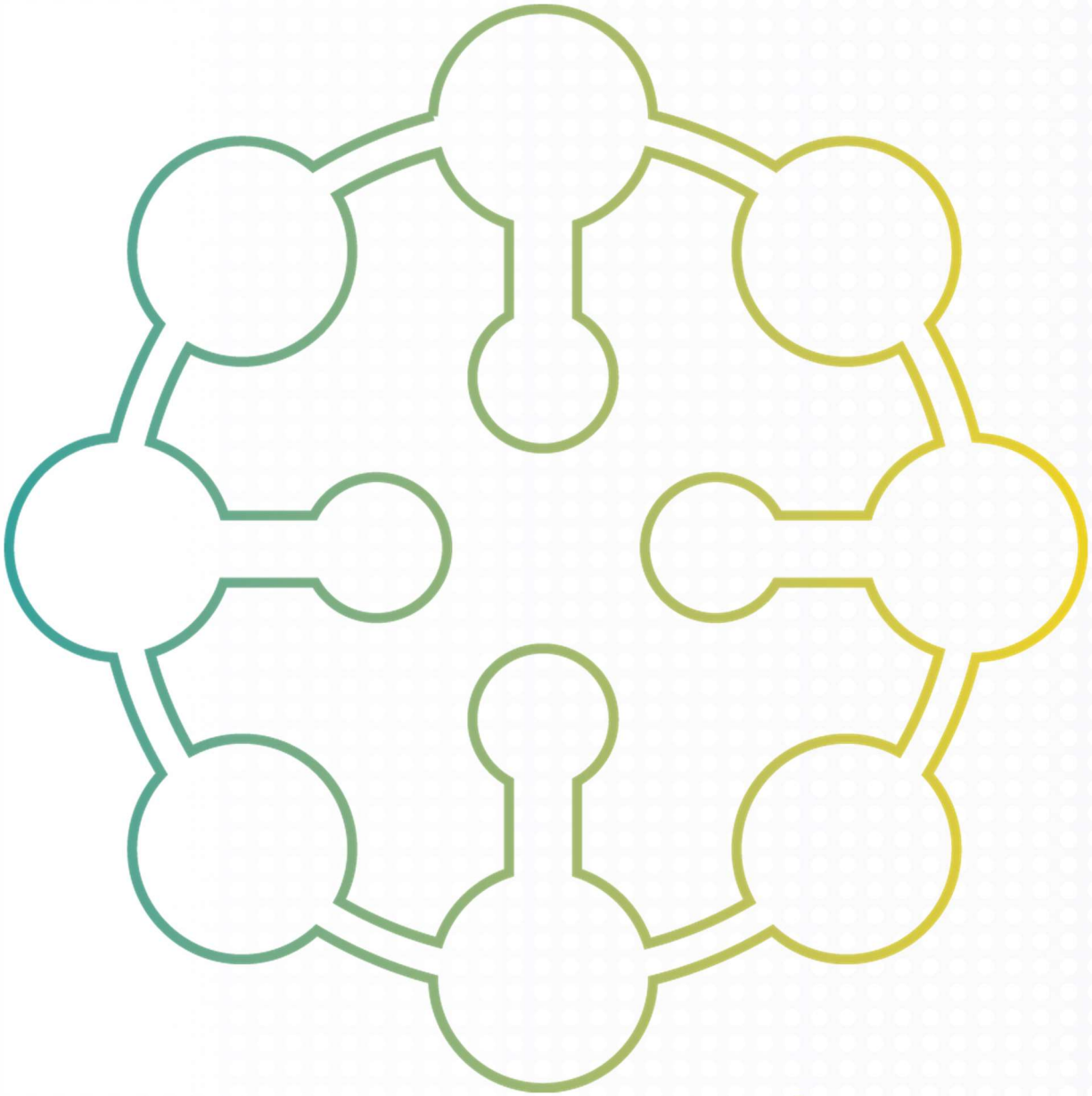

PROSPECT+

Guidance notes for facilitators

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Leader Organization: Eurocities

Authors: Sylwia Slomiak (Eurocities)

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Preface

PROSPECT+, building on the previous H2020 project PROSPECT, will enable capacity building in regional and local authorities in order to finance and implement effective and efficient sustainable energy plans, including their proper monitoring and verification and also ensuring that such plans are using synergies from other local plans. The learning programme will advance through 5 learning modules covering public buildings, private buildings, public lighting, transport, and cross-sectoral topics. PROSPECT+ will focus on improving decision-making of cities in project selection for financing and assessment to ensure that their projects are finance ready. The ambition is to ensure that over 200 EU cities in at least 20 EU MS will improve their capacities when it comes to implementing projects from sustainable energy and climate plans (SECAPs) and similar sustainable plans.

WHO WE ARE

	Participant Name	Short Name	Country	Logo
1	Institute for European Energy and Climate Policy Stichting	IEECP	NL	
2	European Federation of Agencies and Regions for Energy and the Environment	FEDARENE	BE	
3	EUROCITIES ASBL	EUROCITIES	BE	
4	Energy Cities/Energie-cites Association	ENC	FR	
5	University of Piraeus Research Center	UPRC	GR	
6	OÖ Energiesparverband	ESV	AT	
7	Energy agency of Podravje – Institution for sustainable energy use	ENERGAP	SI	
8	Tipperary Energy Agency	TEA	IE	
9	Ayuntamiento de Valladolid	INNOLID	ES	
10	Association of Energy Managers of Towns and Regions of the Czech Republic	SEMMO	CZ	
11	Adelphi research gemeinnützige GmbH	adelphi	DE	

Executive Summary

The aim of the *Guidance notes for the PROSPECT+ facilitators* is to summarise the role of the facilitators and the tools designed to ensure equally high quality of the work by all PROSPECT+ mentors and mentees.

The Guidance notes for the facilitators were prepared based on the *Detailed structure and plan for the CBP (D3.2)* and *the Monitoring guidelines for the success of the learning programme (D4.2)* as their content is dependent on the scope and rules of the CBP.

In order to avoid duplication and to ease the facilitators' preparatory work, the *Guidance notes for the facilitators* do not repeat the information on the *Detailed structure and plan for the CBP*, the content of the Action Plan and the detailed description of the respective Steps (meetings). Instead, they provide supplementary information and explain the use of various tools and techniques.

The facilitators will receive additional tools to support them in their role, including a checklist, email and presentation templates and a monitoring tool to keep track of the main observations, risks and opportunities.

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1 The role of PROSPECT+ Facilitators

The objective of the PROSPECT+ facilitators' role is to ensure the goals of PROSPECT+ are achieved through constructive meetings and exchanges under each mentor-mentee group. The facilitators are essential to ensure all participants feel heard and valued and that the risks and opportunities that could affect the project's impact are effectively monitored.

Facilitators are not trainers nor moderators. They have a unique role critical to ensure that the Capacity Building Groups operate optimally. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each group, the facilitators will contribute to triggering cooperation that can continue beyond the project and inspiring the participants to understand they can impact the situation around them. This is essential to maximise the project's impact.

The facilitators will overview all the work of external mentors and mentees: one facilitator (ENC, ESV Eurocities and FEDARENE) will be assigned to each group that will be matched with an external mentor as their main contact person during the whole CBP cycle.

Groups mentored by PROSPECT+ official partner mentors will not be assisted by an additional facilitator as the partner mentors will partly take on this role, ensuring that the Action Plan is appropriately followed. In case of doubt, the PROSPECT+ official partner mentors will also receive support and guidance from Eurocities.

The facilitators' primary role will be to encourage open and constructive discussions and to ease the work of the mentors, ensuring that the participants make the most of the CBP. The facilitators will ensure the quality and consistency in the capacity building throughout all groups and report to the Consortium (via Eurocities) on the identified potential for further best-practice sharing, e.g., through the Community of Practice, as well as on any major difficulties and identified risks.

Each facilitator should create and manage effective processes that enable the participants to achieve their learning objectives and produce the expected learning outputs and/or outcomes.

The facilitators will support the monitoring of the CBP, by collecting relevant data and contributing to identifying best practice examples and issues of general interest that may feed into the work of the Community of Practice and the policy dialogue.

1.1 Summary of the activities undertaken by the facilitators

- Act as the main point of contact for all assigned mentees and mentors, providing information about the full scope of PROSPECT+.
- Support the development of the Action Plans.
- Introduce the participants to each other and facilitate defining group-specific objectives based on issues raised by the participants during the introductory online session.
- Encourage direct discussions, set the rules, avoid lecture-type sessions with little interaction.
- Understand the group's needs in order to monitor if the discussions touch upon the main interests of all participants.

- Monitor the discussions and activities during the CB Cycle, including online engagements steering the discussions, e.g. ensuring that all agenda points are adequately addressed and all participants have an equal opportunity to contribute and ask questions.
- Monitor the participants' activity and follow-up, especially in case of little engagement.
- Ensure there is enough time for discussion and encourage the discussion by asking questions after each session/presentation, especially if there is no proactive reaction from the group.
- Contribute to triggering a solid network that could result in future collaboration, identify most promising participants and cities for further sharing of best-practice examples (e.g. as part of the CoP and Policy Dialogue).
- Identify risks that not all of the participants will benefit (it is unlikely that the project would trigger any results in their cities).
- Identify and suggest topics the participants should check/discuss with their colleagues in preparation for the next meeting.
- Collect feedback on the peer learning process and provide input to the monitoring tools;
- Ensure that the participants adhere to all administrative, financial, and practical guidelines.
- Housekeeping: make sure the agenda is followed, that speakers respect the time limits, that breaks start and end on time. Between the meetings: ensure participants provide timely answers (e.g. choosing dates of the next meetings), respect all deadlines, keep webcams on, and provide all required information.
- Trigger involvement of other staff (e.g. encourage the participants to invite their colleagues to online meetings, to consult their colleagues on specific issues that can benefit the group and to organise a meeting for their colleagues to share their takeaways from the CBP).
- Identify issues of general interest and best presenters for the Community of Practice.

1.2 Coordination of the facilitators' work

1.2.1 Assigning the facilitators to the mentor-mentee groups

After the matching process is finalised, Energy Cities informs the partners about the final list of matched groups. The information is added to the KPI monitoring file managed by UPRC and the groups receive acronyms. Eurocities and IEECP assign facilitators to the groups, taking into account their interest/experience in the thematic areas and financing schemes, the location and language of most of the participants, among other factors. Eurocities will then contact the facilitators to ask for their confirmation of accepting the groups they have been assigned. Once Eurocities receives all confirmations, the facilitators will be instructed on how to start contacting the groups.

1.2.2 Coordination of the facilitators' work

The facilitators' work is coordinated and supported by Eurocities. The facilitators' feedback will be discussed during *Facilitators' Coordination Meetings* organised at least twice: after Step 1 and after

Step 4. The aim of these meetings is to ensure any significant concerns over the participants' matching are discussed at the beginning of each CB cycle to ensure value for money and the high quality of the process. The facilitators' feedback will be also taken into account ahead of the next CB cycle, in case any modifications would be required to improve the effectiveness of the CBP.

Additionally, the facilitators are also encouraged to raise any concerns on an ad-hoc basis with the Project Consortium, through Eurocities.

1.3 The facilitators' role in monitoring progress and risks

The facilitators' role is essential to ensure the progress and results of the CBP are appropriately monitored throughout the project and the Consortium can take prompt action in case of any problems that could affect the project's outcomes.

To facilitate this process, the facilitators and the PROSPECT+ official partner mentors will provide input to:

- *CBP Monitoring table* (as instructed by UPRC).
- *Facilitators' Monitoring Tool* (as instructed by Eurocities).

1.3.1 Risk factors

Some risk factors that will be reflected in the facilitators' input to the *Facilitators' Monitoring Tool*:

- The participants do not attend all meetings.
- The participants do not contribute.
- The participants report that presented solutions are not possible to implement in their countries, e.g., due to the regulatory conditions (differences that would significantly impact the transferability).
- The mentors' expertise proves insufficient.
- The mentors' projects turn out to differ from how they were described in the application.
- The participants' expectations have not been met.
- There are major differences as regards the participants' approach to project implementation (e.g., best practice, quality criteria).

1.3.2 Risk monitoring

The following questions facilitate the assessment of risks and opportunities:

- What are the group dynamics?
- Is everyone contributing?
- Is everyone on time and provides required input?

- Is the group showing engagement?
- Who is the most talkative?
- Are any of the participants intimidating the others?
- Are some of the participants less willing to share and participate in discussions?
- Are the participants willing to talk about the governance / how the organisation is managed?
- How do the participants perceive the role of their mayor in this knowledge exchange process?
- Are the authorities open to using new financing instruments and change how projects have been financed and implemented so far?
- Are the barriers perceived as external (“not our fault, it's because xyz")?
- Have the participants suggested that their colleagues could benefit from joining the meetings online and contribute to completing the Action Plan?
- Are there any major concerns as regards the quality of the projects presented as best practices?
- Do some participants raise concerns that the presented solutions are impossible in their case?
- Would the participants like to involve their mayor in the CBP or the Community of Practice?
- Have the participants expressed interest in supporting the policy dialogue to represent the voice of public authorities?

1.4 The facilitators’ role in the Community of Practice

The purpose of the PROSPECT+ Community of Practice (CoP) is to establish a network of like-minded local and regional authorities willing to support each other through sharing best practices in order to mitigate the challenges they face as a result of climate change and the required energy transformation.

The Community of Practice aims to trigger cooperation between local and regional authorities that would continue after the project ends.

For the participants of the CB cycles (mentors and mentees), the CoP will offer to benefit from knowledge exchange with representatives of the other CBP groups, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the selected innovative financing instrument or to learn about their application in other of the 5 focus areas (thematic blocks) covered by PROSPECT+.

The Community of Practice will be primarily based on the priorities, best practices and barriers identified across the PROSPECT+ mentor-mentee groups. It will facilitate the identification of the key opportunities and challenges for replication, capitalisation and sustainability of the project’s results.

The facilitators will be ambassadors of the Community of Practice, encouraging the participants of the CB cycles to benefit from the opportunities created by the CoP.

The facilitators will inform Eurocities whenever they identify value in raising particular issues through the Community of Practice in order to reach a broader audience.

1.4.1 Encouraging participation

The facilitators will invite participants in their groups to take an active part in discussions, sharing their organisation's experience and providing input to policy feedback.

This includes encouraging the participation of other representatives of the participants' organisations, including the authorities. To this end, the facilitators will encourage the participants to register to become members of the CoP in order to benefit from the activities organised for the registered members who have successfully filled in an online form.

1.4.2 Collecting input for the scope of CoP activities

The facilitators will encourage the participants to contribute to collecting information on the priorities, challenges and needs that impact the interest in using innovative financing instruments.

Through the *Facilitators' Monitoring Tool* the facilitators will also report on the issues of general interest and on the potential to engage selected participants in further discussions on particular topics (e.g. through the online meetings for CoP members or through replication and policy dialogue webinars).

1.4.3 Identification of PROSPECT+ Innovative Financing Ambassadors

All mentors and mentees will be invited to become PROSPECT+ Innovative Financing Ambassadors in order to engage more public authorities in their countries in the debate on the broader use of innovative financing instruments to accelerate climate action.

The Ambassador cities will be selected based on their experience and proposed scope of their involvement (with priority given to those participants with the most advanced experience in delivering successful projects with the use of innovative financing instruments and those that have experience with bringing together various stakeholders).

Applicants will be asked to indicate interest in taking on the role of PROSPECT+ Innovative Financing Ambassadors when they apply to join the project or when they register for the CoP.

The facilitators will support the identification of suitable candidates across the CBP groups and encourage them to take on the role of an Ambassador.

2 Coordinating meetings and facilitating discussions

The scope of each of the meetings as well as the mentoring and the study visits have been defined in the *Detailed structure and plan for the CBP (D3.2)* and in the *Action Plan*. The facilitators will follow the instruction and the templates that the CBP and the Action Plan provide.

The information in this *Guidance notes for the facilitators* complements, not duplicates, the information provided in the CBP. Therefore, the facilitators should ensure that throughout the CBP cycles they follow the instructions listed in the abovementioned documents.

In order to facilitate this process, tools such as a checklist, email and presentation templates have been prepared. *The Facilitators' Monitoring Tool* will be used to facilitate taking notes and monitoring risks and opportunities during and after the meetings.

The information in Section 2 and 3 provides a summary of the main steps and explains in more detail the techniques that should be used to ensure effective group work, and timely identification of risks and opportunities.

The first meeting of the group (Step 1) is particularly important to ensure smooth and productive cooperation. It should allow identifying the needs and similarities between the participants and assessing the potential, risks and opportunities for the group and the project.

The PROSPECT+ official partner mentors will apply the same principles to an extent that avoids overlapping with their role as mentors.

2.1 The methods of facilitating PROSPECT+ groups

2.1.1 The tools that should be used by the facilitators

Mandatory tools:

- The checklist
- The Action Plan (it includes agenda templates for all Steps)
- Email and presentation templates
- The Facilitators Monitoring Tool
- The CBP monitoring table
- Tools for hosting online meetings (MS Teams unless the group requests otherwise)

Optional tools:

- Online scheduling tools (e.g. Doodle)
- Online collaboration platforms (e.g. Miro)

2.1.2 Before the first meeting

- Transfer information about the participants and their projects from the summary table prepared by Energy Cities into the Action Plan.
- Read the CBP and the Action Plan and ensure you know the scope of PROSPECT+ well and are comfortable explaining the CBP and all opportunities that PROSPECT+ covers (how participants are matched, the rules and scope of assessment of project readiness by Adelphi, the Community of Practice by Eurocities, the database of good practice available online, etc.). If you have any doubts, try to clarify them before meeting the group.
- Read the application forms from the participants of your group. Underline whatever is unclear or may require monitoring (e.g. relevance). If how the participants were matched is unclear, clarify with Energy Cities.
- Participate in training for mentors to ensure the role of the mentors and the differences between the mentor's and the facilitator's role are clear for you.
- Ensure you have an overall understanding of the various financing instruments (participate in the webinar, watch the recording or/and read the handbooks).
- Send the welcome email to your group, as per the templates provided to the facilitators ahead of each CB cycle. Suggest at least ten dates in the first two weeks following the welcome email. Ensure you provide a deadline for answers and follow up with those who have not responded by the deadline.
- Ensure everyone is comfortable using the online meeting platforms.

2.1.3 Before each meeting

- Ensure all participants receive materials for the meeting at least three days in advance if no action is needed.
- Ensure that relevant sections of the Action Plan have been filled in, as per the instruction in the Action Plan.
- Ensure that all participants who are asked to prepare something for the meeting receive such information at least a whole week before the meeting.
- Ensure you follow-up with everyone who has not confirmed their participation.
- Remind everyone that if they would like their colleagues to join the online meetings, they are welcome. Ask for the names of the colleagues who will be joining and include them in the *Facilitator's Monitoring Table*.
- One day before, send a reminder with the link to the meeting and the materials.
- Ask that the participants keep their webcam on and focus their attention on the speaker (they are asked not to, e.g. write emails or answer phone calls during the online meetings).
- During each meeting, take notes paying attention to the issues specified in the *Facilitators' Monitoring Tool*.

2.1.4 How to end a meeting

- Summarise main points, especially the problems and difficulties that have been raised.
- Ask if anyone would like to add anything.
- Explain the aim of the next meeting and how the participants should prepare (refer to the CBP).
- Ask if there are any topics of particular interest for the next meeting or follow up by email.
- Try to set a date for the next meeting already. If not possible, inform that you will follow up by email and do so within two days.
- Remind everyone about the need to update the Action Plan.

2.1.5 What to do after the meeting

- Go through your notes and fill in the *Facilitators' Monitoring Tool* and the *CBP monitoring table.*
- Update the Action Plan, if needed.
- If some participants were particularly quiet during the meeting, follow up by email asking if there was a reason for it that they would like us to address, e.g.
    - they felt there was no interest in their perspective,
    - they found the discussions too advanced, i.e. too technical,
    - they struggled to follow the conversation because of language barriers,
    - they thought the issues discussed during that meeting did not apply to them (follow up to understand the reason and whether it concerned only that particular discussion or the topic covered this group)
- Collect the participants' feedback after each meeting to confirm there are no significant discrepancies in needs and local contexts.

3 The outline of facilitated meetings

3.1 Introduction

The scope of each of the meetings as well as the mentoring and the study visits have been defined in the *Detailed structure and plan for the CBP (D3.2)* and in the Action Plan.

The facilitators will follow the instruction and the templates that the CBP and the Action Plan provide (a checklist has been prepared to ease preparation).

The PROSPECT+ official partner mentors will observe the instructions for the facilitators to an extent that avoids overlaps with their role as mentors.

Since the first meeting (Step 1) is crucial to launch effective cooperation, it has been described in more detail in Section 3.3, providing additional guidance.

3.2 Step 0

The main objective of these meetings (webinars) is to prepare the mentors and mentees for the exchanges in groups before starting the CBP. This step provides information on project proposal development and assessment of finance readiness, as well as training for mentors and a brief introduction to the Action Plan.

3.3 Step 1

The main objective of this meeting is to kick-start the learning exchanges in groups (peer mentoring, study visits, or local mentoring groups). The participants will get to know each other, and the mentor will present their experience and projects to the mentees.

This first meeting will allow to identify the needs and the similarities between the participants as well as to assess the potential risks and opportunities for the group and for the project. The facilitators will encourage direct discussions, set the rules, avoid lecture-type sessions with little interaction etc.

The participants are invited to note down at least five similarities and five differences in the context of their project while they listen to the other presentations.

Summary of the role of the facilitators in this meeting (as per the CBP):

- Before the meeting, contact the participants providing instructions on how to join the online session, remind the participants to update the Action Plan.

- Ensure the aim and format of the online session is clear to all participants.
- Ensure that the mentor and the mentees have prepared their presentations.
- Facilitate the online session, emphasising the discussions and clarifying doubts.
- Take notes of the conclusions and open issues.
- Wrap-up: summarise main points, especially the problems and difficulties that have been raised, explain the aim of the next meeting and how participants should prepare, ask if there are any topics of particular interest for the next meeting, or follow up by email.
- Ensure that the mentor and all mentees have sent the filled-out Action Plan within two weeks after the online session and can use the online session link provided beforehand, follow-up if needed.
- Fill in the CBP monitoring table with the information specified in the checklist.
- Fill out the *Facilitators' Monitoring Tool* with a summary of the group work, identified opportunities, issues of particular interest and potential, and any risk factors, if applicable.
- Provide instructions for the next steps and be available for questions or clarifications.
- Set a date and an online link for the next step, "2. Working Together".

3.3.1 Introduction to the PROSPECT+ CBP

The role of the facilitators:

- Use the template presentation about the CBP.
- Go through the Action Plan.
- Welcome everyone and introduce yourself (your role in the project, some background),
- Congratulate everyone for getting accepted to the programme.
- Introduce the participants (say who you have in the room – they will have an opportunity to introduce themselves later).
- Introduce PROSPECT+, its aims, scope and rules (using the template of the presentation).
- Remind the participants to make notes during all sessions for the evaluation of the programme.

Examples of introductory comments:

- *PROSPECT+ is an opportunity to learn about various financial instruments and build international networks for future cooperation. We hope you will identify opportunities to develop joint initiatives by getting to know each other throughout our four sessions (Steps).*
- *If you would like your colleagues to join our online meetings, they are welcome. Please inform me ahead of the meeting who will be joining, as we would like to keep track of the numbers.*
- *Your mayors expressed interest to hear about your takeaways during an internal discussion. We encourage you to organise a meeting for your colleagues to share your learnings (e.g. after the in-person meeting). If you would like any support in preparing for such a meeting, please let me know.*

- *We are all aware that some differences in the local contexts may affect how projects can be implemented. If you feel like what the group is discussing is not applicable in your country, please mention this.*

    - *We can brainstorm to what extent some aspects are universal and easily replicable regardless of the differences in the law.*
    - *Please also remember that you will have an opportunity to address these barriers under the Community of Practice, which includes policy dialogue and will support cities in voicing their opinions and concerns to relevant stakeholders. Please don't assume that nothing can be done.*

- Housekeeping rules:

    - *Please be on time and stay until the end. When asked to vote for the dates of the meetings, please reply as soon as possible so that we can plan ahead.*
    - *Please keep your webcams on, so we feel like we are together in one room.*
    - *We ask everyone to avoid jargon and abbreviations without first explaining them. We all may have different experiences, and we would like to prevent misunderstandings.*
    - *If anything would be unclear because of, e.g. language difficulty or jargon, please go ahead and ask for repeating/rephrasing as soon as possible to ensure you can follow the discussion.*

3.3.2 Introduction of the participants: getting to know each other

This session aims to ensure that everyone's strong sides are clear to the group, and no one will be written off as a less valuable contributor.

Notice any similarities and any particular differences. It will allow you to group participants of a similar local context, if applicable. This may be useful in case of any significant difficulties, e.g. if one participant is convinced that some solutions would not be possible to be implemented at their institution/country – in such a case the facilitator can turn to those with a similar profile and verify if there are ways to benefit.

Tour de table

Ask everyone to introduce themselves following the same structure (see below). Take notes of the key points that are relevant from the point of view of identifying good practice examples, best speakers for the Community of Practice and the risks of both drop-outs and limited to none impact of PROSPECT+ on the city (please ensure to reflect this in the *Facilitators' Monitoring Tool*). Aim to limit the screen-sharing time so that participants focus on interaction.

Round 1

- Name of the participant.
- Name of the city, country and institution.
- Role in the organisation (area of responsibility more important than job titles),
- Experience with climate and energy-related projects – how many, what type, what was their role).

Round 2

- How are projects they are involved in usually managed (very briefly)?
- Are they solely responsible for everything (ask how they manage)?
- Are they part of a larger team?
- How are decisions taken?

Other examples of questions guiding the introductory part:

- *What are the three areas where you can support the group with your experience? It can be anything you feel comfortable with, e.g. technical know-how, project team management, fundraising, writing applications under subsidy programmes, financial background, experience in education and promotion, background in NGOs, etc. Come up with three concrete things others could ask you about.*
- *What are the three main topics you would like to learn from the group to make your work easier?*
- *What projects or activities you have worked on were the most interesting for you?*
- *What are the three challenges you see when decreasing dependence on subsidies and/or introducing innovative implementation models?*

    - If internal buy-in from colleagues and the mayor is not mentioned, ask if this is easy or they will need to do some lobbying.
    - Ask about what it is like working with the mayor or senior staff – are they closely involved and approachable, or are they usually unavailable etc. You may notice a difference in the working practices based on the size of the city and the institution and its organisational structure. Some participants may work directly with the mayors or deputy mayors, while others may have a few levels of organisation between their units and the authorities. Notice if this impacts the effectiveness of their work.

3.4 Step 2

The main objective of this meeting is to better understand the mentee's projects and needs and how the mentor can further support the mentee during the physical meeting (Step 3). Mentor and mentee(s) define the learning objectives to be achieved in the physical meeting.

Other online sessions can be set up, if needed, to define further and finalise the learning objectives as well as to identify relevant topics that should be addressed during the physical visit. The facilitators will pay attention that the mentors are aware of any potential significant differences in the local regulatory and market context that could severely impact the extent to which the mentor's approach can be replicated.

Summary of the role of the facilitators in this meeting (as per the CBP):

- Introduction: Summarise the main points raised in Step 1, especially those that required follow-up.
- Ensure the aim and format of the online session is clear to all participants.
- Ensure that all mentees have filled out Step 2 of the Action Plan.
- Facilitate the online session, including defining the Learning Objectives and facilitating constructive discussion.
- Invite the participants to note at least five similarities and five differences in the context of their project while they listen to the other presentations.
- Take notes of the conclusions and open issues.
- Wrap-up: Summarise the main points raised in Steps 1 and 2, especially the problems and difficulties that have been raised and explain the aim of the next meeting and how participants should prepare. Ask if there are any topics of particular interest for the next meeting or follow up by email.
- Provide instructions for the next steps and be available for questions or clarifications
- With the mentor and the mentee, set a date for the next step: Step 3 Meeting Up.
- Fill in the CBP monitoring table with the information specified in the checklist.
- Fill out the *Facilitators' Monitoring Tool* with a summary of the group work, identified opportunities, issues of particular interest and potential, and any risk factors, if applicable.

3.5 Step 3

The main objective of this meeting is that the mentor and mentee meet and work together to achieve the learning objectives through in-depth mentoring sessions or site visits.

Ensure participants understand the difference between the study and mentoring visits. In the case of mentoring visits, the facilitator's role is vital to supervise mentors to ensure they invest adequate time in preparation and contribute expected value.

Ensure the mentors understand their role and are prepared to provide feedback/contributions expected by the mentees. Otherwise, the mentees may question the value of the mentor's visit.

Summary of the role of the facilitators (as per the CBP)

Preparation for Step 3:

- Before the physical meeting, ensure the participants have agreed on the agenda and verify that the agenda meets the objectives agreed upon during Steps 1 and 2, that it offers an interesting and realistically comprehensive overview of the project (e.g., by the inclusion of site visits and meetings with additional staff and stakeholders) and that general of the value for money is respected.
- Encourage early booking of flights and accommodation in order to ensure value for money (remind the participants about the cap of reimbursement amounts, as defined in the CBP).
- Verify flights: avoid participants arriving later or leaving earlier.
- Verify whether all of the participants will attend the "joint" moments.
- Agree on dress code (e.g. based on the invited stakeholders, the mentors may suggest a more official dress code).
- Double-check that the participants' needs such as food allergies or mobility/health issues have been considered.
- Double-check that all participants know how to get to the study or mentoring visit location from the airport and from the hotel (the mentor should be asked to provide instructions).
- Make your travel and hotel arrangements based on financial guidelines (as per the CBP).

During the visit:

- Attend the physical meeting and ensure that the participants have made the necessary preparations; put together travel details (arrival and departure times, accommodation, and contact details while abroad).
- Ensure that the activities carried out during the physical meeting support the learning objectives by ensuring all agenda points are adequately discussed, and all participants share conclusions at the end of the visit.
- Make sure the agenda is followed and all topics have been covered. In justified cases, you can decide that some issues would be instead discussed during the next online meeting (e.g. if particular discussions were beneficial and it was justified that they would be longer than planned or in case of delays that could not have been predicted).
- Take care of communications, as instructed by Fedarene.
- Intervene in case of difficult interactions (i.e. language barriers).
- Ensure everyone understands the Covid rules applicable during the visit: explain what is foreseen given the uncertainty caused by the pandemic situation (what happens in case of cancellations, explain the safety measures.
- With the mentor and the mentees set a date for the next step: Moving Forward
- Remind the participants that their mayors expressed interest in their takeaways. We encourage them to organise a meeting for their colleagues to share their learnings from the study or mentoring visit and the CBP so far. We are happy to discuss if some additional support would be needed ahead of such meetings.

After the visit:

- Make sure to save the original receipts for costs approved by PROSPECT+. And remind participants to keep the original receipts of all expenses principle reimbursed by PROSPECT+.
- Fill in the CBP monitoring table with the information specified in the checklist.
- Fill out the *Facilitators' Monitoring Tool* with a summary of the group work, identified opportunities, issues of particular interest and potential, and any risk factors, if applicable.
- Each participant (external mentor, mentee) must fill out the Reimbursement form and attach the invoices. Mentors and mentees will email the reimbursement form together with scanned receipts to the facilitator. The facilitator should check whether the expenses match the attached invoices and whether PROSPECT+ covers the costs. In case there is a need for corrections, inform the participant. Once the facilitator approves the Reimbursement forms, two emails need to be sent:
  - the facilitator informs each participant that their Reimbursement is approved and that it should be printed out, signed, and sent by post, together with **original invoices** to the project coordinator as per the Reimbursement Forms (Annex 1 of the Action Plan). The facilitator informs the participants that the reimbursement will take up to 30 days from receiving their original invoices by post.
  - the facilitator sends an email titled "PROSPECT+ REIMBURSEMENT [insert group code]" to the coordinator (mia@ieecp.org) attaching the approved Reimbursement forms from all external participants.

3.6 Step 4

The main objective of this meeting is to reflect on how the mentee(s) can apply the knowledge gained during Steps 1-3, considering the context of the city/region and factors that might constrain the use of the financing scheme.

Based on the information added to the Action Plan and the experience of the mentee(s), the participants will discuss how the knowledge exchanges have impacted the implementation of the mentee's project to date.

The potential, opportunities, and barriers for incorporating the mentor's methodology will be discussed, along with potential follow-up steps (upon the participants' initiative). Conclusions will include a discussion of relevant observations and recommendations that can benefit the general discussion on cities' needs for increasing the use of innovative financing instruments.

Summary of the role of the facilitators in this meeting (as per the CBP):

- Ensure the mentee(s) has filled out Step 4 of the Action Plan before the meeting.
- Instruct the participants about the Transferability analysis and the Project Readiness Check.
- With the mentor and mentee, ensure the completion of the Action Plan.
- Moderate the online session and take notes of the conclusions and recommendations.
- Pay attention to the issues of general interest and encourage the participants to suggest topics for discussion under the Community of Practice.

- Remind the participants that their mayors expressed interest in their takeaways. We encourage them to organise a meeting for their colleagues to share their learnings from the study or mentoring visit and the CBP so far. We are happy to discuss if some additional support would be needed ahead of such meetings.
- Encourage the participants to fill out the CBP evaluation survey.
- Within 5 days after the last meeting, fill out the *Facilitators' Monitoring Tool* with a summary of the group work, conclusions and recommendations prepared by the group during the Step 4 online session, including identified opportunities, issues of particular interest and potential as well as any risk factors, if applicable.
- Within 5 days after the last meeting, fill in the CBP monitoring table with the information specified in the checklist (all remaining information about the participants, their projects and the good practices).

4 How to handle difficult situations

4.1 Beware of cultural differences that can impact the group's dynamics:

Remember that the participants' experience and work practices may vary. You should also be aware of cultural differences that may be reflected in behaviour during meetings.

Something that may be considered normal and positive in one country may be seen as disrespectful in another country (e.g. dressing casually instead of wearing a tie, asking questions before someone has finished speaking).

Observe the group interaction and try to notice any potential conflicts. Remind of the rules in a friendly way from time to time if you notice that the participants do not respect them and disturb others.

4.2 Some problems you may encounter

- No replies within deadlines.
- Participants confirm but do not turn up or join late.
- Participants do not say much – they just listen, and it is not clear if they are interested.
- No constructive interaction – lecture-like presentations and little reaction.
- Apparent that it is doubtful participants would implement what they learn.
- Profiles of participants differ significantly (e.g. energy/technical experts vs project coordinators only in charge of filling out forms etc.).
- Participants have been mismatched, e.g. their expectations vary significantly, or their local context makes it extremely unlikely that they would benefit.
- Participants do not switch on their webcams – not clear if they are engaged.
- Participants answer phone calls, write emails or generally do not pay attention to the meeting.
- Conflicts within the group.
- During a study visit, participants skip sessions.

4.3 How to steer the discussion if it is not naturally interactive

The facilitators pay attention to knowing the participants in order to assess what facilitation methods will be most suitable for the particular group based on the participants' experience, age, cultural background.

Issues such as the presence of other representatives of the participants' organisation should be considered (e.g., some participants may be reluctant to share their opinions openly if their supervisors or mayors are present).

The facilitators pay attention to who is not taking part in the discussion. The role of the facilitator is to ensure no one is left behind (e.g. the discussions are not dominated by most senior people or those who have the most experience), everyone feels comfortable asking questions. In case of language difficulties, an effort is made by the group to speak clearly, limiting the specialistic terminology, etc.

The facilitators keep it simple and uncomplicated – some participants may be reluctant to admit that some topics are difficult to follow. The facilitators make sure the speakers explain the abbreviations or remind everyone what a specific topic or activity foresees.

Should there be no spontaneous comments or questions from the group, the facilitators can prompt them by asking for the participants' opinions.

The aim of the facilitators' asking questions is not to dominate the conversation but to trigger discussion and contributions from all participants (e.g. paying attention that the speakers explain the abbreviations or remind everyone what a certain topic or activity foresees).

In order to make the online meetings more interactive, the facilitators are encouraged to use online surveys and tools (e.g. to create word maps etc).

The following questions can facilitate steering the discussion:

- *What do you think about this?*
- *Have you faced any similar difficulties?*
- *To what an extent is this similar to what you have faced in xyz?*
- *Has anyone dealt with such a problem?*
- *What were the most valuable solutions?*
- *To what extent have the projects you have worked on used similar solutions?*
- *What are the main differences between this project and your experience so far?*
- *What main takeaways would be most beneficial for your organisation?*
- *Which aspects of what [the mentor] has just shared with us sound most challenging to copy?*
- *What would be necessary for this solution to work in your region?*

During the introduction part, the facilitators pay attention to the group dynamics: keep the atmosphere friendly and supportive and start with ice-breakers. Acknowledge that you appreciate all contributions. For those who join later, mention what you have been talking about while waiting so that they do not feel left out.

Pay attention to the problems the participants mention. If you consider that such concerns are significant risk factors that the participant will not apply what they learn under PROSPECT+ or that they would drop out, follow up individually, reminding them that the Community of Practice aims to bring the attention of relevant stakeholders that can contribute to reducing such barriers. Invite the

participants, their colleagues and their mayor to join the Community of Practice and the Policy Dialogue. Inform Eurocities when you think the issues could be raised through the CoP.

If you observe that the participants do not believe that they can have at least a partial impact on the current situation, there is a risk that their city will not benefit from the project. PROSPECT+'s ambition is to inspire the participants to trigger positive change. This is why new elements have been introduced, i.e. the Community of Practice and the policy dialogue. Please ensure the participants are aware of them and feel encouraged to use this opportunity.

5 Group communication and files management

As outlined in the CBP, at the start of the CB Cycle, IEECP will set private Team channels (on Microsoft 365) for each group. In the Team channel of a particular group, only the facilitator, the mentor and the mentee(s) will be added and have access to the files stored in such channel.

Besides storing the group files (such as the Action Plan and PPTs), the Teams channel can also be used for the communication between the participants and for setting up the online sessions. Although this is the standard communication channel of PROSPECT+, in case participants encounter restrictions to use Teams, the online sessions can be set up using another platform preferred by the group (e.g. Zoom), using license they already have, free options, or acquiring licenses on their own budget (not refunded by the project).

The management of files and the setup of meetings can also be managed through another platform, if needed and if it incurs no additional cost for PROSPECT+. However, IEECP should be informed and the main documents such as Action Plans should be sent to IEECP or copied to a common team SharePoint in order for the files to be accessible by the entire team.

PROSPECT+

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