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D4.4 KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNITY PLATFORM WITH LIVING DOCUMENTS FOR THE EXPERT EXCHANGE ON MULTILEVEL APPROACHES TO FAVOURABLE ORGANISATIONAL AND BUSINESS FRAMEWORKS



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ABSTRACT

This document is on the Knowledge and Community Platform of ECOEMPOWER.

KEYWORD LIST

Knowledge and Community Platform, Living Documents, Discussion Forum, Member.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Deliverable 4.4 is on the Knowledge and Community Platform with living documents for the expert exchange on multilevel approaches to favourable organisational and business frameworks.

A Knowledge and Community Platform has been developed that enables all stakeholders interested in Energy Communities and other related topics to communicate and organise tasks between themselves. The platform includes functionalities that allow the members to share information and work on documents together.

This text shows some screenshots and the main functionalities of the platform. The means of verification for this deliverable is the actual platform.

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1 Introduction

Energy communities are key to the EU Green Deal, with the potential to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. By 2050, half of EU citizens could generate their own electricity, meeting 45% of the EU's energy needs (CE Delft, 2016). To support this, the EU-funded ECOEMPOWER project is establishing local offices (One Stop Shops) to promote Energy Communities in the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, and Italy.

These communities involve citizens and small businesses in collective energy initiatives, using various renewable technologies like wind, solar, and bioenergy. They offer environmental benefits, reduce energy poverty, and enhance social cohesion. However, widespread adoption requires capacity building and empowerment.

Therefore, the ECOEMPOWER project has successfully established a Knowledge and Community Platform that serves as the central hub for stakeholders interested in Energy Communities and related topics. This network platform fosters collaboration by providing essential tools for information sharing, communication, and task management among participants. Open to everyone with an interest in these subjects, the platform ensures broad accessibility.

On August 20th, 2024, the first version of the ECOEMPOWER Knowledge and Community Platform was launched, offering basic functionalities that will be continuously enhanced throughout the project's duration. The platform can be accessed through the project website (www.ecoempower.eu) that works as a unique point of access and information for the users, that can access the different tools of the project, like the hands-on software tool for energy and ICT system analysis developed by Work Package 2, the platform itself and the dashboard for monitoring social impact. Once on the website, users can log in to explore the features of the Knowledge and Community Platform.

1.1 How to read this document

This deliverable reports about the ECOEMPOWER knowledge and community platform. It can be read without knowledge about any other report.

2 ECOEMPOWER Knowledge and Community Platform

The project has provided the necessary community platform needed for ECOEMPOWER activities. The network platform is enabling a collaborative workflow including functionalities to share information, to communicate between the stakeholders and to organise tasks between the stakeholders. The platform is accessible to everyone who is interested in the topics of Energy Communities and other related topics.

Fostering collaboration and exchange is crucial for Energy Communities to succeed. These communities rely on members coming together to share and manage energy resources collectively. Without active collaboration, the concept of an Energy Community cannot thrive. Our platform supports this by providing tools and spaces for members to connect, share ideas, and work together, ensuring the community's success and sustainability.

A first version of the ECOEMPOWER Knowledge and Community Platform has been launched on August 20th, 2024. Login is available under: www.ecoempower.eu in the upper right corner. The website exists with basic functionalities and will be updated constantly during the whole project duration.



Figure 1 - The ECOEMPOWER knowledge and community platform Login.

After login, members of the knowledge and community platform have access to several functionalities. These can be found behind the green circles.

The functionalities present at the moment are:

- My messages
- My Network
- An overview of the members
- A groups section

In the future, it will be possible to add further functionalities. Among other things, it will be possible to incorporate a repository for energy communities. All energy communities that have been established during and with the help of ECOEMPOWER, could be listed there.

It is also possible to give the ECOEMPOWER One Stop Shops their own section, where the exact locations and further information can be found.

This aspect will be evaluated and decided later during the project lifetime.



Figure 2 - The Platform surface after login.

After careful consideration, the consortium decided to develop the platform only in English, as translating the platform in the 5 languages of the consortium would not be beneficial for the diffusion of the project contents (as several European languages would be left out). Moreover, it would have required a huge effort from the partners' side, an effort that will be better employed in animating the discussion and promoting the networking in the platform.

The discussion in specific groups can anyway happen in any language, so to ensure that specific country/regional ecosystem/pilot group in the platform can have an online space where to meet, discuss and share ideas and materials in their own language.

2.1 My Messages

In this section there is a mailbox where you can find messages that you have exchanged with other community members. The section is called "My Messages".

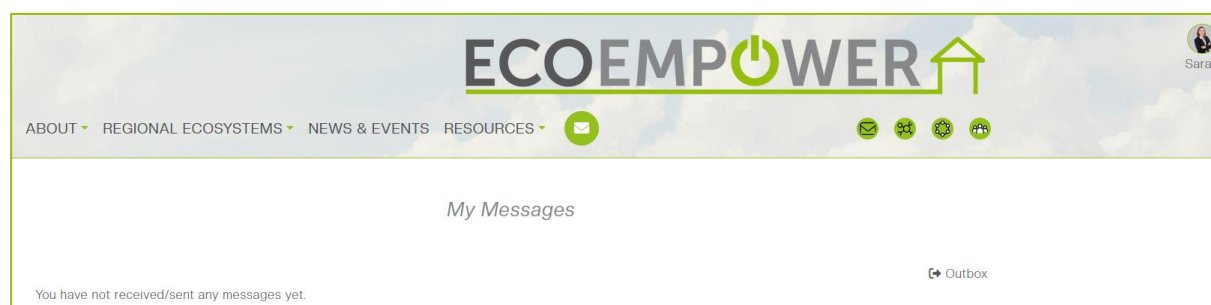


Figure 3 - Mailbox.

2.2 My Network

In “My Network” are listed all the people of the network, that have a connection with the user. This part will enable the user to have an overview of the other users she/he is in contact with, so to facilitate communication over time.



Figure 4 - My Network.

2.3 Members

The “Members” section shows all members of the knowledge and community platform. The user has the opportunity to request connection with the members or send messages to the ones that already are a connection.

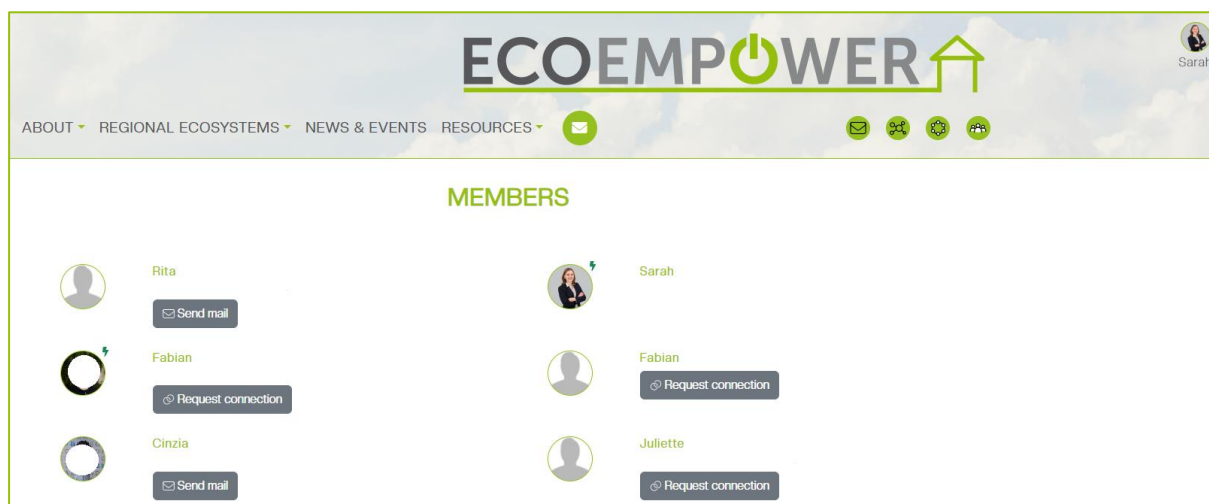


Figure 5 – Members.

2.4 Groups

Activities in the community are organized in Focus Groups and taskforces. Currently the consortium of the project is still in the process of defining the groups. The set of working groups can be changed at any time according to needed thematic focus points member would like to set.

There will be two types of groups. Those where anyone can join freely and those where the moderator must give permission for the person to join.

Each group will be guided by one or two moderator(s). The moderators ought to lead the discussion, initiate new topics and animate other participants to contribute content. Every member of a group is encouraged to deliver input and ideate new topics. Topics to discuss in the Groups can be freely chosen by the members. There is no limit to what is expected as an output or result of a group.

The consortium will moderate some of the groups, and to so it decided to adopt the Community of Practice methodology, implemented through the Communities of Practice Playbook¹. used to enrich the content of the groups and help the community achieve long-term success. The methodology is a toolkit designed to support the management and growth of communities, networks, and any other formal or informal structures that rely on collaboration and cooperation among diverse stakeholders. Drawing from scientific research and practical experience within the European Commission on communities of practice, this playbook offers step-by-step guidance, best practices, and interactive visual boards. These resources enable the co-creation of a roadmap to develop, engage, and empower a community at every stage of its journey.

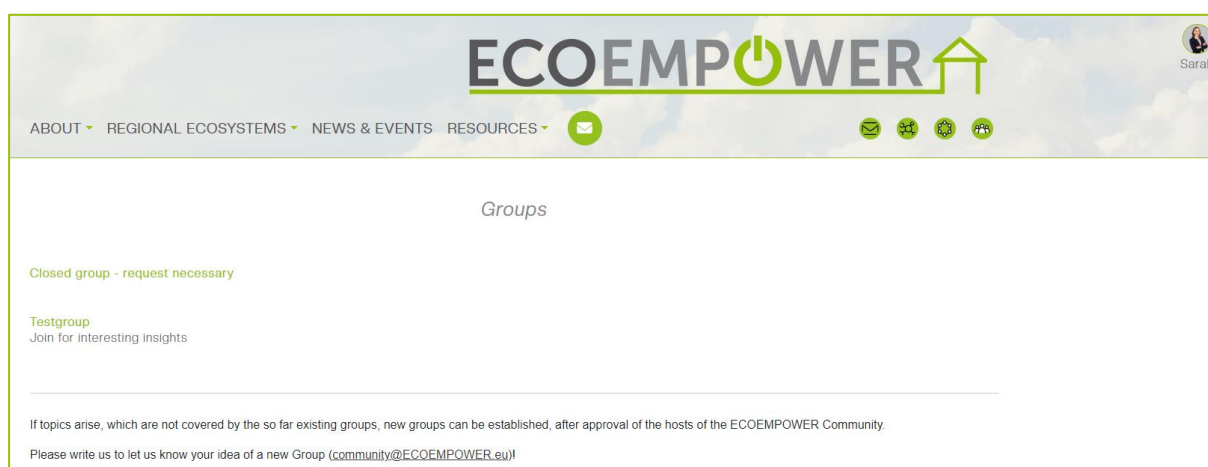


Figure 6 - List of groups.

Inside of each group of the platform, there is:

- an overview of the moderators and members of the group
- a message board
- a place where documents can be uploaded and events can be shared
- a section for discussions on specific subjects, where members can reply directly to.

2.5 Promotion of the Platform

Registration for the community platform is free and possible for everybody, interested in the subject. It is easily accessible via the ECOEMPOWER website.

For promotion of the Knowledge and Community Platform, online international Knowledge Conferences will be organised for stakeholder engagement. The first conference will be a kick-off event at which we will invite the replicators involved in the project to come to the platform and take part in the event. Besides the conferences, ECOEMPOWER will deploy additional formats like discussion forums, news, guidelines and other material, developed within the project.

¹ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9d18431e-1a88-11ec-b4fe-01aa75ed71a1>

The Knowledge and Community Platform will be widely promoted both through the project channels (as, for example, ECOEMPOWER LinkedIn) and other available channels of the ECOEMPOWER partners. Moreover, it will be also boosted at events, or through third party platforms on energy communities, mentions in articles and presentations..

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