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lifeSMART

Support small Municipalities towARds energy Transition

Co-funded by the European Union

D4.1 Operational models to activate and maintain IMTS and foster energy transition of small municipalities

Task 4.1 – IMTS Consolidation

Version 1.0

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Abstract

This document describes the operational models for activating and maintaining the functions provided on an experimental basis by the Inter-Municipal Technical Structures (IMTS) during the project. It also outlines strategies for continuing to promote the energy transition in the five target areas beyond the project's conclusion.

The first part defines the objectives of the IMTS within the LIFE-SMART project, recapping its main characteristics and briefly introducing the five pilot areas.

The second part analyses how the IMTSs were implemented in the target areas according to local needs and institutional frameworks. It highlights similarities and differences in their composition, roles, and functioning, while explaining how the assistance provided by the IMTSs was restructured to ensure sustainability after the project ends.

Building on the strengths and weaknesses of the LIFE-SMART experience, the third part outlines key recommendations for establishing technical structures that provide small municipalities with assistance in their energy transition.

The final part contains annexes providing detailed information on the IMTS implemented in the five pilot areas. This includes a questionnaire for each area, collected by task leader, describing local experiences and lessons learned, as well as documents in the local languages concerning the consolidation phase.

INTRODUCTION

Municipalities are key players in climate action, but, in particular small ones, face major barriers:

- **Limited technical staff**: Municipal Technical Departments are often composed by few human resources, some of them not entirely specialised in energy-related topics, sometimes employed by more than one Municipality and generally burdened with the usual bureaucracy. Even when supra-local bodies offer them assistance programmes and training actions, their ability to put the lessons learnt into practice is weak. This lack of knowledge and skills can be a substantial obstacle to taking effective action.
- **Lack of energy planning expertise**: local policymakers in small towns are often not aware of local potential/abilities in terms of energy saving and production, as well as best practices that could be considered close and replicable. Even when they are provided with a SEAP, they do not have a repository of well-designed proposals to present in case of funding opportunities arise. A clear and comprehensive vision is a key to guide the transition to clean energy. The lack of a clear vision can result in fragmented and uncoordinated actions.
- **Low citizen awareness**: in small towns, both citizens and local decision-makers often have inadequate information on energy issues. Furthermore, in the peripheral context, there is a certain tendency to consider the environmental consequences of high energy consumption as something that is generated elsewhere (particularly in big cities) and therefore cannot be solved locally. These are all common "cultural factors" that limit the initiative of private actors and community stakeholders in the field of renewable energies and energy modernisation. Mobilising initiatives at all levels of the community is essential for the success of the energy transition.
- **Difficulty in accessing funding and designing projects**: funding programmes are usually implemented through calls for proposals, but small municipalities are often unable to apply or develop competitive proposals. Their peripheral location, as well as their limited size, reduce the possibility of getting in touch with relevant market players and make it difficult for small municipalities to participate in significant investment projects. At the same time, when involved with ESCOs in renewable energy or energy modernisation plans, they are unable to negotiate the most favourable conditions.

In order to overcome these barriers Life SMART project tested in five regional clusters (in France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain) an innovative solution: the creation of **Inter-Municipal Technical Structures, IMTSs**, to help municipalities to design, manage and implement energy transition actions together.

This document explains in details what an IMTS is, it analyses the experience of the IMTSs within Life SMART project and it gives some key recommendations for the constitution of similar structures to foster energy transition of small municipalities.

The annexes present a deeper analysis of the experience of each pilot area.

PART 1 – What is an IMTS and description of the pilots

1.1 What is an IMTS

Life SMART project proposed the IMTS as a tool to support small municipalities in overcoming the most common barriers they face in becoming active subjects in energy transition.

An IMTS does not represent a new legal entity, but a **cooperative technical structure**, activated in a specific target area and formalized on a voluntary base, which operates in support of the local administrations involved, accompanying them towards the energy transition process.

Its main function is the promotion of renewable energy, energy efficiency and more generally the energy transition of the territories and communities in the target area. Its main goal is to act as an agent of change and facilitator in the target areas where it is clear the need for skills, vision, resources and initiative in the transition to more sustainable energies.

The IMTS aims to represent not as a temporary solution, but a permanent, self-sustaining long-term entity.

It is composed by three key elements with different [but complementary] roles in successfully driving the transition to more sustainable energies in target areas:

IMTS Coordinator

The IMTS Coordinator is a representative of the partner organisation responsible for the activation of the IMTS. As the central figure in the structure, the Coordinator takes responsibility for the overall supervision of the IMTS and ensures effective coordination between all of the staff involved in the structure. The Coordinator plays a crucial role in ensuring that the project's objectives are met and that all the parties involved work in harmony in order to achieve these objectives. In addition, he facilitates ongoing communication and effective collaboration between the hired external experts, municipal technicians and other relevant stakeholders.

Technical External Experts hired

The hired External Experts are specialists with proved qualifications and competences in the key areas of sustainable energy. They work closely with municipal technicians and the IMTS Coordinator, providing specialised knowledge to guide the target areas in the transition to more sustainable energy. These experts play a key role in identifying energy solutions suited to the specific needs of each pilot area, ensuring that best practices and sustainability standards are applied. Their technical and/or scientific expertise is a valuable resource for the success of local energy initiatives.

Municipal Technicians from the Municipalities involved in the target areas

The Municipal Technicians belonging to the Municipalities involved in the target areas are responsible for the practical implementation of sustainable energy strategies in their communities. Selected taking into account their practical skills and specific knowledge of the target areas, they play a central role in coordinating and implementing local activities. They work closely with the hired external experts and the IMTS Coordinator, in order to ensure that the strategies are implemented effectively on the ground, monitoring progress and reporting regularly. Their ability to adapt and solve problems is very important to overcome obstacles encountered during the implementation of sustainable energy initiatives.

Each element plays a key role in the IMTS: the IMTS Coordinator provides overall supervision and coordination, the hired External Experts contribute with specialised knowledge and the Municipal Technicians lead the practical implementation of sustainable energy initiatives in the pilot areas.

1.2 Life SMART five pilot areas

Life SMART project implemented an IMTS in five pilot areas in France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

In France the pilot area covered four rural municipalities in the Alpes Maritimes department in the southeaster France: **Biot, Saint-Martin-Vésubie, Saint-Vallier-de-Thiey, and Tende.**

FRANCE	4 municipalities	17.000 inhabitants	Area: 340 km^2
Characteristics of the area	The municipalites vary widely in size, population and geography. Ranging from Biot, a relatively dense and dynamic commune close to the Sophia Antipolis technology hub, to highly rural and mountainous territories such as Tende and Saint-Martin-Vésubie, located partly within the Mercantour National Park		
Stage of energy transition at the project start	The municipalities face unequal challenges and capacities, particularly in terms of administrative resources, technical expertise, and financial means, which directly influence their level of advancement in the energy transition. Some are already active in energy transition initiatives, like Saint-Vallier-de-Thiey, while others lack capacity or an overall strategy		
Composition of the IMTS and roles	The IMTS was composed by representatives of the municipalities and CCI-NCA staff, plus as external expert a technical engineering agency (Bureau d'études) directly hired by CCI-NCA on the basis of a professional intellectual services contract. The activation process was formally concluded with the official signature of a collaboration charter.		

The pilot area in Greece includes two neighbouring municipalities of Central Macedonia: **Volvi and Aristotelis**.

GREECE	2 Municipalities 9 municipal units	40.300 permanent inhabitants, increased in summer	Area: 1.530 km^2
Characteristics of the area	Both municipalities are touristic destinations and have protected areas.		
Stage of energy transition at the project start	The two neighbouring municipalities have a shared strategic vision for climate neutrality: they have comparable energy profiles and the significant seasonal variation in energy demand due to tourism.		
Composition of the IMTS and roles	The IMTS was composed by the two Deputy Mayors responsible for energy-related portfolios and Anatoliki's staff, which initially appointed senior internal staff with extensive experience in energy planning in the role of the external expert. Later a mechanical engineer, hired on the basis of a Service Provider Agreement, joined the IMTS. The collaboration was defined by a Mutual Agreement signed by all parties.		

The Italian target area corresponds to the Valle Ustica Union and includes 5 small municipalities, **Vicovaro, Mandela, Roccagiovine, Licenza and Percile**, in the North East of the metropolitan area of Rome.

ITALY	5 Municipalities, united in a Union of Municipalities	6.000 inhabitants	Area: 75 km²
Characteristics of the area	The territory is characterised by an ageing population and a depopulation phenomenon. The municipalities are in the protected area of the Lucretili Mountains, which sets a number of constraints for the use and management of the territory. They are also subject to various restrictions related to landscape systems and areas, for example in historic centres.		
Stage of energy transition at the project start	The Valle Ustica Union of municipalities adhered in 2015 to the Covenant of Mayors for Energy, and in 2022 to the new Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. At the beginning of the project the Union was developing a joint SECAP.		
Composition of the IMTS and roles	The IMTS was composed of a representative from CMRC in the role of coordinator, the responsible of the Union technical department, and two engineers, hired by CMRC on the basis of a consultancy contract, with experience respectively on technical and administrative aspects. The functioning of the IMTS was regulated by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CMRC and the Union.		

The Portuguese pilot area of the LIFE-SMART Project is located in the Alto Alentejo region and includes six small and medium-sized municipalities: **Alter do Chão, Avis, Castelo de Vide, Marvão, Monforte and Sousel**.

PORTUGAL	6 municipalities	27.150 inhabitants	Area: 2.087 km²
Characteristics of the area	This is a predominantly rural territory, characterised by low population density and geographic dispersion.		
Stage of energy transition at the project start	The municipalities have limited internal technical capacity, particularly in the fields of energy, climate and strategic planning. At the same time, the territory presents a high potential for the implementation of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy solutions, especially in public buildings.		
Composition of the IMTS and roles	The IMTS was composed by AREANATejo, as promoter, coordinator and entity responsible for technical articulation, the six pilot municipalities, represented by formally appointed technical focal points, External experts from the Polytechnic Institute of Portalegre, providing specialised technical support. The IMTS was formally activated through the signing of a Cooperation Protocol.		

The Spanish pilot area is the region of La Loma Occidental, located in the centre of the province of Jaén, within the region of Andalusia, includes eight municipalities: **Baeza, Begíjar, Canena, Ibros, Lupión, Rus, Torreblascopedro and Villatorres**.

SPAIN	8 municipalities	34.031 inhabitants	Area: 511 km²
Characteristics of the areas	This region occupies a strategic location between two larger cities (Úbeda and Linares) and is characterised by a rural environment and agricultural landscape.		
Stage of energy transition at the project start	All the municipalities of La Loma Occidental demonstrate a strong institutional commitment to environmental sustainability and the fight against climate change. All of these municipalities are signatories to the Covenant of Mayors, and Baeza is also a member of the Spanish Network of Cities for Climate. In the area of strategic planning, the municipalities of Baeza, Canena, Ibros, Rus, and Villatorres have developed in 2020 a Master Plan aimed at defining a common Smart Territory model, which incorporates specific actions for the improvement and protection of the environment.		
Composition of the IMTS and roles	The IMTS was composed by the staff of FAMP, as the coordinating entity, and of U-SPACE ESPAÑA S.L., as a support entity, two representatives from each of the town councils within La Loma Occidental, the		

	Autonomous Local Authority of El Mármol (included in the municipal district of Rus) and the Provincial Council of Jaén, plus in the role of technical external assistance, contracted by FAMP, EUROVÉRTICE CONSULTORES S.L. The IMTS was formally activated by signing a collaborative agreement between the above-mentioned entities.

Part 2 – Analysis of the experiences of IMTSs within Life SMART project

2.1 Activation of the IMTS

Do be finalised

2.2 Functioning of the IMTS

Do be finalised

2.3 Consolidation of the IMTS

Do be finalised

Part 3 – Conclusions and key recommendations

Do be finalised

Part 4 – Annexes

Annex 1- Questionnaires from project partners

Annex 2 – Supporting documentation from project partners (*do be integrated*)

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Annex 1: questionnaires from project partners

Task 4.1 – IMTS Consolidation

French target area – edited by CCI-NCA

A. Activation of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

A.1. Please describe shortly your Pilot area (number and dimension of Municipalities, main characteristics, etc.)

The pilot area covers four rural municipalities in the Alpes-Maritimes department in southeastern France: **Biot, Saint-Martin-Vésubie, Saint-Vallier-de-Thiey, and Tende**. These communes vary widely in size, population, geography, and stage of energy transition. Ranging from Biot, a relatively dense and dynamic commune close to the Sophia Antipolis technology hub, to highly rural and mountainous territories such as Tende and Saint-Martin-Vésubie, located partly within the Mercantour National Park.
Population density varies significantly (Biot ~10,000 vs. Tende ~2,000), as does geographic accessibility, with some municipalities covering very large areas with dispersed settlements.
Economic activities range from proximity to the high-tech Sophia Antipolis cluster in Biot to tourism and natural-resource economies in the mountainous communes.
As a result, the municipalities face unequal challenges and capacities, particularly in terms of administrative resources, technical expertise, and financial means, which directly influence their level of advancement in the energy transition. Some are already active in energy transition initiatives, like Saint-Vallier-de-Thiey, while others lack capacity or an overall strategy.

1. Biot

- **Population:** ~10,100 inhabitants.
- **Area:** ~15.5 km² (small, relatively dense).
- **Characteristics:** Located near the Côte d'Azur (between Nice and Antibes), Biot combines a historic hill-top village with modern urbanization and part of the Sophia Antipolis technology park. It benefits from cultural amenities, tourism, and economic activity tied to the tech and service sectors.
- **Profile:** More urban and resource-rich among the four, with higher administrative capacity.

2. Saint-Martin-Vésubie

- **Population:** ~1,300–1,400 inhabitants.
- **Area:** ~97 km² (large, mountainous).
- **Characteristics:** A mountain commune and gateway to the **Mercantour National Park**, high above the Vésubie valley, with significant natural and touristic assets (outdoor recreation).
- **Profile:** Rural and dispersed with limited staffing, located in an area with strong seasonal tourism but fewer local technical resources.

3. Saint-Vallier-de-Thiey

- **Population:** ~3,660 inhabitants.
- **Area:** ~50–52 km².
- **Characteristics:** Situated inland near Grasse, this commune has a mix of natural woodland and rural landscape. It sits on the historic **Route Napoléon** and has lower population density.
- **Profile:** Mid-sized rural municipality with moderate administrative capacity and traditional

local economy.

4. Tende

- **Population:** ~1,900–2,100 inhabitants (small rural).
- **Area:** ~177.5 km² — **the largest commune by area in Alpes-Maritimes**.
- **Characteristics:** Mountainous territory within the **Mercantour National Park**, bordering Italy; includes valleys and high peaks. Historically part of Italy until 1947, Tende has strong cross-border cultural links and low population density.
- **Profile:** Very rural, geographically extensive, with limited local services and human resources.

A.2. Please describe how you activated the IMTS in your Pilot area:

- ***Actors involved in the activation of the IMTS***
- ***Procedure followed to activate the IMTS***
- ***Experts selected: profiles, how they have been selected, type of contract established***

The IMTS was activated through a collaborative and structured approach, involving the CCI Nice Côte d'Azur (CCI NCA), the participating municipalities, and an external technical expert.
The activation procedure followed several successive steps. First, the municipalities were selected to benefit from the project, based on their needs and involvement in energy transition. Secondly, a public procurement procedure was launched to recruit an external expert. After the recruitment of the external expert, a launching meeting was organized that enabled to present again the IMTS approach to ensure a common understanding of its objectives and methodology.
After the launching, in-person meetings were organized with the municipalities to start the operational work. These exchanges were complemented by online coordination meetings to ensure alignment among all actors. The activation process was formally concluded with the official signature of a collaboration charter during the Salon des Maires, an existing event bringing together municipalities, which provided high visibility and institutional recognition.
Regarding the experts selected, a technical engineering agency (bureau d'études) specialized in technical and environmental engineering was appointed. The agency has strong expertise in technical studies for the construction and rehabilitation of buildings, as well as in resource-efficiency engineering. The expert was selected through an open public procurement procedure, based on more than three bids, and evaluated according to price-quality ratio, including proven experience in similar projects. The contract established is a professional intellectual services contract, covering consultancy services, including project owner assistance (Assistance à Maîtrise d'Ouvrage) and execution-phase project management (Maîtrise d'Œuvre d'Exécution).

B. Functioning of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

B.1. Please describe how the IMTS works in your Pilot area:

- ***Role and functions attributed to IMTS***
- ***How did the experts collaborate with the Municipalities***
- ***Did the experts interact also with other actors (citizens, companies, etc.)?***
- ***What has the IMTS produced during the project***

In the pilot area, IMTS operated as a **collaborative coordination and support mechanism**, bringing together institutional, municipal, and technical actors to support local energy transition actions.

Role and functions of the IMTS included coordination, technical support, capacity building, and knowledge exchange among stakeholders. IMTS members collaborated across the different project activities, notably through joint work on the **eco-gesture awareness campaign**, as well as through continuous dissemination and communication efforts. The IMTS also facilitated **exchanges of best practices and experiences** during meetings, training sessions, and dedicated events.

The **CCI Nice Côte d'Azur** acted as the **IMTS coordinator**. In this role, CCI NCA organized and chaired meetings, served as the main interface between the external expert and the municipalities, coordinated and delivered training activities, and organized dedicated project events. CCI NCA also financed municipal events implemented under Activity 2.4, monitored and followed up on the work carried out by the external expert, and was responsible for the overall planning and implementation of IMTS activities.

The **municipalities** played an active role within the IMTS by providing feedback, sharing best practices during meetings, and participating in training sessions and project events. They contributed directly to the design and implementation of the **eco-gesture campaign** and internally defined and selected their **priority actions** in line with local needs and capacities.

The **external experts**, contracted by CCI NCA, worked in close collaboration with the municipalities, particularly for **site visits, data collection, and technical analyses**. While experts interacted directly with municipal teams during the studies, CCI NCA ensured coordination of exchanges, organization of meetings, management of document delivery, and consolidation of collected data. In addition, the experts also interacted with **other stakeholders**, such as citizens and companies, during public events, including the **training day held on 18 March**.

During the project, the IMTS **collectively produced several key outputs**, including:

- a **collaboration charter**, formally signed by the partners;
- **four municipal action plans** tailored to local contexts;
- a **shared eco-gesture awareness campaign** targeting municipalities staff and visitors.

B.2. Please evaluate the work/functioning of the IMTS in your Pilot area:

- ***SWOT analysis of the IMTS: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Please indicate also if the involvement of multiple municipalities has been an asset or not***
- ***Level of satisfaction of the Municipalities and other actors who have interacted with the IMTS***
- ***What you would do differently in establishing a new IMTS on your territory / do you have any recommendation to other organisations willing to establish an IMTS?***

SWOT analysis

This SWOT analysis assesses the functioning, effectiveness, and added value of the IMTS implemented in the Alpes-Maritimes, France. It focuses on governance, stakeholder engagement, operational capacity, and external contextual factors influencing the achievement of project objectives.

Strengths

- **Diversity of participating municipalities**, including at least one municipality with an advanced level of maturity in energy transition. This diversity enables peer-to-peer learning, experience sharing, and the creation of a positive dynamic that supports the upskilling and engagement of less advanced municipalities.
- **Strong involvement of a proactive municipality**, acting as a driver for the pilot area through its capacity to propose actions, actively participate in activities, and provide feedback based on operational experience.
- **Clear and well-identified governance structure of the IMTS**, coordinated by CCI NCA
- **Network and communication means:** CCI NCA is an organisation with strong territorial anchorage, extensive institutional and economic networks, and significant communication and dissemination capacity.
- **Mobilisation of a qualified external expert**, ensuring technical credibility, methodological support, and neutrality in the assistance provided to municipalities.
- **Delivery of concrete and context-specific training activities**, adapted to local needs and accessible to non-technical municipal profiles, thereby reinforcing inclusiveness and capacity-building at the local level.
- **Clear operational objective, focused on the implementation of a priority action** within each municipality. Allowing municipalities to select their own priority action increases ownership, relevance, and alignment with local strategies.
- **Institutional legitimacy of CCI NCA**, recognised as a key and trusted territorial actor, facilitating engagement, coordination, and cooperation among stakeholders.

Weaknesses

- **Geographical dispersion of municipalities** within the pilot area, limiting opportunities for in-person meetings and collective working sessions, and reducing informal exchanges between stakeholders.
- **Uneven level of commitment among municipalities**, mainly due to limited available time, competing priorities, or insufficient internal technical resources dedicated to energy transition.
- **Insufficient availability of long-term, user-friendly operational tools**, such as practical training materials, self-assessment instruments, digital toolkits, or evaluation tools (e.g. quizzes, monitoring templates). The development of such tools requires additional financial and human resources.
- **Political and electoral context**, which constrains formal commitments and decision-making processes. Municipal elections create uncertainty regarding continuity, limiting engagement in medium- and long-term actions and encouraging a preference for short-term, highly visible initiatives.

Opportunities

- **Development of multi-level and cross-sectoral cooperation**, involving municipalities, national energy suppliers, supra-local authorities, and other public and private stakeholders, supported through networking events and joint activities.
- **Facilitated access to local and regional ecosystems,** enabling municipalities to identify reliable technical and private partners to support future projects and investments through the

events organized.

- **Potential to initiate and benefit from supra-local initiatives,** including access to regional, national, or European funding schemes and participation in wider territorial or thematic networks.
- **Rising energy costs**, which increase awareness and may act as a strong incentive for municipalities to engage in energy efficiency measures and energy consumption reduction strategies.
- **Favourable legislative framework,** as Loi APER – Accélération de la Production d'Énergies Renouvelables in France, which strengthens obligations and incentives for municipalities, including those with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants, to reduce energy consumption and develop renewable energy actions, thereby reinforcing the relevance and leverage of the IMTS.

Threats

- **Increasing financial constraints on municipalities**, combining higher operational costs (notably energy) and reduced public revenues due to the current economic and political context, potentially leading to a deprioritisation of energy transition actions.
- **Municipal elections and political turnover**, which may affect the continuity of commitments and weaken long-term engagement in energy transition policies.
- **Limited and uncertain public funding** for organisations and public services dedicated to energy transition, reducing long-term support capacity, expertise availability, and scalability of the IMTS model.

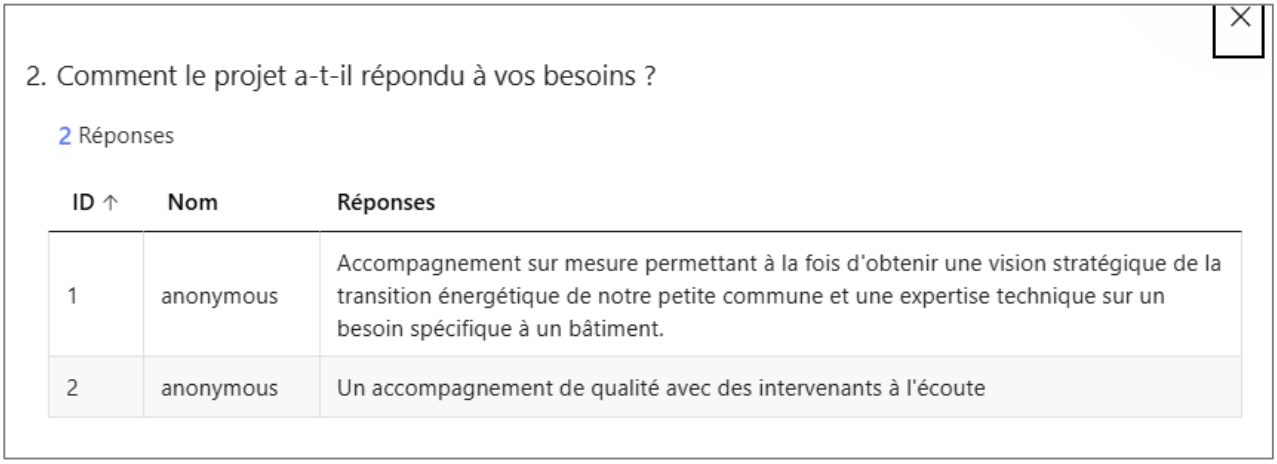
Overall, the IMTS demonstrates strong added value in terms of governance, capacity-building, and local ownership. However, its effectiveness and replicability would benefit from reinforced operational tools, stronger long-term political anchoring, and additional financial resources. Addressing these aspects is essential to ensure sustainability beyond the end of the project.

Municipal Satisfaction and Feedback

Overall, municipalities expressed a **high level of satisfaction** with the project. Positive feedback was mainly linked to the **concrete and operational nature of the IMTS**, which enabled municipalities to identify relevant priority actions and, in several cases, implement them.
Municipalities also particularly appreciated the **opportunity to access financial support for citizen awareness-raising events**, which strengthened local engagement and visibility of energy transition actions. In addition, the project was valued as a **platform for exchange**, allowing municipalities to meet other of their peers facing similar challenges, as well as local actors actively supporting the energy transition.
To collect structured and comparable feedback, an **online satisfaction questionnaire** was submitted to participating municipalities. The results highlighted the following key points:

- The project **met municipalities' expectations** and was fully aligned with the activities and objectives initially presented.
- The project **responded effectively to municipalities' needs**, notably through *high-quality support*, *availability and responsiveness of experts*, and *tailored assistance*. Respondents particularly underlined the value of a personalised approach that provided both a **strategic vision of energy transition** and **targeted technical expertise**, for example on specific public buildings (see Figure 1).

- The project **contributed to capacity-building**, enabling municipalities to improve their knowledge, strengthen skills, develop new competences, and identify new energy transition actions.
- The project **facilitated networking and cooperation**, allowing municipalities to establish useful connections with other local authorities and relevant stakeholders involved in energy transition.



2. Comment le projet a-t-il répondu à vos besoins ?

2 Réponses

ID ↑	Nom	Réponses
1	anonymous	Accompagnement sur mesure permettant à la fois d'obtenir une vision stratégique de la transition énergétique de notre petite commune et une expertise technique sur un besoin spécifique à un bâtiment.
2	anonymous	Un accompagnement de qualité avec des intervenants à l'écoute

Figure 1: Answer to the Satisfaction Questionnaire

Recommendations

If the IMTS were to be implemented again or replicated, greater emphasis should be placed on **maximising the geographical proximity of participating municipalities**. This would facilitate more frequent in-person meetings, strengthen peer-to-peer exchanges, and create favourable conditions for the development of joint or collective actions among local authorities.
Regarding training activities, a **more detailed identification of municipalities' needs** at an early stage of the project would allow for better targeting of both content and audiences. In addition, the **development of user-friendly, practical, and reusable materials and tools** would help ensure that training outcomes are sustained over time and that resources continue to be used beyond in-person sessions, thereby increasing the long-term impact of capacity-building actions.
Based on project experience and stakeholder feedback, it is essential to provide beneficiaries with **structured opportunities to meet peers and exchange** on concrete experiences. Such exchanges enable municipalities to draw inspiration, share lessons learned, and openly discuss implementation challenges, contributing to the identification and dissemination of best practices.
At a complementary level, **in-person interactions** with relevant partners are particularly valued. These include other public actors facing similar issues, technical solution providers, and potential funding bodies. Facilitating these encounters supports networking, strengthens cooperation, and helps municipalities identify concrete solutions and resources to advance their energy transition projects.
Overall, it is recommended **to maintain a strong beneficiary-centred** and **results-oriented approach** throughout the project lifecycle. Actions and outputs should be clearly tailored to municipalities' needs, and communication should consistently highlight concrete benefits and practical outcomes. This approach has proven effective in maximising participation, engagement, and overall impact.

C. Sustainability of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

C.1. Will the IMTS created in your Pilot area be maintained after Life SMART project? If yes, please describe how:

- ***typology of services provided***
- ***how they will be provided***
- ***To whom they will be provided (only municipalities or also citizens; other municipalities than those involved in SMART). How will you involve these target groups?***
- ***Will you have experts to carry out the services? Will they be internal or external staff? If external: what kind of contract will they have? Are they the same experts who have been involved in Life SMART project?***
- ***What are the main risks of the IMTS configuration that you have set up?***
- ***What is the timeframe envisaged for the provision of IMTS services?***

If not, please explain:

- ***Why you took this decision and why you estimate that the IMTS would not be sustainable on your territory.***
- ***The main criticalities that you had to face and whether they were foreseen at the beginning of the project.***
- ***If you will implement an alternative solution to the IMTS, in order to use the results of the project.***

The Integrated Municipal Technical Support (IMTS) developed within the LIFE SMART project will be maintained after the project through a **capitalisation-based and transferable model**, embedded within existing territorial structures and activities. Although CCI NCA will no longer act as a dedicated IMTS coordinator, the tools, methods, and governance principles developed during LIFE SMART will be integrated into ongoing actions, ensuring continuity while enabling replication in other territories.

Post-project IMTS configuration and key activities

The post-project IMTS will rely on a **modular and transferable set of activities** combining digital resources, awareness-raising actions, capacity-building, networking, and first-level technical support.

The central element will be the an **online platform**, providing access **to documentation, practical tools, and guidance materials**. The platform also provides monitoring of energy actions for municipalities. Tools and training materials developed during LIFE SMART, including adaptable ecogesture campaign templates, will be integrated and made freely accessible, ensuring reuse and scalability. The platform might also serve as a **signposting hub towards relevant actors** and support schemes, such as Agence 06, ACV, Énergie Partagée, and RECROSSES one-stop-shop tools.

A **one-year ecogesture awareness-raising campaign** will be implemented for LIFE SMART municipalities, using adaptable materials that can be updated and reused annually, enabling continuity with limited additional resources.

Networking and training events will remain a cornerstone of the IMTS legacy, notably through the annual *Assises Azuréennes de la Transition Énergétique* and activities of the *Club Énergie Côte d'Azur*. These open and recurring formats are based on well-established models that can be

replicated in other territories.
CCI NCA will provide **front-office and remote assistance** through its energy service, acting as a first-level entry point for municipalities, companies, and citizens. This service will deliver initial technical guidance and orient beneficiaries towards appropriate tools, experts, and interlocutors, using a low-cost and replicable support model.
In addition, **on-site visits of the renovated historical building at CCI NCA headquarters** will be organised as a demonstrator and experience-sharing tool, showcasing concrete solutions such as insulation, photovoltaic installations, and building management systems.
Finally, CCI NCA will ensure **communication and signposting of other energy-transition-related events and initiatives**, reinforcing synergies and strengthening the territorial ecosystem.

Target groups and stakeholder involvement

Post-project IMTS services will target **municipalities across the territory**, beyond LIFE SMART beneficiaries, with particular attention to small municipalities. Companies will also be addressed, in line with CCI NCA's mission.
Stakeholder involvement will be ensured through open access to the platform, participation in training and networking events, front-office support, and facilitated exchanges between municipalities, supra-local authorities, associations (notably Agence 06), researchers, and private stakeholders. This **multi-actor approach** is fully transferable to other contexts.

Expert mobilisation, risks, and timeframe

Expert support will be provided mainly through **territorial energy transition experts**, notably from Agence 06, mobilised within their statutory missions or through complementary funding when relevant. The external expert involved during LIFE SMART will not be financed post-project but may remain involved through networking.
The main risks relate to the **absence of a dedicated IMTS coordinator** and to **financial constraints**; however, these are mitigated by embedding IMTS activities into existing structures, recurring events, and permanent digital tools, reducing dependency on project-specific funding.
IMTS-related services are envisaged as a **long-term and continuous process**, with permanent access to digital resources and recurring awareness-raising, networking, and training activities. This approach supports both sustainability and transferability of the IMTS model.

C.2. How will you fund these services? Describe the certain and possible source of funding and the timeframe foreseen.

The continuation of IMTS services after the LIFE SMART project will rely on **a diversified and sustainable funding strategy**, combining own resources, service-based revenues, and public funding at multiple levels.
First, CCI NCA will continue **to finance core IMTS activities**—including front-office support, networking, training events, and coordination—through its own resources, as these actions fall within its statutory missions and long-term territorial responsibilities. Similarly, territorial associations participating in IMTS activities will cover their involvement using their operational budgets, which already include energy transition support as part of their mandate.
The SMART platform **may include a paid version** for municipalities seeking a dedicated and personalised space to manage and visualise local data. This premium option could ensure both tailored services for municipalities and financial sustainability for the platform.

For additional development, scaling-up, or complementary actions, **external funding may be mobilised from local sources** (e.g., Fonds Chaleur, Métropole Nice Côte d'Azur), regional programmes (Région Sud), national schemes (ADEME), or European initiatives (e.g., LIFE, Interreg). This combination of internal resources, service-based revenue, and public co-funding ensures both the sustainability and replicability of IMTS services, while allowing adaptation to different territorial contexts and scaling to additional municipalities or stakeholder groups.
The provision of IMTS services is envisaged over a 5-year period, subject to available resources and funding, ensuring continuity while allowing adjustments based on stakeholder needs and territorial developments.

C.3. How will you consolidate the training programs in your territory?
Describe how you will ensure in the mid-term a long lasting training programme for the staff of your municipalities and the Memorandum of Understanding or other agreement that you have/you will sign with other institutions.

To ensure a **sustainable and long-lasting training programme** for municipal staff, we will build on both **the training materials developed during the LIFE SMART project** and existing resources provided by established actors in the energy transition field, that will be uploaded on the online platform described in section C.2.
Municipalities will be also **be signposted to relevant national and local institutions**, such as ADEME at the national level and Agence 06 locally, which offer training materials and regularly organise capacity-building sessions for municipal staff.
We will also **organise dedicated events** bringing together municipalities and key actors, including ADEME and local associations whose core missions include energy transition training. These events will promote **networking, peer learning, and collaboration**, reinforcing the links between municipalities and expert institutions.
In addition, municipalities and training providers will be invited to **future events and workshops,** ensuring **ongoing collaboration, knowledge exchange, and reinforcement of local capacities** over the mid-term. This approach will allow municipal staff to continuously access updated knowledge and practical tools, while also supporting long-term partnerships between territorial actors.

Greek target area – edited by ANATOLIKI

A. Activation of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

A.1. Please describe shortly your Pilot area (number and dimension of Municipalities, main characteristics, etc.)

The pilot area in Greece includes two neighbouring municipalities (Volvi and Aristotelis) with many common characteristics (size, population, economy, special planning etc.) and comparable energy indicators and needs. Some general characteristics can be found in the following table:

	Municipality of Volvi	Municipality of Aristotelis
Location	Central Macedonia, Thessaloniki Regional Unit	Central Macedonia, Chalkidiki Regional Unit
Administrative seat	Stavros	Ierissos
Population	~22,000 (permanent), >80,000 (summer)	~18,300 (permanent), significantly increased in summer
Area	783 sq.km.	747 sq.km.
Administrative structure	6 Municipal Units	3 Municipal Units
Characteristics	Coastal, touristic, includes Lake Volvi (Ramsar zone)	Religious and summer tourism, mining activity

The pilot area consists of two neighboring municipalities with a shared strategic vision for climate neutrality. Their inclusion in the LIFE SMART project is justified by their comparable energy profiles and the significant seasonal variation in energy demand due to tourism. The geographical proximity (Central Macedonia) and the presence of protected areas (e.g., Lake Volvi) create a common ground for developing joint energy transition strategies and shared technical expertise through the IMTS.

A.2. Please describe how you activated the IMTS in your Pilot area:

- ***Actors involved in the activation of the IMTS***
- ***Procedure followed to activate the IMTS***
- ***Experts selected: profiles, how they have been selected, type of contract established***
- ***Actors involved in the activation***

The activation was a collaborative effort led by ANATOLIKI S.A. (as the coordinating and managing body), in close cooperation with the **Mayors and Vice-Mayors** of the Municipalities of **Volvi** and **Aristotelis**. Crucial technical support was provided by the **Municipal Technical Services**, ensuring that the IMTS structure was built upon the actual operational needs of the local administration.

Procedure followed

The activation followed a three-step process:

- **Initial Engagement:** Confirmation of the municipalities' participation and strategic alignment with the LIFE SMART objectives.
- **Needs Assessment:** Technical kick-off meetings took place where the municipalities presented their specific energy profiles, challenges, and expectations.
- **Operational Setup:** Establishing a workflow between ANATOLIKI's experts and municipal staff to facilitate data sharing and technical advisory.

Experts selected

- **Initial Phase:** The IMTS was originally supported by senior internal staff from ANATOLIKI S.A. with extensive experience in energy planning.
- **External Expertise & Selection:** To further strengthen the technical output, ANATOLIKI S.A. issued a Public Call for Expression of Interest. Following a transparent evaluation process, a **Service Provider Agreement** was established on November 15, 2024, with a duration until March 31, 2026.
- **Profile & Scope:** The selected expert is a **Mechanical Engineer** with excessive experience in energy transition studies. The scope of the contract, titled *"Technical Support Services for the Energy Transition of the Municipalities of Aristotelis and Volvi,"* specifically includes the technical implementation of the IMTS objectives and the development of energy efficiency plans for the pilot area.

B. Functioning of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

B.1. Please describe how the IMTS works in your Pilot area:

- ***Role and functions attributed to IMTS***
- ***How did the experts collaborate with the Municipalities***
- ***Did the experts interact also with other actors (citizens, companies, etc.)?***
- ***What has the IMTS produced during the project***

Role and functions attributed to IMTS

The IMTS in the Aristotle - Volvi pilot area functions as an inter-municipal technical "hub" that coordinates expert and municipal staff to support the local energy transition planning, project preparation and implementation under the LIFE SMART program. The structure is composed of a Coordinator and a Technical Expert from ANATOLIKI S.A., working alongside Deputy Mayors from the Municipalities of Aristotelis and Volvi, who oversee energy-related portfolios.

Collaboration between Experts and Municipalities:

The collaboration was defined by a Mutual Agreement that was signed by all parties. The experts worked closely with municipal representatives and technicians, with day-to-day planning and coordination of the activities of the LIFE SMART project. The experts contributed with their expertise on energy transition and the municipal representatives with their local knowledge on the operation of their municipality and insights into the challenges and opportunities in their area.

Interaction with other actors (Citizens, Companies, etc.):

Other than the municipality representatives, the experts – within the framework of the project – interacted with several actors such as local business owners and common citizens.

- **Citizens & Youth:** Promoting energy literacy through public stands (e.g., *1st Mountainous Race in Paleochori*, May 2025) and educational events for students featuring interactive tools like energy-producing bicycles (Volvi, Sept 2025).
- **Local Businesses:** Specialized workshops held in **Ierissos** and **Ouranopoli** (Sept & Nov 2025) focused on energy sector developments and opportunities for business energy upgrades.

Key Outputs and Deliverables produced

During the project, the IMTS successfully delivered:

Key Outputs and Deliverables produced

During the project, the IMTS successfully delivered:

- **Capacity Building:** A comprehensive **educational program** (February 25-26) tailored to the specific needs of municipal staff. An educational program (25-26 February) was organized on energy transition subjects for municipal technicians and representatives. During the preparation of this program, the IMTS members shared special characteristics of the pilot areas to be considered and proposed the municipal staff that is most essential to participate in such education program.
- **Technical Maturity:** The expert, in collaboration with municipal members, conducted **full energy analyses and efficiency studies**.
- **Tender Readiness:** Completion of all preparatory documentation, including **Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)**, for the tender regarding the energy upgrade of **two public buildings** (one in each Municipality).
- **Community Engagement:** Multiple energy literacy events that successfully raised awareness among diverse local stakeholder groups.
- The IMTS organized several energy literacy activities in the pilot areas. More specifically:
  - On May 3, 2025, experts participated with an information stand in the 1st Mountainous race which took place in Paleochori, Municipality of Aristotelis. The experts provided information to the public on issues related to energy transition and building upgrades during the event.
  - On September 17, 2025, ANATOLIKI S.A. organized an informational event for local students and citizens in the Municipality of Volvi. As part of the event the participants had the opportunity to learn about electric mobility and try out interactive bicycles that produce electricity.
  - On the same day an event took place that targeted local businesses in Ierissos, Municipality of Aristotelis. During the event the IMTS expert presented the current developments in the energy sector and the opportunities of the businesses to energy upgrade. A similar informational event with local businesses as a target took place 28/11/2025 in Ouranopoli, Municipality of Aristotelis.

B.2. Please evaluate the work/functioning of the IMTS in your Pilot area:

- ***SWOT analysis of the IMTS: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Please indicate also if the involvement of multiple municipalities has been an asset or not***
- ***Level of satisfaction of the Municipalities and other actors who have interacted with the IMTS***

- ***What you would do differently in establishing a new IMTS on your territory / do you have any recommendation to other organisations willing to establish an IMTS?***

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The IMTS provides technical expertise that otherwise it would be difficult to obtain for the 2 municipalities. It is a platform where the 2 neighbouring municipalities can exchange information and opinions on the progress of energy transition.

The IMTS acts as a specialized Technical Hub, providing high – level expertise in energy transition that the municipalities lack internally. Its primary strength lies in the economies of scale and the creation of a permanent communication channel between neighboring municipalities, fostering a unified strategy for regional climate goals.

Weaknesses

Chronic understaffing of municipal technical departments and the administrative burden is a significant bottleneck. This “bureaucratic fatigue” often limits the pace at which municipal technicians can absorb and and implement the technical outputs provided by the IMTS.

Municipal technicians are often overburdened with various tasks that limits their ability to apply the lessons learned through their participation in IMTS activities or even participate actively in IMTS.

Opportunities

The IMTS provides a scalable blueprint. There is significant potential to expand this cluster to include more neighboring municipalities, thereby increasing the regional impact, centralizing technical data management, and attracting larger-scale investments for energy projects.

The established IMTS structure creates the basis for an expansion including even more of neighbouring municipalities – expanding the scope and the impact of the current structure.

Threats

The primary threat is financial instability after the project’s subside ends. Without a permanent funding mechanism or dedicated budget lines within the municipal annual plans, the continuity of the structure could be at risk. Limited access to resources and funding might disrupt the continuous operation of the IMTS

Level of Satisfaction

Both the Municipalities of Volvi and Aristotelis, as well as local stakeholders, have expressed a high level of satisfaction from the operation of the IMTS and their participation in the LIFE SMART project. This became apparent through their shared willingness to continue the cooperation with ANATOLIKI S.A. and the continued operation of IMTS. The municipalities value the IMTS not just as a service provider, but as a strategic partner that bridges the gap between high-level EU energy policy and local implementation.

We are currently in discussion regarding this matter, in order for Anatoliki to enter a programme agreement with the two municipalities for the continued operation of the established IMTS.

What to do differently / Recommendations

If we were to establish a new IMTS, we would focus on:

Early Alignment of Political Commitment: While the formal signing of the MoU followed the

project's timeline, our recommendation for future replications is to establish an informal political steering committee even earlier. This would further streamline the transition from the planning phase to the operational functioning of the IMTS.

Dedicated "Liaison Officers": Recommending that each municipality appoints a specific staff member whose exclusive role (part-time) is to coordinate with the IMTS, reducing the friction caused by general bureaucracy.

Financial Diversification: Our recommendation to other organizations is to design a **mixed funding model** (a combination of municipal contributions, service fees, and regional grants) from the beginning to ensure the structure's financial autonomy.

C. Sustainability of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

C.1. Will the IMTS created in your Pilot area be maintained after Life SMART project?
If yes, please describe how:

- ***typology of services provided***
- ***how they will be provided***
- ***To whom they will be provided (only municipalities or also citizens; other municipalities than those involved in SMART). How will you involve these target groups?***
- ***Will you have experts to carry out the services? Will they be internal or external staff? If external: what kind of contract will they have? Are they the same experts who have been involved in Life SMART project?***
- ***What are the main risks of the IMTS configuration that you have set up?***
- ***What is the timeframe envisaged for the provision of IMTS services?***

If not, please explain:

- ***Why you took this decision and why you estimate that the IMTS would not be sustainable on your territory.***
- ***The main criticalities that you had to face and whether they were foreseen at the beginning of the project.***
- ***If you will implement an alternative solution to the IMTS, in order to use the results of the project.***

Yes, the maintenance of the IMTS is formally secured through the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) already signed by the Municipalities of Volvi, Aristotelis, and ANATOLIKI S.A.

Typology of services provided:

- **Consulting & Advisory:** Technical support for energy transition planning, identifying financial resources (funding plans), and administrative assistance with templates and procedures.
- **Capacity Building:** Ongoing training programs for municipal staff to ensure the integration of energy-efficient practices.
- **Public Awareness:** Raising awareness of energy transition benefits and organizing informational sessions for local businesses and stakeholders to foster a "green" local economy.

How service wil be provided

- **Resource Management:** ANATOLIKI S.A. will provide the administrative base (offices) and core management, ensuring the IMTS remains a permanent technical hub.
- **Institutional Framework:** Operation will be governed by a 1 to 2-year Interagency Programmatic Agreement between ANATOLIKI S.A. and the Municipalities.

Target Groups & Involvement

- **Primary**: The Municipalities of Volvi and Aristotelis.
- **Secondary**: Local citizens and businesses.
- **Expansion:** The IMTS is designed as an open structure. Other neighboring municipalities or regional entities can join the MoU through a simple declaration, allowing for territorial expansion. We will involve these groups through periodic open forums and digital communication channels.

Experts & Staffing

- **Internal Staff:** Core services will be provided by ANATOLIKI's internal employees, leveraging the expertise gained during the Life SMART project to ensure continuity.
- **External Experts:** For highly specialized studies (e.g., detailed engineering designs), ANATOLIKI S.A. will hire contractors using the established model contracts developed during the project. This ensures a consistent level of quality and technical rigor.

Main Risks

- **Political/Administrative Engagement:** Potential shifts in municipal priorities might reduce the active engagement of staff.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Reliance on municipal budgets or specific grants; however, the Programmatic Agreement model is designed to mitigate this by creating a structured funding scheme.
- **Staff Turnover:** Loss of trained personnel in the municipalities.

Timeframe

- The provision of IMTS services is envisaged to start immediately after the Life SMART project concludes, with a long-term perspective (initial 2-year programmatic cycles) to ensure mid-term stability and long-term impact.

C.2. How will you fund these services?
Describe the certain and possible source of funding and the timeframe foreseen.

The funding strategy for the post-project operation of the IMTS is based on a diversified model to ensure financial resilience and continuity.

Certain Funding Sources

- **Institutional Support (ANATOLIKI S.A.)**: For the immediate transitional period, ANATOLIKI S.A. will commit its own resources (staff and infrastructure) to maintain the core coordination of the IMTS.
- **Interagency Programmatic Agreements**: As established in the MoU, the two Municipalities (Volvi and Aristotelis) will provide funding through annual or biennial programmatic

agreements. This budget will specifically cover operational costs, training sessions, and technical advisory services.

Possible/Planned Funding Sources

- **New EU Grants**: A strategic proposal has already been submitted under the **LIFE-2025-CET-ENERPOV** call. This project aims to expand the current IMTS model, scale up its activities, and secure long-term funding for its specialized experts.
- **Service-Based Fees**: The IMTS will seek to fund specialized technical studies (e.g., Energy Efficiency tenders) through **dedicated municipal budget lines** for technical maturation or through **Regional Operational Programs (ESPA 2021-2027).**

Foreseen Timeframe

- **Short-term (Year 1**): Transition to the Programmatic Agreement model and internal funding from ANATOLIKI S.A.
- **Mid-term (Years 2-4):** Full operational scale-up through the potential approval of the LIFE-2025-CET-ENERPOV project and the integration of the IMTS costs into the Municipalities' multi-annual financial planning.

C.3. How will you consolidate the training programs in your territory?
Describe how you will ensure in the mid-term a long lasting training programme for the staff of your municipalities and the Memorandum of Understanding or other agreement that you have/you will sign with other institutions.

The consolidation of training programs and the long-term professional development of staff in the Municipalities of Volvi and Aristotelis are structurally secured through the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Energy Transition. Our strategy for ensuring mid-term and long-lasting training includes the following pillars:

- **Institutional Continuity via the IMTS:** ANATOLIKI S.A. will assume the general coordination, administrative management, and technical guidance of the Inter-municipal Technical Structure (IMTS) beyond the project's duration. This ensures that the expertise gained during LIFE SMART remains permanently available to the municipalities.
- **Capacity Building through Programmatic Agreements:** To guarantee a long-lasting training curriculum, the MoU allows Municipalities to sign Programmatic Agreements with ANATOLIKI S.A. This formal legal framework enables the continuous upskilling of municipal employees and the ongoing information of local professionals and stakeholders.
- **Sustainable Staffing & Advisory Services:** The General Director and the Technical Services Director of ANATOLIKI S.A. will staff the IMTS, providing advisory support post-project. This operation will be supported by joint financial schemes designed to secure the necessary resources for training and technical assistance.
- **Technical Supervision and Application:** Beyond theoretical training, the partnership extends to practical implementation, including technical studies, financing application drafting, on-site inspections, and technical supervision of interventions. This ensures that training is directly linked to the territory's climate neutrality and energy autonomy goals.
- **Open Governance Model:** The MoU is an "open" agreement, allowing any other municipality or institution to join via a simple declaration. This scalability ensures the mid-term expansion of the training network and enhances its regional impact.

Italian target area – edited by CMRC/Cras

A. Activation of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

A.1. Please describe shortly your Pilot area (number and dimension of Municipalities, main characteristics, etc.)

The Italian target area corresponds to the Valle Ustica Union and includes 5 small municipalities, Vicovaro, Mandela, Roccagiovine, Licenza and Percile, in the North East of the metropolitan area of Rome, with an overall population of less than 6.000 inhabitants.
The territory is characterised by an ageing population and a depopulation phenomenon. From an economic point of view, only the biggest Municipality, Vicovaro, has a consistent number of active companies, mainly in the sectors of commercial businesses, construction, trade and construction, gardening and transport. In the other municipalities, the main economic activities are restaurants and bars, pharmacies, medical practices and gardening services.
The municipalities are in the protected area of the Lucretili Mountains, which sets a number of constraints for the use and management of the territory. They are also subject to various restrictions related to landscape systems and areas, for example in historic centres.
The *Unione dei Comuni della Valle Ustica* (Union) is an inter-municipal entity, a form of local government association in Italy, established by five municipalities in the Ustica Valley area. It functions as the optimal territorial scope for the efficient and effective associated management of municipal services (e.g., waste, accounting, environment) and promotes the progressive integration of administrative action among its member municipalities.
The Unione dei Comuni della Valle Ustica has demonstrated a constant commitment to energy and climate sustainability. Already in 2015, with Union Council Resolution No. 2 of 14/04/2015, it adhered to the Covenant of Mayors for Energy, then drafting in 2016 the BEI (Baseline Emission Inventory), with base year 2008. This commitment was reinforced in 2022 with the adhesion to the new Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, which took place through Union Council Resolution No. 11/2022 of 22/07/2022. During the last months, the five Municipalities have been working on the defining of the PAESC (Action Plan for Sustainable Energy and Climate), availing itself of the technical-scientific support of a temporary grouping of companies appointed by the Metropolitan City of Rome Capital for this service in the municipalities of the territory.
The LIFE-SMART project is not just about updating documents; it's about empowering these municipalities to become even more effective agents of change, leading their communities towards a sustainable and climate-resilient future in line with the urgent demands of our time.

A.2. Please describe how you activated the IMTS in your Pilot area:

- ***Actors involved in the activation of the IMTS***
- ***Procedure followed to activate the IMTS***

Experts selected: profiles, how they have been selected, type of contract established
A metropolitan Mayor Decree approving the **Collaboration Agreement scheme between CMRC and the Union** has been signed (Decree n° 12 of 05/02/2024) and a **Memorandum of Understanding** (MoU) between CMRC and the Union governing the IMTS structure and the commitment of the parties has been signed on the 14/03/2024.

According to the MoU, the IMTS is composed of:

- a representative of CMRC, in charge of the coordination and general supervision of the operation of the IMTS;
- Union technicians, responsible for the operational functioning of the IMTS;
- External experts, offering specialist knowledge in support of the IMTS.

The parties of the MoU committed to collaborate in the organization of awareness and information activities aimed at citizens on energy efficiency and renewable energy, in defining the contents and planning of training activities aimed at technicians and professionals in the field of energy transition, providing where possible for the participation of municipal staff and in consolidating project results beyond the end of Life SMART funding, helping to verify conditions for maintaining the technical structure and participating in meetings with superordinate bodies to identify funding channels and tools to support the energy transition of small municipalities.
Following the signature of the MoU, the procedure to **select and engage the external experts** was launched. In February an expression of interest was published on CMRC portal for the two professional figures identified. The candidates were interviewed and selected and a contract was signed with two experts in March; they started their work on the 1st of April 2024.
Both experts selected are engineers. The first figure selected (Giulio Lo Re) offers a technical support, thanks to his experience in project management and implementation related to renewable energy production, energy upgrading and sustainability. The second expert (Christian Prosia) offers an administrative support, thanks to his knowledge on procurement regulations, administrative law with special reference to public contracting and energy performance contracts.

B. Functioning of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

B.1. Please describe how the IMTS works in your Pilot area:

- ***Role and functions attributed to IMTS***
- ***How did the experts collaborate with the Municipalities***
- ***Did the experts interact also with other actors (citizens, companies, etc.)?***
- ***What has the IMTS produced during the project***

The **Memorandum of Understanding** (MoU) between CMRC and the Union specifies the nature of the IMTS: it does not represent a new legal entity, but a cooperative technical structure, activated in the territory by the beneficiaries and formalised on a voluntary basis, which will operate in support of the local administrations involved, accompanying them towards the energy transition process.
The IMTS is therefore a working group which, with the support of CMRC and CRAS, as beneficiaries of the LIFE Smart Project –carries out incremental work aimed at supporting the target area in its energy transition, particularly in the planning and development of initiatives in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy, in line with the guidelines agreed between the international partners.
The MoU identifies the following figures for the coordination and functioning of the IMTS:

- **The coordinator of the IMTS**, Patrizia Giancotti from CMRC, responsible for the overall supervision of the functioning of the IMTS, ensuring effective coordination and continuous communication between all staff involved in order to guarantee, through constant collaboration between the parties, the achievement of the project's objectives;

- **Two technical staff members of the Union**, Alessandro Angelini and Katia Moltoni, responsible, each within their respective areas of competence, for the operational functioning of the IMTS and the implementation and execution of strategies and actions at the local level. They undertake to work closely with the external experts appointed by CMRC and with the Coordinator in order to ensure that the strategies and actions are implemented effectively, monitoring progress and reporting regularly, in accordance with the objectives set within the LIFE project.
- **The two external experts** selected and contracted by CMRC, working closely with the municipal representatives and the coordinator, providing specialist knowledge in order to develop the activities of the IMTS which, divided into tasks in line with the project, will focus in particular on:
    - building a knowledge base on local energy consumption and needs, renewable energy production potential, and any local opportunities or constraints (T.3.1 Construction database);
    - defining a common vision at Union level, to be approved by the political representatives of the Union of Municipalities of the Ustica Valley (T.3.2 Plan alignment and updating);
    - identifying a specific set of actions that the members of the Union undertake to develop in the medium term, possibly in a joint or coordinated manner (T.3.3 Strategy definition);
    - The in-depth analysis of at least one action, among those identified above, and the definition of the preparatory steps for its implementation, to be launched by the end of the project (T.3.4 Implementation of local initiatives).

Following the activation of the IMTS, operational meetings have been organised periodically with the municipalities of Union and the IMTS components.
A document was drawn up to identify the IMTS activities, divided into tasks in line with the Project, in order to give operational guidelines for the elaboration of the project outputs.

Collaboration/Interactions:

The IMTS organised periodically on-line and in person meetings with mayors and technical staff, both of the Union and of the Municipalities.
It interacted also with private citizens. During the energy literacy activities, in particular the public assemblies, the IMTS had the opportunity to discuss directly with the citizens and to answer to any question/doubt about energy communities.
Moreover, the IMTS supported both citizens and administrators in identifying solutions and possible funding for the realisation of PV implants. The members of the IMTS organised meetings with different actors to evaluate the feasibility of some solutions, such as:

- Lega Coop, to understand the solutions offered to cooperatives interested in creating RECs;
- Cassa Depositi e Prestiiti, one of the main financial institutions of the Italian State, which offers loans to municipalities who want to invest in their energy transition;
- AzzeroCO2, an engineering and consulting firm specialising in sustainability, which collaborates with CMRC to support small municipalities;
- Energy Service companies (ESCO) which could be interested in investing in a PV implant on the territory.

The main results of the IMTS activities have been:

- **A better knowledge of the context**: the IMTS experts elaborated a baseline report collecting data and information on local consumption and needs, framed within the socio-economic and territorial context. This analysis has been included in the common vision defined for T3.2 Plan alignment and updating;
- S**upport to the Union in defining their energy transition strategy**: the experts prepared a document describing possible energy transition pathways for the territory, identifying a portfolio of possible interventions for each one; moreover, an analysis of the administrative and legal possibilities for the extension of the CER of the Municipality of Roccagiovine has been drawn. Their support led to the definition of the local Strategy definition (T3.3);
- **Support to transform the Roccagiovine REC for in the Ustica Valley REC**: the IMTS has followed the transformation of the REC, offering support for the administrative procedures, identifying strategies to extend the adhesion of consumers and producers to the REC and interacting with municipalities and private citizens. An in-depth analysis of the different possible configurations of the REC and of the funding options has been carried out, identifying opportunities and criticalities of each options and enabling the local actors to decide how to proceed even after the end of the project.
- **Elaboration of templates of administrative acts to be used by the Municipalities**: form to adhere to the REC of the Ustica Valley, market survey to identify interested companies and technicians willing to offer their services in the area for the purchase and instalment of RES plants for residential use;
- **Identification and promotion of funding opportunities** related to the energy transition interesting for municipalities and companies; Support to the presentation of an application to the 1st call of European Energy Communities Facility.

B.2. Please evaluate the work/functioning of the IMTS in your Pilot area:

- ***SWOT analysis of the IMTS: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Please indicate also if the involvement of multiple municipalities has been an asset or not***
- ***Level of satisfaction of the Municipalities and other actors who have interacted with the IMTS***
- ***What you would do differently in establishing a new IMTS on your territory / do you have any recommendation to other organisations willing to establish an IMTS?***

SWOT analysis

Strengths:

- **Strengthened inter-municipal cooperation on energy transition**: Life SMART activities and the constitution of the IMTS have led the 5 municipalities involved to collaborate concretely on the issue of energy transition. Having dedicated experts working specifically on this issue has enabled these municipalities to open among them a more in-depth discussion, evaluating concrete short, medium and long term solutions.
- **Increased awareness of shared challenges and opportunities**: the mayors of the municipalities had the opportunity to understand the shared opportunities and challenges of their territories for their energy transition, as well as to identify what kind of actions they can implement at municipal level and at the Union level.
- **Engagement of citizens and local stakeholders**: initiating discussions with mayors and

local authorities also led to interactions with citizens, for example to gain adhesions to the REC and evaluate the realisation of PV plants, opening a discussion among citizens on the issue of energy transition. This process was supported by the energy literacy activities organised by the project.

- **Active role of small municipalities as drivers of the process**: another interesting aspect has been the significant participation from the two smallest municipalities of the Union, which, despite their size, were the driving force behind the project. This demonstrates that involving very small municipalities can also be an asset.
- **Strong local anchorage and recognition of IMTS experts**: the IMTS experts, in especially the technical one, have well established themselves locally: they have been accredited by the municipalities and will be able to continue to offer technical support even after the end of the project.

Weaknesses:

- **Limited technical and human resources within municipalities**: the municipalities have a very limited technical staff (practically one person covering the needs of all the municipalities) and therefore their participation in the IMTS activities has been reduced due to a lack of time. This, for example, has been a problem when collecting data for the baseline analysis (task 3.1).
- **Lack of leadership within the Union**: this was due mainly to the disengagement of Vicovaro, which began following the political turnover of the 2024 elections and was accentuated by the special administration regime established in 2025 (with functions limited to day-to-day operations). As Vicovaro is the biggest and most populous municipality of the Union, these circumstances had impact on the active involvement of the remaining municipalities.
- **Lack of concrete implementation (e.g. PV plants**): no citizen or municipality or company managed to build a PV plant within the time available. This has reduced the final impact of the project.
- **Insufficient critical mass for long-term sustainability**: even aggregated, the five municipalities represent a very small number of citizens and companies, and this limits their attractiveness for potential investors. This adds to their inability to take on debt due to their financial position.

Opportunities:

- **Alignment with EU energy and climate policies and availability of funding opportunities at EU and national level:** the One-Stop-Shop services in the energy sector and the realisation of Renewable Energy Communities are issues that respond to current European priorities (for example with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive and the Energy Efficiency Directive) and the work programme of different European Programmes foresee funding to support them.
- **Potential to build on** partners' **project experience:** the two Life SMART partners in Italy, CmRC and CRAS, have a good experience in presenting and participating in European projects and they could find different opportunities to further support the municipalities of the territory in their energy transition.
- **Interest from additional municipalities in the territory:** different other municipalities of the territory have demonstrated interest in receiving support for their energy transition.

Threats:

- **Uncertainty and reduction of national funding**: While energy transition remains central in the European Commission priorities at short-term, at national level funding for the increase of green energy solutions, implementation of PV plants and the realisation of RECs is decreasing. It is not certain that funding opportunities will be available for the municipalities at short and medium term on these issues.
- **Political changes impacting continuity and commitment**: general political changes in the territories could lead to a stagnation in commitment and interest of the municipalities towards

Involvement of multiple municipalities

Given the small size of the municipalities, it was essential to involve multiple municipalities. To have different municipalities of the same territory exchange and discuss among themselves solutions for the energy transition was very interesting and was definitively an added-value to the project.
However, involving additional larger municipalities would have been more useful, as it would have allowed a wider community to benefit from the project activities and ensured that the project had a greater impact at the local level.

Level of satisfaction of municipalities and other actors

The overall level of satisfaction among municipalities was good, as evidenced by the unanimous approval of the Reference Framework for a shared vision on energy transition and the Strategy for the activation of a Renewable Energy Community of the Municipalities of the Ustica Valley.
While both municipal staff and stakeholders were satisfied with the project support, the main criticality they express was the lack of direct funding to implement the defined strategy. The project helped municipalities to identify and possibly obtain funding to carry out the activities designed together, but the results of this effort will be visible at medium term and after the end of the project, so the actors have the sentiment at the moment that the action is missing something.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the effective implementation of an IMTS:

- **Ensure that support for municipalities is always accompanied by engagement with citizens**, for example through the organization of energy literacy activities such as public meetings and workshops in schools. This facilitates consensus building, enabling municipalities to have an informed and aware community that can support their energy transition policies.
- **Involve a larger number of municipalities**, so that the physical and economic effort can be directed towards a larger number of citizens.
- **Ensure that municipalities maintain the capacity to reflect on innovative issues and create synergies** even without the support of a European project, going beyond day-to-day administration, and to stimulate and maintain citizens' curiosity about energy transition issues.

C. Sustainability of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

C.1. Will the IMTS created in your Pilot area be maintained after Life SMART project? If yes, please describe how:

- ***typology of services provided***
- ***how they will be provided***
- ***To whom they will be provided (only municipalities or also citizens; other municipalities than those involved in SMART). How will you involve these target groups?***
- ***Will you have experts to carry out the services? Will they be internal or external staff? If external: what kind of contract will they have? Are they the same experts who have been involved in Life SMART project?***
- ***What are the main risks of the IMTS configuration that you have set up?***
- ***What is the timeframe envisaged for the provision of IMTS services?***

If not, please explain:

- ***Why you took this decision and why you estimate that the IMTS would not be sustainable on your territory.***
- ***The main criticalities that you had to face and whether they were foreseen at the beginning of the project.***
- ***If you will implement an alternative solution to the IMTS, in order to use the results of the project.***

While the IMTS as it has been structured within the Life SMART project will not be maintained after the end of the project, the services that it provided will be continued and even extended.
First of all, the internal staff of CmRC will continue to support the municipalities of the metropolitan area in their accession to the Covenant of Mayors and in their energy transition in general, also thanks to the know-how and the tools developed during Life SMART project. As the Covenant of Mayors' Territorial Coordinator since 2009, it assists local authorities with the process of joining and registering on the Covenant platform, supports them in collecting data for the Baseline Emission Inventory, and helps them draft their SEAPs. Regarding support for accession to the Covenant of Mayors and the preparation of the SECAP, CmRC will maintain and update a dedicated website containing not only an archive of resolutions and documents produced but also all activities related to energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. This support also takes the form of providing information and updates on potential funding sources, as well as national and European calls for proposals, via emails and/or news on the dedicated website.
Moreover, CmRC has decided to extend the support regarding the creation of Renewable Energy Communities to all the municipalities and citizens of its territory. To that end, two parallel strategies are being implemented:

- CmRC has committed, through a letter of support, to **promote the activities of the RENOSS project within the metropolitan area**, believing that the synergy between the Life SMART and RENOSS projects is a key element in the process of developing plans and actions for decarbonization and the expansion of sustainable energy. The RENOSS project, funded by the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, aims to support the development of renewable energy communities and shared energy through the establishment of One-Stop Shops (OSS) to promote renewable energy communities (REC) as well as energy efficiency and security. The RENOSS project has a duration of 36 months. The decision to actively support the activities of RENOSS project, instead of creating a new service, aimed at enhancing what already exists and avoiding duplication of activities.
- CmRC is also signing a contract with AESS - Agenzia per l'Energia e lo Sviluppo Sostenibile (Agency for Energy and Sustainable Development) for the **development of specific**

activities for the promotion of Renewable Energy Comunities covering two years (2026-2027). The contract foresees the following activities:

- Technical-administrative support in the CER context: Setup and management support for a metropolitan energy information center / One-Stop Shop (OSS) serving municipalities and citizens;
- Preliminary Master Plan – Technical and Economic Feasibility Studies for the CER's Power Generation Facilities;
- Legal and administrative assistance for the establishment of the legal entity associated with CER.

Typology of services offered

Services offered by the OSS on CERS:

- Legal advice: information about administrative procedures, identification of essential aspects to create a REC, revision of documents;
- Technical support: mapping of existing renewable energy plants, support in the drafting of business plans, check of financial offers;
- Support in the publication of Calls for interest and evaluation of applications;
- Support for administrative procedures (for example registration to GSE);
- Information about funding opportunities;
- Matchmaking activities (between producers and consumers);
- Support for the management of RECs;
- Awareness-raising activities and participation in events on the territory;

Additional services offered to municipalities:

- Preliminary Master Plan – Technical and Economic Feasibility Studies for CER Generation Facilities:
  - Preliminary meeting with municipal administrators and representatives/founding members to define the objectives related to the establishment of a CER;
  - Identification of primary substations and mapping of the target area for the creation of a Renewable Energy Community;
  - Estimation of installable capacity and plant productivity for up to 15 sites
  - Analysis of electrical profiles to determine the expected share of self-consumption of energy from renewable sources and the anticipated level of sharing
  - Preliminary economic feasibility of the investment, through a cost-benefit analysis, taking into account the investment, operating, and maintenance costs of the plants, as well as the benefits from self-consumption, energy feed-in to the grid, and available incentives
- Legal and administrative assistance for the establishment of the legal entity associated with the Renewable Energy Community (REC):
  - Administrative and legal assistance in preparing the documentation required to establish one or more Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) in accordance with current regulations.
  - Support in preparing the legal and administrative documents necessary for the establishment of the REC (articles of association, articles of incorporation, regulations for the distribution of the incentive tariff, management mandate, expression of interest in participation by citizens, expressions of interest in making the facility available and subsequent contract);

How the services will be provided

The services of the OSS in RECs will be provided through:

- A digital helpdesk offering advice via email or virtual consultation
- A physical helpdesk available by appointment
- The organisation of public events
- The RENOSS website which provides information and a chatbox to all end users.

Target users

The OSS will offer services to citizens, small and medium-sized enterprises, third sector organisations and public authorities in the metropolitan area.
CmRC will widely disseminate information about the OSS to all the municipalities of its territory. Moreover, at least 2 public events will be organised to disseminate information about the OSS and about RECs in general.

Experts

Beside the expertise of CmRC internal staff, additional expertise will be provided by AESS.

Risks

The main identified risks are:

- Overload of work for the staff of CmRC, reducing its capacity to promote the OSS and to support municipalities;
- Lack of available funding for small municipalities, reducing their capacity to effectively create RECs on their territory;
- Political instability, which can have an impact of medium-term projects which require strong political engagement.

Timeframe

The agreement with AESS has a duration of 2 years (2026/2027). The collaboration within RENOSS project will last till the end of RENOSS project (2025/2027).

C.2. How will you fund these services?
Describe the certain and possible source of funding and the timeframe foreseen.

Part of the services foreseen will be delivered by CmRC internal staff and do not require additional funding.
The contract with AESS is being funded by internal funds of CmRC.

C.3. How will you consolidate the training programs in your territory?
Describe how you will ensure in the mid-term a long lasting training programme for the staff of your municipalities and the Memorandum of Understanding or other agreement that you have/you will sign with other institutions.

The staff of the Valle Ustica municipalities will continue to receive information and training on energy issues through several key channels. First, they will benefit from the AESS activities described above and the ongoing support of the CMRC in its role as coordinator of the Covenant of Mayors.

Secondly, the request for GSE tutorship (the national energy services agency), originally initiated under the LIFE SMART project to support Renewable Energy Communities, will be renewed. This tutorship provides local authorities with access to shared training paths on the energy transition, as well as a tailored assistance program focused on: Interventions in public building stock; Public investments; Local energy planning.
Finally, both CMRC and CRAS will continue to keep municipal staff informed about upcoming training opportunities and events via the LifeSMART mailing list

Portuguese target area – edited by Areanatejo

A. Activation of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

A.1. Please describe shortly your Pilot area (number and dimension of Municipalities, main characteristics, etc.)

The Portuguese pilot area of the LIFE-SMART Project is located in the Alto Alentejo region and includes six small and medium-sized municipalities: Alter do Chão, Avis, Castelo de Vide, Marvão, Monforte and Sousel.
This is a predominantly rural territory, characterised by low population density, geographic dispersion and limited internal technical capacity within local authorities, particularly in the fields of energy, climate and strategic planning. At the same time, the territory presents a high potential for the implementation of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy solutions, especially in public buildings.
This context justified the creation of a supramunicipal technical structure, capable of providing coordinated, specialised and continuous support to municipalities, strengthening their capacity to address energy and climate transition challenges.

A.2. Please describe how you activated the IMTS in your Pilot area:

- ***Actors involved in the activation of the IMTS***
- ***Procedure followed to activate the IMTS***
- ***Experts selected: profiles, how they have been selected, type of contract established***

Actors involved

The IMTS, designated at national level as the **Intermunicipal Technical Structure (ETIM)**, was formally activated through the signing of a **Cooperation Protocol**, involving:

- **AREANATejo – Regional Energy and Environment Agency of North Alentejo and Tagus**, as promoter, coordinator and entity responsible for technical articulation;
- The **six pilot municipalities**, represented by formally appointed technical focal points;
- **External experts** from the **Polytechnic Institute of Portalegre**, providing specialised technical support.

Procedure followed

The activation of the IMTS was carried out through the **formalisation of a cooperation agreement**, which establishes the objectives, operating principles and commitments of the parties involved, with a view to operationalising the ETIM within the framework of the LIFE-SMART Project.
The protocol defines:

- The objective of activating and operationalising the ETIM as an intermunicipal technical support structure;
- The voluntary and collaborative nature of the partnership;
- The sharing of human resources, technical knowledge and organisational capacity;
- The duration of the agreement, aligned with the LIFE-SMART project implementation period (until March 2026).

The protocol also includes a detailed task schedule, structuring the ETIM's activities throughout the project and defining responsibilities and coordination moments.

Experts selected

- **Profiles**: experts in energy and environment, energy and climate planning, PAESC development, emission inventories and climate risk and vulnerability assessment.
- **Selection**: external experts were designated by the Polytechnic Institute of Portalegre, while AREANATejo ensured overall technical coordination and integration with municipalities.
- **Type of engagement**: collaboration within the LIFE-SMART project framework, complementing the work of AREANATejo's internal technical team, without direct employment ties to municipalities.

B. Functioning of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

B.1. Please describe how the IMTS works in your Pilot area:

- ***Role and functions attributed to IMTS***
- ***How did the experts collaborate with the Municipalities***
- ***Did the experts interact also with other actors (citizens, companies, etc.)?***
- ***What has the IMTS produced during the project***

Role and functions of the IMTS

According to the Cooperation Protocol, the IMTS/ETIM operates as a **technical coordination and support structure**, with the following main functions:

- Supporting the preparation and updating of Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAP/PAESC);
- Developing baseline emission inventories and climate risk and vulnerability assessments;
- Supporting the definition and structuring of priority energy transition measures;
- Promoting coordination between municipalities, experts and regional entities;
- Contributing to the technical capacity-building of municipal staff.

Collaboration with municipalities

Collaboration between the IMTS and municipalities was based on a close and continuous relationship, materialised through:

- Regular technical coordination meetings;
- Joint work on data collection, analysis and validation;
- Direct technical support to municipal focal points;
- Iterative review and improvement processes for strategic documents.

Each municipality appointed an **official technical interlocutor**, ensuring clear and effective communication channels.

Interaction with other actors

In addition to municipalities, the IMTS interacted with:

- Higher education institutions and external experts;

- Regional and national entities;
- Local communities, through awareness-raising actions and workshops foreseen in the project.

Outputs produced

During the project, the IMTS produced:

- Updated PAESCs aligned with the Covenant of Mayors commitments;
- Emission inventories and climate risk and vulnerability analyses;
- Implementation plans for priority measures;
- Training and capacity-building sessions;
- A final report with conclusions and guidelines for the sustainability of the structure.

B.2. Please evaluate the work/functioning of the IMTS in your Pilot area:

- ***SWOT analysis of the IMTS: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Please indicate also if the involvement of multiple municipalities has been an asset or not***
- ***Level of satisfaction of the Municipalities and other actors who have interacted with the IMTS***
- ***What you would do differently in establishing a new IMTS on your territory / do you have any recommendation to other organisations willing to establish an IMTS?***

SWOT analysis

Strengths

- Formal activation through a signed cooperation protocol;
- Centralised technical coordination by AREANATejo;
- Strong territorial knowledge and proximity to municipalities;
- Efficient and replicable supramunicipal approach.

Weaknesses

- Limited human resources in relation to growing demand;
- Initial dependence on project-based funding.

Opportunities

- Growing interest from additional municipalities, particularly regarding PAESC updates;
- Integration of the IMTS within the AREANATejo Energy Desk;
- Strong alignment with national and European energy and climate policies.

Threats

- Medium- and long-term financial sustainability;
- Increased demand without proportional reinforcement of the technical team.

The involvement of multiple municipalities clearly proved to be an asset, enabling knowledge sharing, economies of scale and greater territorial impact.

Level of satisfaction

The level of satisfaction among municipalities was high, as demonstrated by:

- Active engagement throughout the project;
- Positive feedback regarding the quality of technical support;
- Expressed interest in maintaining the structure after the end of the project.

Lessons learned and recommendations

For future IMTS initiatives, it is recommended to:

- Formalise cooperation through clear agreements;
- Embed IMTS structures within existing regional organisations;
- Invest early in internal capacity-building;
- Define sustainability mechanisms from the outset.

C. Sustainability of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

C.1. Will the IMTS created in your Pilot area be maintained after Life SMART project?
If yes, please describe how:

- ***typology of services provided***
- ***how they will be provided***
- ***To whom they will be provided (only municipalities or also citizens; other municipalities than those involved in SMART). How will you involve these target groups?***
- ***Will you have experts to carry out the services? Will they be internal or external staff? If external: what kind of contract will they have? Are they the same experts who have been involved in Life SMART project?***
- ***What are the main risks of the IMTS configuration that you have set up?***
- ***What is the timeframe envisaged for the provision of IMTS services?***

If not, please explain:

- ***Why you took this decision and why you estimate that the IMTS would not be sustainable on your territory.***
- ***The main criticalities that you had to face and whether they were foreseen at the beginning of the project.***
- ***If you will implement an alternative solution to the IMTS, in order to use the results of the project.***

C.2. How will you fund these services?
Describe the certain and possible source of funding and the timeframe foreseen.

Yes, the IMTS will be maintained**.** Although the Cooperation Protocol is formally valid until the end of the LIFE-SMART Project (March 2026), the **mission and functions of the IMTS will continue**, ensured by **AREANATejo** through the **Energy Desk (Espaço Energia)**.

Type of services

- Technical support for the update and implementation of PAESCs;

- Advisory services on energy efficiency and renewable energy;
- Support for funding applications;
- Technical and organisational capacity-building for municipalities.

How services will be provided

- Direct and continuous technical assistance;
- Centralised support through the Energy Desk;
- Ongoing coordination with municipal technical teams.

Target groups

- Municipalities involved in the LIFE-SMART Project;
- Additional municipalities within AREANATejo's area of intervention;
- On a selective basis, citizens and other local stakeholders, via the Energy Desk.

Experts involved

- Services will be delivered mainly by AREANATejo's internal technical staff;

Main risks

- Overload of the technical team;
- Dependence on external funding sources.

Timeframe

- Continuous service provision, integrated into AREANATejo's permanent mission.

C.3. How will you consolidate the training programs in your territory?
Describe how you will ensure in the mid-term a long lasting training programme for the staff of your municipalities and the Memorandum of Understanding or other agreement that you have/you will sign with other institutions.

The consolidation of training and capacity-building activities will be ensured through:

- Integration of training into AREANATejo's regular activities;
- Continued technical support via the IMTS/Energy Desk;
- Establishment of cooperation agreements and memoranda of understanding with higher education and other institutions;
- Capitalisation of the internal know-how acquired under the LIFE-SMART Project.

The internalisation of this know-how allows AREANATejo to ensure **medium and long-term continuous training and technical support**, without dependence on new external contracts, reinforcing the sustainability and robustness of the IMTS model in the territory.

Spanish target area – edited by FAMP/U-Space

A. Activation of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

A.1. Please describe shortly your Pilot area (number and dimension of Municipalities, main characteristics, etc.)

The region of La Loma Occidental, located in the **centre of the province of Jaén** (Spain), within the region of Andalusia, includes eight municipalities: **Baeza, Begíjar, Canena, Ibros, Lupión, Rus, Torreblascopedro and Villatorres**. Except for the municipality of Baeza, which has 15,773 inhabitants, the rest of the municipalities are considerably smaller, with populations ranging from 830 inhabitants in Lupión to 4,293 in Villatorres.
The pilot area has a total of 34,031 inhabitants. This region occupies a strategic location between two larger cities (Úbeda and Linares) and is characterised by a rural environment and agricultural landscape, dominated by olive cultivation, which is a fundamental pillar of its economy.

Municipality	Area (km2)	Distance to Jaén (km)	Inhabitants (2024)
Baeza	192,63	45,1	15.677
Begíjar	47,08	52,3	2.947
Canena	14,32	51,4	1.761
Ibros	55,76	46,7	2.764
Lupión	73	23	806
Rus	61,38	35,7	3.407
Torreblascopedro	24,31	42	2.402
Villatorres	42,76	41,5	4.267

Furthermore, all the municipalities of La Loma Occidental demonstrate a strong institutional commitment to environmental sustainability and the fight against climate change. All of these municipalities are signatories to the Covenant of Mayors, and Baeza is also a member of the Spanish Network of Cities for Climate. In the area of strategic planning, the municipalities of Baeza, Canena, Ibros, Rus, and Villatorres have developed in 2020 a Master Plan aimed at defining a common Smart Territory model, which incorporates specific actions for the improvement and protection of the environment.

A.2. Please describe how you activated the IMTS in your Pilot area:

- ***Actors involved in the activation of the IMTS***
- ***Procedure followed to activate the IMTS***
- ***Experts selected: profiles, how they have been selected, type of contract established***

Actors involved in the activation of the IMTS

Various actors have participated in the activation of the IMTS by signing a collaborative agreement. The IMTS has been set up as a collaborative and voluntary structure comprising:

- The town councils within La Loma Occidental and the **Autonomous Local Authority of El Mármol** (included in the municipal district of Rus),
- The **Provincial Council of Jaén**,
- The Andalusian Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FAMP) as the coordinating entity,
- U-SPACE ESPAÑA S.L., as a support entity for coordination,
- EUROVÉRTICE CONSULTORES S.L., contracted by FAMP as technical assistance for the Life-SMART project in energy matters.

Each signatory entity appointed two representatives who formed part of the IMTS, attending and participating in its **meetings and working sessions**, and who were considered members of the IMTS. Specifically, the signatory local public entities appointed at least one person responsible for policy and one person who is a technical staff technician from the local public entity.
The **coordination** of the IMTS has been carried out by **FAMP** as a partner in the Life-SMART project and responsible for the development of its activities. As the coordinating entity of the IMTS, FAMP ensured the achievement of the objectives of the Life-SMART project and of the IMTS itself, ensuring that all parties involved worked in harmony to achieve these goals. In addition, it organised and convened IMTS's online and face-to-face meetings and facilitated ongoing communication and effective collaboration between IMTS members and other key actors necessary for the implementation of the project.
This work was carried out with the **support and collaboration** of **U-SPACE ESPAÑA S.L.**, which is also a partner organization in the Life-SMART project and coordinated various activities at the transnational level, especially those related to project communication.
On the other hand, the **experts hired** for this purpose have played a dynamic role in raising awareness and building capacity for the IMTS and the participating municipalities. In this way, they have provided support by designing and delivering training for IMTS members and designing various energy literacy activities. In this regard, the expert technical support contracted by FAMP for the development of the Life-SMART project in Loma Occidental was implemented by **EUROVÉRTICE CONSULTORES S.L.**, which has experts with proven qualifications and skills in energy matters. The experts provided technical guidelines and specialized advice to IMTS members and, thanks to their specialized knowledge, guided IMTS in the transition to more sustainable energy in Loma Occidental, playing a key role in identifying energy solutions tailored to the needs of the region. This has resulted in strategic energy documents for the region, which they designed and provided technical contributions for their development. Their technical and/or scientific knowledge is a valuable resource for the success of local energy initiatives.
Furthermore, at the regional administration level, two entities of the **Regional Government of Andalusia** have actively participated in the IMTS: the **Climate Change Andalusian Office** and the **Andalusian Energy Agency**. Both entities have actively supported the IMTS. In addition, the Provincial Council of Jaén, as a member of IMTS, has actively involved its energy department, participating in all the meetings organised.

Procedure followed to activate the IMTS

Following the signing of the Agreement for the creation and activation of the IMTS, an intensive

training plan was designed to facilitate the training of IMTS members. This plan was structured around four modules covering topics such as fundamental knowledge about energy, the energy transition in municipal assets, financing tools for renewable energies, and the adaptation of territories to climate change.
In addition, IMTS members actively participated in various **participatory meetings**, some in person and others online, all with the aim of advancing the region's energy transition.
In July 2024, the first online meeting was organised to present the Life-SMART project, and it was already clear that the fundamental objective was to work together on the energy transition for La Loma Occidental. In October 2024, a participatory workshop was held in Baeza, focused on identifying joint actions for the energy transition. In May 2025, the creation of a common Action Plan for the municipalities of the region was addressed in a participatory session organised in Torreblascopedro. On this occasion, the work focused on defining an inter-municipal strategy, with the aim of identifying common priority lines on which to structure a joint action plan. In October 2025, a participatory online workshop was organised to outline the objectives and main lines of action of the joint strategy. The results of the workshop highlighted the need to strengthen collaborative governance in the region and to obtain adequate technical and economic resources. On 10 February 2026, a meeting of IMTS members was held in Rus, where the joint strategy was officially presented and a protocol was signed in which all IMTS members committed to continuing to work together within the framework of IMTS and to seek funding so that it can continue to offer services and implement the actions set out in the joint strategy.
In November 2024, a process was also launched to **collect data on energy consumption and emissions**, which included not only requesting and collecting data provided by local councils, but also identifying open databases from regional (Andalusia) and national (Spain) governments, as well as a database (Datadis) from energy suppliers in Spain. All the information collected was used to publish a geodatabase on a website with information on energy consumption and emissions in the municipalities of the pilot area, which can be consulted through a GIS viewer (georeferenced map).
Furthermore, it should be noted that the IMTS has been actively involved in **energy literacy initiatives** carried out in various municipalities. These actions were organized related to energy saving, sustainable mobility and the promotion of renewable energies. Specifically, three different types of activities were developed.

1. The setting up of **nine physical points with informative energy literacy materials** in all the municipalities of the pilot area.
2. An **online energy literacy campaign** through FAMP's social networks.
3. The organisation of **four energy literacy workshops** aimed at different target groups, including children, parents and senior citizens.

Experts selected: profiles, how they have been selected, type of contract established

The recruitment process was carried out through an **open public tender**. Five companies submitted bids, and the awarded bidder was EUROVÉRTICE CONSULTORES S.L. with whom a **multi-year contract** was signed for the provision of services for the duration of the Life SMART, thus providing the two experts required by the project.
Experts have worked with and supported FAMP to boost the IMTS, provide technical capacities and skills, develop the geodatabase, promote energy literacy activities and assist in the design of the joint strategy, with the aim of advancing the energy transition. The profiles are engineering-based, with a master's degree or specialisation in the field of energy and extensive experience in advising municipalities on energy transition processes, notably in the Covenant of Mayors and in the

development of Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAP).

B. Functioning of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

B.1. Please describe how the IMTS works in your Pilot area:

- ***Role and functions attributed to IMTS***
- ***How did the experts collaborate with the Municipalities***
- ***Did the experts interact also with other actors (citizens, companies, etc.)?***
- ***What has the IMTS produced during the project***

Role and functions attributed to IMTS

- Maintaining fluid communication between the IMTS members to achieve effective coordination. Establishing a political and technical interconnection channel that promotes the smooth running of the project and maximises the return on resources and results.
- Participation in meetings and working sessions organised within the framework of IMTS.
- Attendance at training and/or capacity-building activities planned for IMTS members.
- Maximum cooperation, collaboration and facilitation for all initiatives and activities that enable the consolidation of the local ecosystem, implemented within the framework of the Life SMART project for La Loma Occidental, in terms of good governance.
- Provision of information necessary for the proper functioning of the Life-SMART project initiatives and activities.
- Provision of material, human and technical resources available to the IMTS members to support the activities and initiatives planned by the Life-SMART project in the municipalities of La Loma Occidental.
- Publicity and dissemination of the Life-SMART project, its activities, initiatives and results.
- Support and cooperation for the consolidation of the IMTS beyond the duration of the Life-SMART project.
- Collaboration in meeting the agreed deadlines for the Life-SMART project activities to be carried out in La Loma Occidental.
- Collaborate to obtain funding for the implementation of the projects defined in the common strategy.

More specific information on how the IMTS works can be found in the previous section related to the procedure followed to activate the IMTS.

How did the experts collaborate with the Municipalities

The role of the experts in the IMTS is based on the following points:

- Facilitating IMTS meetings, designing participatory workshops for each one in order to advance the different phases of the project.
- Identifying the training needs of IMTS members. Designing training modules and their content.
- Delivering training to IMTS members and other stakeholders invited by the municipalities.
- Providing specific advice to municipalities on aspects related to the energy transition.

- Data collection, design and implementation of the geodatabase
- Coordinating and designing a joint strategy for the energy transition in La Loma Occidental.
- Identifying possible lines of funding for the development of projects related to the energy transition.
- Designing a sustainability plan for the IMTS beyond the Life SMART project.

Did the experts interact also with other actors (citizens, companies, etc.)?

Yes, the experts have also provided support to stakeholders who have attended the training courses. In addition, they have participated in energy literacy initiatives with children, families, women groups and senior citizens.

What has the IMTS produced during the project

During the project, the IMTS has contributed to the **consolidation of a shared understanding of common needs**, which have been clearly articulated and structured within the strategic document developed by FAMP as a project partner, with the close collaboration of the local public entities that make up the IMTS.

IMTS's work has focused particularly on the production of the **Joint Strategy for the energy transition of La Loma Occidental** (Task 3.3). This strategy has resulted in a structured, detailed and comprehensive document on the set of needs analysed by the IMTS. The strategy is a comprehensive action plan, not focusing on just one specific action, although **priority** has been given **to those actions that are most likely to obtain funding** in calls for grants and short/medium-term aid. This joint strategy also includes the consolidation of the IMTS as one of its actions.

Likewise, within the framework of the IMTS, a **Protocol** (task 3.2) linked to the joint strategy has been drawn up and signed by all the legal representatives, in which all IMTS members undertake to work together on the development of the planned actions and the consolidation of the IMTS (task 4.1). In other words, by signing a single document (memorandum), the objectives of tasks 3.2 and 4.1 are fulfilled.

Thanks to the activation and operation of the IMTS, a **training programme** has been developed with four courses and materials that are available. In addition, IMTS members have set up **information points with energy literacy materials**.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the launch of the **Energy Consumption Information Platform database** for the municipalities of La Loma Occidental de Jaén. This database serves as a tool for stakeholders in the region and the public to access data on energy consumption, highlighting information on total energy consumption and emissions.

B.2. Please evaluate the work/functioning of the IMTS in your Pilot area:

- ***SWOT analysis of the IMTS: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Please indicate also if the involvement of multiple municipalities has been an asset or not***
- ***Level of satisfaction of the Municipalities and other actors who have interacted with the IMTS***
- ***What you would do differently in establishing a new IMTS on your territory / do you have any recommendation to other organisations willing to establish an IMTS?***

SWOT analysis

Strengths

- A **cohesive team** that is highly motivated to work together.
- **High awareness** of the need for an energy transition and the added value of addressing the process at the regional level.
- **High level of commitment** to the members of the IMTS.
- **Multidisciplinary approach** in the technical field and participation of elected representatives.

Weaknesses

- **Lack of resources (and time)** in such small municipalities.
- **Need for ongoing training**.
- Due to the small size of some municipalities, some members (municipal technical staff specially) **work part-time**, which limits their attendance at some meetings.
- Although in general terms the **involvement of local authorities** has been high, it has **not been uniform**, with some local authorities being more active and involved than others.
- In the very short term (first three months of 2026), no specific grants or fundings schemes are expected from the competent institutions or administrations. It will be necessary to wait until the second half of the year.

Opportunities

- The energy transition and climate change are issues that receive **strong political support** at local, regional, national and European level.
- The energy transition is a political **priority for the EU** and its Member States.
- Possibilities for financing projects related to the energy transition.
- Territory with great potential for the use of **renewable energies**.
- Link the IMTS to the services offered by other public administrations such as the Provincial Council of Jaén or the Andalusian Regional Government through the Andalusian Energy Agency.

Threats

- Territory with a tendency towards **depopulation**, which limits the technical resources of municipalities.
- **High investments required** for the energy transition, which is a problem in the case of such small municipalities.
- **Changes in political representatives and local priorities** that could occur in the coming months, with national and regional elections scheduled and municipal elections in 2027. In addition, these overlapping election periods sometimes lead to initiatives being put on hold, only to be reactivated after the elections.

Level of satisfaction of the Municipalities and other actors who have interacted with the IMTS

The level of satisfaction among municipalities is high. Hence the high level of participation by both technical and political representatives in the meetings that have been held. The other stakeholders involved, mainly representatives of the regional government of Andalusia, have always been

enthusiastic about the work carried out by the IMTS. Finally, the energy literacy workshops were also well attended by the groups invited.

- **What you would do differently in establishing a new IMTS on your territory / do you have any recommendation to other organisations willing to establish an IMTS?**

Having resources available to fund actions would be a boost to the IMTS's work. It could also be beneficial to reward IMTS members' participation in some way. Maybe, identifying a pilot area with more nascent energy initiatives than the selected area would have allowed work on creating the IMTS to begin from a slightly more prepared and less basic foundation.

C. Sustainability of the IMTS in your Pilot Area

C.1. Will the IMTS created in your Pilot area be maintained after Life SMART project?
If yes, please describe how:

- ***typology of services provided***
- ***how they will be provided***
- ***To whom they will be provided (only municipalities or also citizens; other municipalities than those involved in SMART). How will you involve these target groups?***
- ***Will you have experts to carry out the services? Will they be internal or external staff? If external: what kind of contract will they have? Are they the same experts who have been involved in Life SMART project?***
- ***What are the main risks of the IMTS configuration that you have set up?***
- ***What is the timeframe envisaged for the provision of IMTS services?***

If not, please explain:

- ***Why you took this decision and why you estimate that the IMTS would not be sustainable on your territory.***
- ***The main criticalities that you had to face and whether they were foreseen at the beginning of the project.***
- ***If you will implement an alternative solution to the IMTS, in order to use the results of the project.***

Yes, the IMTS will be maintained but will have to be **adapted to the circumstances** we will encounter once the Life SMART project is completed, which, in general terms, correspond to the SWOT analysis provided in the previous section.
The local public authorities of the IMTS have shown a strong interest in moving towards a more sustainable energy model and share the conviction that collaboration and shared management are fundamental elements in addressing current challenges in the field of energy and sustainability. They therefore recognise the essential role played by the IMTS as a tool for energy transition and territorial governance.
For this reason, local public authorities are keen to promote the continuity of the IMTS. The IMTS will continue to be an **instrument of institutional and technical cooperation and coordination**, strengthening existing collaboration between local administrations and ensuring consistency in decisions taken at regional level on energy matters.
This consolidation and continuation of the IMTS is expressed in the Protocol (Memorandum) for

collaboration on local governance in the energy transition of La Loma Occidental, with the aim of maintaining cooperation based on the strategic lines adopted in the joint strategy for the energy transition of La Loma Occidental.
Therefore, the IMTS will focus its institutional and technical coordination and cooperation efforts on energy transition and on seeking funding opportunities that will enable it to implement the actions identified in the joint strategy and to provide specific services to the IMTS.
Until funding is identified and accessed, some of the services offered to IMTS under the Life SMART project may be aligned with the services offered by the **Provincial Council of Jaén** and the **Andalusian Energy Agency of the Regional Government of Andalusia**. To this end, the IMTS will work to **identify the services and opportunities** offered by these two public administrations (provincial and regional) and will make them known, especially to the municipalities that form part of the IMTS.

Typology of services provided

The IMTS will continue to provide a forum for debate, coordination and cooperation to promote the shared vision of energy transition in the pilot area. It will also **identify funding opportunities** to enable the development of joint energy transition and climate change projects for the region. To this end, it will use the joint strategy developed within the framework of the Life SMART project as a reference document.
The IMTS will also be a space for **advocating for the pilot area** on issues related to inter-municipal mobility or the scaling up of renewable energy projects that take advantage of economies of scale. In addition, the IMTS networking allows for a highly desirable **exchange of information and knowledge** in the process.
In addition, the IMTS will **identify, promote and request** the **services** of the Provincial Council of Jaén, as a member of the IMTS, and the Andalusian Energy Agency, an entity that has collaborated in the development and implementation of the project. These entities offer technical support and advisory services to municipalities at the provincial (Jaén) and regional (Andalusia) levels. In addition, these entities are expected to launch calls for grants and subsidies for the development of energy transition and climate change mitigation projects for the region.

How services will be provided

Through the **meetings**, especially online, that will continue to be held by the IMTS. In addition, IMTS will seek to benefit from the services offered by the Provincial Council of Jaén and the Andalusian Energy Agency of the Regional Government of Andalusia. These services fall within the competences of these entities and are specified below.
The **Provincial Council of Jaén** is responsible for providing legal, economic and technical assistance and cooperation to the municipalities in its province, especially those with limited economic and management capacity (municipalities with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants). Through its Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Environment and Climate Change, carries out actions in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy through its OPTIMIZA Programme, aimed at local councils in the province. It therefore offers technical assistance and advice to the small municipalities of the province of Jaén (including the municipalities of La Loma Occidental, Life-SMART pilot area) for the development of energy policies that reduce CO2 emissions, comply with the Covenant of Mayors, promote sustainable energy management and efficient use in municipal buildings, take advantage of renewable resources and raise public awareness.
The Provincial Council of Jaén, as a member of IMTS, will make a special effort to provide information, updates and promotion of the use of services provided to small municipalities in the

areas of energy transition and climate change, with a view to benefiting the municipalities of La Loma Occidental.

The **Andalusian Energy Agency**'s mission is to promote the implementation of a new sustainable energy model in Andalusia from a threefold perspective (economic, environmental, and quality/safety), offering its services to society (citizens, businesses, local public entities) to contribute to the gradual transition towards a carbon-neutral economy in the fight against climate change. Specifically, the Andalusian Energy Agency will offer provincial services through the future **Local Energy Transformation Offices of Andalusia** (OLTEAN, for its acronym in Spanish). The objectives and functions of these offices include providing advice on incentives to promote efficient energy use in Andalusia, their management procedures and technical and administrative requirements, disseminating information on incentives and opportunities to citizens, businesses and local administrations, organising workshops, conferences and seminars, as well as providing specific training on collective self-consumption and solar and energy communities for technicians who provide advisory and dissemination services, so that they can acquire the necessary knowledge on initiatives in this area. These offices will be launched during 2026 (the exact date is unknown at this time) as part of the Roadmap for the development of collective self-consumption and solar and energy communities in Andalusia. One OLTEAN office will be established per province, meaning that the province of Jaén will have its own provincial OLTEAN office, which will serve the municipalities in the province, including the eight municipalities of La Loma Occidental.

IMTS members will work to maintain the close collaboration with the Andalusian Energy Agency that has been established during the development of the Life-SMART project, particularly through the provincial OLTEAN in Jaén when it is finally established.

Involvement of target groups

The services mentioned in the previous section will be provided to participating municipalities in IMTS.

With regard to the services provided by the Provincial Council of Jaén, these are offered to all small municipalities in the province, including those in the pilot area.

In the case of OLTEAN, it is planned that services will also be offered to citizens and businesses

At present, there is no funding available to continue hiring experts as has been done within the framework of Life SMART. Therefore, the IMTS will work with the technical staff of the different entities that form part of it and will seek funding to enable expert technical assistance in energy matters.

As for the services provided by the Provincial Council of Jaén and the OLTEAN office in Jaén, once operational, they will be offered by the staff of these organisations. It is therefore expected that the work of the IMTS will be focused on identifying and promoting the services offered by these entities for the benefit of the IMTS municipalities and contributing to the joint strategy developed within the framework of Life SMART.

Main risks

The main risk identified is related to the lack of funding for needs and actions, which prevents the IMTS from operating in a similar way to how it has been operating within the framework of the Life SMART project.

In addition, the difficulty of applying for grants and subsidies, the possible insufficiency of funding or subsidies, technical difficulties and bureaucracy could also pose a risk to the development of the actions planned in the joint strategy. Similarly, the services offered by the Provincial Council of Jaén and the OLTEAN Office in Jaén will not be exclusive to the IMTS municipalities but will be shared

with other municipalities beneficiaries in the province, meaning that the fluidity and immediacy of the services cannot be guaranteed. Furthermore, it should be noted that the OLTEAN in Jaén has not yet been established, although it is expected to be up and running during 2026.
Other risks include: 1) a lack of leadership or dynamism within the IMTS, given that its members are mainly small municipalities with a lack of human and economic resources that have to deal with day-to-day management issues, 2) possible changes in political representatives in the upcoming election periods that will overlap between 2026 and 2027 may also affect the work of the IMTS, and 3) unequal participation by IMTS members, especially participating municipalities, which could lead to more restricted collaboration/coordination or reduced collaboration between IMTS members or between IMTS and the Andalusian Energy Agency.
Within the framework of the Life-SMART project, the IMTS has established a Joint Strategy until 2031 and a collaboration protocol (memorandum) has been signed for a period of six years. Therefore, that would be the desirable time frame.

C.2. How will you fund these services?
Describe the certain and possible source of funding and the timeframe foreseen.

As mentioned in previous sections, there are currently no specific financial resources available for the operation of the IMTS as there were during the Life SMART project. Therefore, the IMTS will operate with staff from member entities. Regarding the financing of the services provided by the Provincial Council of Jaén and the OLTEAN office in Jaén of the Andalusian Energy Agency, these are internal services and therefore do not require any external source of funding.
With regard to the financing not only of additional services that may be offered to IMTS but also of the actions envisaged in the joint strategy, both the Andalusian Energy Agency and the Provincial Council of Jaen, within their respective areas of competence, publish calls for grants and subsidies to support specific actions in the field of energy, which IMTS may apply for.
In this regard, it should be noted that in order to tackle the climate emergency, the Provincial Council of Jaén approved the 'Provincial Plan to Combat Climate Change' in June 2024. Through this plan, the Council plans to approve lines of funding to support municipalities in the province in terms of awareness-raising, training and citizen participation, with the aim of promoting the active participation of Jaén society in general and the productive sectors in particular in the fight against climate change, through information and training and investments in adaptation, mitigation and energy transition. These lines of support are linked to some of the actions envisaged in the joint strategy.

C.3. How will you consolidate the training programs in your territory?
Describe how you will ensure in the mid-term a long lasting training programme for the staff of your municipalities and the Memorandum of Understanding or other agreement that you have/you will sign with other institutions.

Work is underway on the possibility of signing a declaration of intent (Memorandum) with the **Andalusian Institute of Public Administration (IAAP)**, an entity attached to the Regional Government of Andalusia, which is **responsible for training civil servants** of the Regional Government of Andalusia, as well as for research, study, information and dissemination of matters affecting the Public Administration.
This entity offers the FAMP annual resources to develop a **Continuing Trainning Plan** for public

employees of local entities (Municipalities and Provincial Councils mainly). FAMP carries out this annual training plan aimed at public employees of local entities in Andalusia, with the aim of training employees to fulfil their professional objectives and thus also helping local Andalusian corporations regarding the qualification of their staff. In fact, the annual training plans that FAMP has been developing in previous years already include training on energy and climate change.

Therefore, the signing of the declaration of intent between FAMP and IAPP will reinforce FAMP's commitment to always include training activities on energy issues in its annual training plans, as well as facilitating and promoting the availability of these training activities to public employees of municipalities that are members of the IMTS. This would guarantee continuing education in energy matters.

On the other hand, it is worth mentioning the technical training also offered every year by the Provincial Council of Jaén to municipal public employees, which sometimes covers topics related to energy transition or climate change, as well as the fact that the training provided during the Life SMART project is recorded and available for follow-up once the project is completed.