

**What participatory processes  
for local communities in a  
green transition perspective**

**Key concepts, modernised  
process**

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# *The methodological elements of CO-GREEN*



Animate the local community to act for real change in terms of green issues.



Ensure that participatory processes are **inclusive for all social groups**. Particular attention is paid to marginalised groups and those at risk of exclusion due to various forms of deprivation (e.g. material poverty, cultural and educational deprivation, etc.).



Finding **common ground** for exchange and co-planning, including different stakeholders and groups (*no one left behind or excluded*). This implies an effort to combine the **different interests** that are visible in the community around green issues. **Local stakeholders** are contacted, informed, involved and eventually engaged. Stakeholders must be identified and mapped, so that targeted actions can be defined for them.



**Integrating green issues into existing forms of strategic planning** in communities/territories.



***Step by step***



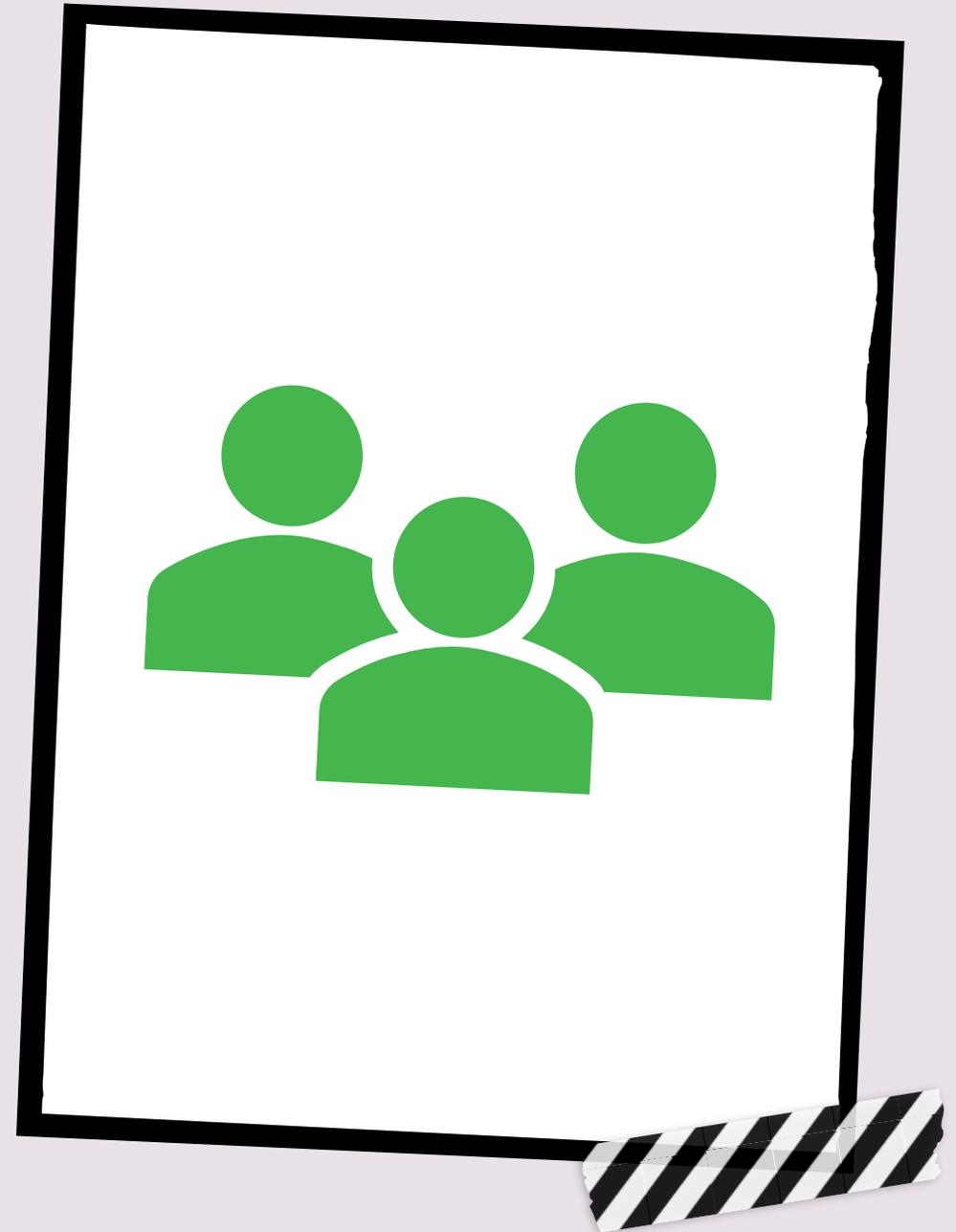


## *First step - From fragmentation to networking*

- Local stakeholder groups must be linked in local multi-actor networks.
- These networks can bring together different actors on a common platform, such as: institutions, third sector and non-governmental organisations, education and training agencies, social partners (e.g. trade unions, employers' associations), informal groups of activists.



- To accomplish this step, the project partners proceed as follows:
  - a. Organise targeted **communication** aimed at local actors.
  - b. Perform in-depth **diagnostic** tasks:
    - Mapping key **stakeholders** (NGOs, local government, schools, universities, citizens, etc.), also describing and assessing their **interests** regarding the introduction of green issues into local strategic planning;
    - Mapping the **potential** of key stakeholders in terms of the influence they can exert in shaping local strategic planning;
    - Mapping of **key green issues** in communities/territories, taking into account input gathered by project partners through observation, action and direct contact with different community groups.



c. Support **team building** to create a **preliminary informal network**:

- Knowing who the stakeholders are, what kind of interests they have and how they can contribute to the development of local green policies, it is possible to create an informal network. To this end, a key role is played by local *champions*, who in many cases are represented by partner associations (e.g. CAL, Euracademy, Žmergo, associate members of the Third Sector Forum). For them, it is crucial to create a group of informed and competent trainers who act as multipliers of participatory activities. Therefore, the steps taken can be summarised as follows:
  - Create **opportunities for** different groups to **meet and exchange** views; the promoting partner must be recognised as a 'team builder';
  - Provide a **stable platform for** meetings and exchanges that local actors can rely on. They know it is a 'safe space' where they can express their ideas and ask for explanations.
  - Identifying **potential trainers** within community groups.
  - Creation of an **education and training pathway for trainers**. This pathway can be built on the basis of existing training offers, with input from various actors (NGOs, activists, vocational training agencies, universities, etc.). The commitment to provide training can be a 'glue' for many actors.





## ***Second step - From apathy to community activation***

For many reasons, citizens are very reluctant to engage in what could be considered 'busy work'. This represents a significant obstacle to the animation of effective change and must be considered carefully. Certainly, citizen engagement needs to be sustained and nurtured today



The common steps  
that the CO-GREEN  
project partners  
envisage are as  
follows:

**Selection of *community animators/activators*** able to engage citizens and stakeholders in discussions, debates, exchanges, co-planning, etc. on key green issues.

The animators must be trained and updated: this is the task of the local trainers.

Within the community network, the animator cannot work alone it is necessary to create a group of community animators (with similar profiles).

The active participation of citizens and other stakeholders must be **solicited and facilitated** (*not steered towards a particular direction/objective!*).

A **targeted communication strategy** for communities can be co-designed already in phase 1 (when team-building activities are implemented) and then implemented by activators/animators. In this sense, they can play a central role in circulating up-to-date information on local green issues, counteracting misinformation, and organising public meetings with experts and peer-experts who can provide explanations from different perspectives. This can be considered a kind of 'community education'.

The work of animators can help **raise awareness** of the need to create a critical mass:

- internal pull factors (increasing awareness) o
- external push factors (flood, earthquake)

This process can be called '**group conscientization**'.



A small, vibrant green seedling with several leaves is growing out of a crack in a grey concrete surface. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The image is framed by a thick black border with a decorative black and white striped corner in the top left.

**Third step** - *From activation to involvement: joint actions for local green transition*

This phase is perhaps the most challenging, as it requires the actors involved to take a position on one or more green issues and act accordingly.



a. **Issue setting**: the selection of green issues is a critical step. It is important for project leaders and promoters to think about how the selected 'green issues' can be aligned with stakeholders' interests.

b. Acceptance of **different sub-communities** that can be created within the wider community and that can address green issues from different perspectives (**intersectional approach**):

- Community of interest,
- Community of practice,
- Community of action,
- Communities defined by generation,
- Communities defined by ethnicity, etc...



c. **Negotiation** of shared solutions for joint actions.

- **Aligning activities/solutions** to the interests of the community and sub-communities that may diverge. This task is very delicate, as it aims to support the different groups in finding common and unifying bases for discussion and co-design. Facilitators, in this phase, must demonstrate their skills in active listening, conflict management, negotiation, etc.

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d. Joint Actions **Implementation Phase**

- The activated community/communities accept the **call to action and begin to cooperate** to achieve shared goals. In order to achieve this, a number of steps need to be taken:
  - Elicitation of **common SMART objectives** , definition of direct and indirect outcomes (e.g. strengthening of trust bonds within the community, increase of social capital at community level).
  - Update of **community needs** to be addressed by the planned action.
  - Identification of the **direct and indirect recipients of the** planned actions.
  - **Detailed planning:** Tasks; Calendar; Human resources: roles and responsibilities; Symbolic resources: training opportunities, communication and dissemination activities; Material resources: available budget.
  - Definition of **indicators of change** to be verified as activities progress.
  - **Launch of activities!**
- SMART = Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely.



An underwater photograph showing a scuba diver in the upper left and a large sea turtle swimming horizontally in the center. The background features a coral reef and sunlight filtering through the water. A yellow banner with black text is overlaid on the center.

# ***Horizontal activities***



Some horizontal activities need to be implemented:

a) Communication and dissemination with the wider public and interested audiences.

b) Continuous participatory evaluation.

- Participatory processes must be observed, valued and evaluated, with respect to the established SMART objectives (as in step 3) and some broader dimensions of impact.
- With regard to the **achievement of specific SMART objectives**, the partner will consider indicators such as:
  - Number of citizens involved
  - Number of organisations involved
  - % of stakeholders involved (in relation to the number of stakeholders mapped)
  - Number of activators
  - Number of participatory events
  - Number of participants at scheduled events
  - Number of input/policy documents drafted and submitted to local public authorities
  - More...
- As far as **impact assessment** is concerned, qualitative dimensions will be taken into account referring to questions such as:
  - *To what extent did participants change their level of awareness, commitment and behaviour towards Green Deal issues?*
  - *What lessons can be learnt and shared among Green Deal networks to make future local initiatives in disadvantaged and remote communities more effective?*
  - *To what extent have the actions implemented with local communities generated long-term impacts on the defined target groups?*
- In this regard, data and information will be collected through qualitative tools, such as in-depth interviews with participants, focus groups with community leaders, etc.

