

Network of Interest – NoI Terms of Reference and Management

BECoop at a glance

Over the last years, the EU has witnessed some remarkable steps in Renewable Energy (RE) deployment. However, at the same time, we see an increasingly uneven penetration of RE across the different energy sectors, with the heating and cooling sector lagging behind. Community bioenergy schemes can play a catalytic role in the market uptake of bioenergy heating technologies and can strongly support the increase of renewables penetration in the heating and cooling sector, contributing to the EU target for increasing renewable heat within this next decade. However, compared to other RES, bioenergy has a remarkably slower development pace in the decentralised energy production which is a model that is set to play a crucial role in the future of the energy transition in the EU. The ambition of the EU-funded BECoop project is **to provide the necessary conditions and technical as well as business support tools for unlocking the underlying market potential of community bioenergy**. The project's goal is to make community bioenergy projects more appealing to potential interested actors and to foster new links and partnerships among the international bioenergy community. BECoop will specifically equip administrative authorities with support tools and skills (capacity building activities) so as to enable them to promote (as policy enablers, project facilitators and beneficiaries) such new forms of energy system governance and allow them to equally compete with other energy market actors. It is important to note that these tools are designed to be useful both as standalone tools to serve particular needs, but also as a cohesive and complete set of tools that can accompany and accommodate the needs of existing or prospective bioenergy communities in their various steps of development. These various support tools include:

- A Self-Assessment Tool, as an easy-to-use tool for all possible actors and aspiring entrepreneurs of new cooperative bioenergy projects to support them assess their position and suggest steps to initiate a new bioenergy business
- A Toolkit, developed as an online repository of already existing tools that can work complementary to the BECoop support services in supporting the development and operation of community bioenergy and heating projects
- An e-market platform, as a digital platform to act as a virtual environment for biomass heating and supply chains for educational and informative purposes.
- The BECoop catalogues for technical, business and financial support services
- A Knowledge Exchange Platform, as both a knowledge repository of relevant community bioenergy resources and digital host for the liaison structure among the EU actors of RE heating and community bioenergy, namely the Network of Interest. The Knowledge Exchange Platform will host all the tools developed and knowledge generated by the project to facilitate ease of access for the project duration and post project replication and exploitation

On top of these, the project will ignite a policy debate at a local and EU level, through workshops and advocacy activities, aiming to streamline the BECoop policy recommendations to the actual support needs of policy makers. The BECoop process is deployed to 4 complementary cases of RESCoops and authorities across Europe ([see pilot cases](#)). In this context, the Network of Interest comprises of a range of relevant stakeholders in the field of community bioenergy with activity in both local and European settings who are strategically involved in key stages of the project to contribute with their expertise and experience, whilst expressing the needs as members of the community energy value chain for the successful deployment of community bioenergy projects.

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Network of Interest Role

The Network of Interest is set up and operates as a liaison structure for stakeholders and experts to share their knowledge and expertise with the BECoop project in key deployment stages, incl. validation, networking and knowledge exchange. The role of the Nol in the context of the project may be summed up as follows:

- **Populate the Knowledge Exchange Platform** and contribute to its various components such as the **Repository of knowledge** (incl. tools and services in the field of community bioenergy heating), the **RESCoops Atlas** (to update, inform and share their experiences of bioenergy community cases and community energy cases with high potential for replication and/or expansion in community bioenergy), the **emarket environment** (to showcase their available resources for biomass heating and supply chains for educational and informative purposes), the virtual forum (to join cross-regional networking, and knowledge exchanges and a dialogue among community bioenergy stakeholders)
- **Participate in Thematic Groups** that will act as Expert Panels in the following topics:
 - Community energy building
 - Biomass supply chains
 - Business models for RESCoops
 - Synergies with authorities and industry
 - Bioenergy technologies and solutions
 - Financing schemes and funding options
 - Bioenergy Policy making
 - International export consortia for bioenergy

The above list is indicative exhaustive and will be amended in accordance with the Nol members preferences, and the stakeholders and BECoop Cases (Pilot and Replication cases) needs. Nol members that will be joining the Mentoring Activities will be asked to setup a personal profile within the Knowledge Exchange Platform with basic information about their expertise, interests and motivations.

- **Project Validation activities** that will be done through the thematic group panels as key elements for the design, development and implementation of community bioenergy heating projects. The panels will leverage their expertise to validate BECoop actions, provide mentoring to our RESCoops and replication cases, fostering their vision for achieving the 2050 decarbonisation goals
- **Networking activities** by participating in matchmaking event for matchmaking seeking funding or collaboration
- **Mentoring activities** that will include participation in a peer-to-peer mentoring program Experts participating in community energy projects will engage in peer learning activities and matched with developing RESCoops. These include sharing information and experience through online meetings, work shadowing and study tours.
- **BECoop dissemination activities** to boost the spreading of the project's impact as well as to support the replication of BECoop concept, methodologies, tools and services.

To fulfil this role, it is foreseen that the Nol members, during the course of the project, will operate mostly through digital means, and participate in activities on a voluntary ad-hoc basis.

Members Benefits

The project **provides several benefits** to its Nol members, such as:

- **Networking opportunities and visibility** as an expert stakeholder in a large multi-stakeholder community in the bioenergy and community bioenergy.
- **Access to knowledge and practical tools** generated by the project
- Unique opportunity to **align the tools, services and policy recommendation offered by the BECoop with the needs of their stakeholders** to ensure that they make the most out of its value propositions

Membership and Operation

The Nol shall be composed of actors across the community bioenergy value chain coming from diverse backgrounds to offer a blend of expertise that represents various groups of stakeholders. These experts will provide BECoop with valuable feedback aimed at aligning the project's outcomes with the needs of stakeholders. Membership will remain open for the duration of the project and the selection criteria are:

- Expertise in Community Bioenergy and/or RESCoops
- Experience in Community Bioenergy and/or RESCoops
- Interest for participation/involvement/partnership in Energy Communities

Although members of the Nol may be selected because of their affiliations with key organizations, they serve on the Nol in their **individual capacity** to represent the interests and views of their stakeholder communities. **Members of the Nol may not delegate another person to carry out the role expected from them** or be replaced by any other person. Members of the Nol are appointed for the entire duration of the project (till October 2023). The contribution of Nol members is on a pro bono basis, apart from the cases in which physical travel is involved and a specific budget for their reimbursement is foreseen in the framework of the project. In such cases, the travel and accommodation expenses of Nol members will be reimbursed by the project. Moreover, participation in the Nol is entirely voluntary. There will be no adverse consequences if an Nol member decides not to participate or to withdraw at any stage. In fact, Nol members may withdraw their participation at any time by informing the Nol Manager. They may also request for their data to be withdrawn without giving a reason and without prejudice. Anonymous data already collected will be used because this information cannot be traced back to a specific person, but no further data or input will be collected, nor any other procedure will be carried out in relation to the specific member.

Network of Interest Management

The Nol is managed by the Nol Manager that facilitates the communications and interactions between the Nol and the consortium, ensuring that members are not overloaded. The Nol Manager will also ensure that for each task requiring input from the Nol, the partners have beforehand prepared an action plan and all necessary briefings and material. Only then, will the Nol Manager introduce a partner who may directly communicate with the Nol in order to achieve the expected goals at each time.