SMCNetZero

Achieving Net-Zero through Innovation in Small and Medium sized cities

D3.2 Innovation Capacity Building Trainings Hosted

30/06/2024

WE BUILD DENMARK, COPENHAGEN and BABLE GmbH

Deliverable administration					
No & name	**D3.2 Innovation Capacity Building Trainings Hosted**				
Status	Pending	**Due**	M16	**Date**	2024-06-30
Author(s)	WBDK, BAB				
Description of the related task and the deliverable. Extract from DoA & GA	**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)**				
	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). 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.				
Participants	All partners				
Comments					

V	Date	Authors	Description
1	20/06/2024	BAB	Working document after Stage 1
2	24/06/2024	WBD	Working document after Stage 2
3	30/06/2024	WBD	The coordinator submits the deliverable to the EU

Dissemination level

PU	Public	**x**
SEN	Sensitive	

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4. Southern Regional Assembly
5. Foreningen BLOXHUB
6. WE BUILD DENMARK
7. UrbanDNA Solutions LLP

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.

Contents

Introduction

As nature, D.3.2 Innovation Capacity Building Trainings Hosted complements the D3.1 Capacity Building Activity Report, providing additional context and depth to the insights gained during the SMCNetZero Capacity Building Programme. D.3.2 is structured to enhance our understanding of the program's scope, preliminary planning, and post-training process. Together, these documents create a comprehensive picture of SMCNetZero Programme Modules as well as emerging needs and current interest areas of small and medium-sized cities (SMCs).

The Approach Towards Building the Modules

The "Complementary Approach in Capacity Building" of the SMCNetZero program, is a 3-staged strategy with four hosted training modules designed to support sustainability professionals in achieving their NetZero objectives. This program is heavily based on findings from the Market Analysis report produced early in the project, which identifies barriers that Small and Medium-Sized Cities (SMCs) face in reaching NetZero goals at both the EU and regional levels. Furthermore, the report details the challenges SMEs face in collaborating with the public sector and provides insights into various tools, key actors, opportunities, and methodologies essential for the successful implementation of Net-Zero projects.
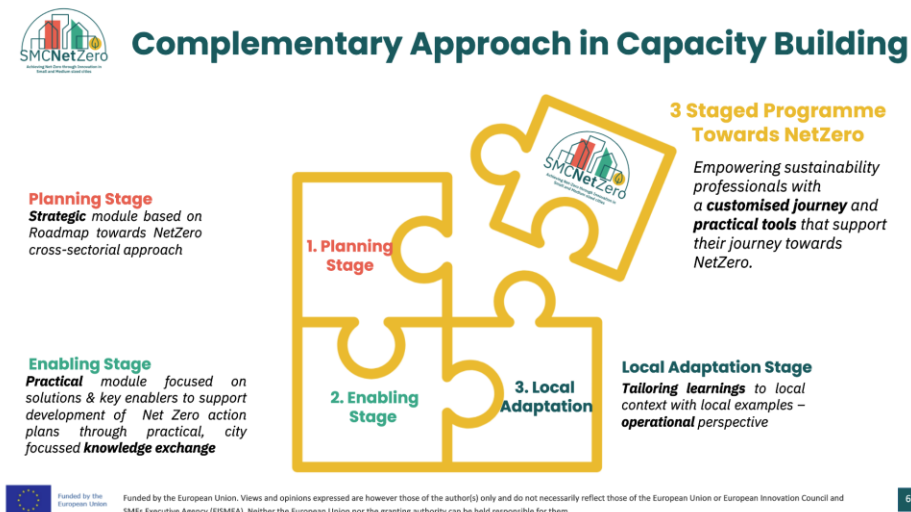
Visual 1: Complementary Approach

The stages of the program include:

- **Planning Stage:** Utilizing a strategic module based on a NetZero Roadmap, this stage adopts a cross-sectorial approach.

- **Enabling Stage:** Focuses on practical solutions and key enablers to assist in developing action plans through targeted knowledge exchange. First part of the Enabling stage focused on 'Enabling Factors to Reach NetZero; Innovative Finance, Living Labs, Citizen Engagement, and Innovation Ecosystems' and second part focused on 'Thematic prioritized Deep Dives for NetZero; Energy Efficiency, Transport and Mobility, Digital Transformation and Planning'
- **Local Adaptation Stage:** Tailors learnings to local contexts using specific examples to provide an operational perspective.

This building block structured approach not only empowers participants with a customized journey and practical tools but also integrates essential market insights to advance towards NetZero.

After several months dedicated to content creation and structuring the training modules, taking into account the specific needs of Small and Medium-Sized Cities (SMCs) identified during the project as well as our own expertise, we have integrated several key components into the capacity-building program such as site-visits, consideration of local aspects, focusing on identified challenges, accessibility of the modules, matchmaking, peer to peer learning, networking and being responsive to needs of SMCs.[1]
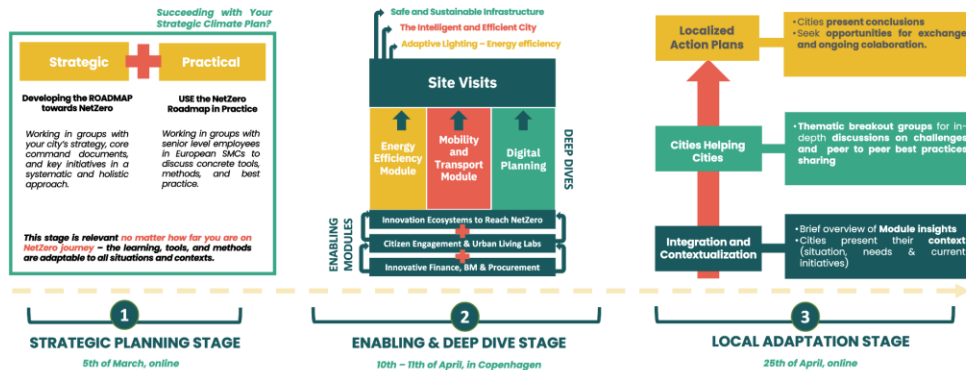
On the 6th of February, we conducted an informative online session to address questions and provide guidance to the participants. This session included an overview of the training, discussion on homework assignments, and instructions on how to prepare for the upcoming sessions.

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[1] More detailed information can be found in D.3.1 Capacity Building Activity Report

Visual 2: Navigating towards NetZero with SMCs

On the 1st of March, we hosted a practical online Q&A session. This provided participants with the opportunity to seek direct guidance and clarification on any aspects of the Capacity Building Programme, including the homework assignments.

To ensure participants were well-prepared and could maximize the benefits of first Stage, we assigned the following homework:

- Mapped key stakeholders involved in each city's NetZero initiatives.
- Captured local 'command documents' that drive each city's NetZero efforts.
- Identified the top 10 projects crucial to achieving NetZero in each city.
- Identified and engaged a NetZero Champion who will follow this capacity-building program to support their city's transformation journey.

These steps have equipped participants with a solid foundation and a clear roadmap to effectively engage in the training and further their city's NetZero objectives.

The Promotion of the Programme

To promote the capacity building program, we have employed a variety of communication channels to ensure broad and effective outreach. Our strategy includes leveraging social media platforms, and email campaigns to increase visibility and engagement and the project website. Additionally, we have utilized webinars and interactive online sessions to directly connect with potential participants, providing them with detailed information about the program's benefits and registration process. This multi-channel approach ensures that we reach a diverse audience and effectively communicate the value and opportunities offered by the capacity building program.

Visual 3: Training Page from the Website

Webpage

A new section on the webpage has been created to provide comprehensive information about the programme. This section is divided into four parts:

- Landing Page
- The Planning Stage
- Enabling Stage
- Local Adaptation Stage

1.1   Landing Page

The landing page serves as the introductory gateway to the programme. It includes:

*   **Aim of the Programme**: A clear and concise statement explaining the primary objectives and goals of the programme.
*   **Programme Structure**: An overview of how the entire programme is organized, including the different stages and their purposes.
*   **Benefits of Joining**: A detailed list of the advantages and opportunities available to participants.
*   **Important Information**: Key details such as dates, times, and the registration process.

1.2 The Planning Stage

This section of the website outlines the initial phase of the programme, focusing on:

*   **Preparation and Strategy**: Steps to be taken during the planning phase, including setting goals and developing a strategic plan.
*   **Resources and Tools**: Information about the resources and tools available to assist participants during this stage.
*   **Workshops and Sessions**: Details about any preliminary workshops or sessions that will be held to help participants prepare.

Visual 4: Benefits of Planning Stage

1.3 Enabling Stage

The enabling stage is designed to provide participants with the necessary support and resources. It includes:

- **Skill Development**: Training sessions aimed at enhancing the skills required for successful participation.
- **Mentorship and Guidance**: Access to mentors and advisors who can offer support and advice.
- **Access to Resources**: Information about the materials and resources that participants can utilize during this stage.
- **Best Practice through site visit**: Information about Europe's largest living lab for smart urban development

Visual 5: Enabling Stage Itinerary

1.4 Local Adaptation Stage

The final stage focuses on adapting and applying the programme's principles locally. This section covers:

- **Implementation Strategies**: Guidelines on how to implement the learnt strategies in a local context.
- **Case Studies**: Examples of successful local adaptations from previous participants.
- **Feedback and Evaluation**: Methods for collecting feedback and evaluating the success of the local adaptations.
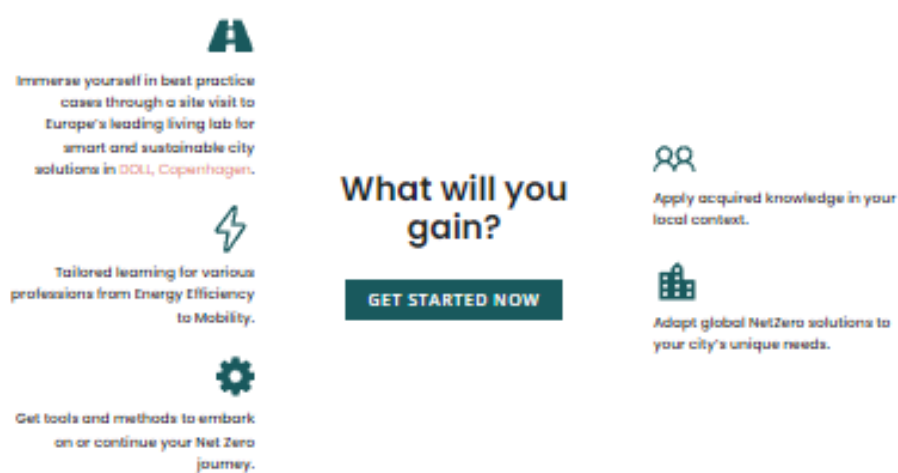
Visual 6: Benefits of Local Adaptation Stage

Each section is designed to provide detailed information to ensure participants are well-informed and prepared to engage with the programme effectively.

Call to Action: At the end of each section, there are clear instructions on where and how to register, encouraging interested individuals to take the next step and join the programme.

2 Social Media

LinkedIn Events

- **Main BABLE Account**: As each stage date approached, a LinkedIn event was created on the main BABLE account. This event provided details about the upcoming stage, including its objectives, benefits, and how to participate.

- **Event Updates**: The same LinkedIn event was continuously updated as the programme progressed through its different stages. Each update included new information relevant to the upcoming stage while keeping participants informed about the overall progress of the programme.

- **Partner updates:** partners of the consortium also shared the opportunity

Visual 7: LinkedIn Event for Promoting our Capacity Building Training

SMCNetZero Social Media Accounts

- **Reposts**: The LinkedIn events created on the main BABLE account were reposted on the SMC social media accounts. This ensured a wider reach and engagement across different platforms.
- **Engagement**: Regular posts and updates were made to keep the audience engaged and reminded about the upcoming stages. These posts included highlights from previous stages and teasers about what to expect next.

Is Your City Ready to Accelerate Towards a Net Zero Future? 🚀

Unveiling the essence of our SMCNetZero initiative, this brief highlights how small to medium-sized cities are charting a course towards Net Zero. At the core is our featured project, Peterborough Accelerated Net Zero (PANZ), which showcases the power of digital tools in local decarbonisation efforts.

Ready to take the next step towards a sustainable future for your city? Register for the second phase of our capacity-building programme!

WE BUILD DENMARK | BABLE Smart Cities | ODRAZ-Sustainable Community Development | BLOXHUB | UrbanDNA | Southern Regional Assembly

#SMCNetZero #NetZeroCities #SustainableCities #UrbanInnovation #CapacityBuilding

SMCNetZero and Peterborough Accelerated Net Zero (PANZ) Joining the dots for mutual, Net Zero benefit...
SMCNetZero on LinkedIn · 3 min read

Visual 8: Blog Articles shared

🌍 Is Your City on the Path to Sustainability? 🌱

Register here ➡️ https://lnkd.in/d7JXE6yY

We're thrilled to announce the upcoming second stage of our Capacity Building Programme: The Enabling Stage! Join us on the 10th and 11th of April for an unparalleled experience at the DOLL Living Lab.

This is your opportunity to immerse yourself in a Living Lab environment, where innovation meets practical application. Don't miss the chance to revolutionize your city's approach to decarbonization and take a giant leap towards a sustainable, NetZero future. 🚀

📅 Mark your calendars and register today to secure your spot. This is more than a visit; it's a stepping stone to transforming your city into a smart, sustainable urban area.

#NetZero #SustainableCities #UrbanInnovation #SmartCities #SmartCity

ENABLING STAGE
forms.office.com

Visual 9: Promoting our Capacity Building Programme

Stage 1: Strategic Planning

The SMCNetZero Strategic Planning Stage was the first training session and was conducted on the 5th of March 2024, in an online format to maximize the accessibility of the Capacity Building Programme. The session is designed to reinforce discussion, brainstorming, and peer-to-peer learning on advancing the decarbonization efforts of small and medium-sized cities on three main levels respectively: Strategic, Tactical and Operational.
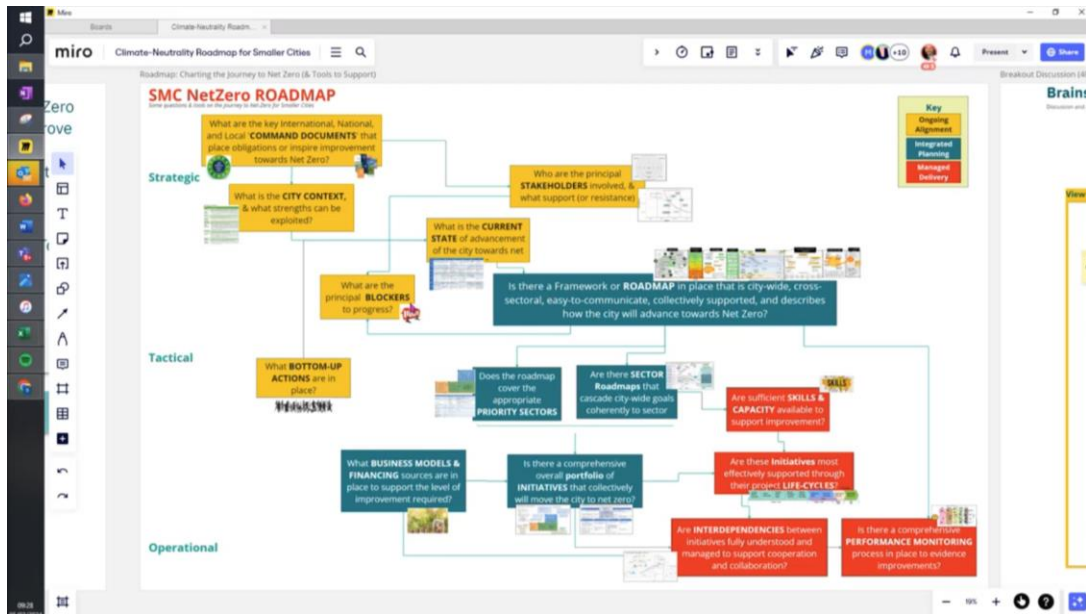
Visual 10: Roadmap to NetZero

The session focused on the importance of aligning key documents and policies, stakeholder engagement, and identifying high-impact sectors for targeted climate action. Moreover, we have welcomed a guest, Koray Velibeyoğlu provided a multi-dimensional perspective on the challenges and strategies for achieving NetZero in urban settings.

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

The second stage on the 10[th of] April 2024 was held in person in Copenhagen. [2] The second stage was divided into two separate but complimentary training sessions. The first part (2.1) We aimed to provide a holistic understanding of the enablers essential for fostering sustainable urban development in 3 sub-sessions:

- **Innovative financing models:** We highlighted innovative financing and a range of funding mechanisms for cities to accelerate their net zero changes. These include traditional funding sources such as EU grants and bank loans, alongside innovative financing options like commercial mortgage-backed securities and pension funds.
- **Urban living labs:** We emphasized the importance of integrating citizens into urban development through co-creation and collaborative testing environments. By exploring the evolution of prototypes into commercial applications, we tried to bridge the common 'valley of death' in innovation.
- **Collaborative innovation ecosystems:** We focused on utilizing the city's ecosystem in creating innovative approaches to their problems and opportunities, and how cities can use their local ecosystem.

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[2] More detailed information can be found in D.3.1 Capacity Building Activity Report
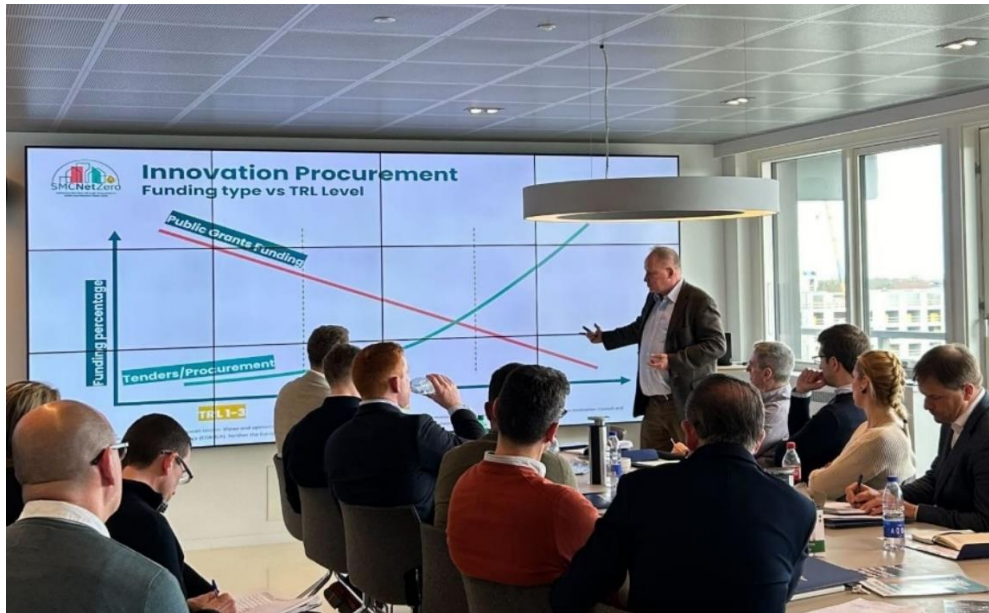
Visual 11: Innovative Financing

Visual 12: Innovation Ecosystems

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

The third training session, part of stage 2, was conducted on the 11th of April 2024, in-person in Copenhagen. The goal was practical discussions on thematic areas such as Energy Efficiency, Sustainable Mobility, and Digital Planning and Transformation. These thematic areas were addressed as priority areas through the market research made in the beginning of the project (June 2023). Stage 3 provided a good base for presenting and discussing best practices, with actionable insights to facilitate the effective implementation of more intelligent and sustainable solutions.

Visual 13: Deep Dive in Mobility

During the site visit in Stage 2, various experts and key stakeholders gathered to showcase real-world examples of successful city projects. Attendees included Malte Frederiksen from Ento, Thomas Østergaard, Climate Officer at Hørsholm City, Daniel Thiesen, a Lighting Specialist at EDF, Jean-François Coppieters, Account Manager at Macq, Peyman Tavakoli, Nordic Lead at Technolution, Luca Leomanni, Co-founder of Social Tech Projects, and Nicoline Klysner, a Product Engineer at Seneco. The session focused on presenting SMEs' solutions that could effectively reduce CO2 emissions and energy consumption while improving traffic flow and vehicle prioritization.

Visual 14: DOLL site visit

Stage 3: Local Adaptation

Last but not least, in our third stage with the fourth training session, aimed at adapting learnings from the previous three sessions to the local context. In this discussion, participants concentrated on integrating and aligning local adaptation strategies with the aim of reaching NetZero targets, drawing on city presentations that highlighted key areas like district heating and mobility islands.

They exchanged insights and obstacles encountered while incorporating national and European strategies into local initiatives. This included upgrading district heating systems, promoting renewable energy, securing community support, and improving urban mobility through innovative approaches like Mobility Islands.

Visual 15: Peer to Peer Learning – Cities Sharing Their Experiences

SMCNetZero Programme Certifications

To further incentivize participation and recognize the efforts of the cities involved, we have offered certifications at the conclusion of the Programme. These certifications acknowledge the commitment and progress of the cities towards their NetZero goals, providing them with a formal recognition of their capabilities and achievements in implementing sustainable solutions. This element of the program not only serves as a motivational tool but also enhances the credibility and reputation of the participating cities, aiding them in future initiatives and partnerships.

Visual 16: Certificate Example

The certificate indicates that the training encompassed three main stages: Strategic Planning, Enabling, and Local Adaptation. It highlights that the program took place from March to April 2024 and involved modules covering various key topics such as Strategic Planning for Net Zero, Innovative Finance, Business Model & Procurement, Citizen Engagement & Living Labs, and Innovation Ecosystems to Reach NetZero, among others. It also touched upon Energy Efficiency, Mobility and Transport, Digital Planning, and Local Adaptation Strategies towards Net Zero.

The certificate underscores the program's structure, specifying that the completion is equivalent to 22 teaching units, with each unit lasting 45 minutes.

Summary and Lessons Learned

The SMCNetZero Capacity Building Programme is designed to equip sustainability professionals in small and medium-sized cities (SMCs) with the strategies and tools necessary to achieve NetZero targets. The programme, documented in D.3.2 and complemented by D3.1, unfolds in a structured, three-staged strategy: the Strategic Planning Stage, the Enabling Stage focusing on 2.1 enabling factors for reaching NetZero, 2.2 Deep Dives on selected themes, and the Local Adaptation Stage. Each stage addresses different aspects of NetZero achievement, from initial planning and engagement with innovative finance and living labs to adapting strategies to local contexts through hands-on examples and discussion.

Over several months, content creation and module structuring have been tailored to the specific challenges and needs identified for SMCs, integrating site visits, stakeholder mapping, and practical online sessions to enhance understanding and application of the material.

In conclusion 32 unique participants from 20 cities across 10 European countries participated in the capacity building programme towards NetZero. Addtionally, based on the capacity building programme both Bable and DOLL have been contacted afterwards to discuss further opportunities for collaboration with one of the cities.

Visual 17: Certificates with Participants

Lessons Learned:

1. **Comprehensive Structuring:** The thorough planning and structuring of training modules based on specific city needs and expert insights have proven essential in effectively delivering content that resonates with and empowers participants.

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2. **Interactive Learning:** Implementing interactive sessions such as strategic discussions, online Q&A, and homework assignments focused on practical application (e.g., stakeholder mapping, project identification) enhances participant engagement and learning outcomes.
3. **Local Customization:** Tailoring modules to reflect local contexts and specific challenges faced by SMCs in achieving NetZero has been crucial. This approach ensures that the strategies discussed are applicable and impactful at the local level.
4. **Peer Learning and Networking:** Encouraging peer-to-peer learning and networking within the program helps share diverse experiences and foster collaboration among cities, which is vital for scaling NetZero initiatives effectively.
5. **Recognition and Motivation:** Offering certifications at the program's conclusion serves not only to recognize the efforts and achievements of participating cities but also to motivate and enhance their credibility in future sustainability endeavors.

The SMCNetZero Programme's structured approach and focus on practical, localized solutions underscore its effectiveness in advancing urban sustainability goals, demonstrating a replicable model for other regions aiming for NetZero.