

Project acronym: EnergyPROSPECTS
Title: PROactive Strategies and Policies
for Energy Citizenship Transformation
Grant Agreement number: 101022492



EMPOWERMENT TOOLKIT AND KNOWLEDGE REPOSITORY

EnergyPROSPECTS partners

University of Galway (UoG)
University Road, H91 TK33, Galway, Ireland



Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB),
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt 50-1050, Bruxelles, Belgium



GreenDependent Institute (GDI),
2100 Gödöllő, Éva u. 4., Hungary



Universiteit Maastricht (UM),
Minderbroedersberg 4-6, 6200 MD, Maastricht,
Netherlands



**Applied Research and Communications Fund (ARC
Fund),** Alexander Zhendov Street 5, 1113, Sofia,
Bulgaria



Notre Europe – Institut Jacques Delors (JDI),
18, rue de Londres 75009, Paris, France



University of Latvia (UL),
Raiņa bulvāris 19, LV-1586, Riga, Latvia



Technische Universität Berlin (TUB),
Straße des 17. Juni 135, 10623, Berlin, Germany



Universidade da Coruña (UDC),
Rúa da Maestranza 9, 15001 A Coruña, Spain



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Resources to overcome disempowerment

Participatory governance

Effective citizenry commitment, organised through initiatives that work for the energy transition is one of the keys to its success. Despite the peculiarities of each initiative, they all share the purpose of experimenting with alternative social relations in order to undertake new forms of action. Their hallmark is the positive social impact they generate and their common search for new forms of trust, cooperation, reciprocity and autonomy, along with respect for the environment (Dumitru et al., 2017; Kemp et al., 2015). The backbone is the construction of a democratically governed organisation that empowers its members. The adoption of participatory governance requires:

seeking out model of responsible, non-profit production and consumption with reference to the big energy companies 'no, no, this is a financial business, and the electricity will be made by someone else (...) this is a business in which you have a monopoly granted by the state and you also have unregulated influence on system regulation (Interview 41, Energy cooperative).

learning comes to the fore, because you must understand a minimum to be able to decide, meaning there has been major educational strides in the Assemblies so that we could all reach a minimum understanding in order to be able to decide (...) without knowledge you cannot form an opinion (Interview 32, Energy cooperative)

Initiatives usually entail the participation of citizen groups, social enterprises, authorities, and community organisations. Each party can make since the interaction between social structures and formal institutions that facilitates the processes of innovative social transformation (Pel et al., 2015). By involving a wide range of stakeholders as to accomplish sustainable and long-term results, there is a greater chance that the community will accept the changes being introduced and wish to engage in the action.



We invite you to reflect on the way in which the participation of the people who are part of the initiative you are involved in is promoted by answering a series of questions:

[Please stop here for doing Activity 10].

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Activity N.º 10

Let's consider and observe my level of participation in the ENCI initiative

Below is a list of questions which will help us ascertain what participation point you are at within the initiative you are involved in.

In my ENCI initiative, I am informed regarding what is happening, the decisions that are made and how they may affect me. There is no exchange of ideas, discussion, dialogue or deliberation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I am not sure
In my ENCI initiative, I am consulted when information is required on a topic, issue or process of community interest, with the intention of obtaining opinions, standpoints, ideas, values, solutions or priorities from each of the members who are mainly affected.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
In my ENCI initiative, I work together with other members based on a common goal to facilitate understanding and the search for a common solution to the problem.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
In my ENCI initiative, I collaborate with other members on all critical aspects of the initiative, including developing alternatives and finding preferred solutions, which are taken into account.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
In my ENCI initiative, I have control and decision-making autonomy as do other members who act as individuals or groups who can influence and/or benefit from the initiative's creation and maintenance.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

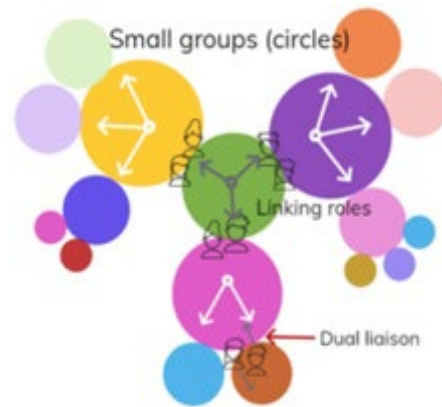


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Empowerment Toolkit

As you have now reflected on your level of participation in the ENCI initiative, we will soon address the role of external factors effecting your participation in the broader energy system. However, we would like to highlight a relevant point on generating democratic governance: creating an organisation which ensures that membership and leadership resemble the community. Some of our respondents in the project told us of the decision-making system based on sociocracy, therefore, we have concluded this point by briefly summarising the term.

Sociocracy is an approach to governing organisations that induces greater engagement, distributed leadership, harmonious adaptability, and increased productivity. It is best suited for organisations that aim to self-manage based on the values of equality. It is based on a set of simple rules (e.g. how to create a circle: The same rule allows any circle to morph into a subcircle, and subcircles to form other subcircles and so on).



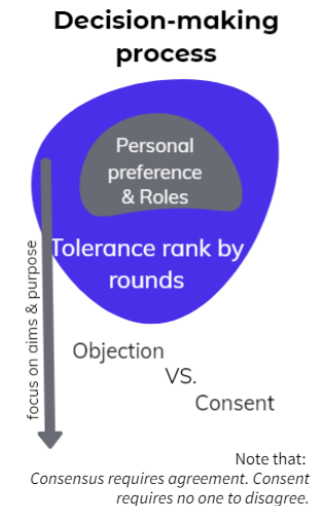
- **Circles:** small groups that form the basis of decision-making. Each circle has a definite goal (a description of what it does) and full authority in a domain (over which the circle has authority).
- **Roles and functions:** will be defined by the circles by consent, both to function smoothly and to "package" operations into meaningful pieces. Any member can play one or more roles.
- **Liaison roles:** Connect circles with other related circles.

Top-down decisions are usually autocratic decisions in which the superior can override the subordinate. In a model based on sociocracy, each circle or role will have authority in a defined domain. Since domains are nested, there is a hierarchy of domains, yet not an autocratic relationship between people or roles. The combination of top-down and bottom-up links between circles results in a circular hierarchy. To make decisions, consent is used in which there are several phases:

1. **Preparation:** Each circle decides, by consent, which topics to include in its agenda and how much time it will devote to each of them.
2. **Personal preferences and roles:** People are chosen in roles such as circle coordination, secretarial, facilitation, or a self-defined operational role.
3. **Turn-taking:** The practice of speaking one by one in meetings until

everyone has spoken once in that round. The intention is to listen to all voices. The rounds contribute to greater mutual listening and understanding.

4. **Consent:** Decision-making is not based on what the majority decides (majority vote), but the group should strive to integrate each objection until all members give their consent. The underlying idea is that minority opinions matter and that majority voting tends to polarize rather than unite people. There is consent to a proposal when no member of the circle has an objection; That is, no member of the circle has reason to assume that the circle cannot achieve its goal adequately if the circle approves the proposal.



Any member of the circle can highlight a problem in a proposal and make sure that the circle improves the proposal prior to approving it. Consent requires working on problems collaboratively. This means sociocracy requires a commitment to listening, learning, and using its tools. For some, this might require a modicum of "unlearning" from practices from more hierarchical contexts