicated.

Key success factors and lessons learnt:

The main success factor is building the network and building engagement which is at the core of ECOLISE's work. A central part of building the network is to bring together relevant organisations and facilitate collaboration. ECOLISE functions in that sense as a bridge builder, creating space where organisations can collaborate and develop new initiatives linked to the goals of Cff.

Key challenges:

The main challenge lies in the difficulty of getting diverse organisations to work together. Although mutual cooperation is a success factor of Cff, it does not come without obstacles. The member organisations of ECOLISE and other Cff partners, although they share similar objectives, are sometimes very different in nature, and in terms of culture, which can present a barrier to deeper level collaboration.

Moreover, the limited availability of funding poses another challenge to this work. In general, the sector is underfunded, which has led to a high dependency on volunteerism. The lack of resources affects organisations' capacities to engage in higher-level collaboration.

Both challenges, building engagement and resourcing, are interconnected and influence each other.



Tools for supporting economic diversification and reskilling/upskilling via projects:

Promoting community-led action that concerns climate change and sustainability.

Central framework conditions³:

ECOLISE, based in Brussels, created Cff in 2019. The platform and its name were inspired by the Fridays for Future movement. However, the first European Day of Sustainable Communities took place in 2017 and predated the creation of Cff. The creation of Cff was meant to open up the community-based approaches towards the general public. So far, community-led action was (and still is) often rather separated from larger politics, however, a systematic policy framework to embed such initiatives is desirable. The creation of Cff is meant to have a potential influence on EU policy making and to mainstream community-led actions.

³ Framework conditions encompass the institutional, informational and socio-economic factors that determine a given environment (contextual information), e.g. market conditions, access to finance, tax regulation, infrastructure and support.

Outlook:

Looking ahead, the key for the future success of CFF and related projects lies in the right level of funding. Moreover, an active network of partners at a national level is needed to facilitate real engagement with communities across Europe. Building a network of national contact points is envisaged.

A stronger focus on reaching out to marginalised groups and communities is also envisaged. This focus on diversity/inclusivity is key for community level engagement. To learn how to work better with diverse communities, more pilot projects, i.e. demonstration communities, is planned.

Cff is still in its early stages. For the next years to come, building the partnership and improving the funding situation across the network will be key priorities.

Partners & contacts:

Lead partner – ECOLISE:

www.ecolise.eu

info@communitiesforfuture.org

Website: www.communitiesforfuture.org



Sources:

- ECOLISE (2022): About communities for Future, <https://communitiesforfuture.org/about/>.
- ECOLISE (2022): Community of Practice on Community-led local Development, <https://communitiesforfuture.org/community-of-practice-on-community-led-local-development/>.
- ECOLISE (2022): European Day of Sustainable Communities, <https://www.ecolise.eu/european-day-of-sustainable-communities/>.
- Interview with representative of ECOLISE, 3 August 2022.
- Klein, Nina (2022): Why communities need to engage in politics in general, and the European Green Deal in particular. A perspective from ECOLISE's policy domain, <https://communitiesforfuture.org/get-inspired/why-communities-need-to-engage-in-politics-in-general-and-in-the-european-green-deal-in-particular/>.
- Survey input of representative of ECOLISE, summer 2022.