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SOCIALNRG

AFFORDABLE GREEN ENERGY FOR EVERYONE!

D1.5 – Review of the Local Advisory Board Meetings (Provisional)

Date: 30/03/2026

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1 Introduction

The SOCIALNRG project aims to develop and test innovative approaches to tackle energy poverty by leveraging renewable energy communities in social, cooperative, and public housing contexts.
As part of this approach, **Local Advisory Boards (LABs)** have been established in each of the three pilot countries: Belgium, Italy, and Slovenia. The LABs bring together relevant stakeholders from the local ecosystem, including public authorities, energy community actors, housing providers, civil society organisations, and other local intermediaries.
The main objective of the LABs is to support the implementation of the pilot projects by providing feedback, validating project processes and outputs, and facilitating dialogue between the project consortium and the wider local stakeholder community. Through regular meetings, the LABs contribute to strengthening cross-sector collaboration and ensuring that the project activities respond to the needs and realities of the local context.
According to the project work plan, each Local Advisory Board is expected to meet **at least once every six months throughout the duration of the project**, resulting in approximately six meetings per pilot.

This deliverable provides an **interim review of the Local Advisory Board activities at the mid-point of the project**, including:

- an overview of the structure and functioning of the LABs
- a summary of the meetings organised in each pilot territory
- key insights and lessons learned
- a preliminary assessment of their overall impact on the project implementation.

2 Structure and Functioning of the Local Advisory Boards

2.1 Role of the Local Advisory Boards

Within the SOCIALNRG governance structure, Local Advisory Boards play a key role in ensuring that the project remains connected to local stakeholders and policy environments.
The LABs serve several functions:

- providing strategic and practical feedback on pilot activities
- validating project methodologies and outputs
- facilitating dialogue between different local stakeholders
- identifying barriers and opportunities for the development of renewable energy communities
- supporting the dissemination and uptake of project results.

By bringing together actors from different sectors — such as local authorities, energy communities, social housing providers, social organisations, and civil society — the LABs help to create a collaborative ecosystem around the pilot initiatives.

2.2 Composition of the LABs

Each Local Advisory Board includes representatives from relevant stakeholder groups involved in the energy transition and the fight against energy poverty.
These typically include:

- local and regional authorities
- housing providers and social housing organisations
- energy community representatives
- civil society organisations
- social services and anti-poverty organisations
- energy experts and technical actors.

The composition of each LAB reflects the specific context of the pilot territory and aims to ensure a balanced representation of key local actors.

2.3 Organisation of the Meetings

The LAB meetings are organised by the pilot partners responsible for each territory.
Meetings typically include:

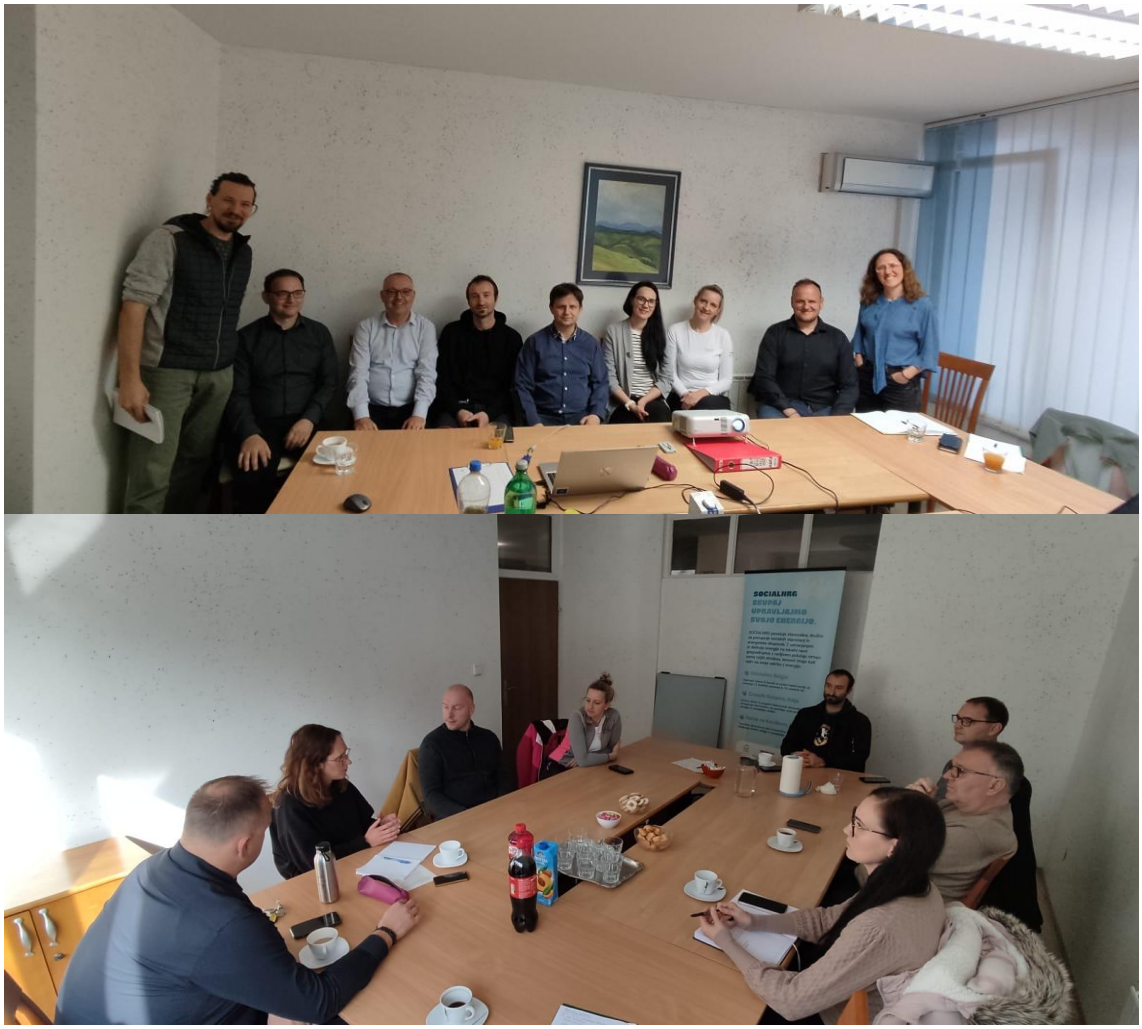
- presentations of project progress
- discussion of pilot developments
- feedback from stakeholders
- identification of barriers and opportunities
- exchange of knowledge and good practices.

To ensure transparency and knowledge sharing, summaries of relevant project deliverables and outputs are also shared with LAB members to support informed discussions.

3 Review of LAB Meetings in the Pilot Territories

This section provides a summary of the Local Advisory Board meetings organised in each pilot country during the first half of the project.
For each meeting, a short description is provided including key information on the date, location, participants, topics discussed and main outcomes.

3.1 Slovenia Pilot – Local Advisory Board Meetings



3.1.1 LAB Meeting 1

Item	Description
Date	14.4.2025
Location	Ravne na Koroškem (pilot site)
Format	In-person
Organising partners	Focus, STAN
Number of participants	8 (5 local stakeholder + 3 project partners)
Stakeholder categories represented	

Item	Description
	Local government (municipality), national funding body (local office of Eco fund (Slovenian Environmental Public Fund), regional development agency, health care providers (local health centre), business (energy management, digital operational monitoring systems) + project partners (NGO, housing provider, research)
Main objectives of the meeting	LAB members become more familiar with the project, its upcoming activities and the characteristics of the pilot site.
Key topics discussed	Topics that were discussed mainly stemmed from the initial project presentation: Specifics of the SI pilot project, tenant engagement activities within the project (past and planned), planned replication activities. LAB members also exchanged information on their upcoming events, activities that offer an opportunity for collaboration.
Main outcomes / conclusions	Key local stakeholders became familiar with the pilot site as well as the project and its upcoming activities in more detail (incl. LAB meetings), contacts and information on activities of involved stakeholders were exchanged among the members.
Lessons learned	If organising an in-person meeting, it can take a long time to coordinate all the LAB members on a date/time slot that suits everyone. However, in-person meetings are beneficial in the beginning, when LAB members are also still getting familiar with each other. In-person meetings also provide an opportunity for LAB members to familiarize themselves with the pilot site. As part of the first LAB meeting we were able to take a tour of the building that has also gone through energy renovation in the last months, which seemed to work well as an element of the meeting.

3.1.2 LAB Meeting 2

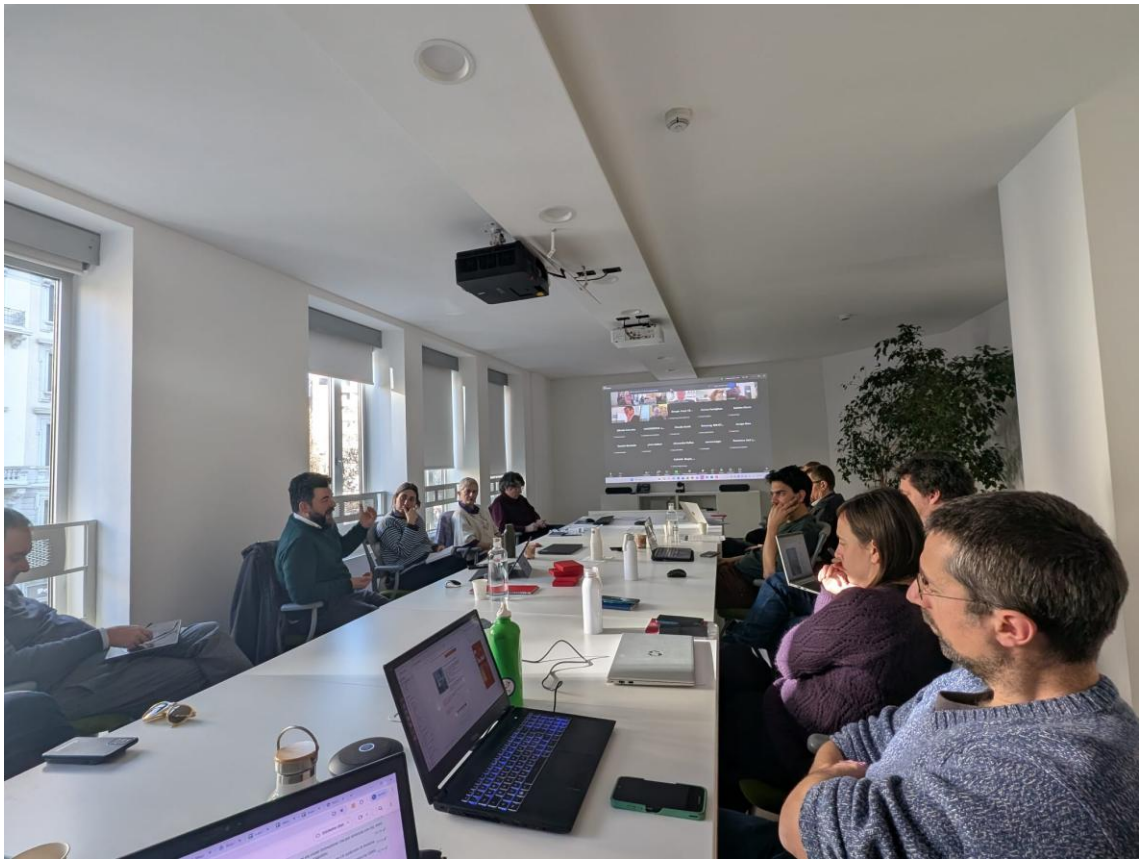
Item	Description
Date	20.11.2025
Location	Ravne na Koroškem (pilot site)
Format	In-person
Organising partners	Focus, STAN
Number of participants	9 (5 local stakeholders + 4 project partners)
Stakeholder categories represented	Local government (municipality), national funding body (local office of Eco fund (Slovenian Environmental Public Fund), regional development agency, health care providers (local Health Centre), social work (local Centre for Social Work), business (digital operational monitoring systems) + project partners (NGO, housing provider, research)
Main objectives of the meeting	Providing an update and receiving feedback from LAB members on recent pilot project developments (establishing a common drying/laundry room in the building) and bring to attention of LAB members the ongoing process of adopting the national Social Climate Plan.
Key topics discussed	The meeting focused on the draft proposal of the national Social Climate Plan, particularly the measures related to alleviating energy poverty and including energy poor households in energy communities. The challenges of reaching and engaging energy-poor and vulnerable households were also discussed. Participants also briefly discussed planned capacity-building and outreach materials.
Main outcomes / conclusions	• LAB members became more familiar with on the ongoing public deliberation of the Social Climate Plan, the measures included in the plan that will steer the additional funding in the coming years for alleviating energy poverty and including energy poor households in energy communities.

Item	Description
	● There were also some plans made between individual LAB members on closer collaboration (e.g. plan to hold a meeting between the municipality and Focus on the plan to form an energy community by the municipality, plan to organize trainings for health care workers by Eco fund on financial mechanisms available for energy renovation of energy poor households). ● Simple informative outreach materials in the form of a brochure are most suitable.
Lessons learned	Addressing ongoing policy processes that are relevant to the members and to the topics of energy communities and energy poverty is a good starting point for a discussion.

3.1.3 LAB Meeting 3

Item	Description
Date	TBC – planned for April 2026. Because we organized a joint meeting with tenants on the 23rd of March, we decided to hold the LAB meeting in April to be able to discuss with the members all the recent developments of the project.

3.2 Italian Pilot – Local Advisory Board Meetings



3.2.1 LAB Meeting 1

Item	Description
Date	16th April 2025
Location	UniAbita premises, Cinisello Balsamo (MI)
Format	hybrid
Organising partners	Innovacoop adn èNostra
Number of participants	12
Stakeholder categories represented	Legacoop Lombardia, Coopfond (mutual fund of cooperatives associated with Legacoop, responsible for financing cooperative projects). Banca Etica: providing financial support for energy communities. Legacoop National (Environment and Energy Office). Legacoop Abitanti, AISFOR: A technical agency/consultancy coordinating the LIFE ASSERT project.AMAT (Environment and Territory Mobility Agency): The agency of the Municipality of Milan working on energy poverty plans.

Item	Description
Main objectives of the meeting	
Key topics discussed	Positive aspects enhanced: high response to the initial questionnaire, high confidence in cooperative building management, due to the cooperative housing mission.
Main outcomes / conclusions	1. Redefining Energy Poverty as a lack of cultural empowerment /knowledge regarding energy rights and market opportunities. 2. Education Support: the TED Model: To bridge the knowledge gap, the role of the Domestic Energy Tutor (TED)is proposed to guide residents in managing consumption. 3. Strategic Implementation (REC vs. Self-Consumption). The group is evaluating whether Collective Self-Consumption (AUC) schemes might be more effective than RECs. Being building-centric, these schemes may be easier for cooperative staff to manage. 4.Generational Bridge: For cooperatives like UniAbita, RECs serve a social purpose beyond energy. They act as a tool for "New Mutualism," helping transfer cooperative values and culture to a new generation of "prosumers." 5. Common Good: The energy transition is framed as a vehicle for social inclusion, integrating new members into the cooperative fabric through the shared management of energy as a common resource.
Lessons learned	UniAbita is going to review the REC project, probably moving to a self-consumption scheme involving via Mozart #13-15-17 buildings. Residents in via Mozart should be trained using a TED, maybe in the next co-creation process The co-creation process in crucial in order to involve via Mozart residents, but a more informal approach should be investigated.

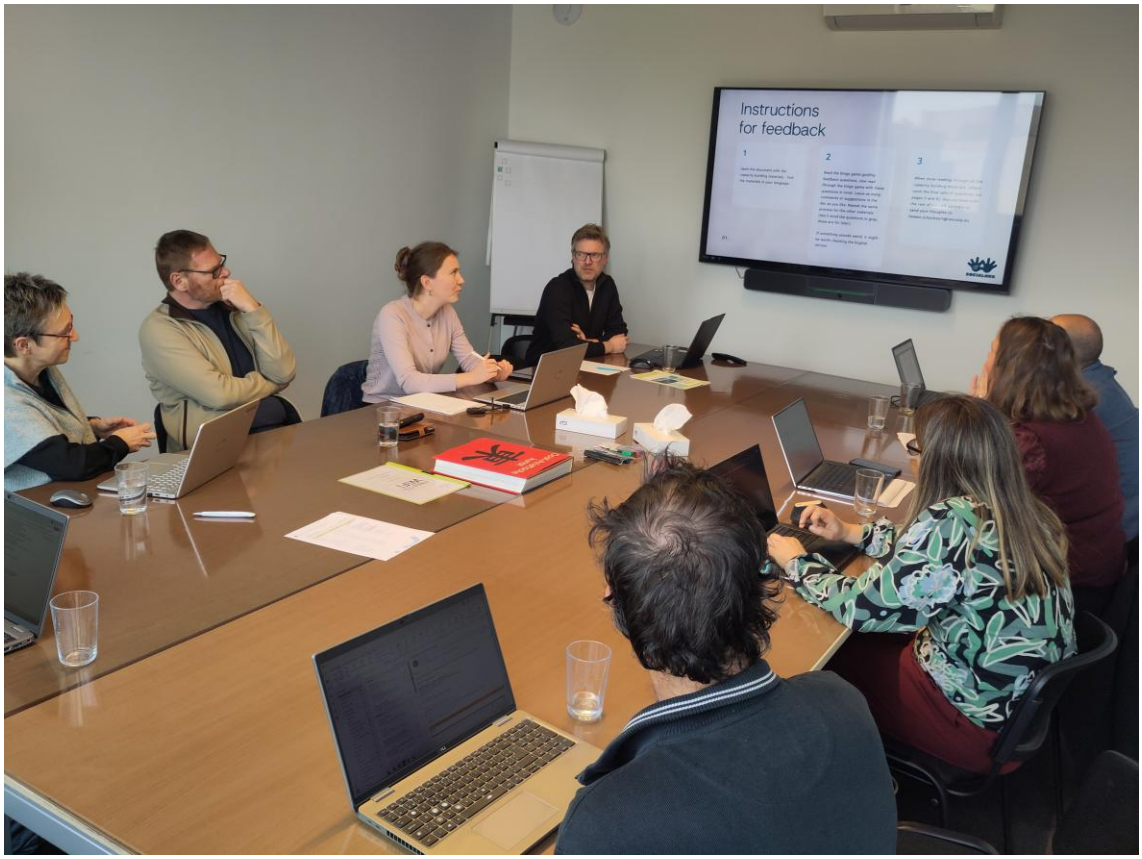
Item	Description
	▪ Suggestion of other entities that could join the LAB: another housing cooperative already involved in RECs (peer to peer training) and social cooperatives

3.2.2 LAB Meeting 2

Item	Description
Date	17th February 2026
Location	Milan, c/o Legacoop Lombardia
Format	hybrid
Organising partners	Innovacoop with Legacoop Lombardia
Number of participants	17
Stakeholder categories represented	Legacoop Lombardia representatives (housing, social and cultural cooperatives), referents for ECs. UniAbita and Abitare housing cooperatives. REC experts from èNostra, TED, Edison.
Main objectives of the meeting	▪ Reinforced Social Dimension: The strategic relocation of the pilot to the Via Mozart complex allowed for a more direct focus on energy poverty and social vulnerability , leveraging the proximity to the "Punto UniAbita" (PUF) for community engagement. ▪ Peer-to-Peer Knowledge Sharing: The LAB successfully facilitated an exchange of best practices among different housing cooperatives (e.g., UniAbita and Abitare), promoting a mutual learning environment regarding collective self-consumption and solidarity-based RECs. ▪ Strategic Technical Partnerships: The collaboration with Edison provided the consortium with concrete benchmarks and a scalable "no-upfront-cost" model, helping cooperatives understand the operational requirements for future PV installations. ▪ Consolidation of Feasibility Data: Despite the lack of immediate installation, the project successfully produced rigorous technical and economic feasibility

Item	Description
Key topics discussed	studies, creating a solid baseline for future investments and energy community participation. - Financial and Regulatory Constraints: Current incentive schemes do not sufficiently support the necessary upfront investments, leading to long payback periods for cooperatives. - Structural Rooftop Limitations: Many cooperative buildings already have rooftops occupied by older PV systems (e.g.,"Secondo Conto Energia"), leaving insufficient space to meet the minimum size threshold (over 30 kWp) required by technical partners like Edison.
Main outcomes / conclusions	UniAbita decided to not proceed with the REC and postpone the PV installation, which is heavily influenced by the lack of co-financing. Futher technical/administrative scenario will be investigated in the next weeks by èNostra.
Lessons learned	Equity and Governance Complexity: Establishing a REC within existing large-scale cooperatives like UniAbita presents challenges in ensuring that benefits are perceived as fair across different buildings and members without adding excessive administrative burdens.

3.3 Belgium Pilot – Local Advisory Board Meetings



3.3.1 LAB Meeting 1

Item	Description
Date	28 april 2025
Location	Dorpshuis Hombeek Leibeekstraat 2, 2811 Mechelen (BE)
Format	In-person meeting, including a neighbourhood walk and plenary discussion.
Organising partners	Woonland & Klimaan
Number of participants	8
Stakeholder categories represented	This includes the chair and secretary, as well as representatives from the City of Mechelen, SAAMO Provincie Antwerpen, ZuidtrAnt-W, Pandschap Rivierenland, Wonen in Vlaanderen and Klimaan.
Main objectives of the meeting	The first Belgian LAB meeting had an introductory and framing function. Its main objective was to present the

Item	Description
	SOCIALNRG project, introduce the Belgian pilot in Kriekerijvelden, and establish the role of the Local Advisory Board as a space for local stakeholder feedback, validation and collaboration. A second objective was to ground the discussion in the actual neighbourhood context through a site visit, allowing participants to better understand the complexity of the pilot site, including its mixed tenure structure, ongoing transition, and the challenges linked to energy poverty, neighbourhood liveability and future district heating ambitions.
Key topics discussed	The discussion focused on the local context of Kriekerijvelden, where vacant homes, social housing and private ownership coexist in a neighbourhood undergoing major redevelopment. Stakeholders discussed the difficulty of engaging households experiencing energy poverty, particularly because many residents do not openly identify themselves as “energy poor” and because survey response rates were low and skewed towards homeowners. Technical challenges were also raised, especially the difficulty of making a heat network economically viable in a neighbourhood with bel-étage housing typologies and phased redevelopment. Participants also exchanged concrete ideas on outreach and engagement, including door-to-door strategies, a local energy desk, more accessible educational materials, better alignment with infrastructure information sessions, and the use of a demo house to illustrate renovation pathways. Replication opportunities and the potential involvement of additional partners, including OCMW, Fluvius, provincial actors and social intermediaries, were also discussed.
Main outcomes / conclusions	The meeting confirmed that the Belgian pilot requires a strongly place-based and socially sensitive approach. It became clear that communication needs to be simplified, positively framed and much more human-centred if the project is to meaningfully reach vulnerable households. The LAB also concluded that active local engagement structures will be essential, and that the project should not communicate only around the heat network itself, but also

Item	Description
Lessons learned	around more immediate and tangible neighbourhood concerns. Concrete follow-up points included redesigning outreach materials and questionnaires, deepening cooperation with OCMW and other local actors, further developing workshop and demonstration formats, and identifying potential replication opportunities. A central lesson from the first LAB meeting was that technical energy concepts alone do not provide a sufficient entry point for community engagement in a neighbourhood like Kriekerijvelden. Residents respond more readily to messages around comfort, affordability and practical benefits than to abstract concepts such as energy poverty or energy communities. The meeting also showed that the success of the Belgian pilot depends on building trust, aligning with local realities, and involving intermediary organisations that already work with vulnerable groups. Finally, the neighbourhood walk and direct discussion of the site proved very valuable, as they helped stakeholders move beyond abstract project language and engage with the pilot as a concrete, lived environment.

3.3.2 LAB Meeting 2

Item	Description
Date	10 december 2025
Location	Offices Woonland Lijsterstraat 6, 2800 Mechelen
Format	In-person meeting combining project updates, discussion of co-creation findings, technical-strategic reflection, and an interactive session on capacity building materials.
Organising partners	Woonland & Klimaan
Number of participants	10

Item	Description
Stakeholder categories represented	The meeting gathered local public authorities, housing and public policy actors, social organisations, intermediary and support organisations, technical-institutional stakeholders, and a European-level project partner. Represented entities included REScoop.eu, the City of Mechelen, SAAMO, Wonen in Vlaanderen, ASTER, Pandschap Rivierenland, Klimaan and Woonland.
Main objectives of the meeting	The second LAB meeting aimed to move from general pilot framing to more substantive discussion of the pilot's implementation logic. A first objective was to present and validate the main findings from the second co-creation workshop and discuss what these imply for the pilot's engagement strategy, especially given the persistent difficulty of involving social tenants. A second objective was to present the district heating feasibility study and discuss financing, governance and technical options. A third objective was to introduce the F5D/Helios framework as a broader conceptual and strategic layer alongside the feasibility study. Finally, the meeting sought input from the LAB on the first drafts of REScoop.eu's capacity building materials.
Key topics discussed	A major discussion point was the profile of workshop participants: mainly private homeowners had attended, while no social tenants had come, confirming that engaging the intended vulnerable target group remains a major challenge. This led to a broader discussion on whether pilot efforts should focus primarily on owners or continue to actively try to involve all residents, including those with weaker agency or more uncertain housing trajectories. Additional workshop-related discussions touched on affordability, future taxation and pricing uncertainties, the need to include cooling as a long-term issue, and the importance of not promising concrete financial benefits before the study is completed. The LAB also

Item	Description
	discussed residents' broader concerns around neighbourhood liveability, vacant housing, poor maintenance, waste, and public space, showing once again that energy issues are embedded in wider neighbourhood perceptions. On the technical side, the feasibility study was discussed in terms of BEO fields, possible drilling in public space, the mention of TED/Thermal Energy from Drinking Water as a complementary source linked to a large PIDPA drinking water pipeline, and questions around tariffs, FS3/FS4 financing and ownership of infrastructure. Governance models were also debated, including vertically integrated versus separated roles and the possible role of ESCOs, while Woonland indicated it does not want to become a heat network operator. The meeting also clarified the distinction between the feasibility study and F5D: the former was described as concrete, site-specific and legally grounded, while F5D was framed as a broader, strategic and conceptual framework that can explore different scenarios and continue where the feasibility study stops. In the REScoop.eu session, participants discussed the format and purpose of the capacity building materials, including videos, guidebooks and gamified tools. They stressed that materials for households should be shorter, highly recognisable and strongly rooted in the Kriekerijvelden context, with less technical jargon and more emphasis on people, community and practical meaning. There was also a strong call to ensure that the materials work for different target audiences and are tested with the intended users.
Main outcomes / conclusions	The second LAB meeting led to several important conclusions. First, it reinforced that social tenants and other vulnerable households remain difficult to reach through standard workshop formats, which means

Item	Description
	future engagement must be more creative, more embedded in existing local events, and more sensitive to people's daily concerns. Second, it confirmed that the energy community should not be framed solely around financial return, but rather around comfort, service provision, risk-sharing and community value. Third, the meeting clarified the conceptual distinction between the feasibility study and F5D, which was important for aligning expectations among stakeholders. Fourth, it was agreed that no promises should be made about tariffs or benefits until the feasibility study is sufficiently advanced. Finally, the LAB provided concrete direction for the further development of the capacity building materials, including the need for consistent style, stronger local specificity and testing with target groups such as vulnerable residents. The meeting also concluded that future LAB sessions should either allow more time or cover fewer agenda items.
Lessons learned	A key lesson from the second LAB meeting was that even when technical and strategic development progresses, social inclusion does not automatically follow. The absence of social tenants from the second workshop underscored that the project still needs to invest significantly in inclusive engagement methods. Another lesson was that stakeholders are willing to support ambitious technical solutions, but only if governance, affordability and role division are addressed transparently and credibly. The meeting also showed that strategic frameworks such as F5D can be useful, but only when clearly distinguished from more immediate project deliverables such as the feasibility study. Finally, the discussion around capacity building materials highlighted that communication tools must be deeply contextualised if they are to resonate with households in a mixed-tenure, socially complex neighbourhood such as Kriekerijvelden.

3.3.3 LAB Meeting 3

Item	Description
Date	23/03/2026
Location	Offices Woonland Lijsterstraat 6, 2800 Mechelen
Format	In-person meeting, combining project updates, a technical presentation by the engineering consultant, and an interactive review session on capacity building materials.
Organising partners	Woonland & Klimaan
Number of participants	10
Stakeholder categories represented	Housing providers, local authorities, social organisations, technical experts, project partners and capacity building actors.
Main objectives of the meeting	The third LAB meeting focused on operational progress and validation. Its objectives were to provide an update on the overall state of play of the Belgian pilot, including construction planning in Kriekerijvelden and broader SOCIALNRG/F5D developments; to discuss the ongoing district heating feasibility study with the appointed consultancy Kelvin Solutions; to consider the possible integration of Otterbeek into SOCIALNRG; and to review the first draft of the capacity building materials in more detail.
Key topics discussed	The meeting opened with a broader project update, including the timing of consortium activities, the mid-term stage of the project, and the planning of F5D working sessions. Woonmaatschappij Rivierenland then presented the state of play of the building works, showing that the pilot is progressing through multiple construction phases and one infrastructure phase, but also that permitting procedures and legal-administrative constraints are affecting the timeline. A large part of the meeting was dedicated to the district heating feasibility study. Kelvin Solutions presented current work on the technical options, including BEO

Item	Description
	fields, TED, network routing and design trade-offs, especially in relation to phased public domain works and potential future connections. Questions were raised around route options, the role of TED for regeneration, the practical relevance of a source network, and the implications of phased connection of Woonland properties. A specific follow-up working session between Woonmaatschappij Rivierenland, Kelvin Solutions and Klimaan was foreseen to examine these trade-offs in more detail. A separate item was foreseen to address the possible integration of Otterbeek into SOCIALNRG, framed as a way of strengthening the project's broader contribution, but it was omitted due to time constraints. In the final session, REScoop discussed the state of the capacity building materials. The four types of materials and their intended target groups were discussed, with particular attention to whether they would actually achieve their communication goal. The group discussed the need to test the materials with real users, the possibility of collecting feedback through playthrough sessions, the challenge of making guidebooks region-specific enough, and the usefulness of school-based outreach and testing during broader project events such as the SOCIALNRG Consortium meeting in Brussels.
Main outcomes / conclusions	The third LAB meeting resulted in a stronger shared understanding of the technical complexity of the district heating pilot and of the need for further focused working sessions on concrete design trade-offs. It also clarified that the timeline of the pilot is closely linked to construction phasing and administrative procedures, and that these need to be kept in view when assessing what is feasible within the project horizon. On the communication side, the meeting reinforced the value of testing the capacity building materials in practice

Item	Description
	rather than relying only on internal review. A concrete pathway was identified for testing the game and collecting further user feedback through local actors and volunteers.
Lessons learned	A major lesson from the third meeting was that technical feasibility work in the Belgian pilot cannot be treated as a standalone engineering exercise: it remains deeply dependent on spatial phasing, ownership structures, public domain interventions and future participation scenarios. The meeting also showed that draft communication and capacity building materials benefit greatly from direct stakeholder scrutiny before finalisation, especially when they target heterogeneous groups. Finally, the LAB format again proved useful as a place where social, technical and implementation-related dimensions can be confronted together, rather than being treated in separate project silos.

4 Overall Impact of the Local Advisory Boards (Mid-Term Assessment)

At the mid-point of the project, the Local Advisory Boards have played an important role in supporting the implementation of the pilot activities and strengthening collaboration among local stakeholders.

First, the LAB meetings have helped create a structured space for dialogue between project partners and key local actors involved in energy transition, social policy, housing, and community energy initiatives.

Second, the LABs have contributed to validating project activities and identifying relevant local challenges and opportunities related to the development of renewable energy communities aimed at addressing energy poverty.

Third, the LABs have supported knowledge exchange between different sectors and stakeholders, contributing to the co-creation approach that underpins the SOCIALNRG methodology.

In addition, the Local Advisory Boards have proven to be a valuable mechanism for bridging the gap between technical project development and the social realities of the target groups. Across all pilot territories, LAB discussions have consistently highlighted the importance of addressing energy poverty not only through technological solutions, but also through inclusive engagement strategies, clear communication, and locally adapted approaches. The LABs have helped uncover critical barriers—such as limited stakeholder participation, financial and regulatory constraints, and challenges in reaching vulnerable households—while also identifying concrete opportunities for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovation. This iterative feedback loop has enabled project partners to continuously refine pilot activities and better align them with local needs, reinforcing the relevance and robustness of the SOCIALNRG approach.

Overall, the LABs are proving to be an important governance and engagement mechanism within the project, helping ensure that pilot activities remain closely aligned with local needs and stakeholder perspectives.

In the second half of the project, the LABs will continue to play a key role in:

- validating the pilot blueprints,
- supporting policy dialogue,
- facilitating replication and scaling of the SOCIALNRG approach.

D1.5 – REVIEW OF THE LOCAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS (PROVISIONAL)

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