



## **D3.1. Capacity Building Activity Report**

**30/06/2024**

***WE BUILD DENMARK, COPENHAGEN***

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Deliverable administration			
No & name	<b>D3.1 Capacity Building Activity Report</b>		
Status	Submitted	Due	M16
		Date	2024-06-30
Author(s)	WBBDK		
Description of the related task and the deliverable. Extract from DoA & GA	<p><b>T3.1 Real-life experience with best practice – site visits (Leader: WBD, Duration: M3-M12, Contributors: BAB, BXH, and all) and T3.2 Innovation Capacity Building Training (Leader WBD, Duration: M6-M15, Contributors: all)</b></p> <p>Through site visits, hands-on experiences with urban innovation and Smart City use cases in a real-life setting will be offered to SMCs. Best practice examples will be used as a vantage point to motivate SMCs in their first steps of the capacity building activities. In this setting of real-life best practice solutions, discussions will be leveraged addressing SMC drivers and challenges from a practical perspective. One round of site visits offered to SMCs will predominantly be conducted in the environment of DOLL Living Lab – a leading facility of its kind in Europe, led by WBD – but BXH (linking to WP4) will also have a key role/part in this activity. Consortium partners representing specific regional eco-systems in the project will contribute to mobilising 20-30 SMC across the regions to engage in this activity (one round of site visits to DOLL will include funding to support SMC attendance, allocated via the partners’ budgets, with additional site visits at DOLL and/or regionally to be optionally available and organised). SMEs will also be activated as part of these visits, complementing the matchmaking in the project (see WP4).</p> <p>Leveraging the knowledge, best practices and expertise related to innovation ecosystems and NetZero topics, a series of trainings will be conducted to offer more in-depth and targeted key learnings to SMCs. The format of the trainings will comply with the focus areas/domains and needs of the SMCs extracted from WP1 and will be conducted both on a regional level in local languages, but also on a cross-regional level in English. Regional partners and ecosystems will conduct training sessions in local languages, based on a common format/structure in the project, whereas sessions on a cross-regional level will be conducted by WBD and BAB in English. The sessions are to be conducted in an online format (4-8 sessions, targeting at least 50 unique participants) ensuring the flexibility for SMCs to enter the sessions regardless of origin. Again, the aim is to activate SMCs into this format ensuring a direct and practical connection, elevating the relevance and quality of the sessions for all parties.</p>		
Participants	All partners		
Comments			
V	Date	Authors	Description
1	14/03/2024	WBD	Working document after Stage 1
2	15/04/2024	WBD	Working document after Stage 2
3	30/05/2024	WBD	Working document after Stage 3
4	15/06/2024	All partners	Peer-review comments attended, finalisation

5	30/06/2024	PC	The coordinator submits the deliverable to the EU
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Dissemination level		
PU	Public	<b>x</b>
SEN	Sensitive	

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- 5 Foreningen BLOXHUB
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## About SMCNetZero

SMCNetZero brings together six successful urban innovation initiatives in Europe with seven (7) regional and Pan European networks and their partners to create a **Satellite Network of innovation actors** to support public sector representatives from Small and Medium-sized cities (SMCs), SMEs, academia, NGOs, and investors across Europe to **facilitate decarbonisation in SMCs**.

The SMCNetZero consortium is composed of:

- BABLE Smart Cities**, Germany (BAB)
- ODRAZ - Održivi razvoj zajednice**, Croatia (ODZ)
- Smart City Cluster**, Spain (SCC)
- Southern Regional Assembly**, Ireland (SRA)
- BLOXHUB**, Denmark (BXH)
- WE BUILD DENMARK**, Denmark (WBD)
- UrbanDNA**, United Kingdom (UDNA)

This project is unique in that its diverse consortium partners and broad commitment from target stakeholders in the Satellite Network ensure **focus in regions with less innovation capacity**, with written confirmed commitment from nearly 100 innovation actors at the proposal stage, to participate in the activities- including an emphasis on largely underrepresented regions and stakeholders.

The project will leverage its diverse Satellite Network to:

- Gain an in-depth understanding of SMC needs and barriers towards achieving NetZero emissions.
- Raise awareness and simplify access to existing successful initiatives supporting decarbonisation.
- Support matchmaking between supply and demand sides by linking SMEs, researchers, and investors with SMCs.
- Help identify and open access to funding for enabling innovation deployment in SMCs currently underrepresented in the European innovation ecosystem.

SMCNetZero's vision is to **create and strengthen local innovation ecosystems' interrelations in SMCNetZero regions** through brokerage and knowledge-building activities as well as digital resources to increase capacity **for planning, deploying, and**

**scaling up of decarbonisation solutions**, overall focusing on increasing the inclusivity of these innovation ecosystems and minimizing existing innovation divides.

To achieve this vision, SMCNetZero has the following primary strategic objectives:

- Open up opportunities and stimulate the dissemination of information and exchange of knowledge on best practices on decarbonization for SMCs (and as a result, SMEs).
- Increase implementation prospects between providers of zero-emission solutions and public authorities from SMCs by designing, developing and providing a digital space and accompanying toolkit for collaborating, learning and networking.
- Identify and engage innovation leaders from the public and private sectors from “strong” innovator regions and “moderate” to “modest” innovator regions within the project’s focus countries.
- Design and deploy engagement and knowledge-building activities for ensuring wide participation for SMCNetZero and maximum impact.
- Facilitate the understanding and implications of the implementation and scale-up of innovation projects in SMCs.

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## Introduction

This Capacity Building program consists of multiple themes identified by the market report in WP1. The program offered capacity building activities for Small and Medium-Sized Cities (SMCs) to help them implement smart and sustainable city solutions with the goal of supporting them in reaching their NetZero goals. The program was divided into three stages, including four hosted training sessions, progressively stepping through the process of responding to NetZero challenges.

### Key components:

- **Site visits:** SMCs visited DOLL Living Lab, a leading smart city facility, to see real-world examples of successful solutions as part of the capacity building program.
- **Trainings:** The program is presented in local languages through webinars and meetings, while the concrete content was presented in English to provide in-depth knowledge on innovation ecosystems and achieving NetZero goals.
- **Focus on needs:** Content was tailored to the specific needs of SMCs identified earlier in the project.
- **Accessibility:** Two sessions were online, while a two-day capacity building was physical at Danish Outdoor Living Lab (DOLL part of WBDK).

### Additional benefits:

- **Matchmaking:** SMEs were involved in the site visits to facilitate connections between cities and potential solution providers. Here, 8 SMEs presented their solutions, demonstrating how they can support SMCs in their journey towards NetZero.
- **Engagement & SMC Network Relationships:** The program actively engages SMCs from multiple countries, offering scope to compare contexts and implemented (or planned) solutions, offering practical application experience, and maximizing the value for all participants.

Before the Program was offered, all participants invited by partners within the consortium were offered online webinars in local languages to present the program, its offerings, benefits and local involvement. This was to support any doubts, answer any questions and additionally, create a relationship with the local partner to break down any barrier that the SMCs might have to the offered program. Also, as the program was build upon a three staged strategy; (i) **Strategic Planning**, (ii) **Enabling** and (iii) **Local Adaptation**, it was also important to identify and engage the right people to participate, as it catered to different levels in the city departments.

In parallel to the webinars, all partners reached out personally to cities in their network and had meetings in their local language to discuss content, interests and needs. Ultimately, this resulted in 41 people across European SMCs showing interest in the program.

## Stage 1: Strategic Planning Stage

This first training session was a comprehensive and structured forum designed to discuss, brainstorm, and share insights on advancing the decarbonization efforts of small and medium-sized cities. The event was meticulously structured to cover a range of topics from setting the agenda, discussing the roadmap towards NetZero, engaging in breakout sessions for detailed brainstorming, and wrapping up plenary discussions. The contributions from Clara Roder, Melike Nur Ülsever, Graham Colclough, and Koray Velibeyoğlu provided a multi-dimensional perspective on the challenges and strategies for achieving NetZero in urban settings.

### Event Details:

Date: 5th of March

Time: 10:00 - 12:30 CET

Location: Online (Access through the link provided through Teams invite)

### Q&A Session 6th February:

If you have any questions regarding the homework or any other aspect of the webinar, we will be hosting a practical Q&A session on the 1st of March. This is a perfect opportunity to seek direct guidance and clarification.

### Pre-Session Homework:

To maximize the benefits of this session, we asked the participants to kindly:

- Map key stakeholders involved in your city's NetZero initiatives.
- Capture local 'command documents' driving their city's NetZero efforts.
- Identify the top 10 projects pivotal to achieving NetZero in each city.
- Identify and engage a NetZero Champion who will follow this capacity building program to support their city's transformation journey.

### Featured Speakers:

- Graham Colclough (Partner, in UrbanDNA)
- Koray Velibeyoğlu (Professor, in İzmir Institute of Technology)

### Moderators:

- Melike Nur Ülsever (Smart Cities Expert Use Cases in BABLE)
- Clara Roder (Innovation Manager in We Build Denmark)

## Session Goal:

To facilitate cities in advancing their journey towards NetZero by developing or enhancing a city-specific Roadmap that supports strategic sustainable development. Specifically looking at how to assess cross-sectorial focus areas in a city to achieve the highest impact.

## Agenda:

- **Developing the Roadmap towards NetZero:** Insights into constructing a comprehensive NetZero roadmap, including essential sections, tools, and methodologies.
- **İzmir Case Study:** Application of the NetZero Roadmap in real-world scenarios, presented by Koray Velibeyoğlu from Izmir.
- **Brainstorm and Draw:** Interactive session focusing on strategic planning for climate action based on the İzmir case study.
- **Plenary Discussions:** Strategies for fostering a shared purpose among employees and effective communication of strategic plans.
- **What is next:** Enabling and Local Adaptation Stage

## Minutes:

### Opening Remarks and Setting the Agenda by Clara Roder and Melike Nur Ülsever

Clara Roeder opened the event by introducing the speakers for the session; Graham Colclough, UrbanDNA Melike Nur Ülsever, BABLE and Koray Velibeyoğlu, City of İzmir. To break the ice Clara asked the attendees to share who they were, and where they were from through Slido. After sharing that, Clara shortly introduced the physical capacity building module 'Enabling Stage'. To kick-start the 'Strategic Planning Stage' Melike Nur Ülsever reintroduced the SMCNetZero Project, emphasizing its goal to bridge the decarbonization gap between small-medium sized cities and their larger counterparts. She highlighted the project's focus on understanding the specific contexts of these cities through market analysis and providing them with the necessary resources, tools, and support for planning, deploying, and scaling up decarbonization solutions. This introduction set the stage for the day's agenda, focusing on developing actionable NetZero roadmaps, leveraging insights from İzmir's experience, and collaborative brainstorming sessions.

### Developing the Roadmap towards NetZero by Graham Colclough

Graham Colclough took the stage to delve deeper into the strategic planning necessary for achieving NetZero. He stressed the importance of aligning key documents and policies, stakeholder engagement, and identifying high-impact sectors for targeted action. Graham introduced practical tools for stakeholder mapping and management, emphasizing a systematic approach to foster collaborative efforts towards shared climate goals. He also outlined the process of strategic alignment, planning, and managed delivery, using Izmir as a case study to illustrate the application of these strategies in a real-world context.

## **İzmir's Experience Presented by Koray Velibeyoğlu**

Koray Velibeyoğlu shared insights from İzmir's journey towards NetZero, providing a detailed account of the city's innovative projects and strategies. He discussed the city's focus on sustainable mobility, energy efficiency, and nature-based solutions as key components of its decarbonization efforts. Koray elaborated on İzmir's initiatives like the development of energy-positive districts and the establishment of the İzmir Transformation Office, highlighting how these efforts serve as a model for other cities aiming for NetZero. His presentation showcased the importance of adapting strategies to the city's unique context and the value of multiscale, systemic thinking in urban planning.

## **Further Insights and Roadmap Customization by Graham Colclough**

Returning to the podium, Graham Colclough provided further customization of the roadmap for İzmir, reinforcing the city's role as a beacon for urban decarbonization efforts. He expanded on the practical steps and sectoral actions highlighted earlier, emphasizing the iterative nature of strategic climate planning. Graham called for a sustained commitment to collaborative leadership, data-driven decision-making, and inclusive governance, underscoring these as essential for successful NetZero transitions. He concluded his remarks by encouraging continuous adaptation and refinement of strategies to meet emerging challenges and opportunities.

## **Breakout Sessions and Plenary Discussions**

The event featured brainstorming sessions in breakout rooms, where participants engaged in detailed discussions based on İzmir's experiences and contemplated their cities' positions and next steps towards NetZero. These sessions were pivotal for sharing challenges, strategies, and innovations among the participants, fostering a collaborative learning environment.

The plenary discussions that followed allowed each group to present their findings, focusing on creating a common purpose for employees, identifying key stakeholders, and leveraging tools for cross-sector collaboration. These discussions underscored the importance of culture shift within organizations towards sustainability and climate responsibility.

## **Conclusion**

The SMCNetZero Strategic Planning event was a rich exchange of ideas, experiences, and strategies to help advance the decarbonization agenda of small and medium-sized cities. The contributions from Graham and Koray, coupled with the collaborative brainstorming sessions, provided a holistic view of the complexities and opportunities in achieving NetZero. The event emphasized strategic planning, innovation, and the importance of tailoring approaches to the unique context of each city, leaving participants with actionable insights and a clearer path forward in their sustainability journeys.

## Participants for Strategic Planning, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024

City	Title
Limerick City and County Council	Climate Action Coordinator
Laois County Council	Climate Action Coordinator
Cork County Council	Climate Action Officer
Skive City	Project lead - Industrial Recycling for Construction, a part of Circular Economy Beyond Waste
Beasain City Hall	First Deputy Mayor and President of the Territory Commission
Stirling City	Strategic Energy Coordinator
Torres Vedras, Portugal	Dept of Mobility Manager
Gera, Germany	Adopter
City of Kranj, Slovenia	smart cities, green transition, digitalization, sustainable cities, small giants, mobility islands
Ministry of traffic of Sarajevo Canton	Assistant minister
City of Kranj, Slovenia	Senior Advisor
Kalush City, Ukraine	Project Manager, International communication and collaboration
Hjørring City	Project Manager, Klimarejsen
Cork County Council, Ireland	Climate Action Coordinator
Valencia, Spain, Climate-KIC	Entrepreneurship Project Manager
Puerto Real (Cádiz), Spain	Responsible Plan Estratégico
Krizevci, Croatia	Energy efficiency, environmental protection and spatial planning advisor
Aracena, Spain	Public worker
Aracena, Spain	Campeón NetZero
Clare County Council, Ireland	Climate Action Officer
<b>Total number of participants: 20 City Officials across 17 European Cities</b>	

# Enabling Stage 2.1: Enabling Factors to Reach NetZero; Innovative Finance, Living Labs, Citizen Engagement, and Innovation Ecosystems

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> April

Time: 12:00 - 17:00 CET

Location:

DOLL Living Lab: Naverland 2, Glostrup 2600, Denmark

## Featured Speakers:

- Henrik Morgen, Nordic Lead in BABLE
- Trevor Gibson, Consultant, UrbanDNA
- Lotte Breengaard, Program Director Urban Partnerships, Bloxhub
- Kathrine Wehrs, Danish Climate Alliance, C40

## Moderators:

- Melike Nur Ülsever (Türkiye Lead in BABLE)
- Clara Roder (Innovation Manager in We Build Denmark)
- Pierre Filohn (Training Expert in BABLE)

## Session Goal:

The second training session on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April aimed at providing a holistic understanding of enablers essential for fostering innovation and citizen engagement in urban development. By exploring innovative financing models, leveraging urban living labs, and nurturing collaborative innovation ecosystems, participants gained insights into sustainable approaches for addressing urban challenges to continue their journey towards NetZero. Tools, methods and theories that can support these enablers were presented and discussed to inspire the cities to implement and maintain momentum.

## Agenda:

- Reflection on the strategic planning stage to set the scene for Enabler Modules
  - Trevor Gibson, UrbanDNA
- Innovative Finance, Business Models & Procurement: Exploring financial strategies for urban innovation
  - Henrik Morgen, Bable
  - Trevor Gibson, UrbanDNA
  - Henrik Morgen, as the Nordic Lead and Principal Advisor, introduced innovative financing and business models, outlining a range of funding mechanisms. These include traditional funding sources such as EU grants and bank loans, alongside

innovative financing options like commercial mortgage-backed securities and pension funds. He also highlights the potential of public-private partnerships, which bring technical and financial resources from the private sector into city planning and implementation processes.

- Citizen Engagement and Living Labs: Unlocking the power of community in city development
  - Pierre Filohn, BABLE
  - Pierre Filohn led the exploration of citizen engagement and the operationalization of Urban Living Labs in the document "Citizen Engagement and Living Labs." He emphasizes the importance of integrating citizens into urban development through co-creation and collaborative testing environments. Pierre Filohn detailed how Urban Living Labs function as controlled settings where innovations are trialed in real-life contexts, promoting a blend of technology testing, user-centered design, and stakeholder-driven innovation. These labs, as Pierre Filohn explained the evolution of prototypes into commercial applications, bridging the common 'valley of death' in innovation. Additionally, he outlines the challenges of co-creation, such as securing political support and managing resources, while offering strategies to foster effective stakeholder engagement and ensure the sustainability of urban development initiatives.
- Innovation Ecosystems to Reach NetZero: Pathways and collaboration for a sustainable future
  - Lotte Breengaard, Bloxhub
  - Katrine Wehrs, C40
  - This session focused on utilizing the city's ecosystem in creating innovative approaches to their problems and opportunities. Here, Lotte presented different approaches to how cities can use their local ecosystem. Kathrine Wehrs from the C40 network presented how the Danish ecosystem of municipalities have formed into the Climate Alliance. The Climate Alliance is based on the Danish DK2020 program helps Danish municipalities develop ambitious climate action plans. These plans aim to make the municipalities climate-neutral and able to handle the effects of climate change by 2050.

# Enabling Stage 2.2: Thematic prioritized Deep Dives for NetZero; Energy Efficiency, Transport and Mobility, Digital Transformation and Planning

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> April

Time: 09:00 - 15:30 CET

Location:

DOLL Living Lab: Naverland 2, Glostrup 2600, Denmark

## Featured Speakers:

- Camilla Føns Mortensen, Head of Nordic IoT Centre at Force Technology
- Peter Bjørn Larsen, Owner of Smart City Insights
- Henrik Morgen, Nordic Lead in BABLE
- Trevor Gibson, Consultant, UrbanDNA
- Mads Pohl Petersson, Product Innovation Manager, KMD
- Ben Cahill, Innovation Manager, Digital Twins, DOLL part of WBDK
- Ewan Prentice, Energy Manager, Stirling City
- Kieran Reeves, Climate Action Coordinator, Limerick City
- Malte Frederiksen, Ento
- Thomas Østergaard, Climate Officer, Hørsholm City
- Daniel Thiesen, Lighting Specialist, EDF
- Jean-François Coppieters, Account Manager, Macq
- Peyman Tavakoli, Nordic Lead, Technolution
- Luca Leomanni, Co-founder, Social Tech Projects
- Nicoline Klysner, Product Engineer, Seneco

## Moderators:

- Melike Nur Ülsever (Türkiye Lead in BABLE)
- Clara Roder (Innovation Manager in We Build Denmark)
- Pierre Filohn (Training Expert in BABLE)



## Session Goal:

The third training session aimed at providing practical discussions on thematic areas that are close to the participating cities and their current focus. These thematic areas were addressed as priority areas through the market research made in the beginning of the project (June 2023). Thus, the goal of the 11<sup>th</sup> of April was to dive deeper into the areas of energy efficiency, mobility and transport and digital transformation and public procurement. This session drew on three previous days discussion on enabling factors such as ecosystem engagement in the mobility sector, and digital transformation drew on enabling factors such as financial and procurement measures. The purpose was to present and discuss best practice, with actionable insights to facilitate effective implementation of more intelligent and sustainable solutions. Solutions that give the cities more insights based on concrete data from their urban spaces. As part of the 11<sup>th</sup> of April the DOLL Living Lab provided a best and next practice tour of the living lab, where selected relevant SMEs presented solutions that support NetZero goals for cities, specifically looking at how they can e.g. lower CO2 emissions in traffic, reduce energy consumptions in buildings, prioritize public transport and much more. Overall, the session aimed to equip cities with the knowledge, tools and best practice necessary to drive sustainable urban development and realize the vision of smart and sustainable cities.

## Agenda

- Parallel Deep Dive Sessions aimed at going more in-depth with specific topics – here, participants were divided into interest groups:

### Energy Efficiency

- Pierre Filohn, Bable
- Ewan Prentice, Stirling City
  - Pierre Filohn led a comprehensive session on the challenges and innovations in urban energy systems, focusing on transitioning towards sustainability. He highlights the significant role cities play in consuming two-thirds of the world's energy and contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. The session explores the current energy landscape characterized by a heavy reliance on fossil fuels and the necessity for a shift towards renewable energy sources as part of achieving NetZero targets. Pierre discussed the implementation of Smart Grids which are crucial for integrating renewable energies and enhancing energy efficiency. These systems are designed to be responsive and adaptive, optimizing energy flows based on real-time data. Furthermore, Pierre emphasized the importance of community engagement and the

development of energy communities to empower citizens and ensure energy security and equity.

- Ewan Prentice conducted a focused presentation on the application of digital twin technology in Stirling to enhance energy efficiency and address infrastructure needs. The digital twin model provides a comprehensive virtual representation that helps in identifying buildings that require retrofitting to improve energy efficiency, particularly in historic and mixed-use structures. Ewan outlined the strategic importance of integrating digital twins with regional energy masterplans to optimize energy use and reduce carbon emissions in the built environment. He addressed specific challenges such as the skills gap in the workforce and the need for collaboration with distribution network operators to manage increased electrical demands from low carbon heating systems and electric vehicles.

#### Mobility and Transport

- Henrik Morgen, BABLE
- Trevor Gibson, UDNA
  - In the "Mobility and Transport Module" session, Henrik Morgen and Trevor Gibson guided participants through innovative strategies for achieving sustainable mobility in small to medium-sized cities. They emphasized the integration of transport systems that align with climate goals, focusing on the need for substantial shifts in infrastructure, technology, and public behavior. The session delves into various aspects of modern mobility solutions including the electrification of transport, shared mobility options, and the development of Mobility as a Service (MaaS). It highlights the importance of planning for active mobility, encouraging the use of non-motorized transport, and designing urban spaces that support 15-minute city concepts, which improve accessibility and reduce dependency on private vehicles. Throughout, Henrik and Trevor advocated for a systemic approach to transport planning that not only addresses immediate urban needs but also contributes to broader environmental and societal goals, ensuring a cohesive transition towards sustainable urban mobility.

#### Digital Planning and Transformation

- Clara Roeder, WBDK
- Camilla Føns Mortensen, Force Technology
- Peter Bjørn Larsen, Smart City Insights

- Ben Cahill, WBDK
- Mads Pohl Petersson, KMD
- Kieran Reeves, Limerick City
  - During the session participants got best practice examples from other cities around EU, and broader on planning and implementing digital solutions in their city to support greater decision-making based on data. Areas that we looked into was local digital twins, scenarios analysis etc. Also, we discussed together with Force Technology a model on how to procure IoT and what role a city can take depending on their capacity and willingness – alongside the implications that these might have to the collaboration with the solution provider.

#### Site visit at DOLL Living Lab:

- Malte Frederiksen, Ento
- Thomas Østergaard, Climate Officer, Hørsholm City
- Daniel Thiesen, Lighting Specialist, EDF
- Jean-François Coppieters, Account Manager, Macq
- Peyman Tavakoli, Nordic Lead, Technolution
- Luca Leomanni, Co-founder, Social Tech Projects
- Nicoline Klysner, Product Engineer, Seneco
  - Meeting real-world examples of successful city projects with on-site experts and SMEs – here, SMEs presented solutions that could lower CO2 emissions, energy consumption and increase better flow and prioritize different vehicles.

## Conclusion for Stage 2

In conclusion, these two-day capacity building trainings provided a comprehensive exploration of strategies to foster innovation, engagement and collaboration for better planning and implementation of sustainable urban development. Throughout the sessions, there was a consistent emphasis on the importance of collaboration, citizen involvement, and leveraging digital technologies for sustainable city planning.

One of the central themes was the innovative financing and procurement models necessary for urban innovation. Discussions highlighted the need to tap into private funds and grants while understanding the nuances between funding and financing. The Technology Readiness Level (TRL) framework emerged as a valuable tool for guiding financial strategies in urban projects.

Moreover, the concept of urban living labs was showcased as a powerful approach to community-driven development. These living labs serve as environments where people can

interact with emerging technologies, test new solutions, and tailor innovations to local needs. By involving various stakeholders, living labs offer a methodological framework for fostering innovation within specific urban contexts. Being at the DOLL Living Lab emphasized and sparked an interest from the participants to explore setting up their own living lab, to drive sustainable city innovations.

This stage also underscored the importance of innovative ecosystems in driving sustainability efforts. Collaborative partnerships, exemplified by initiatives like BLOXHUB, were highlighted as key to achieving sustainability goals. The triple helix methodology, which promotes collaboration between academia, industry, and government, emerged as a promising pathway for bringing innovative solutions to market. To provide best practice for triple helix collaboration, Kathrine Wehrs from C40 shared practical insights into the orchestration of the Danish National Climate Alliance, where all 98 municipalities share the same operating framework for their Climate Strategies, and operate in groups to share interests, experiences, barriers, and opportunities.

Additionally, practical insights were shared during deep dive sessions, focusing on topics such as energy efficiency, mobility, and digital planning. Case studies, like the Smart City Insights in Hamilton, Canada, demonstrated the significance of data-driven decision-making and the role of digital infrastructure in urban development.

Finally, discussions on digital twin development and public procurement highlighted the potential of advanced technologies in urban planning. Examples from Limerick and initiatives like DOLL showcased how digital twins can enhance understanding and optimization of urban environments. Effective public procurement processes were also emphasized as essential for the successful implementation of smart city technologies.

Overall, this stage took a holistic approach to reach NetZero by incorporating innovative finance methods, citizen engagement strategies, and digital innovation as enablers to drive sustainable urban development. Using these enablers in the thematic deep dives supported the realization as concrete approaches, tools and methods were discussed and best practice already implemented was shared by SMEs.

**City Participants 10th and 11th April 2024**

<b>City</b>	<b>Title</b>
Limerick City, Ireland	Climate Action Coordinator
Cork County Council, Ireland	Community Climate Action Officer

Beasain City Hall, Spain	First Deputy Mayor and President of the Territory Commission
Stirling, Scotland	Strategic Energy Coordinator
Torres Vedras, Portugal	Dept of Mobility Manager
Gera, Germany	Adopter
Labin, Croatia	director and SUMP coordinator
Kranj, Slovenia	Head of the Office for Development and Smart Community
Kranj, Slovenia	Senior Advisor
Laois County Council, Ireland	Climate Action Coordinator
Krizevci, Croatia	Energy efficiency, environmental protection and spatial planning advisor
Ayuntamiento de Aracena, Spain	Campeón Net Zero
Ennis, Ireland	Climate Action Officer
Sandyford Business District, Ireland	CEO
Ayuntamiento de Aracena, Spain	Mayor of Aracena
Puerto Real, Spain	Climate Action Officer
Cork County Council, Ireland	Director of Services, Environment, Climate Change & Emergency Services, Cork County Council
Laois County Council, Ireland	Senior Engineer
Hørsholm Kommune, Denmark	Climate Officer
Clare County Council, Ireland	Senior Engineer
Krizevci, Croatia	Senior Professional Associate
Istrian Regional Energy Agency, Croatia	Expert Associate
<b>In total 22 city officials from 17 SMCs</b>	

## Stage 3: Local Adaptation

### Event Details:

**Date:** April 25, 2024

**Duration:** 2 hours

**Location:** Virtual, Teams

## Agenda:

Welcome, Introduction, and Setting the Stage

Peer Exchange & Learning – City spotlights & Breakout Sessions

- Cork (Decarbonisation Plan)
- Beasain (Retrofitting)
- Kranj, Gera & Sandyford (Mobility Islands)
- Krizevci (Renewable Energy)

Collaborative Tools & Resources to Support Knowledge Exchange

- Revisiting Funding Opportunities & Grants
- Collaborative Platforms & Local Networks presented by partners

Learnings & Next Steps

## Moderators:

- Clara Røder (Host)
- Graham Colclough (Co-host)
- Melike Ülsever (Co-host)
- Pierre Filohn (Co-host)
- Various representatives from European small and medium-sized cities presented
  - Kranj (Slovenia), Gera (Germany) & Sandyford (Ireland) – Mobility Island concept and implementation
  - Cork, Ireland – Community-led engagement to drive NetZero
  - Beasain, Spain – District Heating with retrofitting
  - Krizevci, Croatia – Renewable Energy

## Session Goal:

This last training session was aimed at adapting learnings from the previous three sessions to local context. Here, the focus was on discussing the integration and alignment of local adaptation strategies towards achieving NetZero goals based on city presentation on focus areas such as district heating and mobility islands. Participants shared their experiences and challenges in integrating national and European strategies to local actions within retrofitting district heating, renewable energy, ensuring community buy-in and enhancing urban mobility through innovative concepts like Mobility Islands. To maximize value for the participants, and the cities presenting, all participants were grouped into breakout rooms (depending on interest) where challenges, opportunities, concrete action points and experiences were shared.

## Session Content:

### 1. General Topics Discussed:

To make sure that there was coherence throughout all sessions, the beginning of this session refreshed participants on the practical tools and methods contained within the roadmap towards NetZero. Here, Graham Colclough opened the discussion emphasizing the need for aligning various strategies across different governance levels – European, national, and local level. He highlighted the importance of stakeholder management tools that facilitate these alignments and enhance the effectiveness of local actions towards NetZero objectives. Here, he dedicated parts of the presentation to discussing digital solutions that can streamline city portfolio management. A specific tool was demonstrated by way of example, showing how city projects can be visualized and interconnected, thus simplifying the management of complex portfolios and enhancing operational efficiencies.

### 2. Peer to Peer exchange:

#### City Spotlights:

- **Sandyford, Kranj, and Gera:** Presented its smart traffic systems and mobility projects aimed at enhancing the ingress and egress of people within the business district. The innovative concept of Mobility Islands was presented – a transformation into a '5-minute city'. The three cities highlighted their collaboration, where initiatives like electric buses and a unified city card system that integrates various services as tests to see if this can support the use of public transport.
- **Cork:** Shared its pathway to decarbonization through community-led projects and detailed its climate action plan, which includes a variety of sustainable projects across the city of Macroom where the community is engaged to ensure buy-in and involvement.
- **Krezcivi:** Presented their pathway to NetZero energy communities. Here, they have invested massively in solar panels both public and private buy-in have been secured. They shared a success story with the energy climate office that is open to the general public to get knowledge from and seek funding for private solar panel investments.
- **Beasain:** Presented projects around district heating and their current goal of retrofitting it to become NetZero. Here, they presented how they are seeking to use the rest of the heat from a steel plant to their public community centers. They are also looking into retrofitting parts of the cities to accommodate rainwater and reuse it.

### 3. Challenges & Opportunities:

#### Challenges:

- **Resource Allocation:** Discussed the sequential vs. portfolio approach to project planning and execution, stressing the financial and resource allocation challenges.
- **Complex Interdependencies:** Tackled the difficulties in managing interdependencies among various urban initiatives, emphasizing the need for integrated approaches and better coordination.

#### Opportunities:

- **Leveraging Digital Tools:** Opportunities to use digital platforms to manage city projects more effectively were identified as a key advantage.
- **Collaborative Projects:** The Mobility Islands initiative was highlighted as a replicable model that other cities can adapt to improve urban mobility and sustainability.

#### Conclusion:

The discussions underscored the importance of adaptive strategies that meet both the urban challenges of today and the NetZero goals of the future. The meeting highlighted the critical role of digital tools in managing city projects and the potential of collaborative efforts between cities to innovate and implement effective solutions rapidly. Through breakout rooms, the cities experienced peer-to-peer exchange and could afterwards reach out to each other and support further.

#### City Participants 25th April 2024

City	Title
Cork, Ireland	Community Climate Action Officer
Beasain, Spain	First Deputy Mayor and President of the Territory Commission
Stirling, Scotland	Strategic Energy Coordinator
Torres Vedras, Portugal	Dept of Mobility Manager
Gera, Germany	Adopter
Labin, Croatia	Director and SUMP coordinator
Kranj, Slovenia	Smart cities, green transition, digitalization, sustainable cities, small giants, mobility islands
Sarajevo Canton, Croatia	Ministry of traffic, Assistant minister
Kranj, Slovenia	Head of the Office for Development and Smart Community
Kranj, Slovenia	Senior Advisor



Laois, Ireland	Climate Action Coordinator
Krizevci, Croatia	Energy efficiency, environmental protection and spatial planning advisor
Ennis, Ireland	Climate Action Officer
Ennis, Ireland	Ennis Municipal District Manager
Sandyford, Ireland	CEO
Cork, Ireland	Director of Services, Environment, Climate Change & Emergency Services, Cork County Council
Laois, Ireland	Senior Engineer
Clare, Ireland	Senior Engineer
<b>In total 18 city officials from 13 SMCs</b>	

## Summary

The Capacity Building program mobilized a total of 40 city officials and politicians across 27 Small & Medium Sized cities. This includes the webinar to inform about the program and activities to engage in, the first capacity building stage in March (Planning), the second with two hosted training sessions physically in Copenhagen (Enabling & Deep Dives) and third stage in end of April (Local Adaptation). Thus, resulting in 32 unique participants from 20 cities across 10 European countries participating in the capacity building programme towards NetZero.

There was a buzz both online and physically of good discussions, knowledge sharing and questions for the presentations. The cities worked intensively on creating relevant programs and activities that citizens, companies and other relevant stakeholders could engage in. Within the project, supported by this work package, there was a significant opportunity to seek peer-to-peer exchange and ask experts from the consortium on who to reach out to seek inspiration, what funding mechanism they can enroll for, and what best and next practices they could implement locally.

The most important thing is that many of the participants were very pleased with the four days of capacity building activities in total and look forward to continuing the discussion online at the Digital Forum and with local consortium partners. Some have already started to reach out to hear more about further engagement.



Funded by the European Union

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