16th AWARD
BEST PRACTICE
IN CITIZEN
PARTICIPATION

IOPD

Application Form

PART 1: BASIC DATA

Experience data (complete the information below in a clear and concise manner)

Title of the experience: Amsterdam and community-led energy transition for sustainable futures
Name of the city or region: Amsterdam
Inhabitants of the city or territory: 905.234 (31 January 2022)
Country: The Netherlands
Institution presenting the candidacy (name of the municipality, department, government, institution leading the candidate experience): City of Amsterdam (municipality) Democratic Society (collaborator member)
Website of the experience or institution: www.amsterdam.nl www.demsoc.org
Profiles in social networks of the experience or the institution: https://www.linkedin.com/company/gemeente-amsterdam/ https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-democratic-society/
Start date of the experience: March 2021
End date of the experience (if operational, indicate "ongoing"): 31 December 2021
Budget of the experience (indicate the budget of the experience or the resources mobilized for its development and implementation): The work described in this programme was funded as part of the EIT-Climate KIC Healthy, Clean Cities Deep Demonstrations consortium partnership between EIT Climate-KIC, City of Amsterdam, Democratic Society, Dark Matter Labs and Materials Economics in 2021. The Deep Demonstration programme focuses on building capacity in tools, processes, infrastructure and new forms of governance to best support local community development, including energy transition. For the "Toolbox for Change" workshop the project was prepared by 4 'core' team members, the out- of- pocket costs were minimal: coffee, tea, meeting room, travel reimbursement and volunteer fee were available when needed.

Type of candidacy (Mark with an X in the right column)	New experience	X
	Innovation on an existing experience	

Type of experience (Mark with an X in the right column) (*you may choose more than one*)	Continuity of an experience	
	Participatory budgeting	
	Participatory planning	X
	Standing council	
	Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	
	Public Hearing/Forum	
	Poll/referendum	
	Assemblies / Citizen juries / Deliberation spaces	
	E-government/Open government/Digital platforms	
	Citizen initiative	X
	Other (specify):	
Objective of the experience (Mark with an X in the right column) (*you may choose more than one*)	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation	
	Including diversity as a criterion for inclusion	
	Community empowerment	X
	To empower non-organised citizens	
	To increase citizen's rights in terms of political participation	
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy "ecosystem"	
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy	
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy	

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	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
	To improve any public policy through the active participation of the public		X
Territorial area (Mark with an X in the right column) (*you may choose more than one*)	All the territory	Local	X
		Regional	
	District		
	Neighbourhood		
Thematic area (Mark with an X in the right column) (*you may choose more than one*)	Governance		X
	Education		
	Transport		
	Urban management		X
	Health		
	Security		
	Environment/Climate change and/or urban agriculture		X
	Civic associations, grassroots and new social movements.		X
	Culture		
	Housing		
	Job creation		
	Decentralization		
	Local development		X
	Training/learning		

	Economy and/or finances	
	Legal regulations	
	Social inclusion	
	All	
	Other (write the topic) Energy	X
Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) associated with the practice *Mark with an X in the right column (more than one option can be chosen)* *You can also add the specific target*	SDG 1 - No poverty	
	SDG 2 - Zero hunger	
	SDG 3 - Good health and well- being	
	SDG 4 - Quality education	
	SDG 5 - Gender equality	
	SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation	
	SDG 7 - Affordable and clean energy	X
	SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	
	SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	X
	SDG 10 - Reduced inequality	
	SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities	X
	SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production	
	SDG 13 - Climate action	X
	SDG 14 - Life below water	
	SDG 15 - Life on land	
	SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions	

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	SDG 17 - Partnership for the goals	

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Fill in the following fields clearly and concisely. You can add links if you consider it appropriate.

Context

*In a **maximum of 300 words**, it presents the cultural, geographical, historical, institutional and socioeconomic context of the city, the territory in which the experience takes place.*

The City of Amsterdam is on its way to a community-led energy transition to decarbonisation and climate resilience, developing a more integrated engagement approach that sees it increasingly working alongside communities, and adopting a more experimental mindset that is taking civil servants out of their comfort zones and building their capabilities for innovation.

The City of Amsterdam are committed to decarbonisation and sustainable energy generation, with a goal of reducing CO2 emissions by 55% in 2030 and 95% in 2050. At the same time the City of Amsterdam has adopted an ambitious democratisation agenda, including a 'commons agenda', exploring and understanding the governance model of the commons and strengthening local structures supporting commons.

To reach these targets, the City is recognising the need to take a more socially innovative approach, creating opportunities for community-led projects to enable an energy transition that is integrated, democratic and relational, rather than siloed, technocratic and transactional. Taking this democratic approach has required the City to examine its role in enabling local community development, learning to act as a collaborator.

In 2021, through the *EIT-Climate KIC Healthy, Clean Cities Deep Demonstrations* consortium partnership with EIT Climate-KIC, Democratic Society, Dark Matter Labs and Materials Economics, the city progressively built capacity in tools, processes, infrastructure and new forms of governance to best support local community development, including energy transition. This has resulted in learnings for "Government as enabler of communities development" that apply to the energy transition, but also have applicability for mobility, circular economy, and other themes of energy transition.

Key communities needs highlighted:
- Shift to decarbonisation and renewable, sustainable energy generation;
- 50% local ownership, and legal, regulatory, and financial infrastructure suited to energy communities;
- New forms of governance to support energy community development and transition.

Precedents

Explain the precedents and origins of the experience: if it is the innovation of an existing experience, what are its origins, if it is a new experience, what are the antecedents in

*participation in your city/municipality/region. You can also indicate if you have been inspired by experiences in other cities/countries. (**maximum 300 words**)*

In 2020 the City of Amsterdam, Demsoc and other *EIT-Climate KIC Healthy, Clean Cities Deep Demonstrations* consortium partners conducted experiments to understand the current state of citizen engagement and climate action in Amsterdam, looking for systematic, emerging and novel engagement and climate practices, the existing range of initiatives, policies and practice, and identifying existing strengths, assets and capabilities that Amsterdam has in engaging citizens for climate action.

Four learnings emerged from the 2020 work, that directly shaped the 2021 approach to "Government as enabler of communities development" and the penultimate 'Toolbox for Change' workshop described in *Methodology*:

- **Learning 1: Need to 'institutionalise' participation:** Develop an 'integrated engagement approach' on the role of civil servant as collaborator; capitalize on the enthusiasm and energy within the city council by adopting a social innovative approach coming from appreciative inquiry and asset-based community development

- **Learning 2: Address mismatch between speed to become carbon neutral and carrying out a democratic energy transition:** Create more opportunities for citizen-led projects and initiatives to enable a democratic energy transition, using deliberative methods; prioritise learning from pilots and find means of replicating and scaling these;

- **Learning 3: Need for capacity building:** Training for civil servants in democratic climate competencies; Create a knowledge exchange and learning network by promoting a more reflective practice with regular learning sessions for civil servants and civil society;

- **Learning 4: Focus on frontrunners can lead to the potential exclusion of other groups of Amsterdammers:** Targeted engagement and outreach to include diverse and marginalized groups in sustainability initiatives; Be more inclusive, catering to different kinds of people. For example, by supporting and empowering more locally based citizen groups working mostly offline on sustainability and against energy poverty and informal offline hubs, like for example Jungle in the East and De Groene Hub in the South East.

Objectives of the experience

What is the objective listed in Part 1 that you think is the most important, and indicate other outstanding objectives of the experience (maximum 100 words)

Community empowerment is the most important objective of the practice and experience, giving power and agency to citizens and grassroots groups progressing change from the ground-up for a just energy transition. IPCC's 2022 report highlights that "*...collective action and social organising are crucial to shift the possibility space of public policy on climate change mitigation.*"

Improving public policy through the active participation of the public is also an outstanding objective of the experience, where collective action and visioning between diverse actors is demonstrably leading to change at the policymaking level, influencing new coalition agreements on the City's sustainable future (see *Impacts and results)*.

Methodology

Describe the methodology of the experience: phases of the process, participation channels (maximum 300 words)

In October 2021 the City of Amsterdam and Demsoc co-facilitated a 'Toolbox for Change' workshop in-person with energy communities, member networks and civil society to explore conditions for 'Government as an Enabler' of change for energy communities to engage in actions that support decarbonisation and a democratic energy transition. This workshop was the penultimate event of a series of community engagements conducted throughout the year to determine community needs for energy transition, including expert interviews with energy system actors working with marginalised communities.

As second in-person workshop was planned in November for the communities to pitch their Toolbox to City Aldermen at the [Day of the Cooperatives](), but cancelled due to returned COVID-19 restrictions. This was rescheduled to January 2022 as an [online event]().

Goals

- Collectively determining the Government's role as an enabling agent of change for energy communities to engage in actions that support decarbonisation and a democratic energy transition, focusing on ownership, regulation, governance and finance, and knowledge exchange and capability building;
- Generating tangible outputs to be put to policymakers, with goals, tools, actors and actions, progress markers (indicators of change), and the Government's enabling role towards just energy transition, and specific targets of local ownership and decarbonisation by 2030-2050.

Phases of the process

Phase 1: Shortlisting and recruitment of participants, energy communities (solar, wind), member networks, civil society, emphasising diverse representation where possible.

Phase 2: Workshop design.

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Phase 3: Facilitation of a 4-hour workshop at Olympic Stadium, Amsterdam with 14 participants (see *Impact and Results*). Discussion of 'Government as enabler of communities development' meaning, building of 'Toolbox for Change' (two groups), and compare and contrasts of Toolboxes. Also included an Inspiration Wall with community-focused initiatives including the Whole Commons Catalogue.

Phase 4: Design output of the Toolbox for Change and strategy for pitching to City Aldermen.

Innovation

Explain what you consider most innovative in the practice. (*In a **maximum of 150 words***)

The Toolbox for Change workshop method was innovative in three ways:

1. It was an experiment in **growing a participatory 'ecosystem'** of 'unusual coalitions of actors' in the City committed to just energy transition: civil servants, energy communities, member networks, and civil society organisations working at the intersection of art, technology, science, the 'commons', and social innovation. It sought to stimulate relationships between these actors and foster ongoing collaborations connected to progressing the City's energy transition.

2. It used a participatory, highly interactive workshop format to get **diverse participants exploring themes** of ownership, regulation, governance and finance, and community knowledge exchange, to collectively debate what's working, and where there's possibility for change. The civil servant (City) participants 'took a back seat' and later reported the impact of witnessing the skill and drive of energy communities first-hand. This galvanised civil servant desire to amplify citizen voices with their departmental peers and the City Aldermen to make sure the work and community vision found its way into new coalition agreements in 2022.

3. The Toolbox for Change **expressed the community's vision** for energy transition in a tangible, accessible way for easy communication to policy makers. It served as an input to further City and community dialogue on needs for energy transition from November 2021 onwards, and as reference in council committee discussions in May 2022, contributing to publicly announced agreements on supporting local ownership of the commons as part of the unveiling of a new coalition on 25 May 2022 (see *Impacts and results*).

Inclusion

*Point out the importance of including as many groups and diverse populations as possible and how you have achieved it. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

A key consideration in all activities conducted across the year with communities was ***inclusion and diversity***, seeking to centre lived experience and voices commonly marginalised in design and decision-making processes for climate action, based on principles of Design Justice. These principles acknowledge the enormous impact of design on our lives, and how those who are most affected by unintended consequences of design -

such as design of policy for climate and sustainability - are those that often have the least say in decision making processes.

Prior to the Toolbox for Change workshop, we conducted a range of activities including expert interviews with energy system actors working with marginalised communities, to ensure these voice were factored into subsequent activities and programme outputs.

Communication

What has been the strategy and communication channels of the experience so that the population knows about it and gets involved. (In a maximum of 150 words)

Participants were discussed between the City of Amsterdam and Demsoc and invited to the Toolbox for Change workshop by the City of Amsterdam by email.

The intention was to open up the Toolbox for Change to a in-person public audience at the November 2021 Day of the Cooperatives workshop (via the event website) so they could view and comment on the vision and potentially contribute to the community-led 'pitch' the City Aldermen on the day. This in-person event was cancelled due to the pandemic, and shifted to a presentation-style online event in January 2022 led by the City.

In March 2022 Demsoc and Commons Network (workshop participant) published about the work and ongoing opportunities for the City bring about just energy transition on Apolitical, a platform for public servants on innovations in government.

Articulation with other actors

It explains how the experience was articulated with different actors and simultaneous or pre-existing processes. What roles did these participants assume? Explain the degree of success of this joint. (In a maximum of 150 words)

Energy communities and member networks were approached by the City of Amsterdam to attend the workshop personally. The energy communities were invited based on their work and experience in Amsterdam, seeking a representation for 'heat', 'solar', 'wind' and 'energy poverty' initiatives. The invitation was accompanied by a personal note, explaining that expertise and input were important for future (public) policies.

Civil society were invited by Demsoc as peers working at intersection of art, technology, science, the 'commons', and social innovation, for broader input and knowledge exchange.

Evaluation:

*What evaluation mechanisms have been implemented? Develop whether citizenship has participated in the evaluation of the practice (In a **maximum of 300 words**)*

Anecdotal evidence was collected from participants via the City and reported to Demsoc. Those who had been skeptical about attending the workshop fearing it to be 'just another workshop with no outcome' found it surprisingly valuable.

No formal evaluation mechanisms were implemented as the EIT Climate-KIC Healthy, Clean Cities programme and its funding for Amsterdam ended in December 2021. Evaluation of practice and method efficacy arguably comes in the form of how the Toolbox for Change community vision has had cut-through with policy makers in 2022, contributing to new coalition agreements on the City's sustainable future and more specifically support for local ownership of the commons.

A set of progress markers (indicators) are specified in the Toolbox for Change output (see *Annex*). These include civil society actions and government actions and all actions are 'work in progress'.

Impacts and results

*Describe the impacts and results of the process. How many people have participated, and which are their profiles. What have been the impacts on public policies, on the functioning of the administration and on citizens. (In a **maximum of 300 words**)*

Toolbox for Change workshop participants (n=17)

Civil society (n=2): Waag, Commons Network
Member networks (n=2): 02025, Energie Samen
Energy communities (n=6): Amsterdam Energie, Oranje Energie, Westerlicht, WG Terrein / Ketelhuis WG, Zuiderlicht
Civil servants (n=4): City of Amsterdam
(n=3), City of Zaanstad

Spreading and iterating ideas within city networks

In November 2021 the City began working with recommendations from the Toolbox for Change with energy communities and other bilateral initiatives in motion, including a 'School of the Commons' involving other City stakeholders and changemaker networks. The City also had more detailed discussions with design partners on smart contracting, civic technology and financial models, stemming from outcomes of this work, to continue building a robust picture of possibility and systems-level change for city energy transition.

Presentation to policymakers

In January 2022 the City 'amplified the voice of citizens', pitching the Toolbox for Change vision for Amsterdam's energy transition to Aldermen on behalf of energy communities at

the Day of the Cooperatives, seeking to influence budget, resourcing, policy, and new forms of governance for the City in 2022 and beyond to achieve a just energy transition, decarbonisation and other goals of social and economic wellbeing.

Adoption as part of City commitment to sustainable futures

In May 2022 the Toolbox for Change was tabled and referenced as part of council committee discussions (see TKN 95) within the energy theme of AmsterDOEN. On 25 May 2022 Amsterdam's new coalition was unveiled, with one of its key commitments being to sustainable futures with a focus on supporting local ownership of the commons, a core theme of the Toolbox and the energy community's wishes.

PART 3: EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

A summary of the experience: origin, objectives, operation, results, monitoring and evaluation (Do not hesitate to repeat aspects that have already been written before, this summary is the one that will be shared on the digital platform for open evaluation and in the publication of the award). (In a **maximum of 500 words**)

The City of Amsterdam are committed to decarbonisation and sustainable energy generation, with a goal of reducing CO2 emissions by 55% in 2030 and 95% in 2050. Communities are leading the City's transition to decarbonisation and climate resilience, requiring the City to develop a more integrated engagement approach to work alongside communities, and adopt a more experimental mindset to build capabilities for innovation. One of these approaches trialled successful in 2021 as part of the City's involvement in the *EIT Climate-KIC Healthy, Clean Cities Deep Demonstration* and with support of design partner Democratic Society has been a 'Toolbox for Change' workshop to explore conditions for 'Government as an Enabler' of change for energy communities to engage in actions that support decarbonisation and a democratic energy transition.

This workshop was the penultimate event of a series of community engagements conducted throughout the year to determine community needs for energy transition, including expert interviews with energy system actors working with marginalised communities.

The experience has demonstrated innovative, participatory methods for ***community empowerment*** and the change possible when citizens and grassroots groups progress change from the ground-up. It has also shown how ***active participation of the public can improve public policy*** with collective action and visioning between diverse actors being translated into tangible outputs for policymakers and party consideration.

A four-hour workshop was held with 14 participants (energy communities, member networks, civil society and civil servants) in October 2021, involving discussion of the meaning of 'Government as enabler of communities development', and group work to build a 'Toolbox for Change'. The Toolbox for Change sets out community-specified goals, tools, actors and actions, progress markers (indicators of change), and the Government's enabling role towards just energy transition, and specific targets of local ownership and decarbonisation by 2030-2050.

The Toolbox for Change has:
- **Helped spread and iterate ideas for energy transition within broader city networks** and bilateral initiatives, including a 'School of the Commons' involving other City stakeholders and changemaker networks.
- **Been presented to City Aldermen** at the January 2022 Day of the Cooperatives, to influence budget, resourcing, policy, and new forms of governance for the City in 2022 and beyond to achieve a just energy transition;
- **Influenced thinking on sustainable futures and local ownership of the commons** at the council level, forming part of the agreements of a new coalition unveiled in May 2022.

Evaluation of practice and method efficacy has come in the form of Toolbox for Change 'cut-through' with policy makers in 2022, contributing to new coalition agreements. A set of progress markers towards just energy transition are specified in the Toolbox for Change, and are yet to be formalised into operation.

We hope this story of community empowerment and use of participatory, innovative methods to connect people with power to improve public policy will inspire others navigating local community development and ground-up approaches to climate transition.

We invite you to share annexes that allow you to better illustrate your experience: videos, photographs, documents... They can be sent through a heavy document delivery system such as WeTransfer, Dropbox or Google Drive

- Toolbox for Change (Amsterdam Energy Communities_Toolbox for Change v1 EN (11 Nov 2021).pdf)
- Toolbox for Change reference (Amsterdam Energy Communities_Toolbox for Change reference v1 EN (11 Nov 2021).pdf)
- Workshop photos, community sketch of the commons (Workshop photos, commons sketch.pdf)
- Full project report, unpublished (Amsterdam HCC DD 2021_WP04_Government as enabler of communities.pdf)