



ENoLL Energy & Environment Working Group  
Webinar  
27 March 2025, 11:00-13:00 CET

## Using the Living Lab Approach to Develop Socially Innovative Energy Communities

### Overview

The first webinar of the year for the ENoLL Energy and Environment Working Group will focus on energy communities and the potential for applying living lab methodology to their development both in Europe and the Global South. The webinar will be the first in a two-part series, the second of which will be held in May and be led by the Digital Urban Systems & Solutions for Transitions (DUSST) Working Group who will focus in on the digital solutions offered to Energy Communities.

Energy Communities are an important element of the energy transition globally, supported in Europe by legislation and internationally through the important work of NGOs, universities, governments and the private sector. The desire for increased security and energy independence as well as the climate crisis is driving the demand for renewable energy and the decentralisation of the electricity markets.

Although various types of energy communities exist, often coupled with building and neighbourhood renovation projects, and different governance, economic and business models, there are still many challenges to ensure that they contribute to a more sustainable, democratic and just transition for society. Automation, smart services and artificial intelligence (AI) offer innovative solutions for managing the technological challenges of flexibility in the grid, integration with mobility and building efficiency. However, the desirability, feasibility and viability of energy communities and related energy pilot projects, as well as their social impact and spillover potential for wider sustainability transitions could be greatly improved by applying a Living lab approach.

## Objective

To date, only a handful of Living Labs throughout Europe and Internationally have been working to address these concerns. This webinar brings together some of the key living labs working on developing and piloting energy communities both in Europe and the Global South, through sharing of research findings, practical examples, processes, methods and tools and best practice relating to the problem phase of integrating stakeholders and citizens and defining barriers of energy communities and associated pilots.

## Key Takeaways/Outcomes

Participants will gain a key understanding of the challenges facing the development of energy communities, potential methods and tools to apply in developing energy community projects, and key contacts to continue discussions.

## Target audience

The Webinar is targeted at any Living Labs addressing challenges in energy community pilots and projects, as well as partner organisations considering how a living lab approach can help in the development of energy communities.

## Organizers

Fiona Zimmermann, chair of the ENoLL Energy and Environment Working Group, & Energy Living Lab at HES-SO & Konstantinos Oureilidis SMART Living Lab, University of Western Macedonia.

## Agenda

Theme	Speaker	Time
Welcome & Introduction to the topic	<b>Fiona Zimmermann</b> (HES-SO)	5 min
The challenge of decentralising the European Energy market: insights from <b>research findings</b> . How can the Living Lab approach help to introduce a broader diversity of players and bring social benefits to citizens?	<b>Andrej Mihailovic</b> (ADP ZID Living Lab, Montenegro)	20min
Torino City Labs – Let'sGov project demonstrating the role of the city in the energy transition and energy communities – example from the 'One stop shop' approach and challenges for Net Zero Cities and the Cities' Missions.	<b>Alessia Cerchia &amp; Melchiorina Mirella Iacona</b> (Torino City Lab & Commune of Torino)	20min
Learnings from the practical application of Living Lab Integrative Process and the	<b>Professor Ulrike Sturm</b>	20min

Morphological Box tool in the co-creation of an energy co-operative in Lucerne, Switzerland.	<b>(QUBE Project, Living Labs Lucerne, Switzerland)</b>	
How to integrate Living Lab tools and methods into an energy community project.  Examples from Life BECKON and oPEN Lab Projects, Rochapae Living Lab Pamplona.	<b>Elina Makousiari (ENoLL, LIFE-BECKON project) Fiona Zimmermann (HES-SO, oPEN Lab project)</b>	20min
Best practices in developing energy communities in Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia using a Living Lab approach to help overcome barriers and support scale up.	<b>Konstantinos Oureilidis (SMART Living Lab, University of Western Macedonia)</b>	20min
How living lab methodology can be adapted and applied to meet the needs of actors in energy community pilots in the Global South. Examples from the CELLULAR project in India.	<b>Saket Sarraf (ps Collective and RAP) Craig Burton (Monash University)</b>	20min
Discussion and wrap up		20 mins

## Speakers

### **Dr. Andrej Mihailovic, ADP ZID Living Lab, Montenegro**

Dr. Andrej Mihailovic works as a researcher, lecturer, and consultant in Montenegro and UK. He completed his undergraduate and postgraduate studies at King's College London, where he has worked for over 25 years as a researcher, lecturer, and PhD supervisor in the fields of telecommunication. Experience includes numerous projects with leading companies and EU consortia. He is a certified expert and evaluator of EU for future technologies projects.

In the past decade, he has also worked in Montenegro as a consultant and mentor for local faculties, and various institutions in the fields of applied ICT technologies, maritime systems, blockchain, and green energy. He has contributed to successes of many EU/national projects in Montenegro. He is currently the Technology Transfer Expert at NGO ADP-ZID and a chief advisor at Perper.net start-up developing “digital stablecoin currency”. He authored more than 75 scientific papers and several patents.

### **Alessia Cerchia, Torino City Lab, City of Turin**

Alessia is a staff member of the Environment and Ecological Transition Department of the City of Turin, where she is part of the team that supports the development of private and public RECs and the development of the Climate City Contract. She has

previously worked as a lawyer in administrative law firms dedicated to energy and REC issues. She is Deputy Mayor of the City of Sangano.

**Prof. Ulrike Sturm, QUBE Project, Living Labs Lucerne, Switzerland**

Ulrike Sturm has been a lecturer and researcher at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU) since 2010. Her research focuses on questions of urban development, social interaction and participatory processes. From 2013 to 2018, she was head of the Interdisciplinary Research Focus "Cooperation in Building and Planning" and, from 2018 to 2023, head of the Interdisciplinary Thematic Cluster "Spatial Development & Social Cohesion". It was in 2018 that she became head of the Institute of Sociocultural Community Development at the Department of Social Work. Since 2024 she is vice-director for research at the department.

After a master's degree in philosophy, Ulrike Sturm received her diploma as an architect at the Technical University of Berlin in 1998. From 2000 on, she worked as a teaching assistant in urbanism at the Brandenburg Technical University Cottbus, where she received her PhD in the Theory and History of Urbanism in 2011. During that time, she gained practical experience as a freelance architect working for various offices of architecture and urbanism as well as her own practice. From 2008-2010, she was Assistant Professor at the Leibniz Universität Hannover and the UQAM Montreal.

**Fiona Zimmerman, Energy Living Lab @HES-SO, oPEN Lab project**

Fiona Zimmermann is a senior research associate working as a panel & project manager at the Energy Living Lab in the University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland (HES-SO) since 2019. Together with oPENLab colleagues Fiona co-created the capacity building handbook and mentoring programme for positive energy neighbourhoods using a LL approach. Prior to working in research, Fiona was an energy management professional for 15 years internationally with energy services companies, governments and utilities on developing energy projects. With a diploma in Business & Energy Management and a Masters in Environmental Management for Business, Fiona is now developing her academic career through a PhD in Transitions management, specialising in energy communities and living labs. Fiona is originally Irish but relocated to Switzerland in 2016 where she lives with her two daughters. She is passionate about biodiversity and enjoys open water swimming in her free time.

**Elina Makousiari ENoLL, LIFE Beckon project**

Elina Makousiari is a Project Manager and Capacity Building Trainer at ENoLL, working on EU-funded projects that promote co-creation, stakeholder engagement, and sustainable urban development. With an MEng in Urban Resilience and an MSc in Urban Environmental Management, she combines academic expertise with hands-on experience in urban sustainability and strategic planning. At ENoLL, she leads capacity-building activities and supports the integration of Living Lab methodologies across sectors, including energy, to drive innovation and collaborative solutions for sustainability.

**Konstantinos Oureilidis (Assistant Professor), SMART Living Lab, University of Western Macedonia**

Konstantinos Oureilidis is an Assistant Professor at the University of Western Macedonia (UOWM), Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering since 2022. He received his Diploma (2008) and PhD degrees (2015) in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) and his bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki (2015). During his post-doc research, he received funds from IKY Fellowship of Excellence. Since 2008, he has worked as a freelancer engineer conducting energy projects, technical and economic reports for investment laws and as an inspector in photovoltaic projects.

During 2016-2017 and 2020-2022, he worked as Adjunct Lecturer in AUTH and UOWM teaching courses of Power Electronics and Electric Motion Systems. During 2017-2022, he worked in Hellenic Energy Exchanges (HEEx), as a Special Scientist and Head of Markets Support at Markets Operation. His fields of interest include energy storage system, control of power electronics, distributed generation, and energy and balancing markets and he has published more than 48 papers in scientific journals and conferences.

#### **Saket Sarraf, ps Collective, CELLULAR, India**

Dr. Saket Sarraf is the Founder and Principal at ps Collective, a platform dedicated to advancing sustainable development through advocacy, research, policy analysis, and consultancy. His work is driven by a commitment to achieving a just energy transition, leveraging stakeholder engagement, innovative modeling, decision support systems, and robust policy research. Operating at the intersection of the power sector, buildings, transportation, and urban planning, he seeks to deliver system-wide benefits for diverse stakeholders.

Dr. Sarraf holds a Ph.D. and a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA, and a Bachelor of Architecture (Hons.) from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India.

#### **Craig Burton CELLULAR and Monash University**

Craig Burton the Research Project Manager for CELLULAR and trained with ENoLL in living lab design and setup. He is a Research Manager at Monash University in the Architecture Department. Craig worked at the Australian Policy Observatory (APO.org) up to 2019. In 2018 he obtained a Masters degree in Urban Design focussing on renewable energy systems. Prior to that Craig worked as a renewable energy consultant. He has consulted to public and private organisations on IT. He holds an Honours degree in Computer Science from the University of Melbourne and a Bachelor of Information and Communication Science - Cognition from La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.

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