



## **C4C – COMMUNITIES FOR CLIMATE**

Call for local community-led projects to respond to climate change

**DEADLINE: 21 APRIL 2024, 23:59 CEST**

### **Context**

In the face of the multiple crises and conflicts that have been affecting our everyday lives in recent months and years, we – the citizens – are calling for new ways of working together that will allow us to take an active role in the transformation of our society, for earth/nature, people, for what we care about and for younger generations.

Against the fast-paced and increasing impact of climate change, the urge to act and citizens' mobilisation is more important than ever – this is where community-led movements have an essential role to play. Because communities respond, innovate and adapt faster; because communities provide a sense of belonging that helps in overcoming feelings of anxiety and helplessness, and building an inclusive sense of identity in our changing democracies.

For these reasons, the European Commission is launching the Communities for Climate (C4C) pilot action which will support 50 community-led projects in eleven countries of the EU<sup>1</sup>, accompanying them in the realisation of new and innovative ideas for citizens engagement to address climate and sustainability issues. These lighthouse projects will serve as a replicable model for other local communities willing to engage in climate projects across the EU. The scope of this action covers the four following areas: renewable energy, sustainable water management, circular and resource-efficient economy, and biodiversity.

Since climate issues know no borders, particular attention will be paid to those communities living in border regions willing to engage in a cross-border project, facing more administrative and legal complexity.

Are you actively involved in addressing climate challenges within your community or are you involved in a climate-related initiative such as the European Climate Pact Ambassadors? Are you part of a dedicated group working to decrease emissions, care for nature, live sustainably and enhance resilience in your neighbourhood? Whether you're focused on addressing pollution, biodiversity or promoting climate resilience in urban or rural settings, you can bring your efforts to the next level with the Communities for Climate (C4C) initiative.

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<sup>1</sup> The eleven countries covered by C4C are: Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain and Sweden.

## What's in it for you in C4C?

We will provide the 50 selected projects with a tailored package of on-the-ground support, such as:

- Around 20 expert-days<sup>2</sup> combining thematic advice and community-led development facilitation and preparation (e.g. mentoring and coaching on climate change/climate action, technical advice, financial advice and potential sources of funding) by a dedicated and professional team of experts, in the national language;
- A 1000€ lump sum for a customised study visit to a similar project, learning exchanges, and good practices that can be transferred to your own projects;
- Networking and connecting to other initiatives; and
- Visibility of your project at EU, national and local levels, in view of upscaling or replication.

### A dedicated and professional team of experts who will mentor your project

The experts will support your project via on-site visits and regular virtual exchanges with your project team. C4C offers the support of two types of experts: the country experts and the thematic experts. **Country experts** are climate change and community experts, who are tasked to provide on-site and online support to help you in developing your local community's project idea into an inspiring lighthouse example of how community-led climate action can continue to evolve into the future.

**Thematic experts**<sup>3</sup> are climate change experts covering the four prioritised areas who will help you make your project more impactful by providing technical advice to support you in developing and implementing your project idea in the fields of energy, water, biodiversity and circular economy offering.

The experts will also help you connect your local communities with other relevant networks and stakeholders.

### A 1000€ lump sum per project to participate in study visits to demonstration sites for peer-learning

Remarkable, inspiring demonstration sites have been pre-selected. Peer-learning is the goal of these customised study visits during which you will have the opportunity to learn about good practices that you may want to transfer to your own project or replicate for future project ideas.

The 1000€ lump sum will contribute to travel costs of the study visits.

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<sup>2</sup> An average of 20 expert-days will be allocated to each of the 50 projects, for on-the-ground and remote support. Expertise will cover mostly community development and up to 4 days of thematic support, over a period of 6 to 10 months. Experts shall also organise and participate in the study visit.

<sup>3</sup> The experts have been selected from recognised public, private and academic centres of expertise, such as University of Vaasa, MetaMeta, Zero Waste Europe, CEEWeb for biodiversity, Trinity College, Horizon Nua Foundation, Stockholm Environment Institute, Erasmus University, Möbius Business Design, just to name a few.

## Networking and connecting to other initiatives

Through C4C you will be enabled to plug into European and national networks of sustainable community-led initiatives, energy cooperatives, Local Action Groups, or EU Climate Pact Ambassadors. The experts will support you to make connections with stakeholders relevant for your region, for network weaving and knowledge exchange.

## Increased visibility at EU, national and local levels

Your project will benefit from added visibility for your climate action and advocacy through the C4C's various communication channels. For instance, the 50 selected projects will be promoted through the European Commission's channels, showcasing your results that will inspire other communities across Europe.

## Who can benefit from the C4C initiative?

Applicants must be **legal entities** located in one of the eleven countries mentioned above, that present a specific project idea in one of the thematic areas listed here below, that will be a local community-led initiative towards achieving the call's objectives and that will demonstrate a **citizen-driven nature**.

The call invites organised local communities to apply, but also highly encourages the participation of emerging cross-border communities, operating and experimenting joint approaches.

## Types of organisations

The C4C initiative focuses on local communities engaged in the fight against climate change; these can be represented by the following types of **local** organisations which have a **legal entity**:

- Civil society organisations (CSOs) and/or non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Local authorities, local development agencies and local financial institutions
- Public-private-community partnerships, such as a Local Action Group (LAG)
- Organisations behind the European Climate Pact Ambassadors
- Energy communities, smart villages, eco-villages, etc.
- Organisations representing indigenous communities, migrants or minorities
- Local collaborative networks and intermediary organisations that focus on social innovation and social economy

## Thematic areas

The Communities for Climate initiative will support projects relating to one (or more) of the following four thematic areas:

### a. Renewable energy

Solar energy, wind energy, biomass-based energy, small-scale electricity generation initiatives, renewables self-consumption, energy communities, etc.

### b. Access to water and sustainable water management

Water reuse, pluvial floods prevention, non-drinking water use, access to drinking water to vulnerable and marginalised groups, natural waters preservation and retention, etc.

### c. Circular and resource efficient economy

Sustainable production and consumption, small-scale recycling and waste treatment, bio-waste digestion and composting, capacity building, local circular economy strategy elaboration, etc.

### d. Protection/preservation of nature and biodiversity

Regenerative agriculture and forestry, urban greening, protection and enhancement of biodiversity, nature-based services, ecosystem services (water purification, recreation, natural spaces, air quality improvement, etc.)

## Timeline

The following table indicates the relevant dates and timing for this call.

<b>Publication</b> of the C4C call for projects	21 February – <b>21 April 2024</b>
<b>Informational webinar</b> to launch the Call for local community initiatives	29 February 2024
<b>Virtual information workshops</b> to take place to discuss applicants' project ideas and benefit from advice/feedback from country experts. These will be held in the national language.	March 2024
<b>Deadline</b> for applications	<b>21 April 2024 – 23:59 CEST</b>
<b>Evaluation</b> of applications	21 April – 15 May 2024
<b>Notification</b> about the selection/non-selection communicated to the applicants	17 May – 24 May 2024
<b>Implementation</b> of 50 local community projects and expert support <b>begins</b>	1-10 June 2024
The <b>project implementation time</b> is anticipated to be between	June 2024 - March 2025

## Application form and further detailed information

If you wish to join the Communities for Climate, please fill in the [APPLICATION FORM](#).

This Call text is complemented by a [Q&A SECTION](#), which applicants should consult.

An [CHECKLIST](#) is available to help you in assessing your eligibility for this call.

This call documentation will be available and published on the [WEBSITE](#).

More information about the selection procedure of this call can be found in the annex below.

If you have a specific question that is not addressed in this text, you can send an email to [c4c@aeidl.eu](mailto:c4c@aeidl.eu)

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## **ANNEX: EVALUATION PROCEDURE**

The evaluation and selection of the 50 local communities will be carried out in line with the overarching principles of fairness, transparency and accountability. The selection will be done in two stages: an eligibility check and a technical evaluation.

### **Eligibility check**

As an applicant, you should meet the five (5) eligibility criteria:

#### **1. Legal entity**

Your project's hosting organisation must be a legal entity, such as a CSO, NGO, public institution (such as a local authority), public-private-community partnership (such as a Local Action Group), or other local entities (such as associations, businesses, financial institutions, local cooperative, social economy or rural development initiative, smart or eco-village, etc.) that are community owned and have a mission to support the public good.

#### **2. Focus on climate action**

Your project idea must have a main focus on climate action, covering at least one of the four thematic categories of the call (renewable energy, access to water and sustainable water management, circular and resource-efficient economy, and nature and biodiversity).

#### **3. Includes a realistic project idea that can be implemented between June 2024 and March 2025**

Your application should consist of a project idea embedded within the local community. The project description should be specific to this call.

#### **4. Citizen/resident-driven**

You must have identified mechanisms for citizens'/residents' engagement, spanning the project's design and implementation.

#### **5. Geographical focus (eleven countries)**

Your project idea should have a local geographical scope, operating within one of the 11 selected countries. These include Croatia (HR), Estonia (EE), Finland (FI), France (FR), Germany (DE), Hungary (HU), Italy (IT), Poland (PL), Romania (RO), Spain (ES), and Sweden (SE). Cross-border project ideas are also welcome - and will be given particular attention - if the applying entity is located in one of the 11 selected countries.

You can check your eligibility [HERE](#)

## Selection criteria

If eligible, your project proposal will then be evaluated by two experts, using the following six (6) selection criteria:

### 1. Thematic quality and focus

Your project idea must have a main focus on climate action, covering at least one of the four thematic categories (renewable energy, access to water and sustainable water management, circular and resource-efficient economy, and nature and biodiversity). This criterion measures the quality of thematic understanding, approach and proposed solutions, and your project's general thematic credibility.

### 2. Innovative character at the local level

When speaking of innovation, this could be assessed in terms of added value at the local level. Local innovation can be categorised as technical, thematic (for example, an existing community-led climate initiative exploring a new approach or technology), or social innovation (for example, an existing community seeking to strengthen the inclusion of marginalised groups). Is your project idea innovative, meaning bringing novel elements, ideas, models, technologies, processes, methods, organisation, or partnership, which could confer a differentiated added value at the local level?

### 3. Well-formulated need and potential impact

Does your project proposal articulate why the community initiative needs external technical assistance, and within which timeframe, and what type(s) of assistance you are requesting to resolve the identified need(s)? What impact would your proposed project generate?

### 4. Diversity & mobilisation capacity

You will need to show how you propose to mobilise and engage citizens/residents, as well as other local stakeholder groups in the design and implementation of your project. Please describe the targeted stakeholder group(s) and identify their role in your project application, including the degree to which they have been consulted.

### 5. Projects' exit & sustainability (and potential for further funding)

Does your local community involved in the project have a longer-term vision with regard to the project's sustainability beyond the support period, and to what extent will C4C's provided technical and support services contribute to this goal? Is there potential for your project to continue after the 10-month C4C initiative comes to an end? Are you or the project's hosting organisation able to leverage financial resources to scale up or replicate the project?

## 6. Implementation capacity

Does your project's hosting organisation have adequate experience and a demonstrated track record in delivering community-led project initiatives? Does it have a strong commitment and adequate capacity/human resources?

Please note that the selection will seek to achieve a balanced geographic distribution among the selected project applications across the 11 participating countries, but also within these countries, with a proportionate distribution between regions, between urban and rural areas, and also including cross-border areas.

A balanced distribution between the four thematic areas will also need to be achieved.