



European
Commission

Just Transition Platform: Working Group on Horizontal Stakeholder Strategy – Scoping Paper

May 2022

*Regional and
Urban Policy*

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1. Objectives of the Scoping Paper

The Scoping Paper is the first document produced by the Working Group (WG). It represents the first deliverable of the WG, laying down the foundations of the preparation of the Implementation Plan and providing the scope of the actions to be implemented by WG members in the next two years. The first part of the Scoping Paper focuses on the objectives and composition of the WG, while the second part describes the challenges and focus areas identified by the members of the first circle of the WG, including the approaches for actions and good practice examples from the local and regional level.

The Scoping Paper has been prepared in March 2022 by the 20 first circle members of the WG, supported by the JTP Secretariat. It was subject to consultation with members of the WG's second circle between 28 March and 8 April 2022 to which a total of 19 organisations replied (see Annex 3). Remarks made during the consultation were integrated into the Scoping Paper throughout April 2022 resulting in this final Scoping Paper.

2. Objectives of the Working Group

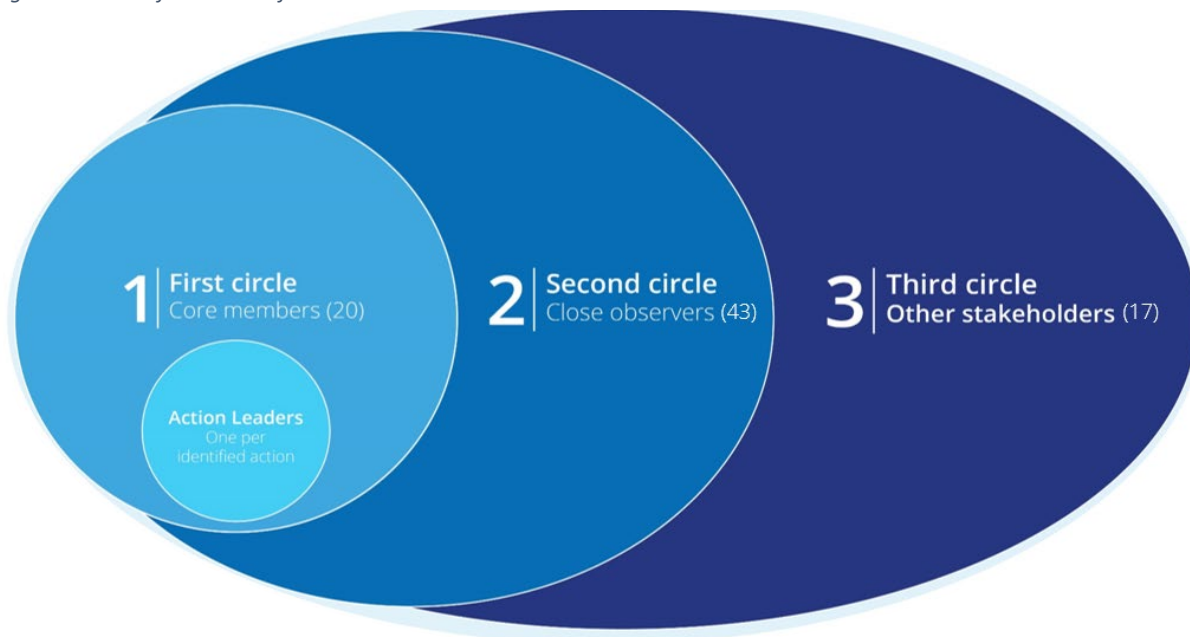
As a cornerstone of the [Just Transition Platform](#) (JTP), four WGs have been established in November 2021 to ensure comprehensive stakeholder involvement throughout the activities of the JTP. Three WGs have a thematic focus on a carbon-intensive sector (chemical, steel, cement) to exchange and develop practical solutions to ensure that the decarbonisation of the respective industry happens in a fair way, leaving no one behind. The fourth **WG on Horizontal Stakeholder Strategy**, of cross-cutting nature, focuses on the identification and assessment of approaches and good practices to engage all stakeholder groups.

The objective of this WG group is to act as a forum for exchanging and tackling various challenges that are common to stakeholders involved in the transition process. It aims at developing a strategic approach for engaging and involving different stakeholder groups in the overall decarbonisation process and particularly in the programming and implementation of the Member States' Territorial Just Transition Plan (TJTPs) and other mechanisms of the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM). The common objective (also with other WGs) is to develop problem-solving and advocacy actions within the identified focus areas, to achieve the wider goals of the JTP – supporting stakeholders in their just transition. The WGs ensure that this will be implemented through a multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance approach to develop a common just transition vision across the EU.

3. Working Group Composition

This (and the other three WGs with sectorial focus) consists of three types of members, namely core members ("first circle"), close observers ("second circle") and other stakeholders ("third circle"). Within the first circle group, several Action Leaders will be identified to spearhead selected actions (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Circles of members of the WG



Notably, members of the WG are:

1. **Core members of the WG (first circle)** actively participate in all the phases and activities of the WG. They shape and perform the work determined through the various deliverables and actions and participate in WG meetings on at least a bi-annual basis.
2. The **second circle of close observers** takes part in some of the work of the WG on an ad hoc basis. Members are kept informed of progress made by the WG, notably through consultations on the WG's deliverables.
3. Finally, **the third circle of other stakeholders** remains informed on the mid-term and final results of the WG activities.

WG members are organisations/authorities, represented by one person (and if needed by an alternative representative) in the activities and meetings of the WG. Within the WG on Horizontal Stakeholder Strategy, 20, 43 and 17 members (for the first, second and third circle, respectively) have been selected following a [call for applications](#) opened in September/October 2021.

The table below presents a brief explanation of the five different stakeholder categories that were addressed by the call for applications, including the number of members in the Horizontal Stakeholder Strategy WG per circle. In the first circle, geographical, sectorial and gender balance (of representatives) was of utmost importance, as well as an even distribution between stakeholder types, know-how and interest. The complete list of members can be found in Annex 1.

Table 1 Overview of members of the Horizontal Stakeholder Strategy WG

| Stakeholder group | Description | Number of members per circle ¹ | | |
|--|---|---|--------|-------|
| | | First | Second | Third |
| Member states authorities | These are national authorities from the EU27, such as ministries or national agencies. | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Local and regional authorities | These are regional authorities, national representatives of local authorities, local authorities representing cities and urban areas, or other bodies organised at national, regional or local level and authorities representing the territories covered by Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTP) with relevance for the specific carbon-intensive sector(s). | 3 | 8 | 6 |
| Associations representing regional, local, urban and other public authorities | These include associations representing higher educational institutions, educational and training providers, think tanks and research organisations, active and knowledgeable in the field of just transition; as well as associations representing other public authorities having an active role or expertise in just transition matters, including public procurement offices, and bodies for the promotion of equal treatment established in accordance with Directives 2000/43/EC, 2004/113/EC and 2006/54/EC. | 5 | 10 | 0 |
| Organisations representing economic and social partners | These include social partners' organisations, in particular those active in just transition, associations representing stakeholders; association of chambers of commerce, associations representing business, financial sector actors, consultancies representing the general interest of industries and branches, active in the field of just transition, as well as representatives of the social economy; and associations representing thematic networks representing specific economic sectors. | 3 | 8 | 5 |
| Bodies representing civil society, such as non-governmental organisations | These are bodies involved in the development of just transition, taking into account representativeness, geographic and thematic coverage, management capacity and expertise; as well as organisations or groups that are significantly affected or likely to be significantly affected by the implementation of the just transition strategy. | 7 | 13 | 4 |
| Total | | 20 | 43 | 17 |

4. Presentation of the challenges

The EU has adopted EU-wide binding targets of reaching climate neutrality by 2050 and reducing EU-wide emissions by at least 55% by 2030. Considering this, the way in which we live and work needs to change if we want to keep the promise of the Paris Agreement to make efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. A transition is now inevitable and needs to happen fast – now even faster considering the EU's geostrategic shift and decision to decrease dependency on Russian gas (and also oil and coal) due to its invasion of Ukraine. Failure to meet our climate targets increases social costs: environmental damages from more frequent extreme events, such as floods, heatwaves, droughts and forest fires will rise to an additional annual loss of up to €175 billion at 3 degrees of global heating. The distributional impact of these costs will be greatest among households who are already vulnerable (financially or otherwise) as they have the least capacity to adapt – to escape pollution, to insure their

¹ As of 4 March 2022; number of second and third circles are subject to change

homes, or to boost flood protection. This message is underlined by the recent IPCC working group 2 report, which shows the climate change impacts are and will be most felt by the poorest globally and regionally.

In the transition, **carbon-intensive regions face several key challenges**. These include the need to provide alternative jobs, re/up-skilling programmes and social protection to affected communities, ensure continuous funding and investments into other economic sectors important to the region, plan for decarbonisation and transition early on, and find ways to restore the environment through sustainable management approaches and nature-based solutions. Furthermore, the adoption of effective and innovative governance models to ensure a just transition is considered challenging as well as the lack of a long-term vision for just transition, capacity, expertise and experience of authorities steering the process. **The role of social partners in the development of TJTPs as well as the level of social dialogue, collective bargaining, as well as the engagement of civil society has also been identified as insufficient in many countries and regions**. Considering the different territorial dimensions (local and regional contexts) of transition is also seen as a major challenge, together with the importance of information sharing and communication to raise acceptance among the local population².

Until now, decarbonisation is in most transition regions still seen as a threat by local communities and their leaders, especially because the opportunities coming from the transition and the absolute necessity of transitioning to a greener economy are often not sufficiently and/or effectively communicated. Furthermore, the transition is now happening rather rapidly in some EU regions. Therefore, communities with a long history in working sectors related to fossil fuels and heavy industries are often highly attached to their social and cultural fabric. For these communities, the transition can be seen not only as the loss of employment but also as the loss of their cultural heritage and identity. What is more, employment in these sectors and industries has, in the past, provided for decent working and living conditions and high value-added in the regions. Jobs in these sectors have been mostly high-quality jobs based on collective agreements between trade unions and employers.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of disinformation and misinformation circulating, in which the transition away from fossil fuels and highly emitting industries has been used as the scapegoat for rising energy prices and energy poverty. Other worries concern energy security (and independence from Russian gas), the loss of jobs caused by decarbonisation and lack of investments, further exacerbating emigration and brain drain (especially by the skilled workforce) and demographic change.³ Emigration out of these regions also weakens social security systems and leads to a lack of a qualified workforce, one of the essential features for a region's competitiveness.

In this context, the biggest challenge according to the members of this WG is to **achieve sufficient stakeholder consultation and engagement in the transition process**, especially in Member States which have taken a more centralised and top-down approach to the transition governance and

² Conclusions based on the outcomes of the first WG meeting, notably the menti-poll and subsequent discussion.

³ Conclusions based on the Needs assessment interviews held with 13 WG members and the subsequent discussions held at the second WG meeting.

preparation of their TJTPs. The Regulation establishing the JTF⁴ clearly necessitates the involvement of stakeholders in line with the partnership principle in the governance of the TJTPs. Despite this provision, many stakeholders often report insufficiencies, a lack of involvement and a lack of transparency in involving stakeholders, partly due to the time pressure under which the JTF regulation was and the TJTPs are being prepared. Even though public consultations or stakeholder engagement activities were conducted, some of them were too rushed to reach smaller stakeholders and created a sense of “false participation” of the general public, mainly due to the strong presence of lobbying groups or superficial “one-shot” consultation processes, without feedback about how proposals have or not been taken on board. In this regard, there is the need to gain trust among the general population in regard to the transition process. In order to do so, public participation should be transparent and accessible to everyone, including social partners, civil society and NGOs, as well as industrial groups (international, national and local). The local population (workers, trade union representatives and others), as well as local business sector representatives, need to be sufficiently motivated to join the consultation sessions. On a similar note, more ‘hard-to-reach’ groups (e.g. youth, rural communities, etc.) should be included in the process through appropriate channels⁵. Finally, ensuring the equal participation of both genders (women and men) in the various consultation mechanisms and decision-making processes is essential to make sure that the transition is fully just. Thus, more structured and effective participation mechanisms should be implemented at the local level.

Overall, the European Commission’s guidance and requirements for stakeholder involvement in the transition/TJTP preparation process, notably the partnership principle in the JTF regulation that required Member States to outline their governance mechanisms (in chapter 3 of the TJTPs), have supported the participation of different groups of stakeholders in some regions. The next challenge is to **increase the level of stakeholder involvement and its effectiveness** also in the process of TJTP **implementation, monitoring and revision** – where again, time pressure and ineffective communication channels hamper holistic and meaningful stakeholder engagement.⁶

5. Focus areas of the Working Group

Seven focus areas have been identified by the WG on Horizontal Stakeholder Strategy. These aim at addressing some of the challenges identified in the section above, particularly those related to stakeholder engagement. While the first three focus areas are of horizontal nature, valid to all Member States and stakeholder groups as a whole, focus areas 4-7 target specific stakeholder groups.

A complete description of each topic and issues that the WG plans to tackle can be found below. The description respects the same structure for all the seven focus areas, presenting the problem

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2021/1056 establishing the Just Transition Fund: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R1056&from=EN>

⁵ Conclusions based on the Needs assessment interviews held with 13 WG members and the subsequent discussions held at the second WG meeting.

⁶ Ibid

description/issues to be tackled, the preliminary approaches for action and ideas for the implementation phase, and (where appropriate) good practice examples from the local/regional level.

Horizontal focus areas

Focus area 1 – Communicating and raising awareness around just transition

Problem description/Issues to be tackled

The transition towards climate neutrality is happening and is inevitable, but its speed and fairness are not guaranteed. Resistance can slow it down, reducing the time left to adapt and undermining a just transition further by exacerbating climate change and its impacts. For a truly just transition, communication about the transition, climate change and socioeconomic costs of inaction, as well as about the commitment to phase out fossil fuels, reduce emissions and the advantages of a just transition approach for those affected is therefore vital. Everyone must understand the need for a planned transition and support the steps taken to deliver it. This will both reduce resistance and provide certainty of direction, giving people a chance to adapt their livelihoods and boosting investor and entrepreneur confidence.

The presence and involvement of individuals, companies and organisations in the public debate on just transition in Europe seem, to date, not to be as expected. This fact is probably due to the lack of public information, but also to the "special knowledge" required to monitor such a technical issue. Furthermore, communication is often not accessible to all due to language barriers. In other cases, climate change misinformation is hindering engagement with stakeholders.

It is also crucial to provide transparent and accessible information about the processes to deliver the just transition. Higher engagement and transparency of engagement processes increase the likelihood of transition success. Clear and targeted information about just transition processes, how to get involved and the tools available to deliver it, are essential to engage smaller actors. Without targeted and accessible information, only the largest, most well-connected and resourced stakeholders have the capacity to engage, while vital information about the needs of stakeholders is missed (see case study 1 below). On the other hand, mass media approaches with more general bite-sized information can facilitate the dissemination of information at scale. Lack of engagement from, and understanding of the needs of, less well-resourced and smaller actors can then fuel resentment of the transition, disaffection and lead to suboptimal use of just transition resources.

Case study 1: SMEs in Hungary

Due to information gaps, large enterprises and incumbent industries dominate just transition fund project calls for proposals, with negative implications for economic diversification, the ability to increase socioeconomic resilience and to tap the full just transition potential in the regions.

This occurs because small municipalities, enterprises and not-for-profit organisations lack the capacity (staff/resources) to develop projects. They often also lack resources to meet high co-financing requirements, or may just lack awareness about just transition processes and/or best practices. Even when these small actors are aware of just transition schemes, they have no time to spend understanding the conditions, the rationale or the potential projects possible.

Communication about the just transition should also include targeted information, particularly to smaller actors about good just transition projects and practices and progress made in the transition (i.e. key milestones achieved through TJTPs), to motivate and inspire others for meaningful engagement. These actors typically do not have good links to, or understanding of, EU institutions and processes and so information should be presented in a local context relevant to them. There is also the need to clearly differentiate and point out complementarities between the many EU initiatives and their missions (JTM, NextGenerationEU, Recovery Plans, Cohesion funds) in communication, as stakeholders can get confused about the scope and aims of each initiative.

Case study 2: Targeted support to smaller actors is essential

In Eastern Wielkopolska, most just transition projects have focused on wide-ranging issues that are not necessarily consistent with a holistic just transition strategy. There is nothing for SMEs, or to encourage general, sustainable economic diversification in line with climate neutrality. SMEs, entrepreneurs and even small municipalities lack awareness about the need for companies to decarbonise within the next 18 years according to the region's declaration of achieving climate neutrality by 2040. This contributes to low absorption of funding, even when there is funding available; or suboptimal use of vital just transition support. Local NGOs have tried to plug this knowledge gap. For example, Polish Green Network has run dedicated workshops targeting smaller actors in the regions to help with project development and their decarbonisation plans. But such communication is dependent on civil society resources and funding. There is a need for systemic programs that will cover this gap.

The main problem is therefore to identify what needs to be communicated on the just transition, to whom and, crucially, how this information should be communicated. An initial scoping of what should be communicated is included below but could be subject to further refinement.

What needs to be communicated?

- The need and reasons for transition (within a larger climate change context);
- The inevitability of transition and the social, environmental and economic impacts;
- The commitment to a just transition;
- The just transition process and ways to get involved, including the responsibilities and roles of different actors and authorities;
- The just transition tools available;
- The just transition plan(s)/strategy(ies);
- The milestones achieved in the transition.

As the stakeholders vary by - and are specific to - each region, we will also need to consider what can be done to improve communication at the regional and local levels on just transition, in addition to what the EU itself should do. Critical to this will be the establishment of some form of **regional contact points or just transition centres**. Such an institution should be close to the target group and appropriately resourced to implement communications activities.

Approaches for action and first ideas for the implementation phase

The WG should therefore focus on several areas:

- Collecting good examples of communication practices (including tools and indicative budgets);

- Analysis, through surveys in the regions, of the barriers to awareness about the transition and just transition processes in the different Member States;
- Exploring the potential for regional transition observatories to provide contact points and information on the transition in the regions;
- Developing suggested guidelines for Member States on regional transition observatories/contact points in their ministries for improving awareness and engagement – these independent bodies could be made responsible for launching communication campaigns towards communities at the local level;
- Identifying the needs and barriers for setting up regional transition observatories, considering the risks of limited capacities and resources;
- Developing advice on information campaigns at an EU level on the (just) transition;
- Exploring ways to support local authorities in just transition communication activities, e.g. through the development of a communication guide for stakeholder engagement in coal regions or through guides for collaborative vision building;
- Mapping of local, independent media in coal regions that can help communicate about the transitions and the possible communication channels one could use to reach a wider audience (online/offline, YouTubers, influencers, artists, performers, etc).

Good examples/practices from other regional or thematic contexts

| Where | What | Caveats | Links |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Upper Silesia, Poland | <p>Good project example under draft TJTP: The TJTP includes a commitment to, and inclusion of plans for, coal community communication about the process of just transition throughout the financial period (2021-27).</p> <p>Over 16 online meetings with different groups of stakeholders were organised. The local authority responded to remarks submitted within the public consultation of the draft TJTP.</p> | The project has not yet been carried out/ finalised and it is not clear if there is any follow-up or monitoring of communication needs. | https://transformacja.slaskie.pl/ |
| Kolubara, Serbia | <p>NGOs and local activists in Serbia share positive just transition stories (notably from the Visegrad and other CEE countries) to inspire the desire for change and motivation to begin planning coal phase-out early (rather than leading it too late). This is crucial because the national debate and political narrative are dominated by the influence of the dominant, incumbent coal industry.</p> <p>At the European level, the creation of the Western Balkans and Ukraine coal platform is also helping to share good just transition stories.</p> | Civil society does not have the resources to deliver comprehensive support in this way in all regions: it needs to be institutionalised. | CAN/CDE briefing https://unify.caneeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/07/policy-recommendations-cultivating-it-in-cee.pdf |
| Eastern Wielkopolska, Poland | The Polish Green Network has run dedicated workshops targeting smaller actors in the regions, to help with project | Civil society does not have the resources to deliver comprehensive | |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | development and their decarbonisation plans. There is a need for systemic programs that will cover this gap. | support in this way in all regions: it needs to be institutionalised. | |
| Horní Nitra region, Slovakia | Good practice on stakeholder engagement through regular meetings organised to inform a large number of participants represented by their umbrella organisations about the preparation of the TJTP and ask about their opinion. Additionally, a series of workshops were organised for SMEs and municipalities, as well as talks with youth. | Closed to its members (representatives of municipalities, SMEs, unions, NGOs, regional governments etc.), but these were asked to disseminate the information to their members and bring in further suggestions for possible new participants. | https://bankwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/EBRD-AGM-IP-JT-example.pdf |
| Myrnohrad and Chervonohrad, Ukraine | Innovative approach for stakeholder engagement: The Butterfly Effect: Piloting research to support the sustainable transformation of Ukraine's coal mining towns (UNDP) | Currently on hold | https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/blog/2021/the-butterfly-effect--piloting-research-to-support-the-sustainab.html |

Focus area 2 – Stakeholder identification and stakeholder involvement (measuring, monitoring and impact)

Problem description/Issues to be tackled

Stakeholder participation is a key component in any decision-making process, as it enables stakeholders to be informed and influence decisions and processes that may interest or affect them. It is a reciprocal process of knowledge-sharing, governance continuity, and the legitimacy of the process. Enabling stakeholder engagement in decision-making also increases public acceptance of public choices and decisions, reduces opposition and helps those governing to gather more comprehensive information from all the different societal groups. These elements are essential for tackling the complexity of the transition challenges, as well as for identifying all the potential benefits. However, the methods, depth, and quality of engagement vary greatly from simple provision of information and mainstream approaches, such as public consultations, surveys, and focus groups, to a truly collaborative decision-making process, such as foresight and voting. There is a lack of comprehensive guidance and robust performance indicators that would measure the depth and quality of stakeholder involvement.

In addition, especially with underrepresented groups or those with lower capacity and experience with such processes, diagnosing, informing and involving them in the just transition frequently requires **more proactive forms of bringing them into the discussion**. While some groups have naturally become part of the planning process (municipalities, NGOs, large industries), others need to be approached directly through a variety of means in order to first provide them with knowledge, information and understanding of the process so that their voices will be taken into account. For

particular groups/individuals, limited availabilities and time constraints need to be equally considered (e.g. women in childcare) (see also FA1 and FA5).

The following issues are seen as the most pressing by WG members:

1. Managing authorities often do not recognise the need to involve vulnerable stakeholders and identify the appropriate channels to involve underrepresented social groups. It is crucial to provide guidance to managing authorities on how to identify vulnerable groups/communities in the regions (in particular the ones at the highest risk of energy poverty or long-term unemployment) and to develop a strategy for involving them in the participatory process, as well as to mitigate the negative impacts of the just transition. A complete mapping of relevant stakeholders can be even more difficult in places where governance structures are often very fragmented.
2. The decision-making process is often centralised, fragmented and top-down and does not allow for sufficient deliberation of different stakeholders.
3. The provisions laid down in the JTF Regulation are too general and do not set specific requirements or minimum thresholds for the involvement of local and/or regional authorities, community, citizen-led, civil societies, social partners or SMEs. There are no clear indicators that would allow an assessment of the concrete involvement of stakeholders. The possibility to group several local authorities (NUTS-3) further limits their involvement in the process and moves away from decision making on the level of administration that is the closest to the citizens.
4. The decision-making process on the development of the TJTPs and the overall energy transition process is highly centralised in most countries, and in the absence of a decarbonisation/coal phase-out strategy in some regions, there are risks of solutions being imposed. In addition, establishing a TJTP too quickly to provide funding without giving sufficient time to process the risks and salient opportunities may cause the regions to not fully benefit from the transition or to not transform in the way they should. Considering the complex challenges facing regions, funding alone will not solve their problems. Given the time pressure, there is also a risk of projects being selected because of the timeframe for spending rather than on merit.
5. The involvement of the local and/or regional authorities is often limited to the mere attendance of their representatives. However, the final planning and decision-making are steered by the central government. There is no obligation for central coordinators to account for the inclusion of points raised at the local level or on how the evaluation process of proposals was conducted. As a result, regional and local stakeholders do not feel sufficiently involved in the decision-making process.
6. Currently, there are no guidelines on how to identify vulnerable groups/communities in the regions (in particular the ones at the highest risk of energy poverty or long-term unemployment) nor on how to develop a strategy for involving them in the participatory process and mitigate the negative impacts they might experience. The authorities in charge of organising consultation processes frequently minimise their efforts to involve underrepresented groups and rarely proactively reach out to those groups that have been identified as relevant to the process even though their voice has not been adequately heard.
7. There is a lack of requirements for the inclusion of programme-specific indicators to assess the impacts of the TJTP on inequality, such as gender pay gaps, labour market inequalities and energy poverty measures. Future solutions need to adequately address the needs and

concerns of the ones that have been or will be most affected. These should ideally be developed before JTTPs start being implemented.

8. There are also no requirements for specific measures for addressing inequalities and providing targeted support for vulnerable groups, such as reinforcing collective bargaining structures, introducing a minimum income, energy poverty reduction or early retirement, re-skilling programmes, and integrating them in specific sectors of the green labour market (if relevant), also linking with FA4 and FA7.

Approaches for action and first ideas for the implementation phase

As part of its comparative evaluation framework for TJTPs and based on the highest standards for inclusiveness, ambition, and impact potential, one of the WG members, the Center for Study of Democracy (CSD) has identified four dimensions in the elaboration of guidelines for the stakeholder involvement process: objectives, identification, engagement in the planning phase, and engagement in the implementation phase⁷. These four dimensions will be reflected in the WG Implementation Plan.

The first dimension covers the two most general aspects of the stakeholder engagement process – who are the agents responsible for the governance of the planning process – the so-called planners (e.g., national or local authority, external consultant, etc.) and what are the main objectives (e.g., meeting legal requirements, acquiring local knowledge). The second dimension will measure the extent to which all relevant stakeholders have been identified before or during the consultation process. It will look in particular at what kind of stakeholders are defined as relevant in the planning process and which sectors/professional fields they represent. It will also examine the composition of the different stakeholder groups and their level of influence. The third dimension will evaluate the depth and coherence of the engagement methods used for stakeholder participation during the TJTP planning process. The fourth dimension will look at stakeholder engagement during the implementation process. This also includes the development of a robust system for checks and balances during the implementation process (i.e. regular monitoring reviews/evaluation reports) that could also prevent the capture of the decision-making process by incumbents and vested interests. The WG will also aim at identifying monitoring tools for the implementation of the TJTPs.

Focus area 3 – Knowledge exchanges across the EU on just transition lessons learned

Problem description/Issues to be tackled

As underlined in Focus Area 2, stakeholder participation is a key component in any decision-making process. It enables stakeholders to be informed and influence decisions and processes that may interest or affect them, in turn increasing public acceptance of public choices and decisions made, as well as increasing their quality. To facilitate engagement, stakeholders need to be informed about processes but also have an idea of what good decisions and results look like.

In addition to facilitating engagement, **knowledge sharing between regions for the just transition can increase the efficiency of the use of public resources**. Good practices can be more easily replicated elsewhere, and past mistakes avoided. As multiple regions across the EU strive for a just transition

⁷ https://csd.bg/fileadmin/user_upload/publications_library/files/2021_09/Comparative_Just_TEF_WEB.pdf

from fossil fuel-based systems to fairer and sustainable futures, it is essential that support is provided to ensure knowledge and experience gained in one region cross-fertilises others, to enable rapid and efficient transitions that deliver on overall positive transformation across Europe.

However, there are numerous barriers to this effective exchange and cross-fertilisation, including:

1. The lack of capacity of regional actors to engage and spend time collecting and digesting information about transitions in areas other than their immediate territory.
2. Cultural and language barriers to sharing experience: knowledge and experience gained in one region may not appear immediately applicable or relevant to other regions as they may concern transitions from different energy sources, or lead to different outcomes than those intended for the region or territory of principal concern. Differences in circumstances and regional characteristics need to be considered in exchanges across Europe and beyond.
3. Information and knowledge exchanges, even where already facilitated, might not reach all those who would benefit.

Public bodies and institutions must therefore facilitate knowledge sharing between regions on just transition practices across the EU. This should include the curation of relevant examples of just transition practice (projects and processes) into forms that are relevant and accessible for relevant stakeholders.

Work should also be done to **support the translation into local languages** of relevant information. However, to enable real exchange and to enhance learning, the engagement and exchange of experience between regions with support to overcome cultural and language barriers is needed in addition to access to standard written, and static information. This is because to really learn from examples, regions need to be in direct contact, ask questions and dive deeper into specific issues. Exchanges should also be reciprocal. An example of how this is helpful in practice is demonstrated by the [Forum of Mayors for just transition](#) and potentially by the European Commission's [coal regions exchange programme among EU countries](#) and [coal regions exchange programme among EU and Western Balkan/Ukrainian countries](#) (see below under best practices). However, follow-up mechanisms to shed light on the impact of knowledge exchange practices after completed exchange programmes are often missing.

In addition, to ensure that information is useful and to strengthen the potential for cross-fertilisation between regions, knowledge and experience should be made relevant to the specific regions and actors targeted. Limited time and capacity to absorb information on the ground, combined with a mental and physical distance from EU processes and narratives, means information on just transition is most likely to be useful and made use of if it is targeted at specific regional needs and circumstances. In this instance, synergies with regional contact points, centres, or hubs for just transition could be particularly helpful.

Approaches for action and first ideas for the implementation phase

The working group could **map good practices on stakeholder engagement across the Member States** to identify what could be replicated by regions and the EU as a whole. However, in order to strengthen engagement and quality of engagement across the EU, it is also important to **identify the needs of stakeholders for knowledge sharing and to appropriately communicate the benefits that come from such exchanges as incentives**. The working group should therefore analyse which stakeholders lack information and what aspects of just transition process and content would be useful for those

stakeholders in the EU. This will inform what needs to be curated in information databases and as subjects for exchange. Furthermore, the WG could develop metrics to monitor the progress of knowledge exchange programs and evaluate their eventual impacts on participants and regions.

For knowledge exchange to be useful, it must also be accessible; this means information should be tailored to the local level and to the stakeholders concerned, while the format of presentations should be user-friendly and innovative (e.g. 'Learning journeys'). The working group should therefore **explore how knowledge sharing might be facilitated in a regional context and in directly affected regions**, particularly with regards to the creation and functioning of regional just transition centres/hubs and in response to the Just Transition Platform's proposed expert and project databases. **The working group should develop recommendations on how those databases can be most useful and accessible to different stakeholders (e.g. with filter options), following an analysis of their needs.**

Good examples/practices from other regional or thematic contexts

Several initiatives serve as good practice examples for knowledge exchange between stakeholders involved in the just transition, e.g.

- Forum of Mayors for just transition: This is a network of mayors from European coal regions, many of whom have signed the [Declaration of Mayors for a just transition](#). It is facilitated by WWF Poland which currently hosts the secretariat.
- [ExchangeEU](#), the European Commission's coal regions exchange programme among EU member states. Though still in the stage of preparation, this exchange programme will cover a total of 20 exchanges between 40 transition regions (coal, lignite, oil shale, peat and gas) through different exchange formats, like study tours, job shadowing or other innovative collaborative approaches that will enable participants to deep dive into specific issues that affect their transition. All exchanges will be supported by an online collaboration tool that should enable participants to continue their networking activities beyond the physical exchange.

The [Coal Regions Exchange Programme](#) of the European Commission follows a similar concept yet with a broader territorial scope of the Western Balkans and Ukraine. Launched in 2022, this programme will bring together six Western Balkan coal regions⁸ with European counterparts and facilitate direct, one-to-one dialogues and knowledge exchange between stakeholders. The programme will enable regions in and the EU to share their knowledge and experience on coal phase-out and clean energy transition through study visits, potentially accelerating the clean energy transition in EU neighbourhood countries.

- The existing [database of the Initiative for coal regions in transition](#) could be used as a base to provide good practice examples.

⁸ The exchanges with Ukrainian coal regions have been put on hold.

Stakeholder group-specific focus areas

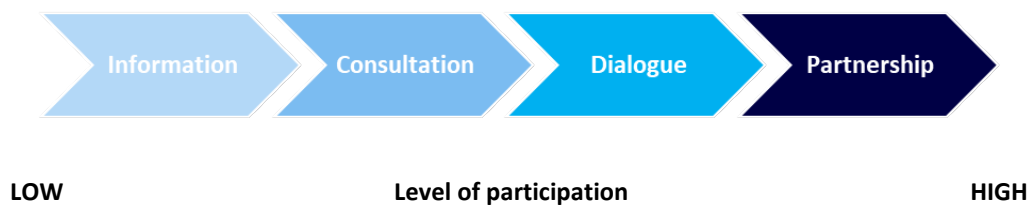
Focus area 4 – Engaging the ‘hard-to-reach’ and ‘vulnerable’ groups

Problem description/Issues to be tackled

The energy transition will only be just if it is participatory and inclusive, equally benefiting all citizens. At the moment, it poses a significant challenge as the shift towards a sustainable and climate-neutral economy will bring employment and social changes, requiring decisive investments to bring onboard all regions and societal groups in the transition. **To be successful, the transition should fight inequalities and should ensure that all stakeholder groups, particularly those in vulnerable situations (and who are likely to be more exposed to adverse effects of climate change), can actively participate.** The process to engage must follow traditional stakeholder engagement quality criteria by being timely and meaningful. When appropriate, capacity building and access to (digital) information should be developed and ensured by local and national authorities to ensure informed and meaningful engagement at all steps of engagement, throughout the programming and implementation process.

The transition towards people’s engagement, empowerment and agency in the transition should be fostered through meaningful and structured civil dialogue throughout the transition. Therefore, both the European Union and the Member States must take into account its economic and social implications from the outset and deploy all possible instruments to mitigate adverse consequences.

Figure 2: The different levels of civil participation in the decision-making process



Source: Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process, Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, October 2009

To guarantee this direction, the just transition must therefore engage with a representative range of partners at all transition stages and in all processes including a broad range of grass-roots stakeholders to ensure the transformation will also be a tool for social cohesion. The meaningful engagement of civil society groups should be formally recognised and structured, as the dialogue between civil society organisations (CSOs) and institutions at EU and national level will only bring benefits if governing structures and institutions make sure that the people they represent are included in shaping, developing and implementing all policies related to the transition.

This should include setting clear consultation structures, timetables and resources that strengthen the involvement of stakeholders, including CSOs, in all steps of the process. For some stakeholder groups (e.g. women in child care), time constraints and the prioritisation of other issues can hinder the involvement. To facilitate their participation, suitable arrangements and budget to facilitate their

participation need to be found (child care, transportation, the timing of the consultation meetings, remuneration for participation, outreach channels not online-only, etc) at the local level. Furthermore, it could mean the establishment of requirements for consultation on how the consultation was managed and how input was taken into account that is valid for all draft policy documents (i.e. TJTPs as part of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership). On the other hand, it could mean the establishment of regular reporting cycles during the implementation and monitoring of the green transition towards climate neutrality (TJTPs), measured by disaggregated data that captures the lived reality of the diversity of people living in Europe and engagement of civil society across all stages of policy making.

It will be imperative for Member States to go, in the drafting and implementation of their TJTPs, beyond an exclusive focus on industrial strategy and jobs to also focus on living conditions (e.g. energy poverty). **For a truly fair and equal process, some specific attention must be given to specific groups more likely to be excluded, or naturally more likely not to engage in the traditional stakeholder engagement processes.** The framework for stakeholder engagement will therefore have to deliberately engage with vulnerable and 'hard-to-reach' groups such as representatives of communities in rural areas, the elderly, people living in poverty, and other groups defined locally as the most vulnerable (e.g. women, youth, people with disabilities, cultural minorities, unemployed, senior citizens, rural communities). User-friendly participatory tools should be made accessible to all these local stakeholders, as individual citizens. As opposed to organised civil society that is usually aware of existing public consultations and of the available tools to get involved in the transition process, individual citizens that are not part of a specific group are not encouraged and informed on how they could individually get involved in the process of transition in the area they live in (e.g. via citizen panels). Therefore, as the just transition process and actions to be taken should involve everybody, be known, understood, and accepted by citizens, special attention should be paid to 'simple' citizens in order to encourage their involvement in the just transition and development process.

Approaches for action and first ideas for the implementation phase

Citizens' involvement should be widely encouraged, and **user-friendly participatory tools** should be widely promoted at the local level and differentiated by the specific target groups for engagement. These participatory tools could be at the same time developed by public authorities (mandatory), but also by local civil society (schools and universities, private sector, NGOs, etc.) using simple, everyday language. Various targeted types of participatory tools should be used, taking into account the audience and building on existing engagement mechanisms and networks (e.g. Local Government and local partnerships). Children should also be involved in the participatory process through different applications, games and other 'informal education' (e.g. animated movies) with a specific participatory purpose. Traditional and innovative tools should be used in a complementary manner and also developed together with the community. Methods that could be used to improve citizens' involvement could make use of online applications available to citizens through their smartphones, online platforms, public workshops and conferences, public hearings, public debates, surveys, focus groups, and open hours offered by public authorities to citizens.

Focus area 5 – Supporting capacity building of stakeholders

Problem description/Issues to be tackled

In order for the just transition process to be truly inclusive and relevant to the problems a given region is experiencing, it requires the inclusion of even the smallest local stakeholders, such as smaller municipalities, SMEs and micro-enterprises, individual citizens, local NGOs, etc. The opportunities that the Just Transition Mechanism offers should not be limited only to those stakeholders who possess high capacities to engage in innovative and transformative processes, such as the larger municipalities, companies, sector-related trade unions or energy utilities. While these usually lead the planning process using their own resources and experiences, **there is an urgent need to support smaller and less resourceful stakeholder groups that do not have the capacities or know-how to appropriately engage in the transition process.** Often, smaller stakeholders (and even some of the larger ones) do not have the experience, knowledge or contacts with experts to develop and implement plans, strategies or projects that would make it possible to achieve the goal of a real just transition in the region. When stating that we *will be leaving no one behind*, the issue of building the capacity of all those involved is all the more relevant, as it is precisely the less prepared and resourceful groups of citizens that we should target with support mechanisms.

Based on the experience of NGOs working on just transition on the ground in many EU countries, this issue has already been presented to the European Commission during dedicated meetings. There, the discussion revolved not only around the capacity problems and links that have been identified for achieving the goal of a just transition across coal, oil shale, peat, and other carbon-intensive regions, but also some ideas for resolving them.⁹

In terms of identifying the problems, it has been noted that there are barriers to engagement in the transition due to a **lack of awareness among various stakeholders of funding options and processes**, as well hurdles and obstacles in developing and implementing projects that truly create a climate-neutral economy, deliver jobs and address local challenges (such as depopulation and low quality of life). In terms of the technical assistance that has been provided, it has been observed that there is a lack of knowledge on the ground of existing technical assistance opportunities that would address the specific local needs. Furthermore, there continues to be a lack of such tools available for and tailored to smaller actors. In addition, due to the speed at which the planning process was conducted and the lack of very clear guidelines, the available just transition funding is frequently treated as an opportunity for financing disjointed projects, meaning that there is a need for translating the broader TJTPs into more specific guidelines for smaller stakeholders to ensure that the entire region can participate in the wider long-term comprehensive plan for the area. The dominance of large enterprises and incumbents in calls for proposals will be accompanied by negative implications for economic diversification and the ability to increase socioeconomic resilience and to tap into the full potential of just transition in the regions. The rapidity and time restrictions with which the process is taking place itself pose the danger of leaving out those groups of stakeholders who are entering it with lower capacity.

Certain barriers to unlocking the potential of the JTM and involving all relevant stakeholders can be also country-specific – for instance traditionally centralised administrative systems in some parts of

⁹ The Europe Beyond Coal Just Transition group will be issuing a paper on this issue within the next few weeks.

the European Union, lack of real (de facto, not just de jure) governance and administrative capacity and budget opportunities on regional or even local level, the lack of past and present cooperation between different stakeholders at the regional or local level (i.e. two municipalities with historical coal background, belonging to neighbouring regions, but with no history whatsoever of mutual projects and initiatives). The lack of real democratic working mechanisms to actively involve the stakeholders on the ground (such as local governments and other local stakeholders) in constant dialogue on the issues of Just Transition can only intensify the problems discussed above. If measures are not put in place for the **empowerment of the local stakeholders to act as subjects, as opposed to objects** of the Just Transition Mechanism, then the aspirations of the union in that respect will be at considerable levels of risk of being failed.

In this regard, JTF could represent a unique opportunity to support local authorities in developing capacity building and implementing opportunities. Therefore, a very pressing issue is certainly also the mechanism by which the actual funds will be distributed and used to support concrete projects – if the JTF management is located centrally in some ministry at the national level (similar to the ERDF funds for instance) with a vague “shared responsibility” for projects selection and approval at a regional level (NUTS 2), where, as stated above, the de facto governance is often either completely missing or barely functioning due to lack of capacity and other structural issues, then “leaving no one behind” will simply become a chimaera.

A final issue that must be noted is that of language limitations and lack of access to EU-level knowledge/information for small local entities: many smaller stakeholders do not speak English and are not used to seeking information at EU level. They need relevant information to be provided to them through local channels and in their local languages and in a form that is easily accessible to them.

Approaches for action and first ideas for the implementation phase

In order to tackle this issue, the Just Transition Platform should:

- Advocate for establishing regional just transition contact points, at which information, support, knowledge and tailor-made training workshops and courses would be provided to local authorities/stakeholders with less capacity to aid them in any issues they have with the process. These contact points could also be actively approaching stakeholders via different means and communication channels (e.g. social media, TV, radio, etc.)
- Provide support for staffing costs to ensure adequate personnel is available to engage in just transition planning and project development. This would need to cover not only regional authorities, but also smaller municipalities, and include provision for staff who can support smaller stakeholders in developing good-quality projects.
- Organise workshops and training courses targeting smaller actors in the regions to help with project development and their decarbonisation plans (such activities have already been implemented on a small scale by the Polish Green Network in Eastern Wielkopolska, as mentioned in the good example table of Focus area 1).
- Prepare a common methodology for monitoring and evaluating the just transition process as a whole, regarding, e.g., such aspects as measuring the impact of implemented projects, employment rates, population changes, environmental tipping points, etc.

- Ensure that all relevant material is available in local languages and in a form that is accessible also to stakeholders with less experience in participating in such processes.
- Introduce measures aimed at improving local participatory governance, for example by introducing more opportunities for involvement on NUTS3 and NUTS4 levels, and even manage and govern the JTF with the institutionalised involvement of stakeholders from these levels. In that respect, certainly good examples and possible approaches can be adopted from the LEADER approach and even the transition from LEADER to Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) which was introduced in response to the failure of traditional, top-down policies to address problems faced by many rural areas in Europe. This approach, although extremely novice in 1990 is now a well-proven mechanism to engage the energy and resources of people and local organisations as development actors rather than beneficiaries, empowering them to contribute to the future development of their rural areas by forming area-based Local Action Group (LAG) partnerships between the public, private and civil sectors. Certain parallels can be drawn between the hurdles of rural regions back then and those of coal and other carbon-intensive regions today. The solution is certainly a more participatory approach to area and region development directly involving local representatives in the development and delivery of local strategies or JTTPs, decision-making and resource allocation. The added value of this approach would be associated with local empowerment through local JTTPs development, delivery and resource allocation. Even forming a national action group in each country, comprising representatives of the carbon-intensive regions at NUTS4, national authorities, and actors from the private and civic sectors is a possible solution worth exploring. In other to ensure participatory governance such formats should by default function in an open manner, formally attracting relevant stakeholders from the various sectors (public, private and civil) at relevant stages of their work, in a way very similar to which the working groups on the issues of Just transition were formed by the EC/DG Regio.

Much of this dedicated support and measures suggested above need to be introduced urgently (by mid-2022), to ensure that the just transition process is as inclusive as possible and continues to head in the right direction.

Good examples/practices from other regional or thematic contexts

As a relevant good practice for this focus area, 'Peer Parliaments' are highlighted as an interesting and effective participatory tool for involving citizens (see for example the [European Climate Pact's peer parliaments](#)).

Focus area 6 – Engaging social economy, research and private sector in planning and implementation process

Problem description/Issues to be tackled

To ensure a general adhesion to the just transition, **all the sectors of activities should be involved**, especially those which can have an impact on the transition process. Research, private and the social economy sector will all need to be involved in the transition. Quite often, the focus is on larger structures, but not so much on the smaller ones, even though they are the ones that have the most

impact locally. Indeed, they all have the power, even at a small scale to contribute to and participate in the transition, provided that they are able to anticipate the transition for themselves and are encouraged to take the necessary steps in the right direction.

For example, concerning **social economy actors, are often not considered partners in the discussions regarding the just transition**. However, a lot of social economy organisations are active on the ground in the just transition process, through activities in the circular economy, agriculture, innovation, while, at the same time, ensuring for some of those organisations the integration of people with support needs on the labour market (work integration social enterprises). Those organisations can help, at the local level to create new activities, support reskilling and upskilling needs, and ensure no one is left behind in the transition. Another crucial reason why social economy actors should be engaged in the just transition process lies in their democratic aspect. This **internal democracy** ensures that all the workers are adhering to the organisation's orientation and debates take place internally. This way all the workers in the organisation are aware of the transition and adhere to the process. This is also a way of raising awareness of the need for a transition issue. Involving social economy actors in the just transition process is a key point to ensure that the transition is just. To involve those actors, actions must go in two directions, first, the public authorities should be made aware of their potential role and take action to acknowledge them. Second, if for some organisations in the social economy sector, being involved in a just transition is obvious, it is not the case for everyone and there is a need to encourage them to do so through policy and financial incentives, which are key for ensuring active involvement and social cohesion, as well as providing essential and desirable services (e.g. work integration, elder care, circular economy services, etc.). Any action to engage the social economy in the planning and implementation process should take into account those two issues.

Approaches for action and first ideas for the implementation phase

Possible actions that the Working Group can take in the upcoming year(s) to tackle these issues is for example:

- Collect good practices of just transition processes where social economy actors have been involved in the just transition process.
- Prepare an analyse to showcase how social economy actors can be active actors in the just transition process illustrated with a collection of good practices. This analysis should also include the examination of how embedded the individual sectors are in the economic life and value chain of the region(s).
- Raising awareness actions towards local and regional authorities on the role that social economy actors can play through exchange of good practices, webinars (link it to the social economy action plans activities foreseen for example). This should also include the involvement of private companies of all sizes, given that their internal transition strategies could affect and benefit the regions where they are based.
- Collect information about the needs for proximity and social economy organisations to be more involved in the just transition process.
- Raising awareness actions towards proximity and social economy organisations about their role in the just transition (through their national & local networks)
- Developing and improving ways to ensure the flow of information and collaboration between social economy, research and private sector, including for instance Horizon calls and incentives for the private sector to collaborate with social economy actors.

Good examples/practices from other regional or thematic contexts

[The JustGreen project](#) showcased that in Gmina Swietochlowice (Poland), a coal region, the municipality is taking the social economy turn by creating cooperatives to encourage the employment of the most disadvantaged. They also use social clauses in public procurement, to promote the integration of people with support needs in the labour market. The tasks concerned by those initiatives are building renovation, green spaces maintenance, etc.

Focus area 7 – Strengthening social dialogue

Problem description/Issues to be tackled

In its [Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all](#), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) makes clear that an effective involvement of workers and their trade union representatives is an essential element of any just transition to climate neutrality.

In line with the ILO core standards, the European Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union stipulates the right to information and consultation of workers (Art. 27), the right of collective bargaining which included the right to strike (Art. 28) and the right to fair and just working conditions (Art.31)¹⁰. Articles 151-156 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union establish the provisions for Social Dialogue at the union and national levels¹¹. Its role is further underlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals¹² and the European Pillar of Social Rights¹³.

Despite these provisions at the Union level social dialogue and collective bargaining systems have been weakened in many EU Member States through changing labour codes undermining the fundamental rights to collective bargaining and the right to strike¹⁴. The relevance of these provisions is significant to the TJTPs as they should lead to **economic diversification and the creation of sustainable employment** which is based on the fundamental rights to join a trade union, the right to collective bargaining and the rights to information and consultation.

The negotiation of the TJTPs through social dialogue and collective bargaining indeed helps increase the social acceptance of climate policies while anticipating and managing the potential negative socio-economic consequences that the transition will have on employment, working conditions, skills and the economic development of a company, sector, region, or country. The rapid dynamics of changes

¹⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>

¹¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>

¹² <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights_en

¹⁴ To give an example: in Romania the labour code was changed in 2012 introducing representativeness thresholds that effectively curtail the bargaining at sector level. In Greece collective bargaining coverage decreased dramatically with the bailout programmes and recent changes in the labour code undermine the right to strike.

in working conditions have been exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic through which teleworking, digitalisation and flexible contracts have become the new norm.

In some Member States, trade unions are a strong part of the democratic system and a natural partner in the negotiations of the transition process (see section below on good practice examples). It is, however, not always the case that public authorities and employers engage in meaningful social dialogue and collective bargaining with affected workers. As highlighted above, in countries with strong industrial relations systems, trade unions are still an effective partner, however, the economic pressure on sectors and companies also puts pressure on industrial relations with strong lobbying to undermine collective bargaining systems and even actively encouraging trade union-busting strategies in some countries. In other cases, it is not clear, how opinions and conclusions from social dialogue are accounted for by relevant authorities. This is highly problematic in the context of meaningful and effective engagement of trade unions and the pursuing efforts to maintain quality of employment in the transition process.

The WG members ETUC and IndustriAll Europe recently conducted a survey among their affiliated trade unions to evaluate their involvement in the design and implementation of TJTPs. While the survey highlighted some good practices in countries with a well-established tradition of social dialogue, it also showed that many countries are still currently not involving workers and their trade unions in these discussions – or in a very superficial manner. Out of 21 countries that answered the survey, 10 indicated that they had not been involved in the design of the TJTPs. In addition, several countries who indicated they had been somehow involved in the drafting of their TJTP said their involvement has not been sufficient and their input is not properly taken into consideration.

Approaches for action and first ideas for the implementation phase

In light of this analysis, it is crucial to **strengthen social dialogue across all Member States** in line with the fundamental principles highlighted above and to monitor the effective involvement of social partners in the various TJTPs. This would increase ownership and the social acceptance of those plans by the communities of workers directly affected by the changes. It would also ensure that workers are adequately supported in their transition, that alternative job opportunities are created in the same regions and that these opportunities (e.g. new green jobs in the renewable energies sector) are adapted to the skills of the workforce. Finally, ensuring an effective social dialogue and collective bargaining would ensure that new jobs created are quality jobs – which is not always the case at the moment. For example, a study conducted by Szpor and al (2019) shows that for the same level of education, “*salary in hard coal and lignite mining is almost fifty per cent higher than in the construction sector and almost forty per cent higher than in manufacturing and across the whole economy*”¹⁵. A just transition cannot be achieved if social dialogue is undermined, as it is the main tool to ensure the quality of employment.

In order to tackle this issue, the WG should:

- Conduct regular analysis to monitor the status of involvement of Trade Union organisations in the design and development of TJTPs. If problems are identified in specific countries, the JTP and the European Commission’s country desk officers should liaise with the national public authorities to resolve the problem.

¹⁵ Aleksander Szpor, 2019, *The changing role of coal in the Polish economy – restructuring and (regional) just transition in Towards a just transition: coal, cars and the world of work*, ETUI.

- Promote the use of existing social dialogue structures as well as collective bargaining in all EU Member States to develop TJTPs. One-shot consultation gathering all stakeholders with only limited time to speak and with no feedback on how the input has been taken into consideration is not sufficient.
- Evaluate the proposed TJTPs submitted by Member States in light of the governance and consultation process. Any plan that would not have properly involved social partners should not be accepted by the European Commission.
- Evaluate the proposed TJTPs submitted by Member States in light of the social and labour dimension. TJTPs should be subject to social conditionality. Any plan that would not sufficiently address issues related to employment, future working conditions, gender equality at work and training should not be accepted by the European Commission.

Good examples/practices from other regional or thematic contexts

As noted in the problem description, there are some Member States in which trade unions are a strong part of the democratic system and a natural partner in the negotiations of the transition process. In Finland, trade unions have been part of the Climate Policy Roundtable supporting the implementation of the Finish target to achieve climate neutrality by 2035¹⁶. In Germany, the Commission for Growth, Structural Change and Employment that developed recommendations for the phase-out of coal included representatives from the trade unions at confederal and sectoral levels. The final recommendations include strong recommendations for effective collective bargaining¹⁷. The Plan Del Carbon and the Acuerdo Centrales Térmicas en Cierre have been signed between representatives of regions, employers and trade unions and enshrine a strong participatory process of trade unions in the Just Transition process¹⁸. At company level, there are also some good examples of collective agreements negotiated by trade unions and employers to facilitate a just transition of the workforce (e.g. ENI, ENEL, Renault ElectricCity, Projekt Zukunft from Daimler, Future Pact from Volkswagen, etc.).

¹⁶ <https://ym.fi/en/climate-policy-round-table#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20Climate,carbon%20neutral%20society%20by%202035.&text=Climate%20Policy%20Round%20Table%20was,during%20the%20current%20government%20term>

¹⁷ Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment – Final Report, January 2019, p.70: “Depending on the personal situation of the affected employees, binding collective agreements must be made between the two sides of the industry, e.g. to ensure placement in skilled jobs and compensation for lower wages, apprenticeships and further training, compensation for financial losses or for early retirement, assistance in obtaining adjustment benefit (APG), compensation for pension deductions or other early retirement factors.”

¹⁸ https://www.transicionjusta.gob.es/reactivacion_comarcas/Plan2019-2027-ides-idweb.asp

6. Workplan

The following section includes an overview of deliverables, milestones and WG meetings both completed and outstanding along a timeline.

Deliverables, milestones and timing

The following table gives an overview of the achieved and next milestones and deliverables (to be reached by the WG throughout the next two years. The timing of milestones and deliverables after mid-2022 is indicative, hence in *italic*.

| Time | Milestone (M) / Deliverable (D) |
|---------------------------------|---|
| September/October 2021 | M: Call for applications for JTP WGs (M) |
| 15 November 2021 | M: Formal establishment of WGs – at public JTP event, session “Launch of JTP Working Groups on carbon-intensive regions” |
| February 2022 | M: Six Needs assessment interviews held with first circle WG members |
| 16 March 2022 | D: Draft Scoping Paper |
| 28 March – 11 April 2022 | M: Scoping Paper Consultation with the second circle WG members |
| 10 May | D: Final Scoping Paper and presentation at public JTP event, session on the JTP WGs “Getting started! JTP Working Groups: scope and engagement” on Tuesday, 10th May 2022 14:00-15:30 |
| <i>October 2022</i> | D: Draft Implementation Plan |
| <i>January 2023</i> | D: Final Implementation Plan |
| <i>From January 2023</i> | M: Implementation of actions |
| <i>December 2023</i> | M: Finalisation of activities |

Meetings

Below is a table of WG meetings both held so far and to be held in the future. Again, the timing of meetings after May 2022 is indicative, hence in *italic*. The last column indicates the format of the meetings.

| Time | Meeting | Format |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 18 November 2021 | First WG meeting | Virtual |
| 23 February 2022 | Second WG meeting | Virtual |
| <i>16 May 2022</i> | Third WG meeting | Virtual |
| <i>November 2022</i> | Fourth WG meeting | <i>tbd</i> |
| <i>May 2023</i> | Fifth WG meeting | <i>tbd</i> |
| <i>November 2023</i> | Sixth WG meeting | <i>tbd</i> |

Annexes

Annex 1: List of members of the WG

| Organisation |
|--|
| Member states authorities |
| Romanian Ministry of European Investments and Projects |
| Greek Task Force for Just Transition Fund of the Management Unit SA (MOU SA) |
| Local and regional authorities |
| Intermediate Body of the Wałbrzych Agglomeration |
| Midlands Regional Transition Team – Local Authorities |
| Pernik Municipality |
| Associations representing regional, local, urban and other public authorities |
| Association of Cities and Regions for Sustainable Resource Management |
| Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) |
| Forschungszentrum Jülich GmbH |
| Trakia University |
| European Association of Development Agencies (EURADA) |
| Organisations representing economic and social partners |
| European Network of Social Integration Enterprises |
| European Trade Union Confederation |
| industriAll European Trade Union |
| Bodies representing civil society, such as non-governmental organisations |
| CEE Bankwatch Network |
| Center for the Study of Democracy |
| European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) |
| Just Transition Institute Greece |
| Social Platform |
| Valea Jiului Development Society Project |
| WWF |

Annex 2: Summary table of issues and proposed approached for action per each focus area

Focus area 1 – Communicating and raising awareness around just transition

| <i>Issues to be tackled</i> | <i>Proposed approaches for action</i> |
|--|--|
| Lack of awareness about the commitment to, the need for and benefits of the transition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of barriers to awareness about transition and just transition at the local level • Preparing and developing communication strategy guidelines for the local and national level • Developing a European level communication campaign |
| Low trust in the commitment to and likely success of the just transition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing and developing communication strategy guidelines for the local and national level |
| Lack of awareness by authorities about the groups they need to reach out to and inform them about just transition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of barriers to awareness about transition and just transition at the local level • Developing regional just transition observatories or contact points |
| Lack of capacity of smaller actors to find out and develop knowledge on the processes of just transition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing regional just transition observatories or contact points |
| Lack of capacity of smaller actors to find out and develop knowledge about just transition projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing regional just transition observatories or contact points |
| Lack of understanding about EU processes and commitments, with no contextualisation of the challenges and opportunities at the local level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing regional just transition observatories or contact points |

Focus area 2 – Stakeholder identification and stakeholder involvement (measuring, monitoring and impact)

| <i>Issues to be tackled</i> | <i>Proposed approaches for action</i> |
|--|---|
| Lack of measurement and accountability for stakeholder engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a set of indicators to measure stakeholder engagement in the implementation of TJTPs • Ensuring the most affected participate in the implementation, monitoring and revision of plans • The development of guidelines on how to ensure broad and inclusive participation (which could also be broadly used in the rollout of various funds in the future). |
| Varying methods, depth, and quality of engagement | |
| Lack of comprehensive guidance and robust performance indicators | |
| Lack of pro-active forms of bringing underrepresented groups into the discussion | |

Focus area 3 – Knowledge exchanges across the EU on just transition lessons learned

| <i>Issues to be tackled</i> | <i>Proposed approaches for action</i> |
|--|--|
| Need to exchange more good practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a compendium of good practices on stakeholder engagement in different Member States. |
| Lack of capacity of regional actors to engage and spend time collecting and digesting information about transitions in areas other than their immediate territory. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify categories of needs (practices and processes) on which knowledge sharing would be useful, including |

| | |
|---|--|
| Cultural and language barriers to sharing experience | <p>to inform the development of information sharing databases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and identify the most useful formats for knowledge sharing for different stakeholders (mapping after consultation); this should include a deep dive into what features an accessible and user-friendly database of experts, projects and practices could look like, as envisaged by the Just Transition Platform. |
| Information and knowledge exchanges, even where already facilitated, might not reach all those who would benefit. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify types of stakeholders and the barriers they face to access and understand information on just transition from other regions. • Explore how information and knowledge might be collated and conveyed by regional hubs/centres for just transition. |

Focus area 4 – Engaging the ‘hard-to-reach’ and ‘vulnerable’ groups

| <i>Issues to be tackled</i> | <i>Proposed approaches for action</i> |
|---|---|
| Energy poverty, increase in energy price and need to phase out coal and fossil fuel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage broadly with citizens, all affected by the increase in energy price, facilitate the establishment of energy communities, provide a specific focus on already energy poor and most at risks from a health perspective (elderly, children, etc.) |
| Engagement with civil society | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set clear consultation structures, timetables and resources that strengthen the involvement of CSOs, in all steps of the process |
| Lack of engagement with youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise exchanges with universities • Develop toolbox on how to engage with the youth |

Focus area 5 – Supporting capacity building of stakeholders

| <i>Issues to be tackled</i> | <i>Proposed approaches for action</i> |
|---|--|
| Low capacities of LRAs and stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange of solutions on how to support LRAs • Developing training toolkit to increase capacity |

Focus area 6 – Engaging social economy, research and private sector in planning and implementation process

| <i>Issues to be tackled</i> | <i>Proposed approaches for action</i> |
|--|---|
| Lack of inclusion of private sector stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange on different financial mechanisms to involve private sector in the transition process |
| Lack of inclusion of social economy stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect good practices of what social economy actors can do in the just transition and prepare an analysis with concrete proposals • Disseminate this through webinars / meetings of LRA |
| Lack of concern from social economy actors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect information about their needs to be more involved in the transition process • Raising awareness activities towards social economy actors on the role they can play in the transition |

Focus area 7 – Strengthening social dialogue

| Issues to be tackled | Proposed approaches for action |
|--|--|
| <p>Lack of involvement of trade unions in the design and implementation of JTTP in some Member States.</p> <p>Lack of social dialogue and collective bargaining in some Member States.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular analysis to monitor the status of involvement of Trade Union organisations in the design and development of Just Transition Territorial Plans. If problems identified, liaise with national public authorities. • Promote the use of existing social dialogue structures as well as collective bargaining in all EU Member States to develop Just Transition Territorial Plans. • Evaluate the proposed TJTPs submitted by Member States in light of the governance and consultation process. Any plan that would not have properly involved social partners should not be accepted by the European Commission. • Evaluate the proposed TJTPs submitted by Member States in light of the social and labour dimension. Any plan that would not sufficiently address issues related to employment, working conditions and training should not be accepted by the European Commission. |

Annex 3: Respondents to consultation (second circle members of the WG)

| Organisation |
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| Member states authorities |
| Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic |
| Local and regional authorities |
| Region Norrbotten |
| Marshal's Office of the Malopolska Region |
| Offaly County Council |
| Associations representing regional, local, urban and other public authorities |
| Gal Sulcis Ilesiente Capoterra e Campidano di Cagliari |
| Network of Cities with Lakes |
| Organisations representing economic and social partners |
| European Roundtable on Climate Change and Sustainable Transition |
| HU Coal Commission Secretariat |
| Heves County Chamber of commerce and industry |
| Euracoal |
| UNESID (Spanish Steel Industry Business Trade) |
| Bodies representing civil society, such as non-governmental organisations |
| Instrat Foundation |
| Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe |
| Energiaklub Climate and Policy Institute |
| Energy Management Institute |
| Digital Communication Network Global |
| EuroHealthNet |
| The Green Tank |
| Generation Climate Europe AISBL |

