

## **Deliverable D7: Guidelines on Management of the Community engagement activities**

### **1. Objective of the task (according to the contract)**

*Engaging and educating residents in each partner community of the importance of sustainable energy and the opportunities that it presents for community development is one of major objectives in the ASPIRE project.*

*These activities will allow the Sustainable Energy Action Plan be fully integrated into the community development, community structures, be accepted and understood.*

### **2. Importance of Community engagement**

Effective community engagement is essential to the development of positive and long-term relationships. The guidance provided in this document is not meant to be prescriptive, it shows the potential partners, whose importance was already stressed in setting the Strategic Steering Board to Sustainable Energy Community, possible techniques and ways in which community can engage with the partners. The nature and extent of community engagement activities are shaped by many factors - type, scope and location of activities and the magnitude of impacts it may have.

As far as sustainability of energy efficiency and renewable energy actions is concerned, though, these activities may become most important in view of their sustainability.

### **3. Description of the activities**

Community engagement can mean different things to different people, different communities and different services and situations. The Guideline has been developed in order to ensure that we can provide the most appropriate means for communities and the community groups to be involved and give feedback. Several means of community engagement include:

- **Information** - supports all types of community engagement and keeps people informed about such things as decisions, services and local events – it can be articles in local/regional newspapers, specialised website, links to information channels, etc.
- **Consultation** - can be used when there is a decision to make about something or when there are a number of choices about the details.
- **Deciding together** - this is when local people are involved in deciding which options to choose, but it is the Authority that will act on the decisions
- **Acting together** - this is when decisions are made by partnerships between local people or agencies and the Council. The people involved in making the decisions also

The ASPIRE task 3.1 will involve workshops, interviews and events being held within each partner community with community groups, mainly with local residents, and schools.

These events will:

- a) be aimed at increasing awareness and information transfer within each community of the important role that energy plays in everyone's daily lives, and the economic, social and environmental benefits that can be gained through increasing the integration of sustainable energy in the community.
- b) inform residents of the role that they can play in helping their community to work towards becoming a 'Sustainable Energy Community' (e.g. through reducing their own energy consumption),
- c) ensure that community groups and individuals are involved in the process of drafting SEAPs. The events will take the form of workshops, public debates and consultation meetings.

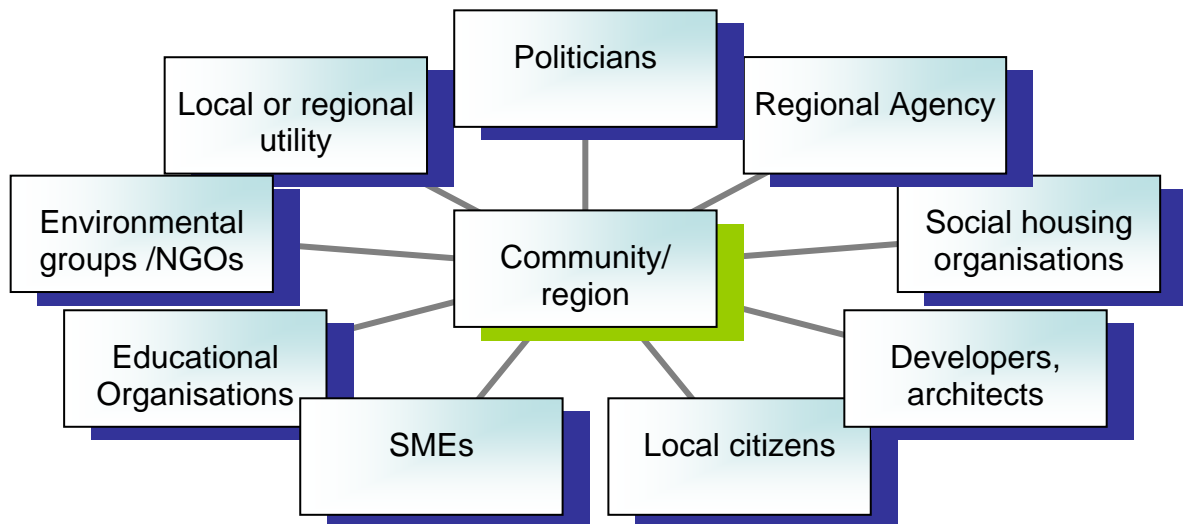
These activities are part of a general consultation process within the community, during which the community and its partners in the ASPIRE project will:

- Raise and manage expectations
- Explain how views of community groups will be included
- Say how they can follow up and what feedback they can expect
- Operate honestly with the aim of maintaining credibility.

Setting out a **timescale** for running and completing the consultation, incl. information and awareness events is important and also a closing date for project consultation process within the ASPIRE project.

#### **4. Community groups for SEC**

Following graph suggests community groups which the community and its partners would involve in the above described events and consultation process. Most of them were already included in the WP2 Terms of Reference for SSB and participate in the Strategic Steering Board to the Sustainable energy Community or in its working groups:



## 5. Overview of useful engagement techniques

During the consultation process, awareness and information events following engagement techniques are proposed:

- Community consultation document – to be publicly available to citizens
- Publications to local residents, to smaller groups
- Linkages to other projects going on in the area
- Information to business
- A series of Consultation days
- An event for Architects
- Fieldwork
- Exhibitions
- Website feedback form – e-consultation
- Workshops
- Manuals
- Media Press releases

All forms of consultation should aim at Positive Engagement. Means of feedback and follow up should be stated. Where and when will the results from the consultation be available? Will it be leaflet, contact details, website address?

## 6. Evaluate community awareness needs

- 1) The elected representatives are responsible for strategies, plans, policies and measures to be adopted. They delegate representatives to the SSB. Before you talk to them learn about existing status and also during the meetings with them find out their expectations and plans. Get acquainted with policies and priorities of the existing municipality management, with the level of knowledge and the level of interest. Motivate municipality leaders showing that behaviour and activities that promote sustainable energy development are already partially being used.
- 2) Learn also about the level of energy management that exists in the municipality/region and related knowledge that exists with the politicians. A question can be raised – do you know how much energy is used in the municipality/by the municipality/in what structure?

- 3) Ensure support to awareness activities.
- 4) Learn about existing status: about building practices used, about municipality requirements on investors, planners, designers, etc. – mainly as far as energy efficiency parameters (are there any more stringent standards required by municipality?) are concerned and renewable energy technologies installation.
- 5) Identify (in bilateral/ multilateral meetings, etc.) information needs, interests and capacity building needs by each target group in the community. Priority target groups are:
  - Schools and other property of the municipality
  - Local residents
  - Community groups –depending on the size of the community, character of the community, etc. these groups can be: **officers** (of the municipality town halls - towns), SMEs, farmers...
- 6) Identify existing projects, related to sustainable energy development, get data about them. Involve information on these projects in your presentation, awareness and information campaign, into dissemination activities (in order to make existing successful projects popular).
- 7) Identify most appropriate and useful way of awareness increase – e.g. local TV channel, leaflets, workshops, etc. depending on the target group (local residents, community groups, schools). Discuss also exhibitions of successful SE projects at key local venues.

## 7. Surveys and Opinion Questionnaires

Setting the survey questions is one of important activities to manage the consultation process. Differentiate survey and questions so that they are appropriate for stakeholder consultations.

- Assess the stakeholders' awareness of their own energy consumption & costs in their homes and businesses. Do they know how much energy they use, what they currently pay, are they concerned about the cost?
- Would they like to have renewable energy serving their home/business premises?
- What is their interest in Energy citizenship opportunities – are they active in community groups or clubs and associations?
- What do they perceive are the key barriers to action – eg. knowledge, funding, planning.
- Their knowledge of energy efficiency and any action taken already, e.g. home energy checks, insulation, signing up to green energy tariffs, making a conscious decision to purchase energy efficient appliances etc.
- Their knowledge of climate issues – nil, media (news, TV and film), reading (books, newspaper and magazines), research, active.
- Their knowledge of fossil fuel issues.
- Their knowledge in particular of renewable technology options that could be suitable for their situation.
- Ability/wish to give time to a community project & be involved.
- Any skills they could contribute to a community project.
- Their contact details.

Questionnaire “How ESC you are” can be made use of. It can make dialogs interesting, helps people to remember what was done in their municipality and helps them understand what activities belong to “sustainable” energy activities.

## **8. Prepare Community Awareness Plan**

Project-specific awareness raising campaigns will be held in each community to highlight awareness in each SEC of the efforts that are being made to make that community more sustainable and the impacts that this is having.

During the general public events following information about the ASPIRE project and more general energy sustainability will be disseminated. Topics to be addressed include:

- Describe the ASPIRE project aspirations and results it will have on the community;
- Highlight awareness in each SEC of the efforts that are being made to make the community more sustainable and about existing successful activities and projects;
- Inform on existing energy situation in the municipality /region, potential for energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies, available financial resources, economics of RUE and RES schemes;
- Inform on the impacts that this is having - CO<sub>2</sub>, costs
- Explain economic and social benefits of the renewable and energy efficient schemes, mainly of those who may be potentially successful in the region.
- Inform on other information sources that exist nationally/ regionally and relate to renewable energy schemes, energy efficiency activities, energy prices, etc.
- Discuss potentially successful activities and projects and their relevance to the region, timing, etc. – with regard to SEAP development.

To follow the proposed topics, make use of the ASPIRE WP2 outcomes – knowledge in the potential for energy savings and for use of renewable energy in the region/ municipality:

- a) Prepare an overview of existing activities and existing successful installations or projects, attitudes, experience.
- b) Develop Good or Best Practice projects in the community/region and get agreement of the project owners to present their project/ activity.
- c) Make preliminary idea of most relevant activities, projects and technologies which can be most suitable and available for the community (on the basis of the WP2 findings – potential in energy efficiency and in renewable energy).
- d) Identify potential project owners (Residents? SMEs? Municipal authority?) (These can differ depending on gas distribution network extension, climate conditions, district heating networks, limitations by air quality, etc).

## **9. Evaluation of the engagement activities achievements**

At its simplest, evaluation is about finding out if the community engagement process was a useful thing to do, what it achieved, how it could have been done better and what might be done next. One way of doing this is to break down the evaluation under the following headings:

- Participation level

- Influence of engagement
- Evaluation of individual activities.

More specifically, an evaluation might consider:

- Whether the objectives of the engagement were achieved;
- How well they were achieved;
- Which **engagement techniques** drew the highest response rates and also the highest level of satisfaction from which participants;
- To what extent target groups participated in the community engagement, e.g. In terms of numbers and the range of views expressed;
- To what extent participants expressed their views;
- If participants from all target groups were adequately represented, including those identified as having special needs
- Whether people from all participant groups feel that they were listened to and their views adequately recorded.