

FAST & FAIR RENEWABLES

A CHECKLIST FOR MUNICIPALITIES



BASED ON FIVE BASELINE PRINCIPLES

PRODUCED BY THE CROSS-SECTOR

FAST & FAIR RENEWABLES & GRIDS INITIATIVE



A checklist for fast, but fair renewables

Renewables (RES) are a great opportunity for local communities. However, mayors, frequently encounter challenges such as local opposition, a lack of perceived local value and competing interests and motivations. Municipalities need proper support in playing their key role as enablers, facilitators and mediators for more local acceptance. [Five baseline principles](#) constitute the first European consensus on fairness between key sectors and offer the involved stakeholders and municipalities a framework for facilitating renewable energy projects that are perceived as fair for all.

In reference to the consensus, this document presents a checklist to be used by municipal mayors and staff when approached by developers regarding new renewable energy projects, or when initiating projects themselves. We recommend that all new projects undergo this checklist. The underlying principles have been co-created and endorsed by major European interest groups representing developers, citizen organisations, environmental organisations, energy communities and local governments. Because of this there exists no bias in these principles which means that projects adhering to them should be considered as fair by all. This should result in fewer local conflicts and accelerated projects which do not end up in court.

It is not expected that every box will be ticked in every project. However, going through these questions during the planning stage and using them as a basis for conversations between local stakeholders, will help to carry out a more positive discourse from the outset.

Principle 1 (The Local Projects – Local Influence)

Early, continuous, and meaningful engagement of all relevant stakeholders is essential. Doing so increases local perceived fairness and results in smoother realisation of new RES and electricity grid infrastructure.

As a municipality, you should ask:

- ☐ Does the project provide early and meaningful engagement between mayor / municipal councils and project stakeholders?
- ☐ Does the project have a joint a collaborative public engagement strategy to involve local communities?
- ☐ Are local communities invited to consultation events/processes ideally while different project locations are being considered with flexibility to shape project outcomes?
- ☐ Does the public engagement strategy include vulnerable citizens and young people?
- ☐ Does the project engage with local interest representations (e.g. local citizen associations), including existing and/or potential energy communities that might be interested in investing in the project?

Principle 2 (Local Projects – Local Value)

There should be tangible, appropriate, and proportionate community benefit opportunities in conformance with national and regional legislation as well as with the aims of the local communities involved. This is to increase public support, promote a sense of identification and pride with new infrastructure and to ensure that local communities benefit from such projects.

As a municipality, you should ask:

- ☐ Does the project include local businesses and/or create local jobs?
- ☐ Does the project offer the host municipality and citizens benefit sharing schemes, or community co-ownership adapted to their local needs?
- ☐ Does the project contribute with business tax payments to your municipal budget?

Principle 3 (Transparency)

A transparent use, communication and governance of additional revenue and of the overall process, in accordance with national and regional legislation, brought by the new infrastructure is essential. You should be aware of different options and good practices for benefit schemes. Their implementation must be done in a transparent manner.

As a municipality, you should ask:

- ☐ Are you fully aware of how national / regional legislation sets the rules for benefit schemes and for receiving additional voluntary payments into the municipal budget?
- ☐ Are you making publicly available and are actively communicating, through various channels, how any revenue by the municipality from RES and grids is used?

Principle 4 (Nature-Positive)

The installation of RES and grids, like any infrastructure, has an impact on nature and biodiversity, but such impact can be minimised and mitigated, and the impact can be an overall positive one. If done in a coordinated manner, therefore RES and electricity grids have the potential to effectively address the twin climate and biodiversity crises, and their deployment should go hand-in-hand with nature protection and restoration.

As a municipality, you should ask:

- ☐ Does the project apply the mitigation hierarchy by:
 - First, avoiding or preventing negative impacts;

- Second, where impacts cannot be avoided, minimising damage and rehabilitating their effects (e.g. by increasing biodiversity at PV, wind and grid sites);
 - Third, offsetting or compensating residual adverse impacts. #
- Are you cooperating with the developer to address the challenges they face in applying the mitigation hierarchy? Examples of such cooperation could include the mediation between land users or assessing land available for offsetting impact.

Principle 5 (Empowering Community-led Initiatives)

A level-playing field between all actors on the renewable energy market is essential. To share in the value creation from renewables development, market actors with less administrative and financial capacities (e.g. citizen and renewable energy community-led initiatives) need special support to allow them to develop their own projects and to access the grid on an equal footing with professional actors.

As a municipality, you should ask:

- Is the project providing and/or considering collaboration with a local community-led energy initiative?
- Are you aware of local community-driven energy initiatives in your area who might be interested in working with you / the project?
- Are you supporting and / or cooperating local community-led energy initiatives? This could e.g. include financial, technical and in-kind support and to set up a one-stop-shop.
- Are you coordinating with your local / regional distribution systems operator (DSO) to support community-led initiatives?
- Are you creating space in public procurement procedures to allocate room and/or remunerate projects developed by renewable energy communities?
- Do you, but also citizens in your municipality have adequate awareness on the added value of local ownership, as well as access to finance and expertise to realise community-led initiatives?