

# WORKSHOP FACILITATION GUIDE

TOOLS & TIPS FOR ORGANISING  
SUCCESSFUL ENERGY TRANSITION  
WORKSHOPS ON ISLANDS

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## WORKSHOP FACILITATION GUIDE

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# 1 Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to help you prepare and carry out energy transition workshops in island communities.

No matter the status of the energy transition on your island – whether you are just starting out and need to develop a vision or strategy, whether you want to develop a specific project, or whether you need to take some time to consolidate your community – the tools and exercises in this guide are designed to help you make your meetings and workshops a success.

This document is built on practical experiences from the Clean Energy for EU Islands Secretariat's capacity-building workshops, as well as commonly used effective facilitation techniques.

## 2 Before the workshop

### Defining your goals

The first important thing when organising a workshop is to be clear on your goals and objectives for this workshop. This will determine the facilitation tools and techniques you may want to use. Are you looking to

- **EDUCATE YOUR COMMUNITY ABOUT THE ENERGY TRANSITION?**
- **DEVELOP AN OVERALL VISION?**
- **DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN?**
- **STRENGTHEN THE COMMUNITY AND/OR DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS?**

#### **Educating your community about the energy transition**

If you're looking to educate your community about the energy transition, make sure to think about where your community is currently at. You will most likely not need to start from zero, but it is always useful to briefly recapitulate the main/latest information about climate change as one of the most urgent reasons for the energy transition. There are however other relevant aspects particularly when talking about a community-owned energy transition; positive impacts on the local economy, increased funds for improving community assets such as schools, transportation, cultural buildings etc., a stronger community fabric which in turn can have a positive impact on people's overall well-being, crime rates and more.

[Read on ...](#)

#### **Developing an overall vision**

In order to ensure a well-managed energy transition, it is important to develop an overall vision that takes into account the different stakeholders, needs, priorities and assets within the community. The vision will help you keep your eye on the horizon, structure your work, and bring more community members and stakeholders on board for the transition project.

[Read on ...](#)

#### **Develop an action plan**

Once you have a well-defined vision, the next step is to build a concrete action plan. This guide includes a number of workshop facilitation resources ([see p. 12 onwards](#)) to help you and your community turn your vision into a reality.

[Read on ...](#)

#### **Strengthen the community and/or develop partnerships**

Your island energy transition will only be as successful as you succeed in fostering a healthy, constructive and collaborative community. This includes healthy dynamics within the core community, as well as productive partnerships.

[Read on ...](#)

## 2 Before the workshop

### Planning aspects to keep in mind



#### PROVIDE THE RIGHT INFORMATION

No matter the objective of your workshop, it is important to make sure participants will receive the information they need in order to effectively contribute to the workshop. Particularly if you're looking to define a realistic vision and concrete actions, experience from previous workshops has shown that having the right information available is what will make the difference for reaching concrete outcomes.

For instance: If your objective is to develop a vision with your community which will effectively reduce your island's emissions, it is key to bring data on what consumes the most energy on your island (or, if this is not yet available, on similar islands), in order to guide your group's deliberations on what would be the most appropriate actions. Otherwise, you may end up with ideas that may create interesting projects, but will not result in significant emission reductions.



#### KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

To ensure your workshop will help you move towards the next step of your energy transition process, it is key to know the stakeholders in your community. If you understand their expectations, worries, capacities, as well as the overall community dynamics, you will be able to design a workshop that takes all stakeholders along in the process and strengthens the community dynamics.

In a first step, this means mapping your key stakeholders. Who do you need in the room in order make a successful energy transition on your island possible? Then, ask yourself how you can get these people to join the workshop. Can you contact these people directly? Do you need to ask someone to put you in touch, or contact them on your behalf? Are any stakeholders currently entirely out of reach? Organise your outreach before the workshop accordingly. If any key stakeholders are currently out of reach, you can start with the group that is available right now, and keep in mind how you can reach out to the missing stakeholders later on (some members of your initial group might know how to help).

Second, make sure to spend time with each of the stakeholders or stakeholder groups individually before the workshop. This will help you understand their positions and personalities, and give you an overview of the (potential) group dynamics. It will further help build trust between you and all stakeholders, which is important as they will more easily accept you as the facilitator/coordinator of the workshop. This step is particularly important when you're starting the energy transition process, but individual meetings or calls can be a helpful approach throughout the entire process in order to ensure productive workshops.

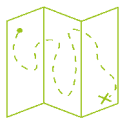
Last, take an honest look at the stage your community is currently in. If you're only just starting out, don't expect to have a full decarbonisation plan ready at the end of the first workshop. To identify which stage your community is at and what could be useful next steps, you can consult the [Islands Transition Handbook](#).



### **KEEP PEOPLE ACTIVE**

The more time you leave for active collaboration among workshop participants, the more involved and engaged they will feel in your island's energy transition. This will help ensure people's commitment to the process in the medium and long term.

No matter the focus of your workshop (education, visioning, action plan, community building), try to balance presentations with active time for participants. This can be group discussions around key questions related to the presentations, working groups if you're looking to develop a vision or action plan, or simply coffee/lunch breaks. Breaks are particularly important to give people time to rest, process the information they've received and connect with members of their community.



### **BE PATIENT & THINK AHEAD**

If you're just starting your energy transition, it will not be possible to cover everything you need in order to define concrete actions within just one workshop. The time for getting from a first conversation to developing a vision and action plan will vary depending on the size and experience of the island community, but it is safe to say such a process takes several months to one year with regular follow-up. So: Be patient with your community, plan for a series of workshops to get you towards your goal.

Remaining open to the ideas, questions and concerns of the stakeholders within your community will be a key element to building a cohesive and effective energy transition process.

Even if your community is already more advanced, it may be that you originally planned for a specific focus within your workshop, and realize that you need to change course and first cater to an unforeseen need. This aspect becomes less likely the more you know your community.

## **Tips to reach your goals of ...**

### **...EDUCATING YOUR COMMUNITY**

If you want to dive into specific topics, approaches, technologies, think about what your community needs right now to be able to take the next step in the process. Do they need inspiration from other, similar, communities who have done what you are looking to do? Do they need to learn more about a particular technology you have been thinking about for your project? Do they want or need to learn more about different models of energy communities?

Once you know your topics, it is worth thinking about who you choose as the messenger for the information you want to share. Think about who your community members will listen to – is it someone from inside the community? Someone from a different community? Someone from government/EU level? Choosing your speakers according to the importance your community attributes to them (and availability of course) will strengthen the impact of your workshop.

### **...DEVELOPING AN OVERALL VISION**

Motivating a community to develop a vision can be a challenge at times, as people can perceive it as a waste of time – be it because they are not interested in lengthy discussions and want to get straight down to work, or because there have already been a number of unsuccessful/inconclusive conversations on a vision before, etc.

## 2 Before the workshop

You may need to find creative ways to get the necessary elements for the overall vision from your workshop participants, but it is worth the effort. Without a vision, you may otherwise end up with disconnected projects, inefficiencies and even blockages further down the road. As you will see from other islands, developing a vision has helped them develop their activities in a much more coherent way than they could have done without a vision.

You will find more information on the key elements for developing a vision in the [Islands Transition Handbook](#), as well as some facilitation techniques for such workshops below.

### ...DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

You have your community together and you're ready to work on concrete projects? Here are a few things to keep in mind when you're organising a workshop to develop an action plan for your island. Oftentimes, the initial dreams and ideas of your community may not be the most effective way to reduce your emissions. In order to ensure that you can find the best possible solutions that is in line with your community's vision, make sure to gather as much relevant information as possible ahead of the workshop. This includes data about what sectors or installations produce the most emissions, and which technologies will bring the highest returns in terms of energy production and emission reductions for your island. If you don't have this information available for your island, don't be shy to consult the profile of islands with a similar geographical situation to yours. You can find some islands on the Secretariat's [interactive map](#), as well as for instance on FEDARENE's [islands & rural communities page](#).

Finally, make sure to have information at hand about the economic opportunities arising from different possible solutions. There are many information resources available from other island and mainland communities on this subject (see links above).

### ...STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY/DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

Trust between community members (individuals as well as organizations) is important as it helps to connect to important resources that will help your community get where you want to go. By taking time and energy to build trust among community members, you will be able to build the strong foundations needed to carry you through the project development and financing process. Building trust takes time, so make sure to make it a pillar of your strategy from the beginning by fostering a culture of open communications and honesty, both during and outside of workshops.

## Logistics

Never underestimate the power of planning when it comes to workshops. Whilst you will definitely need to keep flexibility for unforeseen circumstances, detailed planning will help reduce the stress on you as an organiser on the day, and will help you navigate the activities more calmly.

### How to create a dynamic room set-up

If your workshop takes place on-site (as opposed to online), experience has shown that group tables will achieve the highest level of interaction. You can change up the constellation of the groups throughout the workshop. A theatre style setup may work well for presentations, but it automatically puts the participants in a passive position, meaning they will more easily disconnect than if they feel like they form an active part of the workshop.

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#### **SEEDS FOR CHANGE WORKSHOP FACILITATION TOOLBOX**

*A compilation of tools and techniques for working in groups and facilitating meetings or workshops*  
[More information here](#)

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When it comes to online workshops, you can create a dynamic setup by including interactive elements, such as online post-its where participants can answer a question you're asking to the group, polls, and more. You can find a number of suggestions and templates [here](#).

Another way to ensure active participation in your online workshop is to create group exercises in breakout rooms. This feature is available on a number of online meeting systems, you can find a number of examples [here](#).

This will require some additional planning ahead of the workshop (i.e. thinking of the exercises and/or questions, deciding on a way to effectively organise the groups in advance or during the workshop).

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### **EXPERIENCES FROM IBIZA**

*The island of Ibiza in Spain used the tool Miro for the facilitation of online workshops. It requires some preparation with the facilitators, but has helped to ensure the success of the island's online workshop. The tool is available free of charge.*

[More information here](#)

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### **Plan your day**

While detailed planning is not something everyone enjoys, it will help you navigate your workshop, and identify potential gaps or challenges in advance. Even experienced moderators plan their workshops in quite some detail to ensure the participants get the most out of their experience. What level of detail you want to go into is up to you and your workshop partners; below you can find a suggestion from one of the workshops organised with the support of the Clean Energy for EU Islands Secretariat.

### **DETAILED TIME PLANNING TEMPLATE FOR WORKSHOPS**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>
9h30-9h35	Registrations	Participants will sign in to the attendance list, and write their name on a name tag	Paula
9h30-9h35	Take a seat	Encourage participants to take a seat at any of the tables	Tom
9h35-9h40	Welcome	Welcome everybody and recap why we're here	Paula & Tom
9h40-9h55	Energiser	- Find groups of 3 and find 3 things you all have in common - ask groups to share their common points	Paula
9h55-10h05			
Etc.			

## *Logistics checklist for workshops*

- Decide on your room setup (theatre style, group tables)
- Confirm your venue
- Confirm your speakers
- Set a date
- Define your agenda (be as precise as possible)
- Confirm your moderators  
(suggest a minimum of 2 who speak the local language)
- Send invitations / promote the workshop  
(consider informing your local media to help inform and bring on board relevant stakeholders)
- Prepare workshop materials  
(flipcharts, sticky notes, pens, paper, working canvases etc.)
- Organise planning meetings with moderators  
(potentially also speakers)
- Follow-up after the workshop

## *Extra points to keep in mind for online workshops*

- Choose your technology (some examples can be found [here](#))
- Decide on the format (will the workshop happen in one “room”, are you planning to use breakout rooms for smaller group discussions?)
- Make sure to plan rehearsal sessions to familiarise yourself and the moderators and speakers with the tool

### 3 During the workshop

This section contains practical exercises and advice for the workshop implementation.

#### Developing a vision

Before diving into the practical exercises for developing a vision during a workshop, we recommend that you read the chapters “Understanding the island dynamics” and “Developing an island vision” in the [Islands Transition Handbook](#). You will already find some helpful tools in these chapters, which you can complement with the following exercises.

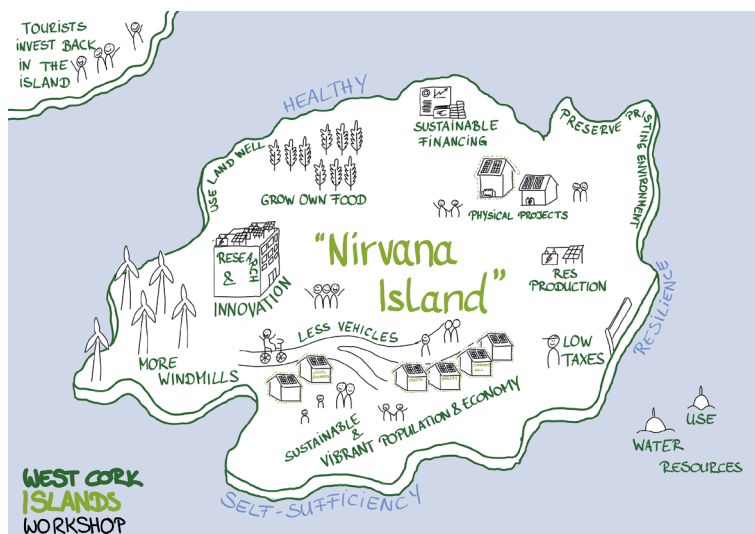
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#### EXERCISE: THE EMERGENCY SCENARIO

Will write this out in more detail; it’s an exercise they used on La Palma, to ask the participants to imagine there was a big storm that cut off all ships to the island (can add power cable for interconnected islands). Now try to imagine how you can set yourself up in order to survive. What are the possibilities on your island in terms of energy production, mobility, agriculture etc? Not every island will want to become autonomous (this can be part of the question for the vision), but on the back of this exercise, you can in either case ask participants what they would like to include for the vision on their own island.

**TIP:** Rather than just writing the vision up in a text, think of visual ways to represent the vision. You could for instance invite a graphic facilitator, or put together a collage of pictures or icons that represent/highlight the key elements of your vision. Visual representations tend to help people visualise their future, which in turn will help when developing a concrete action plan.

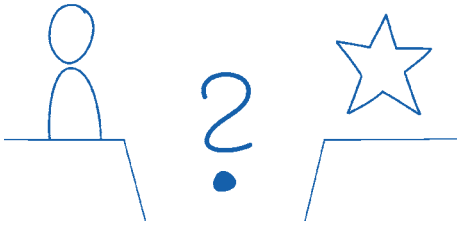
You can do such a visual representation in many ways; visual facilitation as shown here is one possibility, other options include collages (make sure to have enough magazines & newspaper images at hand; you can also print out relevant pictures in advance), or just using markers of different colours to draw (it doesn’t need to be professional drawing, just simple ways to illustrate your ideas).



Example: Visioning exercise with the West Cork Islands, Ireland

### 3 During the workshop

## Developing an Action Plan



Now you have a vision, it's time to turn it into a reality. To determine what actions will most effectively bring you towards your goal, we have summarised a few effective techniques to help you and your community structure your thinking process. One key point to note is that this is the stage where it is very helpful to have an idea of what activities or actors consume the most energy on the island, in order to focus your deliberations around how to reduce your emissions in these areas. Once you

have the appropriate information, you can start developing ideas for concrete decarbonisation actions that are achievable either in the medium or the long term.

### Criteria for “good” ideas

It can be challenging for people to move from big picture thinking to concrete actions that will turn the previously established vision into a reality. In order to help the workshop participants work on ideas that will really help advance the island's decarbonisation process (rather than adding more grand ideas which at this stage will weaken the vision), a useful tool is to first establish what constitutes a “good” idea.

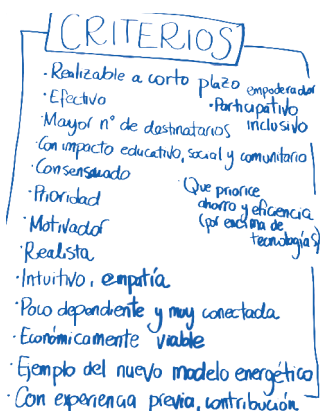
To make people feel like they are part of the process, the most effective way is to establish these criteria together. Ask your participants: “What constitutes a good idea?”

Often, the answers will be along the lines of

- Effective
- Economically viable
- Realistic/Doable
- Inclusive
- Promote local ownership
- ... or the likes

Designate one person who will write down the ideas on a flipchart, whiteboard or similar.

You will then be able to use this overview throughout the workshop to help people regain focus if their ideas are starting to move away from practicable solutions into philosophical conversations (not to say you shouldn't leave space for such conversations, but it will help you get back to the task at hand when you want to).



Once you have established the basis for what constitutes a good idea, ask your participants to come up with two ideas per table. Give the groups 30 minutes to develop their ideas (two ideas overall, 15min per idea, reminding them of the time after 10, 15 and 25 minutes to help refocus conversations).

Ask the groups to select one person that will present their idea in less than 15 seconds, outlining the name of the idea and using one sentence to explain it.

The ideas will then be pinned on the walls in the room, and participants will have 15 minutes to walk around the room and decide which idea they would like to develop further. An ideal group size for the next stage is 3-5 persons per group.

Depending on the overall length of your workshop, you can give participants the possibility to choose one or two ideas, and organise one or two rounds of the exercises that will follow.








### Giving your ideas a reality check with the six thinking hats

The six thinking hats – also called the “Bono hats” after their inventor Edward de Bono – are a way to help you think through an idea or project from different angles. Each hat has a different colour, and each colour represents a specific mindset. By using the different hats to think through an energy transition idea, you will be able to have a clearer picture of whether the idea is useful/realistic, and what actions you need to take to turn this idea into a reality. It helps people detach

themselves from “fixed ideas” (looking at these ideas from their own personal or organisational interest) and focus on those that actually have an impact.

So, which are the thinking hats?

	COLOUR	PURPOSE	QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF
	White hat	Data and information	What information do we have available?
	Red hat	Feelings and intuition	How do I feel when I think about this idea?
	Yellow hat	Optimism	Why is this a great idea? Why will this work?
	Black hat	Pessimism	What solutions can we find to solve any problems with this idea?
	Blue hat	Overview and process	What would be the next steps to realize this idea?

#### HOW TO RUN THIS EXERCISE:

1. Encourage your participants to group themselves around the idea (or ideas) they would like to develop further. Let them find their working table.
2. Explain that you will use the thinking hats technique. You don't need to explain the individual hats from the beginning, it can be more helpful to let the participants discover each of the hats one by one.
3. Start with the white hat; hand a sheet of paper to each participant of the group, which contains the colour of the hat and the guiding questions above.
4. Explain the white hat (you can find a more in-depth explanation of the different hats [here](#)).
5. Give people 2 minutes to reflect individually on their idea from the perspective of the white hat.
6. Then, give the groups 5 minutes to share their thoughts in the group. Encourage a “yes, and” approach (this means fully accepting each member's contribution, without contesting it)

### 3 During the workshop

7. Once the participants have shared their thoughts within their groups, ask them to keep the notes from their reflections, and move on to the next hat. Repeat steps 4-6 with each of the hats.
8. Once you reach the blue hat, it's time to bring together all the insights that came up in this process. Ask the groups to evaluate whether they still feel this idea is worth pursuing, or whether they came to the conclusion that a different approach may be more effective. If the group considers the idea worth pursuing, ask them to present the reflections with the group.

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#### THE THINKING HATS IN THE ISLAND CONTEXT

The book "How to read an island" by Christian Pleijel takes up the thinking hats and applies it to the island context. If you're thinking of using this approach in your workshops, the book is a very helpful resource to familiarize yourself with the concept, and to apply it particularly to the island context.

[You can find an online version of the book here](#)

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#### Turning your ideas into actionable projects

Once the workshop participants have evaluated their ideas and chosen which ones they would like to take forward, they will need to define concrete actions to turn these ideas into a reality. The Action Canvas will help you identify key actions to take, obstacles to overcome, and allies to activate. From there, the members of your group will then be able to determine action points for each group member.

For example:

ACTION CANVAS	
<b>Transformation idea (title)</b> Install solar panels on school roof	<b>To be completed by</b> 2 years from now
<b>Key actions (specific activities &amp; responsible person)</b> - convince school to participate (Anna) - confirm suitability of the roof (Tony) - secure funding (Katrin) - communications (Peter)	<b>Key resources (financial, technical etc.)</b> - Peter is an electrical engineer - Need to find out about appropriate funding
	<b>Key allies (specific organisations or persons)</b> - Parents association - City's energy department
<b>Obstacles</b> - Funding unclear - not sure about suitability of roof	<b>Notes</b>

Concrete action points deriving from this could for instance be:

- Anna to discuss idea with school director by 10 October
- Katrin to check if there are funding programmes available at municipal, regional or national level by 1 October)
- Peter to prepare & share talking points about the project by 5 October

## ACTION CANVAS

Transformation idea (title)	To be completed by
Key actions (specific activities & responsible person)	Key resources (financial, technical etc.)
	Key allies (specific organisations or persons)
Obstacles	Notes

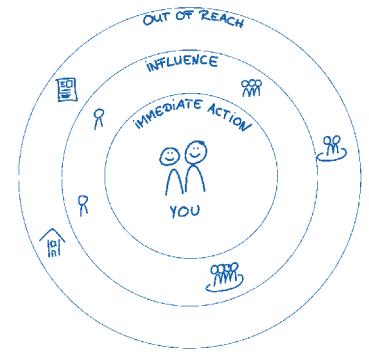
### 3 During the workshop

#### Influence circles

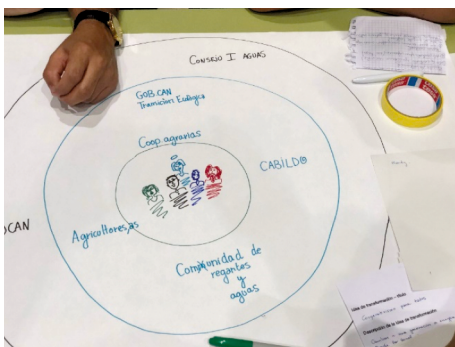
The influence circles are a deep-dive on the “allies” (and potentially the “obstacles”) in your Action Canvas. Part of developing an action plan is identifying the different ways people need to be activated in order to realize these actions.

The different agents can generally be grouped into three categories:

- **Control:** the inner circle represents the people in the working group, those who commit to acting upon the objective.
- **Influence:** the second circle represents the stakeholders who need to be influenced in order to reach the objective (see image below as an example)
- **Out of control:** the outer circle represents those who cannot currently be reached by the working group. The placement of each of these actors might change over time (i.e. if you have successfully turned an influence target into an actor, they might be able to reach those stakeholders the group currently identifies as unreachable)



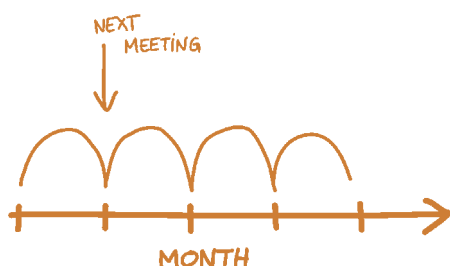
Ask the workshop participants to take some time to identify what they need to do (the inner circle), who they need to talk to in a first step (influence circle), and who may be a target in the medium to long term future (out of control).



This is also the moment to ask your working groups to identify concrete immediate actions for the members of the group, such as “Marina will ask the Mayor for a meeting in September” or “John will organise a meeting room for our next meeting on 5 October” or “Simon will talk to the bakery owner before November to see if he would be interested in installing solar PV panels on his roof”. It’s important that these actions are concrete, and that they contain a deadline – this will help the working group members hold each other accountable, and identify progress more easily.

#### Community building and partnership development

When it comes to developing your transition process, it is important to keep in mind the expertise and knowledge available within your communities, and to think about useful partnerships. For instance, in a small communities, there is often a lack of specific and technical expertise. Building strong and lasting partnerships between different stakeholders is hence highly beneficial to help island communities tackle the challenges they are facing. Historically, island societies are strongly interconnected, and community members have depended on each other for survival for centuries. Leveraging this culture of mutual support and collaboration of different skills and knowledge sets is hence crucial to unlock the sea of opportunities available to islands for the energy transition.



When looking at everyday collaboration, two of the key aspects to building strong, healthy communities and partnerships is to build trust and honour commitments. At your first community meeting, ask the group how often they want to meet on a regular basis, find what kind of format/context/location can work for everyone. Then, at the end of your workshop (or any community meeting), determine when and where the next meeting will take place, and what needs to happen before then.



An important point to keep in mind in this context is the size of the island, as it has a big influence on the group structure (i.e. positions, political and economic complexities) and communications channels. Make sure to consider your community's constitution and needs when thinking about solutions that will help bring everyone on board and establish a positive dynamic.

### **Communications channels**

In order to allow for fluid communications, make sure to identify a tool that can work for everyone where people can ask questions or share relevant information.

Tip: It can be helpful to establish clear rules what a specific channel is for, as some people have a tendency to clutter channels with information or messages that don't specifically relate to its purpose. For example: Some people participate in energy transition initiatives primarily because they are looking for a connection to other community members. This is as valid a reason as any, it may be however that other people in the group are more reserved and may prefer to interact mainly on the transition topic, and may feel pressured by the idea that the transition may now permeate every aspect of their life.

If you see that there is such a dissonance between community members, it might be worth proposing solutions to keep everyone on board – for instance, establishing a “social activities” channel which people can join if they're interested in participating in social activities outside the working group setups.

Depending on how big your transition group is, you may also want to think about an internal communications structure. For instance, if you have a coordination team and specific working groups, it may be useful to have one channel per working group, one channel where working group “rapporteurs” keep the coordination team up to date, and one group for general information sharing among the transition group.

### **Dealing with setbacks**

Often, promising energy transition initiatives can get discouraged over time if they see that a previously developed action plan doesn't seem to make sense anymore as you progress in your transition. This is however a completely normal part of the transition, and it's important to help your community understand this aspect early in the process. Your vision may remain valid over a long period of time, however the means for achieving this vision may need adjustment as you advance – be it due to a change in the political or regulatory context, the development of new or improved technological solutions, potential setbacks or delays.



We encourage you to touch on this subject so that once you hit your first roadblock, people are mentally prepared and able to contextualise it, rather than interpreting this as a sign that the energy transition will never happen on your island.

## 4 Setting the mood and energisers

One of the most important things to ensure a successful workshop is to create a feeling of connection among the participants. This will enable them to work together as a team, looking beyond their differences and focusing on their common goal. Below you will find some exercises for inspiration. You can use one or several of them throughout the workshop.

### Setting the mood



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#### EXERCISE 1: WHAT CONNECTS US

**Objective:** Encouraging people to find similarities between them will break the ice, and help them focus on what unites them – and through this, make them more open to work together.

**How to guide the exercise:** Ask participants to pair up. Encourage them to pair up with a person they have never met, or rarely interact with. Once people are paired up, ask them to identify 3 things they have in common, which don't relate to the energy transition or climate change.

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#### EXERCISE 2: GRATITUDE

**Objective:** Encouraging people to focus on things that make them feel good will help set the overall mood to “positive” (and might help those people who may have arrived with some negative thoughts step out of this mood a little).

**How to guide the exercise:** Ask participants to think of at least one thing they are thankful for. This can be a simple thing like a good breakfast they had in the morning, or big aspects of their life.

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#### EXERCISE 3: SHORT REFLECTION ON THE ENERGY TRANSITION

**Objective:** A short reflection will help bring people fully into the present moment, let go a little of some things they may have brought into the room, and help them focus on what they are about to do.

**Note:** This exercise may not be adapted to all groups. Think about whether the stakeholders of your island are likely to go along with such an exercise; if you think they might feel uncomfortable, it might be better to choose a different exercise for them.

**How to guide the exercise:** This exercise is best tested among facilitators once before applying it in a group. Encourage all participants to find a position they feel comfortable in (this can be sitting on a chair,

on the floor, lying down, even standing if they prefer). Next, explain that you will be doing a very short reflection (5 minutes) to allow everyone to fully arrive and set their minds to the energy transition.

The exercise is simple (you can read the following text to the participants through the exercise): close your eyes, and focus on your breath. Try to focus on each breath in, each breath out. You will find that naturally, things will come to your mind and distract you from the breath. That's okay, it's completely normal. The important thing is that once you notice you forgot your breath, to give yourself a mental high-five for remembering – not punish yourself for having forgotten about it. It's a bit like training a puppy: if you want it to learn something, you reward it every time it does something right. Rewarding your mind for remembering the breath will encourage it to do this again, as it will expect a positive experience.

After a minute or two, ask the participants to direct their attention to the energy transition. What comes to mind? What kind of community do you want to live in? What would need to happen on your island? How can you see yourself contributing to the energy transition on your island?

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#### EXERCISE 4: CHAIRS



**Objective:** Help participants understand that even though we have different objectives that may seem contradictory at first, it is possible to find a common way forward that respects everyone's needs. The game tends to make a strong impression, and participants will have it in mind every time there is disagreement on priorities or needs of individual group members.

#### Important notes on this game:

1. Make sure to test this with a group you know before trying it in a new environment. It's a challenging game to facilitate if the "understanding phase" lasts longer than expected, so it's best to not be a complete beginner when doing it in a workshop.
2. Be aware that the above described process is the ideal scenario. In some groups, this game can trigger strong frustrations (i.e. the last persons to understand the bigger picture may feel stupid). Before playing the game, consider the mix of personalities in the room, and try to use your judgement as to whether you feel this will work.

**How to guide the exercise:** Ask the participants to each bring a chair, and put all the chairs together in the middle (no particular order or shape, just put them all together in the middle). Then, divide the participants into three groups. Each group receives an instruction written on a piece of paper. Groups are not allowed to talk about it among each other, nor are they allowed to communicate their instruction in any way to any of the other groups – not in this phase, and not once the game begins).



The instructions are as follows:

- Group 1: put all chairs in a circle
- Group 2: put all chairs upside down
- Group 3: put all chairs in pairs, back to back

## 4 Setting the mood and energisers

*In a first instance, the instructions seem to contradict each other, but it is actually possible to combine all three instructions (the solution is to put all chairs upside down, in a circle, back to back).*

*Once each participant in each group has seen the instruction, tell them they will need to complete their task as quickly as possible. Remind them they are not allowed to talk to each other during the game. Once you feel that everyone is ready to go, you can count down “3, 2, 1...go!” – and then the mess begins.*

*For a while, the groups will be working against each other. This can take quite a few minutes, so be patient. At some point, normally, a few people will start stepping back frustrated and observe what is going on. Normally, some people will start understanding the instructions of the other two groups, and some of them will understand that you can bring everything together. They will then try to show others how to do this (with gestures). It will then take another few minutes for this to spread, and for all three groups to work together.*

*Once the game is over, ask people to share their reflections on the game. Useful questions include: How did you feel during the game? When and why did you change your approach? What did you learn from this?*

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## Energizers

We've all experienced long workshops or events – after a while, people get tired, the energy drops, and the group exercises lose focus. There are many things you can do to get energy levels up again. We have listed a few for you here:

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### TAKE A BREAK

*The easiest one by far: ensure you plan enough breaks throughout your day, and make sure they are accompanied by coffee and/or food. Giving your participants enough downtime will ensure they stay motivated, and provides them with an opportunity to connect further.*

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### THE TANGERINE

**Objective:** *One of the key insights from this exercise is that the key to success is to keep adjusting your strategy, and to not give up if your first attempt didn't produce the result you were looking for.*

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### **How to guide the exercise:**

- 1.** Divide the participants into groups of approx. 6 people (it's not a problem if one or several of the groups have 7 people)
- 2.** Assign one time-keeper per group, who will use their phone or a time-watch to stop the time of their group. This can be either a workshop facilitator or a member of the group.
- 3.** Give each group a tangerine. Explain that you will first give all the instructions, before the actual game starts.
- 4.** Explain to the groups that they will need to pass the tangerine as quickly as possible through each member of the group in alphabetical order (by first names). Tell them they will first have 1 minute to establish the order and discuss their strategy. Then the actual game will start. You keep the time for the minute, the timekeepers will come in when the actual game starts. Tell them you will do several rounds, so groups will have a chance to try again. Make sure each group has understood the instructions.
- 5.** Once you're sure each group has understood the instructions, count down ("3, 2, 1..." "ready, set, go", whatever you prefer) and stop the time for 1 minute while they discuss the alphabetical order and their strategy.
- 6.** Once that minute is over, without giving them a break, immediately say "now I'll count down and you'll have to pass the tangerine through the group. Timekeepers, get ready!" (count down again)
- 7.** There will be a phase of shouting as each group finishes the game. Ask the timekeepers to report the times back group by group, and note down their times on a flipchart/whiteboard/projector screen so everyone can see them.
- 8.** Give the groups 1 minute to adjust their strategy, then get the timekeepers ready again and start the second round. At the end of the round, note down each group's time.
- 9.** You can now tell them that it is possible to do the exercise in one second.
- 10.** Do two more rounds of this game.
- 11.** At the end of the game, you can announce the winner(s) – and then it's time for reflection: Ask the group how they felt about the game and their progress. What made them improve?

The key of this game is that it exemplifies that even though you may have a very wobbly start, by trying over and over again, you will eventually find ways to improve – sometimes significantly. Our human tendency is often to focus on the negative aspects ("I didn't achieve what I wanted", "It's not going fast enough", "It's not going to work if it didn't work this time"), but this game is proof that sticking to a task will eventually help you get there.

Draw the parallel to the energy transition process: at times, you won't know how to do something, or it will seem complicated, take a long time...but if you keep rethinking your approach, you will eventually make significant progress. Especially in the context of the energy transition, where one can often feel like time is running out, it is important to stay patient, re-evaluate one's strategy, and celebrate progress.

## 5 Closing and resources

We hope you were able to find some useful resources for the organization and implementation of energy transition workshops in this guide. The suggestions in this guide are of course by no means exhaustive, many more resources exist to help you plan your workshops. Below are a few additional resources to help you in your work – don't hesitate to also roam the Internet and ask the EU Islands Online Community for advice on specific facilitation techniques or workshop experiences.

[Online library of the Clean Energy for EU Islands Secretariat](#)

[Islands Transition Handbook](#)

[Seeds for Change library](#)

[Urban Transition Management Manual](#)

[Social Innovation Community Learning Repository](#)

[Miro online workshop facilitation tool](#)

[Training for Change tools library for online workshops](#)



Define C

The  
Optimizer  
The Planner

Groups of  
friends  
travelling  
together

Understand RC

## 2. PROBLEMS / PAINS

Which problems do you solve for your customer?  
There could be more than one, explore different ones.  
eg. existing solar solutions for private houses are not always  
a good investment (1).

TOO MANY  
POINTS FOR  
COMPARISON  
(FI) X

Hard to  
coordinate  
booking for

TOO MANY  
TABS