



Guidance note for applicants

Mentoring programme



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What is the mentoring programme of Regio1st?

1 Background and overall objectives of the mentoring programme

From January 2025, the EU-funded LIFE-CET Regio1st project will implement a mentoring programme, open to local and regional authorities and related stakeholders (including regional energy agencies), allowing them to exchange knowledge and experience in the incorporation of the Energy Efficiency First (EE1st) principle into regional and local planning.

The Regio1st project aims to provide appropriate guidance to regional authorities to embed the EE1st principle in their decisions and the implementation of their energy plans. It establishes a community of practice for EE1st in cooperation with the Covenant of Mayors to ensure the political commitment of regional authorities and strengthens the enforcement of the Multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogue provision.

The mentoring programme will build upon the Regio1st energy planning framework and successful activities and practices implemented by the six Regio1st pilot partners from the following regions:

- Liguria, Italy
- Asturias, Spain
- South East Ireland (Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford and Waterford counties)
- Spodnje Podravje, Slovenia
- Medjmurje county, Croatia
- Western Macedonia, Greece¹

During the first phase of the project, partner regions led several regional and local workshops to:

- Start the discussion on the development of planning roadmaps and the online support framework;

¹ For more information, on the pilot partners of Regio1st, on the website of the projects: [Regio1st Partners - Fedarene](#)

- Understand investment options, decision criteria, preferences of the decision-makers, and constraints;
- Provide the respective inputs to the planning framework's tools for the analysis (e.g. priorities, costs, benefits and externalities); Implement the analysis – run the decision support tool and assess the results (e.g. results analysis, risks analysis, sensitivity analysis) in a quantified manner.

To support these regional consultations, an online framework was developed: The REGIO1st Planning Framework. This provides a comprehensive, structured approach for regional energy planners in Europe to develop and implement sustainable, cost-effective energy strategies in line with the Energy Efficiency First (EE1st) principle. It is a strategic tool for energy planners in Europe, regional authorities' technical staff, and interested stakeholders involved in formulating sustainable and affordable energy strategies aligned with the EE1st principle.

Building on the results of these first activities, the mentoring programme focuses on **three central thematics** divided into the following 3 core-topics:



1. Including the **Energy Efficiency First principle** into regional and local energy and climate planning with the support of the online planning framework;
2. Developing and implementing **efficient multilevel governance**, to bring regional and local good practices to the national level, in order to properly implement the Energy Efficiency First principle into National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs);
3. Exploring the financing **opportunities though the Just Transition Fund** as well as other funding schemes, understanding its mechanisms and strategic importance in financing regional energy efficiency actions.

The mentoring programme aims to engage local and regional authorities, directly participating in one of its three topics. A special focus will be made to ensure that beyond direct participation, trained participants will spread the acquired knowledge within their organisations and with other stakeholders in their local ecosystem.

Objectives of the programme are the following:

1. Enable the regional authorities to apply the EE1st principle in their energy-related planning practices
2. Establish a community of practice for EE1st to ensure political commitment and societal acceptance through co-development of energy-related scenarios
3. Support the introduction or strengthening of EE1st in the revision of Regional Operational Programs and foster the enforcement of the Multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogue Provision

1.1 Engagement process and calendar

This call for expressing interest is open until December 2024.

Applications will be selected according to eligibility and evaluation criteria. Selected participants from the different regional and local authorities will be matched to create the most effective and consistent learning groups.

All the sessions of the mentoring programme will be delivered online in the format of a webinar, and will be available online in a recorded format, on the website of the project.

Each group of topic will be moderated by a member of the Regio1st project consortium, who facilitates the exchanges.

The mentoring programme will start in January 2025.

1.2 Courses and duration of the sessions

Each topic is expected to be implemented within one month and will consist of the below sessions. Each session will last approximately two hours, depending on the planned content and activities:

Topic 1 Energy Efficiency First into planning	Topic 2 Multilevel governance and integration of the EE1st	Topic 3 Just Transition Fund for Energy efficiency actions
January – February 2025	February – March 2025	March – April 2025
Session 1 Setting a vision and engaging stakeholders	Session 1 About Multilevel Governance: History, legal framework and implementation	Session 1 Introduction to the Just Transition Mechanism
Session 2 Understanding the regional energy system and analysing energy options	Session 2 Good practices from the Regio1st project	Session 2 Focusing on the Just Transition Fund
Session 3 Developing and implementing a regional energy plan	Session 3 Have your say: Multilevel governance in your region	Session 3 Why and How Policymakers Should Take the Lead on Just Transition
		Session 4 Presentation of good practices

Topic 1 – Energy Efficiency in planning

This topic will introduce the [Regio1st Planning Framework](#). It will present this online framework step by step, following the methodology of a tutorial and with a participatory approach, enabling the active involvement of participants. Participants will learn about best practices in incorporating the EE1st principle in regional energy planning, will understand the different tools developed for the Online Planning Framework, and will be encouraged to use them. The first session will delve into the four first steps of the planning framework. The second session will explore the next four steps of the Framework.

Session 1 – Setting a vision and engaging stakeholders

The first session will present the three first steps of the Regio1st energy planning framework, along with case studies, and participative activities to explore the framework and the tools developed, including:

1. Laying the groundwork for developing an effective regional energy plan
2. Engaging stakeholders and building partnerships
3. Reviewing energy objectives and targets

Session 2 – Understanding the regional energy system and analysing energy options

The second session will present the two steps of the Regio1st energy planning framework, along with case studies to explore the framework, and the tools developed:

1. Exploring the current regional energy system
2. Cost-benefit analysis of different solutions

Session 3 – Developing and implementing a regional energy plan

The third session will present the final three steps of the Regio1st energy planning framework, along with case studies to explore the framework, and the tools developed:

1. Defining actions and developing the regional energy plan
2. Implementation, monitoring and review

Skills to be developed

The participants will acquire the fundamentals of regional energy planning, with an emphasis on incorporating the EE1st principle. Participants will understand and will be able to use effectively the Regio1st tools and mobilise stakeholders and broader society in energy planning.

Expected outcomes and objectives

The participants will:

- Learn how to incorporate the EE1st principle in their regional planning,
- Be encouraged to become part of the community of practice for EE1ST principle under the Covenant of Mayors
- Learn how to use participatory techniques to engage stakeholders and the broader society in energy planning

Topic 2 – Multilevel governance and integration of the EE1st

In this training topic, the sessions will elaborate on what is multilevel governance, how to implement it, and which activities and successful good practices can be replicated in your own local or regional situation. Barriers and successful case studies will be showcased, to better figure out how multilevel governance, especially multilevel dialogues can support the implementation and integration of the EE1st principle into National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs). The overall objective is to make it possible to showcase and take inspiration from regional and local good planning practices, to eventually properly integrate the EE1st principle at the national level, and to foster and feed fruitful dialogue on EE1st implementation between the local/regional, national European scales of governance.

Session 1 – About Multilevel governance

The training session on multilevel governance covers the evolution and principles of governance structures that operate across different levels of authority, from local to global. Participants will explore the historical context that shaped multilevel governance, tracing its roots and development through various political and legal milestones. The session delved into the legal framework that underpins these governance models, examining key international, national, and local regulations that facilitate coordinated decision-making across multiple jurisdictions. Finally, the training will address practical aspects of implementing multilevel governance, focusing on best practices, challenges, and strategies for effective collaboration among diverse governance actors.

Session 2 – Good practices from the Regio1st project

The training session on good practices in multilevel governance from the Regio1st project will focus on implementing the Energy Efficiency First (EE1st) principle in regional planning. It will highlight strategies for regional authorities to incorporate EE1st into their energy planning, and to facilitate the creation of a community of practice, as well as to support the revision of National Energy and Climate Plans (NECP). The session will also emphasize the importance of stakeholders' engagement and the enforcement of the Multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogue provision to ensure broader acceptance and implementation.

Session 3 – Multilevel governance in your region

The session will provide a dynamic forum where participants will actively share their experiences and perspectives on the obstacles and needs related to implementing multilevel governance in their regions and countries. Attendees will be encouraged to share specific barriers they encountered, such as legal, administrative, or logistical challenges, and to voice their requirements for support, including resources, training, or policy changes. The session aims to foster a collaborative environment, allowing for a diverse range of insights that will inform future strategies and initiatives to enhance multilevel governance practices across various contexts.

Skills to be developed

The "*Have your say: Multilevel governance in your region*" training session is designed to develop key skills for effective multilevel governance implementation. This includes:

- **Critical Analysis:** Participants will learn to critically assess barriers to governance and identify gaps in current practices within their regions.
- **Feedback Utilization:** Skills in effectively gathering, analysing, and applying feedback to improve governance practices will also be emphasized.

These competencies are intended to empower participants to advocate for and implement more effective multilevel governance strategies in their countries.

Expected outcomes and objectives

The session aims to:

- **Identify Barriers:** Facilitate the identification of specific obstacles to effective multilevel governance in different regions.
- **Collect Needs:** Gather insights on the resources, tools, and support participants to implement successful multilevel governance strategies.
- **Enhance Skills:** Develop practical skills for navigating multilevel governance.
- **Inform Policy:** Use participant feedback to inform future policy developments and governance frameworks that are more responsive to regional needs.

These objectives are intended to create a more inclusive and effective approach to multilevel governance, tailored to the unique challenges in different regions.

Topic 3 – Just Transition Fund for Energy Efficiency Actions

In Topic Package 3 of the mentoring session on the Just Transition Fund (JTF), participants will delve into the fundamentals of the JTF, exploring its mechanisms and strategic importance. The session begins with an introduction to the Just Transition Mechanism and the JTF, followed by an in-depth focus on how the fund operates. It will emphasize the critical role of policymakers in leading Just Transition efforts and provide practical insights on effective leadership. To solidify understanding, the session will include case studies and good practices, illustrating successful JTF applications. Through a mix of presentations, group discussions, and interactive activities, participants will gain the knowledge and skills needed to leverage the JTF effectively in their regions.

Session 1 – Introduction to the Just Transition Mechanism

The session opens with a detailed overview of the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) and its three pillars. This segment will cover the objectives, funding structure, and overall framework of the JTM, with a specific focus on the JTF's role within this structure. Participants will gain insight into how the JTF supports regions in managing the socio-economic impacts of transitioning to a greener economy.

Session 2- Focusing on the Just Transition Fund

In this section, participants will engage in a deep dive into the operational aspects of the JTF. This includes understanding eligibility criteria, application processes, and fund allocation. Emphasis will be placed on the practical steps required to design, propose, and secure funding for projects under the JTF. This will also cover the financial management and reporting requirements associated with the fund.

Session 3 – Why policymakers should take the lead on Just Transition

This session will address the crucial role of policymakers in driving the Just Transition agenda. Participants will explore why strong leadership is essential for the successful implementation of transition strategies and how policymakers can effectively lead these efforts. This part of the session will offer strategies for policymakers to engage stakeholders, build political will, and ensure the alignment of regional policies with the goals of the JTF.

Session 4 - Presentation of successful Case Studies

To reinforce learning, the session will feature a series of case studies and examples of good practices from regions that have successfully used the JTF. Participants will analyse these case studies to understand the key success factors, challenges faced, and solutions implemented. This practical insight will help participants visualize how the concepts discussed can be applied in their contexts.

Skills to be Developed

During their participation in the topic 3, participants will find themselves familiar with the following skills:

1. Strategic Planning and Analysis

Participants will develop a comprehensive skill set in managing the Just Transition Fund (JTF) effectively. This includes understanding the eligibility criteria and application process, enabling them to access JTF resources, navigate the steps involved in applying for funds, and tailor project proposals to meet these requirements. They will also gain expertise in project design and implementation, learning how to craft detailed project plans, set realistic milestones, and ensure compliance with funding guidelines. Additionally, participants will acquire competencies in financial management, including budgeting, financial reporting, and monitoring expenditures to ensure the effective use of JTF resources.

2. Policy leadership and Stakeholder Engagement and Management

Participants will develop skills in leading Just Transition efforts through effective policymaking and stakeholder engagement. This involves understanding the role of policymakers in driving transition strategies and mastering techniques to build consensus and collaboration. Additionally, they will get to experience the importance of initiating and facilitating social dialogue and ensuring inclusive participation in the transition process.

3. Analysis and Application of Best Practices

Participants will learn how to analyse and apply lessons from successful case studies and good practices related to the Just Transition Fund. This skill involves evaluating real-world examples to identify key success factors and strategies for overcoming challenges.

Expected outcomes and objectives

Through this topic, participants are expected to achieve several key outcomes that will significantly enhance their capabilities in managing the Just Transition Fund (JTF), as well as acquire a broad overview of financing Just Transition resources.

First of all, they will be familiar with the JTF Mechanism, especially with its first pillar which is the JTF, including the eligibility criteria, the application process, and how to align proposals with the JTF requirements. Additionally, participants will develop the ability to design and implement activities to strengthen stakeholder engagement and leverage multilevel governance methodologies to take the lead on Just Transition. Last, but not least, participants will have the chance to gain useful input from successful case studies in the framework of the JTF in their respective regions.

1.3 More information on the mentoring programme

The Regio1st mentoring programme, and all related exchanges and materials will be **delivered in English**. Participants must have a **B2² command of English** to be able to communicate easily within their group, in all activities of the programme.

The mentoring program is completely **free of charge**.

More information on the mentoring programme can be found on the Regio1st website: [Regio1st - Fedarene](#)

2 Type of targeted participants

2.1 Mentors

Mentors have a sound knowledge of their topic related to their topic and on the implementation of the EE1st principle in general and can liaise with other experts within their organisation and local ecosystem, to gather all elements of information that will help mentees in increasing their knowledge and capacities.

²https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/9_languages_common_european_framework_of_reference_en.pdf

Mentors will share their knowledge with involved participants from other EU cities and regions. Mentors of the sessions will be the Regio1st project partners, including regions.

1st Topic: Energy Efficiency in plan

- Coordinator of the topic: ICCS

2nd Topic: Multilevel governance and integration of the EE1st

- Coordinator of the topic: MENEA

3rd Topic: Just Transition Fund for Energy Efficiency Actions

- Coordinator of the topic: CluBE

2.2 Mentees

We seek local or regional authorities that are interested in learning from an experienced peer mentor on how to implement the EE1st principle, with the tools and lessons learned from the Regio1st project.

The person participating as a mentee should be involved in the planning and/or implementation of a regional or local sustainable energy and climate project for which they are seeking the expertise of a mentor. Their planned project is part of a local or regional sustainable energy and climate action plan or similar and is at least in the preparatory stage, or the review stage. The mentee can liaise with other experts and political representatives within their organisation/region/city to gather all elements of information related to the local project and to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and replication of the Regio1st methodology on the territory. Several persons from the same organisation are allowed to apply to the mentoring program.

Apart from regional and local authorities, we also seek professionals from local, regional, and national energy agencies and consultancies. We will also consider case-by-case applications from professionals of DSOs, TSOs, One-stop-shops, and other relevant entities.

In general, the main driver to apply to the Regio1st mentoring programme is to be involved in energy and climate planning, and to be seeking assistance on incorporating the Energy Efficiency 1st principle at any level of governance. Mentees will have the opportunity to learn from other projects implemented in Europe and apply what they learned in their context. Also, they will get tailor-made assistance adapted to their learning objectives and needs, and confront ideas with peers, and finally share their experience and knowledge, and come up with new solutions.

2.3 Expected commitments from participants

When applying to the Regio1st mentoring programme, participants commit to following the full topic package that they registered to and to undertake the necessary preparation and follow-up tasks, according to the instructions and recommendations provided by the group facilitator.

They can of course register for several topics.

The duration of a topic package is flexible but set at the beginning of the topic, and expected to be one month, depending on the availability of participants and of mentors, and the work plan and time plan of each group.

3 How to apply?

Interested parties can complete the application form at **the [EU Survey platform](#)**. This allows you to download a PDF version of the form. You can also save your application at every step to come back to it at a later stage.

3.1 Timeline of the call for applications

The call for mentees will be open from the 21th of October to 8th of December 2024.

The links to the online application form will be published at [Regio1st - Fedarene](#).

3.2 Who is eligible to apply?

Regio1st will accept applications from:

- Staff members of regional or local authorities or their energy/climate agencies, in the eligible countries;
- Staff members of other local or regional or national organisations/authorities (e.g., development agencies, municipal companies, energy cooperatives, one stop-shops, TSOs and DSOs...), in the eligible countries;
- External consultants working for a local or regional public authority in the eligible countries.

Eligible countries are EU-27, the United-Kingdom and H2020 associated countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

Applicants should demonstrate their capacity to manage or contribute directly to local or regional projects in the fields of sustainable energy and climate actions.

3.3 What information should be included in the application?

The application form for mentees includes 2 sections:

- Section A: **consent to the rules** of the program
- Section B: **information about the applicant**, including a question on their organisation and questions on their **motivation to join** the Regio1st mentoring programme, and about the applicant's interest in the different learning topics and sessions offered by Regio1st. Applicants can register to up to three learning topics.

In addition, applicants can upload documents to provide further information on their project. All details provided will also enable the best matching of participants.

3.3 How will applications be assessed?

Evaluation criteria

Eligible applications will be evaluated by the members of the Regio1st project consortium, according to the following criteria:

- Overall quality of the application (I.e., answers are clear, detailed, and consistent),
- Motivation to share knowledge with peers in other cities, regions, or agencies;
- Clearly identified and described challenges and learning needs in climate and energy planning, involving interest in the implementation of the EE1st principle;
- Motivation to acquire new knowledge from an experienced peer,
- Ability to share the acquired knowledge with other colleagues in their organisation.

Participants will receive an email confirmation after registration.



Website: <https://fedarene.org/project/regio1st/>

<https://regio1st-planning-framework.fedarene.org/>

Social Media: #Regio1st

