



Deliverable 6.4

Renewable Energy Community Platform

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SUMMARY

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Authors:	Isabel Azevedo (INEGI)		

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ABOUT COME RES

COME RES - Community Energy for the uptake of renewables in the electricity sector. Connecting long-term visions with short-term actions aims at facilitating the market uptake of renewable energy sources (RES) in the electricity sector. Specifically, the project focuses on advancing renewable energy communities (RECs) as per the EU's recast Renewable Energy Directive (REDII). COME RES takes a multi- and transdisciplinary approach to support the development of RECs in nine European countries; Belgium, Germany, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, and Spain.

ISSUES ADDRESSED AND MAJOR STEPS

COME RES covers diverse socio-technical systems including community PV, wind (onshore), storage and integrated community solutions, investigated in nine European countries. The project has a specific focus on a number of target regions in these countries, where community energy has the potential to be further developed, and model regions, where community energy is in a more advanced stage of development. COME RES analyses political, administrative, legal, socioeconomic, spatial and environmental characteristics, and the reasons for the slow deployment of RECs in selected target regions. COME RES synchronises project activities with the transposition and implementation of the Clean Energy Package and its provisions for RECs in policy labs. Policy lessons with validity across Europe will be drawn and recommendations proposed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Deliverable 6.4 summarises and documents the actions associated with the development of the Energy Community Platform. It comprises the activities performed under the framework of Work Package 6 “*Supporting the development of renewable energy communities through capacity development and best practice transfer*”, Task 6.4 “*Renewable Energy Community Platform*”.

The report is composed by four main sections, with the following content:

- A brief introduction illustrating the background and purpose of the report.
- An overview of the Energy Community Platform, the rationale for joining forces and for the integration with the REScoop.eu platform, the main features resulting from COME RES contribution and a short account of the implementation process.
- A more detailed description of the COME RES specific contribution to the platform.
- A final section with the main conclusions of the report and next future steps.

The report also highlights the benefits of joining forces with REScoop.eu and other projects, which ensured a much larger outreach as well as the sustainability of the platform.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report is part of the COME RES Work Package 6 “*Supporting the development of renewable energy communities through capacity development and best practice transfer*”, more specifically of Task 6.4 “*Renewable Energy Community Platform*”. WP6 aims at capacity building and transfer of good and best practices, and comprises training activities targeting local policy makers, authorities and community organisations, as well as activities to initiate the transfer of good and best practice measures, including organisational forms, business models and financing instruments in target regions. Furthermore, this WP also aims at creating a comparable and scalable basis for the future development and implementation of Renewable Energy Communities (REC) through the development of a platform (Task 6.4).

According to the Grant Agreement, **Task 6.4** should establish a **flexible, easy-to-use** and **open source platform** to connect people interested in REC projects, to offer support to RECs regarding development and organisation and to disseminate the concept of RECs. The content should be based on information that is gathered throughout the project implementation, capitalising on the created knowledge and capacity, and should be able to represent a guide for new REC initiatives through the whole development process.

The platform must comprise:

- the provision of **country-specific information** on definitions and specifications of RECs, legal frameworks, existing and novel business models, and enabling frameworks, including financing instruments, promotional measures for RECs and consideration of RECs in national/regional support schemes for RES-electricity;
- the creation of a **network of RECs and related stakeholders**, to continuously grow during and after the project lifetime;
- the **dissemination of best-practices** and promotion of peer learning, to foster replication or transfer of best-practices.

The Grant Agreement also mentions the intent to **build on existing information generated by other projects** and to exploit the opportunities to link with existing networks already established by REScoop.eu.

In line with the Grant Agreement, this deliverable provides an overview of the Energy Community Platform, as well as a more detailed description of the main features of the platform developed by the COME RES project, in the scope of Task 6.4

1.2. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is composed by four main sections. **Section 1** provides a brief introduction with the background and purpose of the report. **Section 2** is dedicated to the overview of the Energy Community Platform, as well as a concise description of the development process. Subsequently, **section 3** provides a more detailed description of the main features of the platform developed as part of the COME RES project. Finally, **section 4** comprises the main conclusions and a brief reflection on the next steps, necessary to ensure the sustainability and update of the platform.

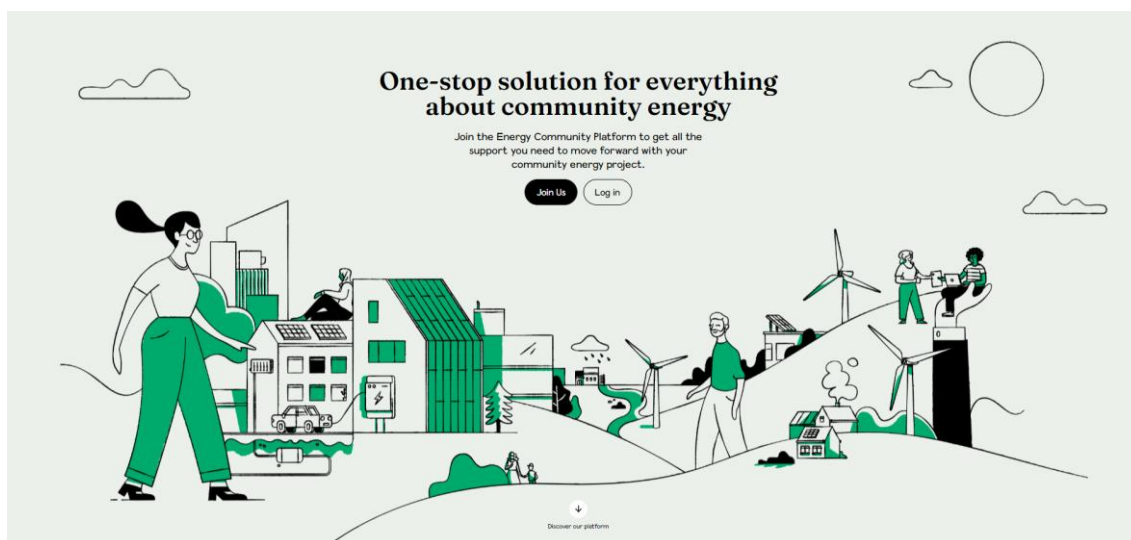
2. ENERGY COMMUNITY PLATFORM

2.1. OVERVIEW OF THE ENERGY COMMUNITY PLATFORM

The **Energy Community Platform**¹ is an online and open-access platform, which results from a collaborative effort of REScoop.eu and several European Projects (including the COME RES project), to support the development and implementation of energy community initiatives in all the project development stages.

WHY?

This platform was developed with the aim of becoming a **“one-stop solution for everything about community energy”**. Considering the numerous resources and tools available to aid local actors to set up energy community projects, which are scattered across many different websites, the goal was to facilitate the access to these resources through their assembly into a single and more visible website. The gathering of resources on this topic in a single place will make it easier for all interested actors and stakeholders to access.



Source: <https://energycommunityplatform.eu/>

Figure 1 – Print screen of the landing page of the Energy Community Platform

HOW?

The initial development of the Energy Community Platform was strongly inspired by the accomplishments of the Interreg NWE ECCO – Creating new local Energy Community Co-Operatives project,² where the Munster Technological University developed a prototype for an online platform for energy communities to interact, find experts, collaborate, and track and share their progress. REScoop.eu, having the responsibility to maintain the platform after the end of the project, looked for interested partners to join forces, add relevant resources and tools and support the continuity and further development of the platform.

¹ <https://energycommunityplatform.eu/>

² <https://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/ecco-creating-new-local-energy-community-co-operatives/>

The creation of a One-Stop-Shop for Energy Community initiatives, potentiating the synergies between different projects by joining forces and creating “critical mass” for a robust and sustainable platform, was the rationale driving the collaborative effort.

Task 6.4 had a change in its timeline, with the kick-off meeting being anticipated to Month 7, instead of Month 18 (as proposed in the Grant Agreement), to foster the collaboration and potentiate the synergies with the ongoing development of the Energy Community Platform. A number of activities were performed, including an overview of existing platforms and tools promising potential synergies with the REC Platform to be developed under the COME RES project. This was followed by discussions with the participating partners regarding the opportunities for collaboration with other EU projects and existing platforms. Subsequently, a preliminary concept for the Platform was developed, with identification of main objectives, reasons for integration with Energy Community Platform and main features to be included. The preliminary concept was presented to the partners in the Consortium Meeting held in September 2021.

In the initial months of Task 6.4, COME RES also contributed to the platform prototype, developed by the Munster Technological University in the scope of ECCO project, with proposals for improvement of specific features and identification of relevant features that could be added.

In the summer 2022, a new version of the platform was launched as a shared effort of REScoop.eu, the ECCO project, the COME RES project, the Compile project, clothes retailer Patagonia and the SCCALE 203050 project. Instead of each project developing its own platform that might not be used after the project comes to an end, all of them contributed to a single platform, which gathers all resources and tools resulting from the different projects’ activities. This option also ensured the sustainability and continuous development of the platform and made possible to extend the outreach of such resources to a wider audience.

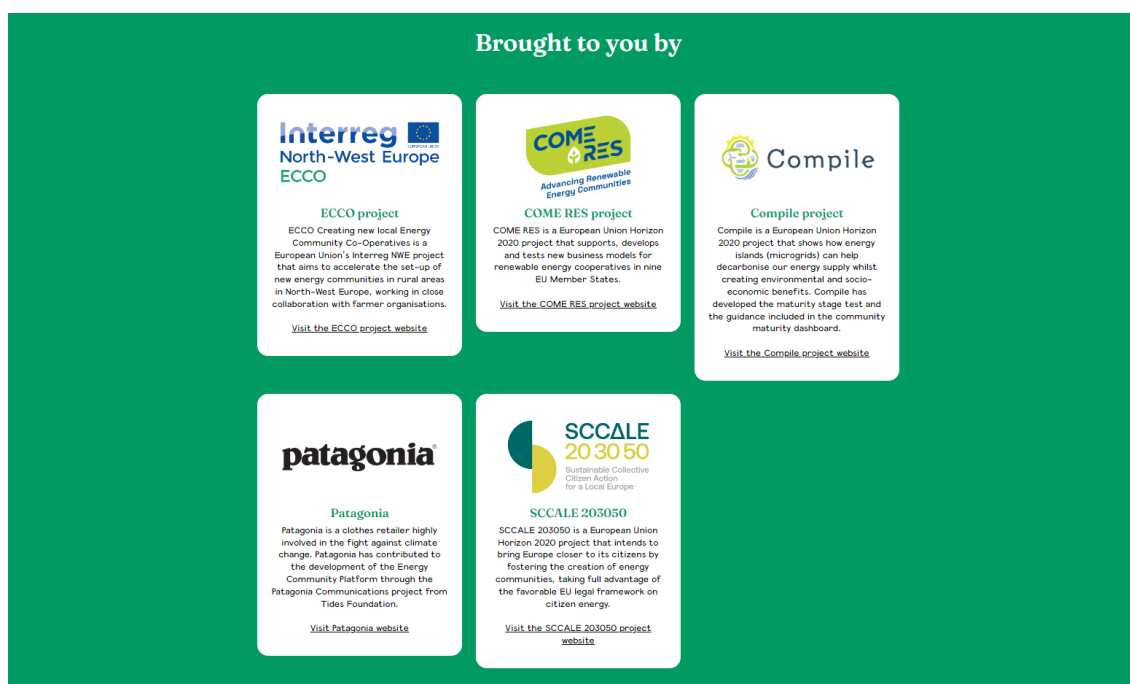


Figure 2 – List of contributors to the Energy Community Platform, as presented in the “About” page of the platform

WHAT?

The platform gathers a wide **collection of resources and tools** (that may or may not be developed as part of the contributing projects) organised by area/theme or activity. The tagging of resources facilitates the search, through filtering, improving the users' experience. It also enables the tailored recommendation of resources to the registered energy community initiatives, according to their profile.

One of the highlights is that the platform also provides a **maturity test**, which can be performed by the energy community initiatives so that they can self-assess their development stage. The result is complemented with some indications on how to assess strengths and weaknesses and help potential Energy Communities to move forward. The platform also proposes resources tailored to the development stage of each initiative.

An additional test, which is based on a COME RES deliverable (D5.4), is also made available. The **sustainability scorecard** allows energy community initiatives to assess the impact of their initiatives, in terms of environmental, economic and social benefits. The obtained results can be used to showcase the initiative's impacts and to disseminate the initiative to a wider community. They can also be used to monitor the initiative's impact over time, and to identify opportunities for improvement.

The Energy Community Platform also comprises a **community energy map**, which features examples of energy communities across Europe to provide inspiration, facilitate the exchange of best-practices and foster collaboration between initiatives. The map has a continuously growing database of energy community initiatives, where the latter can showcase their initiatives and characteristics and can get in contact with other initiatives.

As a whole, the platform fosters the creation (and continuous growth) of a **network of experts**, who can support community initiatives to move forward with their projects' implementation, provides a list of such experts across Europe and enables the communication with them, always in line with the General Data Protection Regulation and rules.

2.2. RATIONALE FOR JOINING FORCES AND INTEGRATION WITH REScoop.eu ENERGY COMMUNITY PLATFORM

REScoop.eu, acknowledging the possibility (and probability) of different projects and organisations developing similar platforms and databases, proposed the creation of a single platform dedicated to energy community initiatives, which aims at aggregating most of existing information and tools to promote their implementation and support their operation throughout Europe. REScoop.eu promoted several discussions with different organisations and projects that were planning (or already developing) digital platforms focused on energy community initiatives.

At the beginning of 2021, INEGI, COME RES partner responsible for the implementation of Task 6.4, together with Ecoazioni (WP leader) and FUB (Project Coordinator), were invited to discuss with REScoop.eu and partners from the NWE ECCO project the **possibility of integrating the COME RES platform with the Energy Communities Platform under development**. The discussions revealed the potential for significant synergies between the digital platform under development and the COME RES platform, as described in the Grant Agreement.

Within the identified advantages of the integration, the following are worth mentioning:

- Enlarged outreach capacity – the creation of a single platform will ensure that all stakeholders reached by the different projects and initiatives will be directed to the same platform;
- Gathering of all resources in one place – this will improve user's experience making the resources more accessible, and provide a more integrated and effective support to energy community initiatives;
- Improved cost-efficiency – costs associated with the general development of the platform will be shared among the different projects involved, which leaves more budget available for the development of specific features and dedicated support tools and
- Extended lifespan and recurrent update – REScoop.eu committed to ensuring the sustainability of the platform and the regular update of its content after the end of the project(s), which would be challenging for a single project such as COME RES.

Therefore, and given the fact that the COME RES **Grant Agreement also foresees the possibility of linking the platform with existing networks established by REScoop.eu**, this opportunity was discussed in the second COME RES consortium meeting, on 21 September 2021. All partners agreed to integrate the COME RES platform with the Energy Community platform, thus contributing to its overall development and with specific features, based on the project outputs.

2.3. MAIN FEATURES DEVELOPED BY COME RES

COME RES contributes to the Energy Community Platform through the **co-development of the overall platform**, as a joint effort with other contributing projects, and with the **development and implementation of specific features**, related to the COME RES project outputs.

On the general development of the platform, the contribution of COME RES comprises the following:

- Participation/contribution in the discussions for the definition of the general features, and provision of feedback to the preliminary version of the platform;
- Dissemination of the Energy Community Platform using the national country desks, inviting national stakeholders to join the Experts Network;
- Support in the identification of useful resources from other sources/projects.

Regarding the main features and functionalities to be developed as part of the COME RES project, these were identified on the basis of:

- (1) the provisions included in the project Grant Agreement;
- (2) the main barriers and challenges identified within the country desks;
- (3) the tools and functionalities already available and/or under development.

The table below describes the features and functionalities envisaged as part of the Energy Community Platform being developed under the COME RES project.

Table 1 – List of COME RES features integrated into the Energy Community Platform

COME RES feature		Synergies with features from EC Platform
COME RES good and best practices	(Some of) the good and best practices identified as part of COME RES project (WP5) will be featured in the Community Energy Map, showcasing inspiring cases and fostering the communication with/between the different initiatives.	Community Energy Map is a continuously growing database of energy community initiatives
Sustainability Scorecard	The tool developed by COME RES, as part of Task 5.4, was converted into an interactive tool, which allows communities to self-assess and showcase their environmental, economic and social impacts.	This tool is complementary to the maturity test, where community initiatives can assess their stage of development. The results can be stored in the user's account, similarly to the results of the maturity test.
Country-specific information for RECs	Country-specific information collected as part of the COME RES activities is integrated in the platform as additional resources, including legal requirements (size, technologies, actors that can integrate a REC, legal forms, etc.), licensing procedures and adequate business models.	The Community Energy Platform already includes several tools and resources to support energy community initiatives to move forward. This content will complement already existing resources with country-specific information.
COME RES resources	COME RES resources relevant for promoters and members of RECs will be added to the platform resources, and will be tagged according to country, type of support/topic, and development stage.	Resources from COME RES complement resources from other projects and entities already inserted in the platform.

2.4. IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

INEGI, as leader of Task 6.4, was responsible for the definition of the content and features to be included in the platform. The process had the contribution of all the project partners, especially from REScoop.eu (as owner of the Energy Community Platform), FUB (as project coordinator) and Ecoazioni (as WP6 leader). In order to do so, an initial concept note was shared with all project partners and discussed in the consortium meetings.

The graphic design and implementation of the COME RES features, as foreseen in the Grant Agreement, were carried out with the support of WeMake Graphics bvba, a subcontracted organisation.

The selection of the subcontractor followed a procedure of excluded procurement, with the invitation to a single entity, following the customary applicable tendering procedures of H2020 projects as well as the applicable national law on public procurement. The invitation of a single entity was admissible in the scope of excluded procurement, as established in art. 3º from the Decree-Law 60/03.08.2018 (Portuguese Presidency of the Council of Ministers).

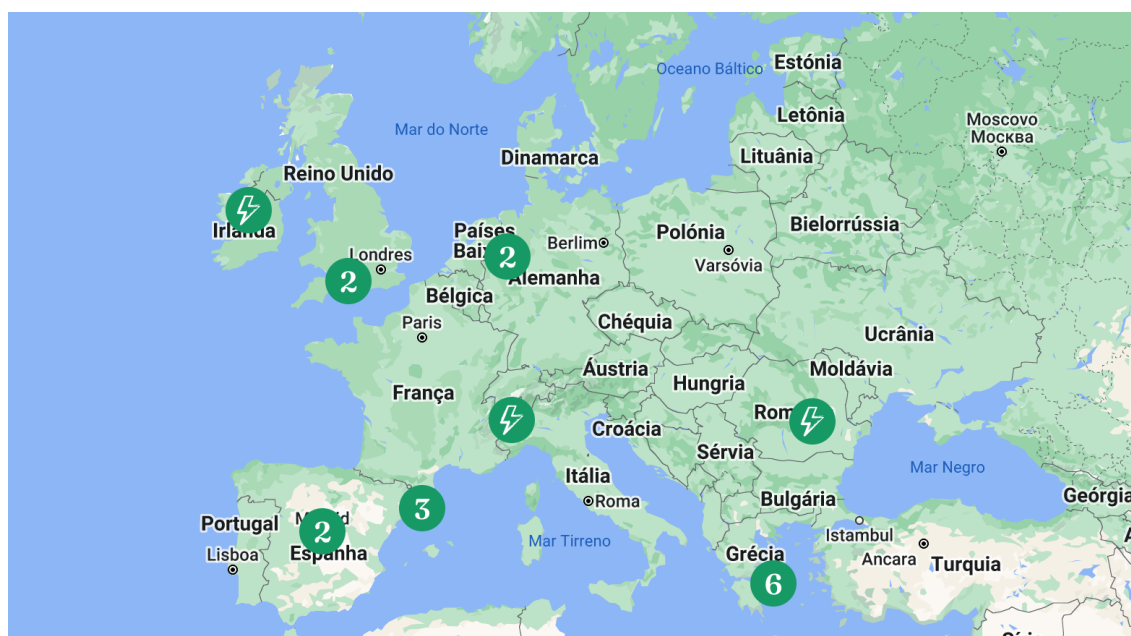
The choice of inviting a single entity is justified by:

- the positive evaluation of We Make Graphics as a supplier for the design and implementation of the general Energy Community Platform;
- We Make Graphics already had in-depth knowledge of the platform in its previous state. Thus, they did not need additional efforts to get acquainted with the platform, which means valuable time and economic savings as well as a faster response time. This fact fosters the continuation of a more effective service provision and avoids all the constraints associated with the transition to a new service provider, without harming the rigorous and time-consuming formalities relating to the implementation of these services which have already been duly completed with the invited organisation;
- the proposed value was considered competitive vis-a-vis comparable offers for similar platforms.

3. DESCRIPTION OF COME RES FEATURES

3.1. COMMUNITY ENERGY MAP & COME RES GOOD PRACTICES

The Energy Communities Map features energy community initiatives and enables exchange of experiences between different communities.



Source: <https://energycommunityplatform.eu/communities/>

Figure 3 – Screenshot of the Community Energy Map

The COME RES good and best practices, identified as part of WP5, are to be included in the map as far as the initiatives approve the submission of the form in the platform. The main goal is to increase the visibility of the good practices identified in the COME RES project, while also fostering the transfer of these practices around Europe.

Moreover, in order to foster the introduction of additional initiatives in the Community Energy Map, the COME RES Country Desks were invited to disseminate the platform, and specifically the Community Energy Map. The Belgian and Dutch Desk as well as the Latvian Desk promoted sessions dedicated to the Energy Community Platform, where a demonstration was performed on how to insert a community initiative.

3.2. SUSTAINABILITY SCORECARD

The Sustainability Score card, developed as part of Task 5.4, was converted into an interactive tool and integrated into the Energy Community Platform. The idea is to provide platform users the opportunity to perform a self-assessment of their own impacts – including environmental, economic and social.

A banner with a link to the test was introduced in the landing page of the Energy Community Platform, as well as in other pages of the platform.



Figure 4 – Banner to access the Sustainability Scorecard test included in the Energy Community Platform landing page

Once users click on the banner, they are directed to an introductory page explaining the objective of the self-assessment test and what the results can be used for. There is also a reference to the COME RES project and its main objectives.

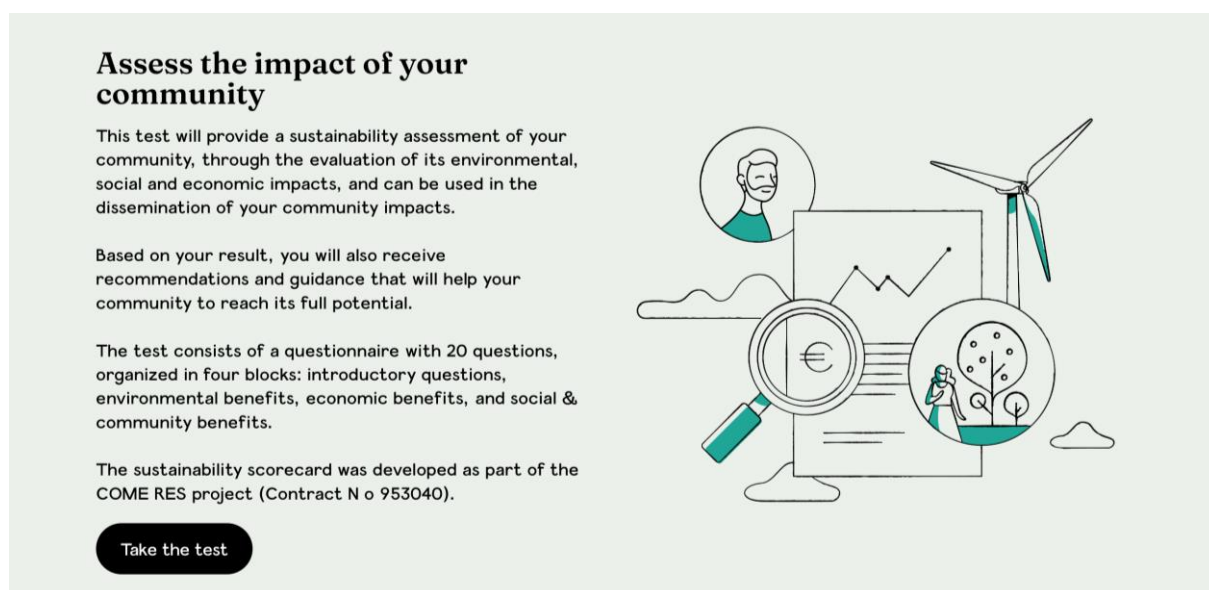
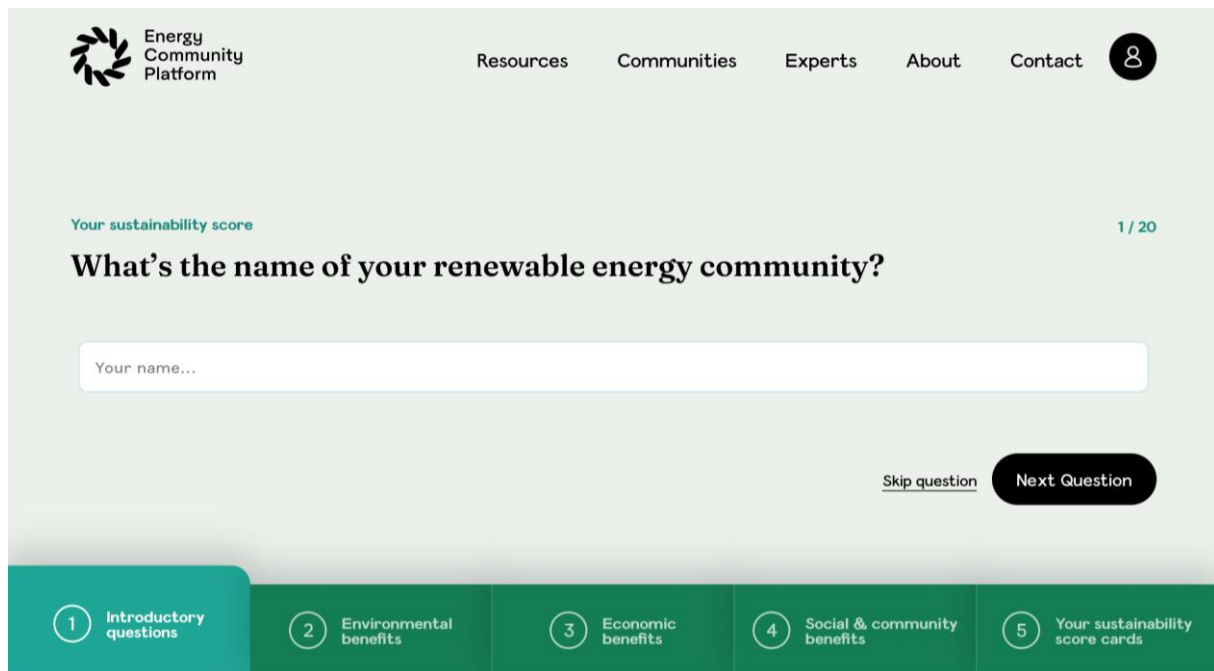



Figure 5 – Screenshot of the Sustainability Scorecard landing page

As described in Deliverable D5.4, the assessment is conducted by answering to a questionnaire of 20 questions, organised into four blocks: introductory questions, environmental benefits, economic benefits, and social & community benefits. The users are guided through the questionnaire, with the questions being shown one by one, and the users have the option to skip non-mandatory questions.



Energy Community Platform

Resources Communities Experts About Contact 

Your sustainability score 1 / 20

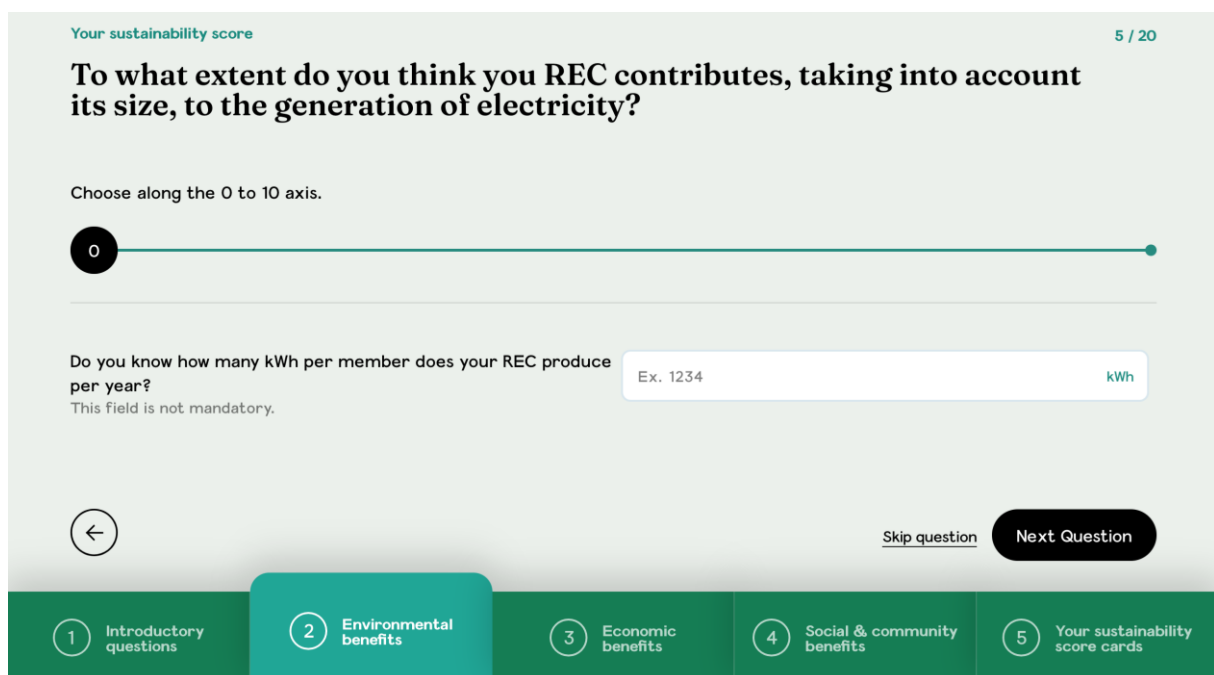
What's the name of your renewable energy community?

Your name...

[Skip question](#) [Next Question](#)

1 Introductory questions 2 Environmental benefits 3 Economic benefits 4 Social & community benefits 5 Your sustainability score cards


Figure 6 – Screenshot of the questionnaire for the Sustainability Scorecard test (question 1/20)



Your sustainability score 5 / 20

To what extent do you think you REC contributes, taking into account its size, to the generation of electricity?

Choose along the 0 to 10 axis.

0 

Do you know how many kWh per member does your REC produce per year? kWh

This field is not mandatory.

[Skip question](#) [Next Question](#)

1 Introductory questions 2 Environmental benefits 3 Economic benefits 4 Social & community benefits 5 Your sustainability score cards

Figure 7 – Screenshot of the questionnaire of the Sustainability Scorecard test (question 5/20)

The results are automatically generated when the user ends the questionnaire. The level of detail of the results depends on the level of detail of the answers provided. Also, depending on the results, tailored recommendations are showcased.

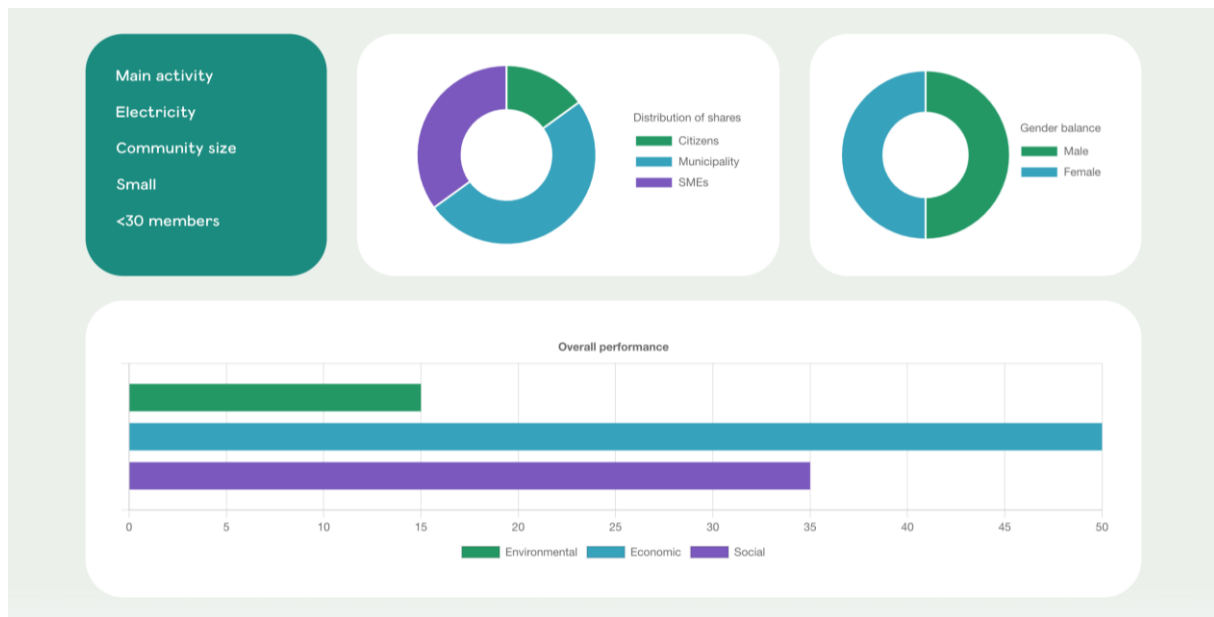


Figure 8 – Example of the Sustainability Scorecard results page, overall performance

Results comprise a header with the overall performance, and one section per area – environmental, economic and social. To see the detailed results and recommendations, users are required to register/login in the platform. Users can also print their results in a visually appealing way, to showcase in their initiatives website, or to use to disseminate their own impacts.

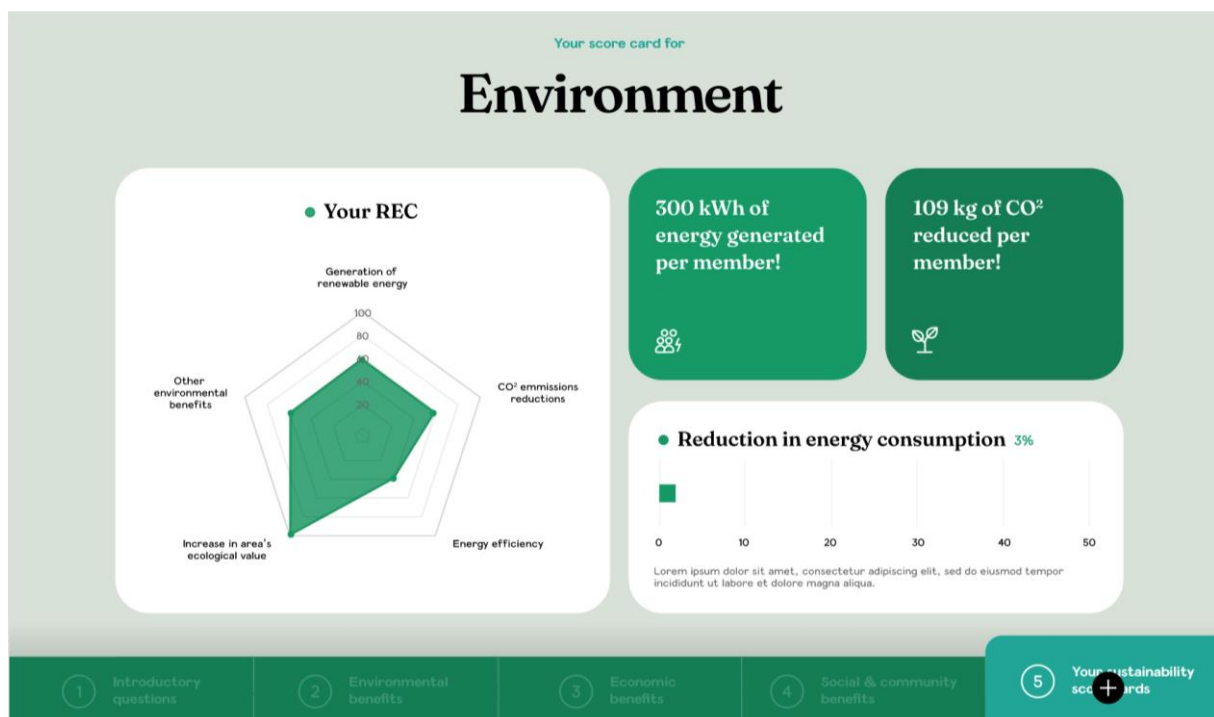


Figure 9 – Example of the Sustainability Scorecard results page – environment performance

3.3. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC INFORMATION AND OTHER RESOURCES

All project outputs that may support promoters and members of energy community initiatives in implementing and operating their projects have been integrated into the platform, in the resources section.

These comprise documents with definitions and requirements for RECs in the different COME RES countries, mapping barriers and drivers. A mapping of organisational and legal forms, and business models adequate for RECs are also included together with good and best-practices as well as transfer roadmaps.

The list of resources included in the platform by December 2022 is presented below:

- D2.1 Assessment report on technical, legal, institutional and policy conditions (possibly will also be used to create info pages for each country)
- D2.3 Synthesis report of case-studies on drivers and barriers in five selected target regions
- D4.1 Report on organisational and legal forms and business models for RECs
- D4.2 Summary report on novel financing instruments for RECs
- D4.3 Report on tailor-made business models for RECs in 4 selected regions
- D5.2 Good practices portfolio
- D5.3 Synthesis report based on in-depth assessment of ten transferable best practices
- D6.3 Four best-practice transfer roadmaps for learning regions

By the end of the project, resources currently being finalised will also be included in the platform. For instance, the D7.3 Final policy report and recommendations is expected to be integrated in the platform in February 2023.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The **Energy Community Platform** is an online and open-access platform, resulting from a collaborative effort from REScoop.eu and several European projects (including the COME RES project). It assembles in a single place all the resources that can support citizens and other promoters in moving forward with their energy community initiatives.

Capitalising the knowledge created throughout the project development, COME RES contributed to the platform with specific resources and with the showcase of good and best-practices. An interactive tool that enables community initiatives to assess their environmental, economic and social impacts and provides recommendations to improve was also developed, starting from the sustainability scorecard elaborated in Task 5.4.

After the end of the project, REScoop.eu will ensure that the platform stays online and gets regularly updated through the use of own resources and with funding from external sponsors and other projects. Indeed, other ongoing European projects as well as other parties have already demonstrated interest in contributing to the further development of the platform.

In the short term, REScoop.eu will prioritise work on the maintenance and management of the Energy Community Platform to ensure that new content is fed into it and that it can reach as many citizens as possible. Some concrete next steps include the growth of the community energy map with at least 30 new communities in 2023, the dissemination of monthly social media messages focusing on new resources or tools in the platform and the launch of three calls for new tools and experts. In the long term, REScoop.eu plans to maintain and further develop the platform, to expand the network of community energy initiatives and experts and continuously add new resources and tools, making sure to enlarge the range of projects that can contribute to it.

CONTACT

COME RES Project

info@come-res.eu

www.come-res.eu

PARTNERS



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