



Just Transition Platform Working Groups

Action 3: Toolkit for communicating
about the just transition with citizens
and municipalities

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*Regional and
Urban Policy*

Action 3: Toolkit for communicating about the just transition with citizens and municipalities

Action leader: WWF European Policy Office

Action contributors: Social Platform, Midlands Region (Ireland), Forschungszentrum Jülich, Valea Jiului Society, Digital Communication Network Hub South East Europe, Estonian Ministry of Finance, Coal Commission Secretariat at Eszterházy Károly Catholic University.

Category: Horizontal

The **Just Transition Platform (JTP) Working Groups (WG)**, established in November 2021, bring together all stakeholders from across Europe with a common concern for the people and places affected by the transition to a climate-neutral economy. The WG for **Steel, Cement and Chemicals** each have a focus on a specific carbon-intensive sector that is heavily impacted by the transition, while a fourth WG focuses on **Horizontal Stakeholder Strategy**.

After finalising their [Scoping Papers](#), outlining the focus areas and objectives of their WG, the WG members developed a [common Implementation Plan](#), which sets out their 17 actions. This plan was finalised and published in April 2023. Throughout the rest of the year, the action leaders, together other WG members contributing to the action, have been implementing their respective action.

This document presents the final output of Action 3.

Disclaimer:

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Introduction

Challenges addressed by Action 3

This action emerged from discussions amongst Working Group (WG) members on the frequent misunderstandings and miscommunication that members had observed when it came to the just transition at the local level. This was due to a lack of information among citizens and local stakeholders, as well as challenges from local governments and municipalities in communicating about the just transition, particularly what it meant and could look like in their unique local context. It was recognised that resources were needed to support such actors in clearly communicating about the just transition and raise awareness about it, that could be adapted to local context.

Objectives of Action 3

The aim of this toolkit is to develop a set of resources that could be used and adapted to communicate about the just transition at the local level. It seeks to primarily support local-level public authorities and municipalities to communicate about the just transition with citizens and to raise awareness among citizens and municipalities about what the Just Transition Fund (JTF) does and how to make use of it.

Stakeholders targeted by Action 3

The stakeholders targeted with this action are those working at municipal and local levels, such as municipalities, local governments, public bodies, and citizen groups who are engaging and communicating with citizens on the just transition.

How this action was implemented

As part of this action, a survey was disseminated to stakeholders involved in the just transition process across Europe, in order to gather input to better understand the needs of municipalities, public bodies, citizen groups and other stakeholders involved in the just transition with regard to effective just transition communication and awareness raising. This action was also represented twice at the Just Transition Platform (JTP) conference, once after the initial survey results were gathered and once after the action was finalised to present the outputs. This led to engagement, feedback, and input with the wider just transition community on the action and how it could best be targeted and applied.

Toolkit for communicating about the just transition with citizens and municipalities

This toolkit consists of four resources, each which can be used independently or in complementarity with the other resources. The resources are:

1. A short guide to the just transition:

This short guide explains the just transition in plain English for use in communications at local level. It can be translated and adapted to be relevant and useful in different contexts.

2. How to adapt 'A short guide to the just transition' for use in your local context:

This guide contains pointers for adapting the short guide. To facilitate wider use, the short guide is also available in an [editable version](#).

3. Glossary for understanding the just transition and its framework:

This glossary contains some quick reference short definitions for terms that may come up in discussions around the just transition. It is based on the experience of local stakeholders and is not exhaustive.

4. Top 10 tips for communicating and raising awareness about the just transition at the local level:

These tips draw upon both results from the survey on communications conducted, and the experience of working group members in communicating about the just transition.

1. A short guide to the just transition

What is the just transition?

The just transition is a planned process of moving to a low-carbon economy in a way that is fair, inclusive and positive for the communities concerned. It involves developing green businesses and industry with a focus on creating decent work opportunities and other benefits for the local community.

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Why do we need the just transition?

In order to tackle pressing environmental challenges like climate change, pollution and loss of nature, we need to transition towards greener, resilient, sustainable and climate-neutral economies and societies. This requires action from governments, businesses and citizen groups. This will mean moving from fossil fuel-based energy systems and carbon-intensive industries to cleaner renewable energy sources and less polluting industry. This is not just a 'technical' change – it has implications for employees, citizens and communities. It is important to plan the change in a participatory way to make sure no one loses out, and to ensure that the whole community can benefit from new opportunities.

Under the Paris Agreement (2015) almost 200 nations committed to transform their development strategies in order to limit global warming. To be consistent with the Paris Agreement's terms, EU leaders have agreed to a target of net zero emissions by 2050. This means, for example, that EU countries need to phase out coal and peat as energy sources, so plans are underway to close many coal mines and peat works.

What does the just transition involve?

A just transition involves maximising the social and economic opportunities of climate action, while minimising and carefully managing any challenges – including through effective citizen consultation and dialogue among all impacted groups, and respect for fundamental labour principles and rights. It includes careful attention to where jobs will be lost, support for reskilling and re-employment opportunities, assistance for economic diversification, promotion of clean energy solutions and attention to the wider social implications of economic change (migration, gender equality, heritage etc.).

How does the EU support the just transition?

The EU has established the [Just Transition Mechanism](#) (JTM) to support regions that face the biggest challenges and will experience the most significant social and economic impacts in moving away from fossil fuels and developing greener economies. The mechanism consists of a dedicated JTF plus a public sector loan facility and budgetary

guarantee scheme. This short guide focuses on the JTM, but just transition projects may also be funded under other EU funding programmes¹.

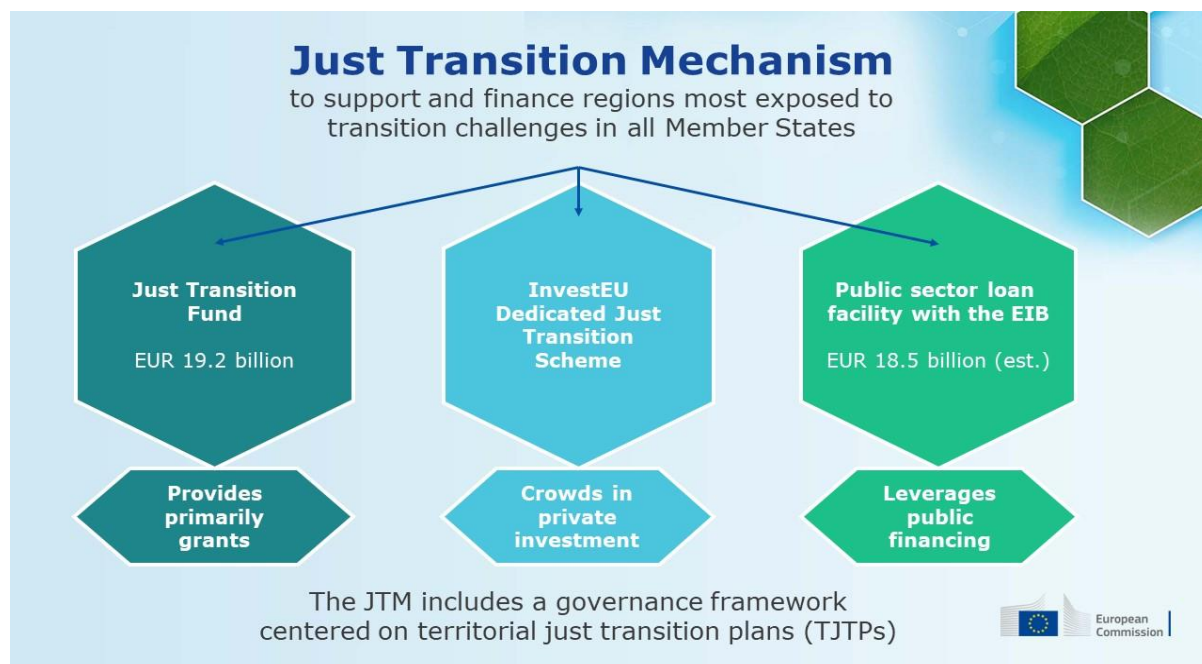


Figure 1. The three pillars of the Just Transition Mechanism

Just Transition Fund (JTF)

The JTF² supports regions that are expected to be most negatively impacted by the transition towards climate neutrality, helping to finance economic diversification and related activities including:

- workforce adaptation – training and reskilling of workers for the green economy, job-search assistance etc.;
- economic resilience and diversity – investments in small and medium-sized enterprises and creation of new firms;
- low-carbon solutions – clean energy, energy efficiency, transformation of existing carbon-intensive plants and factories and sustainable local mobility;
- environmental rehabilitation and land repurposing;
- research and innovation;
- education and social inclusion.

The regions identified across the EU for support are shown on the map below.

¹ Including EU Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund, and European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

² The Fund is governed by the [Just Transition Fund regulation](#) and the [Common Provisions Regulation](#).

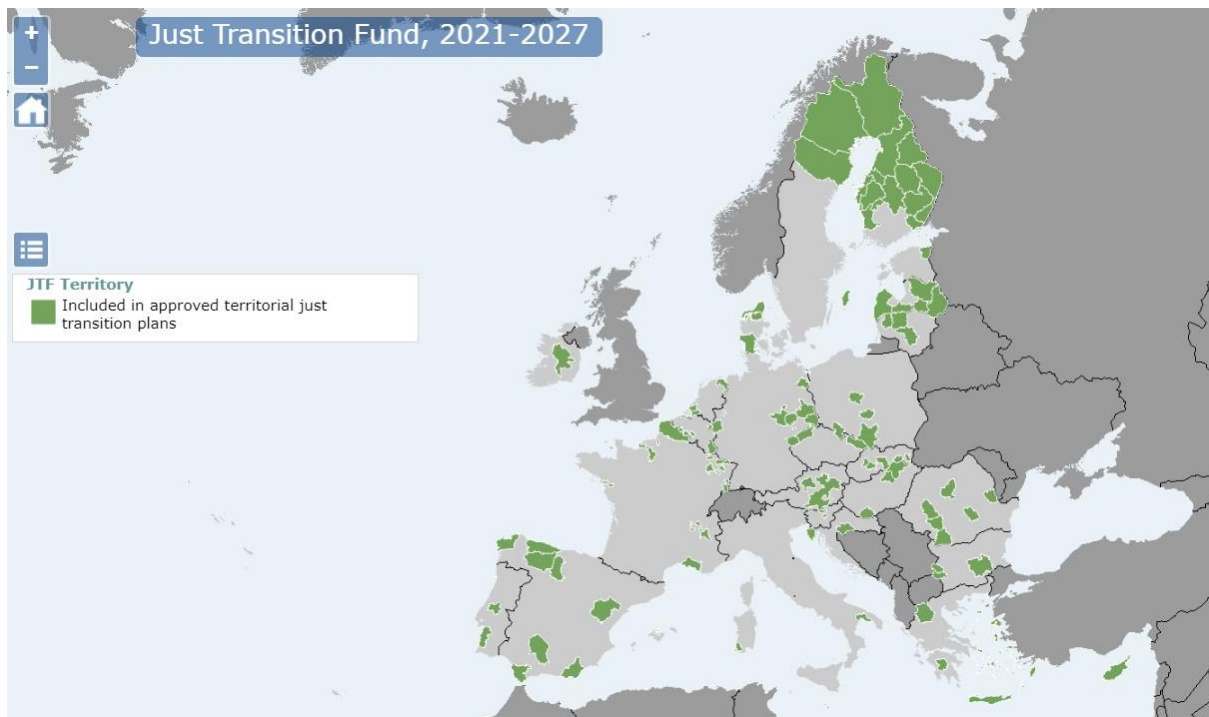


Figure 2. Proposed and approved JTF regions (as of the end of 2023)

What happens at the regional level?

Regional plans for the just transition

Funding has been awarded to the identified regions based on Territorial Just Transition Plans³ (TJTJs), prepared by Member States with the relevant local and regional authorities⁴. Each TJTJ outlines the transition process for the specific region, setting out the local social, economic, and environmental challenges stemming from the phasing out of fossil fuel-related activities, or the decarbonisation of carbon-intensive industries or businesses. They describe the activities to be supported by the JTF, and outline the intended use of the other pillars ('Invest EU' and public sector loan facility).

Overseeing just transition plan implementation

National or regional [managing authorities](#) are responsible for selecting the projects to be funded. In each region a programme monitoring committee is also established, comprising representatives from civil society, business, and others, to ensure local consultation and transparency.

³ Funding awarded in accordance with approved TJTJs is disbursed as part of Member States' [Cohesion funds](#).

⁴ TJTJs are also coordinated with National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), which lay out how each EU member state intend to meet EU climate and energy targets for 2030.

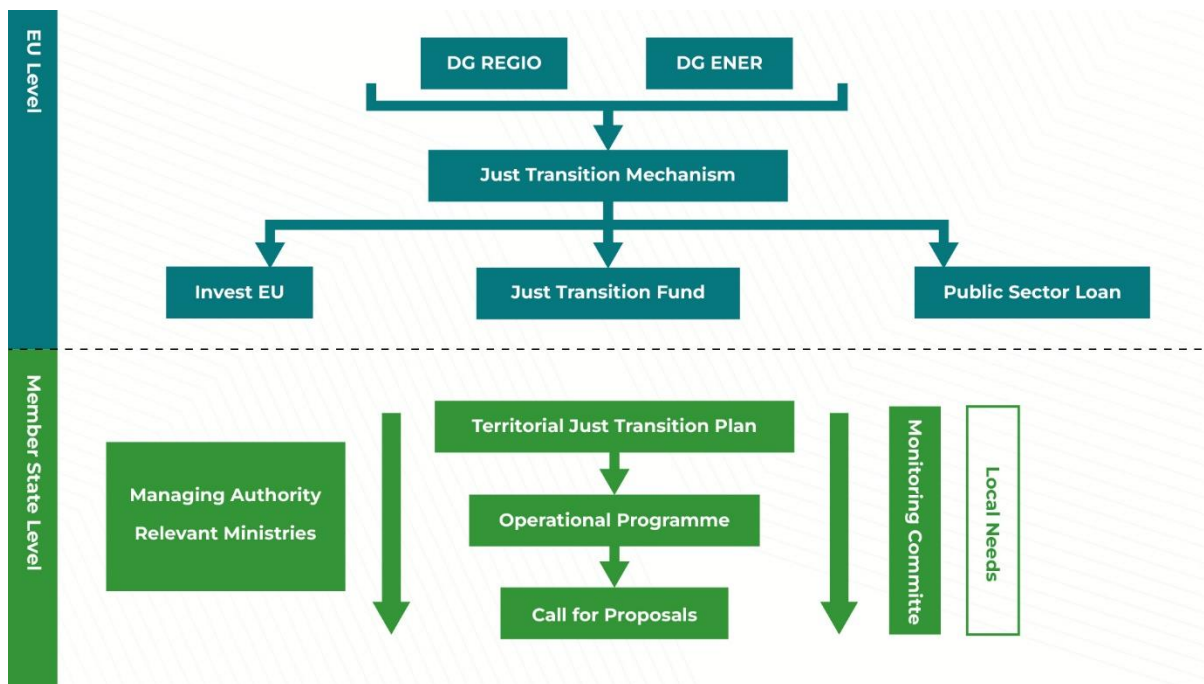


Figure 3. The JTF explained at Member State level

"The JTF shall contribute to the single specific objective of enabling regions and people to address the social, employment, economic and environmental impacts of the transition towards the Union's 2030 targets for energy and climate and a climate-neutral economy of the Union by 2050, based on the Paris Agreement."

Regulation (EU) 2021/1056 establishing the Just Transition Fund

Just transition in practice

Each region has its locally specific requirements for the just transition, resulting in a unique set of programme priorities and projects. You can find out more about the priorities in your region by contacting your [managing authority](#). The way the just transition is managed will also depend on local arrangements.

Here's a bit more detail on how just transition can happen in practice.

Defining a just transition programme

In regions participating in the JTM, a just transition programme⁵ is defined to tackle identified challenges in the territory related to addressing the social, employment, economic and environmental impacts of transition towards a climate-neutral economy. Programme objectives are informed by article 8 of the [Just Transition Regulation](#) and may include:

⁵ In some countries EU funds are combined within one programme: in this case there may be a just transition priority as part of the multi-fund programme instead.

- **Economic objectives** e.g. i) promoting economic diversification by supporting productive investments in micro-enterprises, SMEs and economic stakeholders in key sectors; ii) implementation of bottom-up local and regional economic strategies; iii) research, development and innovation activities to contribute to the development of the green and circular economy;
- **Environmental/regeneration objectives** e.g. supporting the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded fossil fuel facilities and regeneration and repurposing of industrial assets; and
- **Sustainable local development/energy/mobility objectives** e.g. providing impacted communities with smart and sustainable mobility options to enable them to benefit directly from the green transition.

These are just examples. There may also be programme areas focused on training & re-employment, research and innovation, social inclusion, clean energy solutions etc.

Implementing the just transition programme through projects

A just transition programme is carried out through different projects and activities, involving a variety of stakeholders. Their combined impact supports the shift to a low-carbon economy. Examples of projects might include:

- up/reskilling projects allowing coal workers to be able to access green jobs;
- investments to improve energy efficiency in buildings (retrofitting projects, heat pumps etc) in the assisted areas;
- information and business support to promote a circular economy and/or to foster economic diversification;
- an observatory to track progress on local and national just transition plans, share reports, data;
- systems for production/storage of clean (renewable) energy and establishment of energy communities;
- repurposing former mining or industrial sites for green economy activity or public use;
- investments in low-carbon transport e.g. supporting bus operators to move to electric vehicles, installation of publicly available fast charge points at community centre sites.

The examples above are suggestions of some of the activities that could be implemented as part of a just transition programme. Each project or activity will be designed to respond to the priority needs of the local situation, providing support for the green transition when other resources are not available.

Managing the just transition (governance structure)

For the just transition to be effective, relevant, and coordinated, a balance between 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' planning and management is needed. A multi-level approach to governance can help ensure that local needs are addressed during implementation. For example, a dedicated platform for wide stakeholder consultation can be established

at local or regional level, ideally in the just transition region. Such a platform can support continuous communication, which is crucial to successful implementation, and can build trust so that local actors participate in a structured way in decision-making on the plans which concern their communities.

At national level, just transition processes typically involve a range of ministries since a variety of issues are included (employment, industry, energy, economy, social affairs, environment, and more). For an effective just transition programme, it is important to have both wide involvement and clear communication across a range of departments, and a clear division of responsibilities.

The effective and efficient implementation of just transition programmes is overseen by monitoring committees. Established by national managing authorities, these involve various relevant stakeholders including economic and social partners and civil society. Monitoring committees might have specific working groups or local committees to support their work. When used well, they enable a diversity of perspectives and expertise to contribute to assessing the progress of just transition programmes and are an important means of transparency and accountability.

Opportunities for learning and support

- The JTP promotes the sharing of knowledge and experience from across the EU via events, technical assistance and a helpdesk. It builds on the work of the [Initiative for Coal Regions in Transition](#), and has dedicated WGs that enable exchanges between a range of just transition stakeholders and the joint production of relevant tools for better transition process implementation. The [JTP Groundwork](#) programme provides technical assistance for the implementation of TJTPs, with an emphasis on increasing local ownership and capacity.
- The [JTPeers](#) initiative has also been launched to connect professionals working on the just transition and support peer exchanges. Good practice examples for policy approaches and projects can also be found in the [JTP Knowledge Repository](#).
- Regions seeking to increase their capacity or knowledge on a range of just transition issues (skills and employment, social development, renewable energy, etc.) can receive tailored technical assistance under the [START](#) programme.
- The [exchangeEU programme](#) supported exchanges between different 'coal+' regions⁶ between 2020 and 2023. The website includes learnings and success stories.

Looking for more information?

You can find out more information about the just transition in your local area via the [managing authority](#) for your country or region. You can [find your region on this map](#) and click through for more information.

⁶ Coal, lignite, peat and oil shale regions.

2. How to adapt 'A short guide to the just transition' for use in your local context

The challenges and opportunities related to the just transition in any particular territory will be unique. Similarly, each territory or district will have a particular range of stakeholders to involve in transition planning and practice, and a specific set of resources to use in the transition (financial, natural, technological, human capital etc.).

In order to share information about the just transition, and thereby ensure wide engagement and collective efforts, the publication 'A short guide to the just transition' can be adapted to local use.

The original version content in English in editable format can be found [here](#).

This information is copyright free and we hope that you will find it useful to translate and adapt, to use as a basis for more targeted communication.

The following table provides tips and recommendations for information to adapt or add to the document, by section, depending on your local context.

Section	Suggestions for adapting the short guide for local use
What is the just transition?	The sub-section 'Why do we need the just transition?' could reference the specific challenges of your local area e.g. which industries are priority for phase out / decarbonisation etc.
What happens at regional level?	<p>Include a link to your relevant TJTP and / or an overview of the plan's priority areas.</p> <p>Include a reference to the local managing authority and other relevant decision-making or monitoring bodies.</p>
Just transition in practice	The general information and range of examples given in this section could be replaced by specific information related to the TJTP in your country or region . For example, you could explain the local just transition programme priorities and objectives, major or innovative projects and the governance model for your region.
Opportunities for learning and support	If your area has been involved in a support programme, for example receiving technical assistance, or participating in a learning exchange you could mention this. You could provide a link e.g. to news article or report about a relevant visit or event.
Looking for more information?	<p>The contact points for managing authorities and other office-bearers responsible for funds and programme management can be inserted as relevant to your location.</p> <p>Monitoring committee details could also be included.</p>

3. Glossary for understanding the just transition and its framework

Please note this glossary is not an exhaustive list of terms related to just transition, and is meant to reflect the terms commonly used or are relevant to the work of the JTP WG members who contributed to this action.

C

Carbon footprint

A measure of the greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere by a particular person, organisation, product, or activity. A bigger carbon footprint means more emissions of carbon dioxide and methane, and therefore a bigger contribution to the climate crisis. Measuring a person's or an organisation's carbon footprint entails looking at both the direct emissions resulting from the burning of fossil fuels for energy production, heating, and land and air travel, and indirect emissions resulting from the production and disposal of all food, manufactured goods, and services they consume.

Carbon-intensive region

Carbon-intensive regions are territories in EU Member States that have carbon-intensive industries (e.g. cement, steel, chemicals, aluminium, fertiliser, or paper production) which contribute in large part to the region's economy.

Circular economy

An economic system based on low-carbon energy and reuse of new materials in order to make products and deliver services in an environmentally sustainable way. Achieving a circular economy means moving away from the current economic model of 'take, make, throw away', in which resources are extracted, turned into products and then discarded or disposed of.

Climate crisis

The serious problems that are being caused by changes in the planet's climate, including weather extremes and natural disasters, ocean acidification and sea-level rise and loss of biodiversity. The consequences of the crisis include health risks, food and water insecurity, economic disruption, displacement, and even violent conflict.

Climate change

Refers to the shift in the Earth's long-term weather patterns and temperatures. Climate change is warming the atmosphere, ocean and land, affecting the balance of ecosystems that support life and biodiversity, and impacting health. It also causes more extreme weather events, such as more intense and/or frequent hurricanes, floods, heat waves, and droughts, and leads to sea-level rise and coastal erosion as a result of ocean warming, melting of glaciers, and loss of ice sheets.

Climate change adaptation

Refers to changes in the way we live, and adjustments to ecological, social or economic systems necessary to limit the negative impacts of climate change. This might include making buildings or infrastructure more resilient, making changes in agriculture to accommodate climate impacts on crops and growing seasons and actions in many other areas. Essentially, climate change mitigation is *preventative*, adaptation is *reactive*.

Climate change mitigation

Actions taken to reduce the production of greenhouse gases or removing these gases from the atmosphere to limit climate change. Reducing or preventing greenhouse gas emissions can be achieved by transitioning to renewable energy sources like wind and solar, using energy more efficiently, adopting low-carbon or carbon-free transportation modalities, promoting sustainable agriculture and land use, and changing production and consumption models and diet behaviours.

Climate neutrality

The state of net zero greenhouse gas emissions, to be achieved by massive reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and the balancing of any remaining emissions by removal of carbon from the atmosphere.

Coal region

Coal regions are territories in EU Member States that practice coal mining or coal-based power generation. These regions are many of the most affected by the transition. The EU's JTM was created to help these regions (and other areas of carbon-intensive industry or mining) achieve transition towards a climate-neutral economy in the fairest way possible, leaving no one behind.

Coal+ region

Regions which extract coal, peat, lignite, and oil shale.

Coal phasing out process

To achieve the climate neutrality targets of the European Union, coal regions had to declare the date when they will phase out the coal from their energy production mix. To be successful and to implement a just and fair transition, the phasing out process must be carefully prepared, resulting in a roadmap of decarbonisation leading to the declared phase out date. The phasing out process needs to cover areas of activity including support and retraining/re-employment for workers, diversification of the local economy, cleaning up of extraction sites etc.

Cohesion Fund

An EU fund that supports the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the EU by providing support to the Member States which have a gross national income (GNI) per capita of below 90 % of the EU-27 average. The fund supports investments in the field of environment and transport infrastructure, with at least 37 % of the overall financial allocation expected to contribute to climate objectives. The Cohesion Fund is one fund through which the EU supports development of regions and cities under its Cohesion

Policy. Other funds include the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the JTF.

D

Decarbonisation

The reduction or elimination of carbon emissions that a society produces. This is achieved through the use of low-carbon power sources (e.g. wind or solar power) as well as changes to industrial processes, shifting to transport-systems that are not based on carbon-based fuels, adapting how buildings are built and how land is farmed or managed.

Development banks

Dedicated financial institutions, often owned by governments, that provide finance (normally loans) for economic development projects, including just transition initiatives.

Directorate-General (DG)

A department of the European Commission, responsible for a particular policy area.

DG ENER

Directorate-General for Energy, the European Commission department responsible for the EU's energy policy.

DG REGIO

Directorate-General of the European Commission responsible for Regional and Urban Policy. It is responsible for the JTF.

E

Energy democracy

Energy democracy is the concept that brings together the transition to renewable energy sources with efforts to make production and management of energy more democratic. This includes social ownership of energy infrastructure and public participation in energy-related policy.

European Green Deal

The European Green Deal is a set of proposals to make the EU's climate, energy, transport and taxation policies fit for reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. It will transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy, ensuring: no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050; economic growth decoupled from resource use; and no person and no place left behind.

Energy efficiency

Using less energy to achieve the same result. This reduces energy demand, saving money and reducing energy-related emissions.

Emissions Trading System (ETS)

The EU ETS is a carbon market which uses a 'cap and trade' system to reduce emissions and therefore assist the EU to achieve its climate neutrality goals. It works by putting a limit, which is lowered over time, on the total greenhouse gases that can be emitted by aviation, power generation, large-scale industrial activities and maritime transport. Emissions allowances are received or bought and can be traded. Each year, an installation must have enough allowances to cover all of its emissions, otherwise it is fined. From 2027 a second ETS will include buildings and road transport sectors.

F **Fit for 55**

The EU Fit for 55 is a package of legislation created to achieve at least a 55 % decrease in CO₂ emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. This serves as a key milestone in reaching climate neutrality by 2050. It includes the revision of climate and energy legislation related to energy taxation, emissions from land use, emissions standards for vehicles, energy efficiency, Member States' emissions reduction targets, ETS and a carbon price for imports (Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism).

Fossil fuels

Fuels such as oil, coal, peat and gas that are formed in the ground over many thousands or millions of years from the decomposition of vegetation or animals. These can be burned for energy which releases carbon into the atmosphere. Note: although scientifically speaking, the organic content in peat has not actually 'fossilised', peat has comparable greenhouse gas emissions to other fossil fuels, and emissions from peat combustion are included in national emissions data for fossil fuels.

G **Global warming**

An increase in the Earth's average surface temperature that occurs when the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere increases. These gases absorb more solar radiation and trap more heat, thus causing the planet to get hotter. Burning fossil fuels, cutting down forests, and farming livestock are some human activities that release greenhouse gases and contribute to global warming.

Governance model

The arrangements put in place by a national or regional authority to deliver its coal phase out or just transition strategy within the broader governance context of the region. The governance model determines responsibilities, decision-making and accountability.

Governance of regional transitions

The concept of governance refers to the various ways in which different actors and factors work together in the pursuit of a collective goal and the formal and informal

means by which they can be influenced. A wide range of actors and stakeholders are involved in just transition territories / coal regions in transition (institutions, civil society, employers, workers, etc.), and they can interact in multiple ways.

H

Heat pumps

Heat pumps are mainly electrical devices which transfer heat from a cool space to a warm space using a refrigeration cycle. They are generally more environmentally friendly than fossil fuel-based heating systems and can be installed to heat homes, offices and other suitable buildings. Different types of heat pump systems draw heat from different sources including air, water or the ground.

I

Initiative for Coal Regions in Transition

The Initiative for Coal Regions in Transition assists EU coal, peat, lignite, and oil shale regions ("coal+ regions") in their transitions to a low-carbon economy, supporting them to deliver transitions in a just and fair way. It supports public administrations and other relevant stakeholders via knowledge products, technical assistance, events, and peer-to-peer exchange.

J

Just Transition Fund

The fund is the first pillar of the EU JTM and can provide financial support to agreed transition regions under an agreed TJTP. Through the fund, projects can be financed to support:

- up- and reskilling of workers;
- investments in SMEs;
- creation of new firms;
- research and innovation;
- environmental rehabilitation;
- clean energy;
- job-search assistance;
- transformation of existing carbon-intensive installations.

Just Transition Mechanism

An EU framework created to achieve a climate-neutral economy in a fair way in specific coal- or carbon-intensive regions. The mechanism includes a fund, and other pillars to support transition financing, disbursed in keeping with agreed TJTPs.

Just Transition Platform

A platform to support the sharing of knowledge and experience on the just transition between Member States and all stakeholders from JTF territories. It operates via JTP conferences, JTP WGs, and technical assistance on the ground: JTP Groundwork and JTPeers and a helpdesk.

Just Transition Fund Regulation

The EU legislation, adopted in 2021 by Member States, which establishes the JTF and sets the conditions for its use. It can be found in translation to EU languages [here](#).

M

Managing authority

A national or sub-national governmental department or body which is designated to receive and disburse funds within an agreed programme (e.g. under the JTF). The managing authority provides information on the programme, selects projects and monitors implementation.

N

National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP)

A strategic level document that summarises how a Member State will meet EU energy and climate targets. It includes planning relevant to energy efficiency, renewable energy, greenhouse gas emissions reductions and energy infrastructure. Current plans cover the period from 2021–2030.

Net zero emissions

This refers to achieving an overall balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced by human activity and greenhouse gas emissions taken out of the atmosphere.

P

Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It served as a landmark in the multilateral climate change process as soon as it was adopted on 12 December 2015 (during the COP21). The treaty's overarching goal is to pursue efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels. To do this, greenhouse gas emissions must peak before 2025 and decline 43 % by 2030.

Programme monitoring committee

A body set up to monitor the implementation of a programme supported by EU funds within a particular Member State. The committee contains representatives of public authorities, civil society, economic and social partners and reviews programme progress, implementation, communication and evaluation. In some countries, there may be a sub-committee (or territorial committee) structure to provide monitoring or coordination functions at a territorial level.

R

Renewable energy

Energy derived from natural sources that are constantly being replenished, such as wind, sunlight, the flow of moving water, and geothermal heat. In contrast to energy sourced from fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas, energy from renewable sources is sustainable, cheap to operate and does not cause significant greenhouse gas emissions.

S

Social dialogue

Negotiation, consultation or information sharing between representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. Social dialogue can be informal, or institutional, and is often a combination of the two. It aims to promote consensus building, support democratic practice between stakeholders in the world of work, and to result in effective policy development and implementation.

Social inclusion

The process whereby efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities and to try to make sure in particular that traditionally disadvantaged or marginalised groups have access to services, resources and information and are included in decision-making.

Social partners

Worker organisations, such as trade unions, and employer organisations, as well as public authorities in some contexts; the parties that engage in social dialogue, shaping working conditions and influencing social policy.

Stakeholder

A person, group, or organisation with an interest in the decision-making and activities of a particular programme, project or organisation/company. In the context of the just transition, stakeholders are all of the organisations, companies, people, etc. that will be affected positively or negatively by the transition. Stakeholders can be identified by stakeholder mapping and classified by types (e.g. civil society, unions, businesses, etc.). There is a strong emphasis on stakeholder engagement in the just transition in order to leave no one behind and to ensure that the opportunities and costs of transition to carbon-neutrality are shared fairly.

Stakeholder engagement

Process by which an organisation/authority leading the transition in a particular territory engages with and involves those who are affected by the decisions that are made.

T

Territorial Just Transition Plan

TJTPs are documents that lay out the challenges, needs and goals for each region participating in the JTM. Submitted by Member States to the European Commission, they lay out plans and methods for achieving decarbonisation goals within a particular territory in a socially just manner and are a key prerequisite to accessing just transition funding.

Tripartite

Used in many different contexts, this means 'involving three parties'. In the context of the just transition, this often refers to the involving representatives of workers, employers, and governments.

U

UN 2030 Agenda / Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 2015, the United Nations formally adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with a set of 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets. The goals can be applied at national, regional and local levels. Many SDGs and the related sub-targets are especially relevant for the development of former coal/carbon-intensive regions, including 1 (no poverty), 3 (good health and well-being), 5 (gender equality), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action) and 15 (life on land).

V

Vulnerable groups

Groups of people, or sectors of the population, who are considered to be at risk of social exclusion and/or poverty. This vulnerability can arise from factors including social status, nationality, age factors, work history, housing status, disability and many more. Stakeholder engagement strategies for the just transition must therefore place a special emphasis on the involvement of vulnerable groups i.e. identify them within the local context and find the tailor-made methods to involve them.

4. Top 10 tips for communicating and raising awareness about the just transition at the local level

Tip 1 – Invest time in defining (and discussing) the ‘just transition’

Different people will have different ideas about what is important in a just transition to make it ‘just’. Make sure you talk about this! It is important to understand each other’s perspectives.

One definition often agreed with is that the just transition is a change process that is designed and implemented at the local level, towards a climate-neutral and sustainable economy, which happens in a fair way and leaves no one behind.

Conversations on whether this is a meaningful definition in your local situation can be helpful for understanding where challenges are. What does ‘fair’ mean in the context of your local problems? Who risks being left behind?

Tip 2 – Get a strategy!

Communication should be planned according to the local situation, possibilities and stakeholders. A communications strategy gives a sound basis to communications activities and ensures everyone involved is on the same page about what to communicate, how, when etc. Your strategy will probably include what information you need to give/receive, to which audiences, which methods and channels to use and what your timeframe is. This will also enable you to look at the resources needed (both in terms of people and budget!) to carry out your communications.

Tip 3 – Be aware of the needs and interests of the different stakeholder groups

A tailored approach is necessary for the most effective communication. Bear in mind the attitude of different groups towards the just transition. Use surveys or other questioning techniques to understand the positions, demands, interests, fears and needs of different sectors of the population. And of course, active listening is central to understanding both individual and collective concerns and motivations.

Tip 4 – Pick your communication methods

There are many ways to communicate, however different target groups often prefer different communication channels to achieve effective communication. First of all, check which means exist, which possibilities you have...then pick the ones that work for your target group. There is no one-size-fits-all solution!

And of course, each method will have different strengths and weaknesses. For example, face-to-face conversation is great for the possibility of quality information exchange, while written documents might not have the same level of impact. And while social media are particularly effective in terms of immediacy and keeping people up to date with changing situations, they might not reach all segments of the population. Your just transition communications strategy will probably also consider the use of websites, radio broadcasts, newsletters, press articles, educational materials, public events... and much, much more!

Tip 5 – Check WHO is in the discussion

Who is talking about just transition, who is consulted about local challenges and possible solutions? If someone is not there it might not mean that they're not interested!

Changes in the local economy, environmental schemes and all elements of local development have a whole-of-society impact. It is therefore important to include a wide and representative range of stakeholders in consultation and discussion. Otherwise, you might make plans which miss out important perspectives and information and which could harm people rather than helping them.

Tip 6 – Build trust!

It is crucial to use clear, simple and consistent messages, avoiding 'transition jargon' when you are talking about the just transition. It is worth focusing on the parts of the just transition that will directly affect your target group, rather than remaining general and vague. Information has to be derived from a reliable source; be transparent about where facts and data come from and build trust by acknowledging feedback (positive and negative).

Tip 7 – Create 'live' opportunities to really talk about just transition

During stakeholder engagement it is important to meet people in person. 'Mass' communication via newsletters and websites also has a role, but 'live' exchanges are particularly important for discussing difficult issues, and for building trust and understanding.

Many types of actions can provide the framework for this: you can organise workshops, round-table discussions, or informal gatherings where you can invite decision-makers and experts on the topic as well. It's best to design events which fit the demand of your target group, e.g. young people might be more interested in a creative workshop or hackathon than a straightforward information session. It is important to note that these events must provide a place for mutual information exchange, which means that the voices of locals also have to be heard, and questions should be answered.

Tip 8 – Use existing networks to create awareness

At first it might seem hard to imagine how you can achieve enough communications coverage to reach all of the people that need to be involved in the just transition conversation, but there is often no need to reinvent the wheel. There are likely to be existing networks, collaborations, interest groups and citizen information platforms and

other organisations which can serve as channels for communication and awareness raising. Use your available regional networks, be open to sharing through a diverse range of collaborators and your communications will travel far!

Tip 9 – Once is not enough! Communication should be frequent and repeated

A single information-sharing activity, or a one-off event is insufficient to create trust and real understanding between different stakeholders involved in the just transition. Think of communication more like an ongoing conversation – it needs to be upheld over a period of time and some information will certainly need to be repeated. There should be a continuous flow of information and feedback in place to have a really effective communication process. In practice, this might mean multiple rounds of public meetings as plans are formed and implemented, or an online platform for asking questions and publishing responses, or a dedicated office/phoneline to respond to queries and offer clarifications.

Tip 10 – Lack of communication is dangerous!

Poor communication leads to low participation in local-level change, and this can result in a 'top-down' transition plan which is not based on local knowledge or adapted to local realities. Such a plan will likely be perceived as a threat, and something which is 'imposed' upon local people, rather than a plan to solve collective challenges. An absence of adequate communication typically leads to resistance and mistrust, meaning that even good transition plans can be hard to implement.

Looking for more help on communicating on the just transition?

A useful [Handbook for Transition Communication](#) has also been developed as part of the START technical assistance, with a focus on communication strategy development.

