

E.2.2.1 - GENERAL PROCESS FOR THE CONDUCT OF TERRITORIAL DIALOGUE

FRAMEWORK FOR ALL DEMONSTRATOR BUILDINGS

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THE COLEOPTER PROJECT

The COLEOPTER (*COncertation LocalE pour l'Optimisation des Politiques Territoriales pour l'Energie Rurale*) project develops an integrated approach to the energy efficiency of public buildings that links technical, social and economic challenges. COLEOPTER addresses two energy efficiency challenges in buildings: difficulties for rural municipalities to act and carry out work despite the positive local impact (i.e., energy savings and local employment) and a lack of awareness of building challenges, which leads to irrational use of energy/water and low renovation rates.

The COLEOPTER approach has three components:

1. Territorial dialogue with local actors to co-construct work plans of public buildings.
2. Use of Building Information Modelling (BIM) as a collaborative tool to support the dialogue.
3. Consideration of water efficiency issues along with energy challenges to better consider usage.

The approach will be tested on four public buildings, three to be renovated (in Póvoa do Lanhoso, Portugal; Cartagena, Spain; and Creuse, France) and one new building (in Creuse, France). It will be replicated in Escaldes-Engordany (Andorra) to validate its transferability.

The main contributions of the project, namely the COLEOPTER approach and the work conducted on the test sites, will benefit municipalities, citizens and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), leading to better planning of energy and water efficiency policies and increased public and private renovation rates.

The COLEOPTER project (SOE3/P3/F0951) is financed by the Interreg Sudoe Programme that supports regional development in Southern Europe, financing transnational projects through the European Regional Development Fund. The Programme promotes transnational cooperation to solve common problems in Southern Europe, such as low investment in research and development, weak competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises and exposure to climate change and environmental risks.

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Axis 3	Low-carbon economy
Objective 4C1	Improving energy efficiency policies and the use of renewable energy sources in public buildings and housing through the implementation of networks and joint experimentation
Total eligible cost	1 454 944.07 €
ERDF Grant	1 091 208.06 €
Duration	36 months (01/10/2019–30/09/2022)

Partners

RURENER
Agência para a Energia (ADENE)
Asociación Empresarial Centro Tecnológico de la Energía y del Medio Ambiente de la Región de Murcia (CETENMA)
Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC)
Comunidade intermunicipal do Ave
Ayuntamiento de Cartagena
Município da Póvoa de Lanhoso
Syndicat Mixte Ferme est Creuse



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INTRODUCTION

Territorial dialogue is one of the three components of the COLEOPTER approach, along with the energy-water audit methodology and the use of BIM (Building Information Modelling) as a collaborative platform. Territorial dialogue is key in putting users, citizens and other local stakeholders at the heart of public energy efficiency projects to increase their local impact. The implementation of territorial dialogue is made of three main steps:



In this report, we will focus mainly on the first step, **the preparation of the dialogue**, leading us to the definition of the general dialogue process within the COLEOPTER approach.

In this document, we want to share the good and bad practices that we identified in the building of the local dialogue processes. It is intended to support municipalities in the definition and implementation of their own dialogue processes on efficiency projects in public buildings, applying the COLEOPTER approach.

WHO DOES WHAT IN TERRITORIAL DIALOGUE?

THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR AND NEUTRALITY

The facilitator of the dialogue must be identified from the very beginning. The **facilitation team** is usually composed of two people, one facilitator and one person in support to take notes during the meetings or manage technical aspects.

The facilitator of the dialogue can be an external facilitator (mediator) or someone from the municipality (internal staff). In the case it is someone from the municipality, this person must be clearly identified from the beginning as facilitator and thus he/she does not represent the interest or vision of the municipality, adopting a **neutral position**. Without this neutrality, the facilitator will have trouble being legitimate in the eye of the participants.

THE GROUPS OF INTEREST

What we call **“groups of interest”** in territorial dialogue are all the people or groups that **are impacted directly or indirectly by the project**. In the COLEOPTER approach, it can include (but is not limited to):

- The municipality (elected people and technicians)
- The building users
- The neighbors of the building
- The staff working in the building
- Local SMEs in the building sector
- Institutions related to the use of the building (health organization, safety organization...)
- Other authorities (association of communities, regional authorities, national government, ...)
- ...

Each group will be related to the project in a different way, some as users of the building, others as financing authorities or regulatory institutions for instance. **Putting all of these perspectives together from the beginning is the goal of the dialogue**, preventing the appearance of barriers later on (ie: the regulatory framework for the specific type of building was not taken into account or the landscape integration obligations were forgotten leading to more work to reshape the project afterwards).

A first identification of the groups of interest impacted by the project can be done by the municipality. Other groups may be mentioned during the preparatory interviews (see below) in the preparation phase, in which case they will be contacted afterwards.

Some groups of interest are **organized** entities (sports association, school board,...) while other may **not be organized** (users of the post office, users of a parking lot...) or organized but without a representant able to speak in everyone's name (student association, building staff...).

In the second and third case when a group is not organized or organized but without a legitimate representant (legitimate by position or feeling legitimate), we need to reach out to more than one person of the group to make sure all visions and needs are expressed in the dialogue and group interviews may be organized (see below).

Example: A group of students was contacted regarding the renovation of the highschool's gym but the President of the student group did not feel like she represented the interest of the whole group. After a first interview with her, a second group interview was organized to collect more feedback from her fellow students (in particular males who had a different vision of the gym than female users).

THE EXPERTS

At the difference of the groups of interest, the "experts" are people or entities that have been mandated by the municipality to conduct an expert study on the building (conduct of an audit for instance). Many people in the groups of interest are also experts in different fields but they will bring their vision to the dialogue rather than their expertise. Considering the expertise of use, anyone could be considered an expert and the main difference with the groups of interest is their position in the dialogue: reporting on a study conducted for the municipality is the role of an expert while sharing views of the project and taking part in the co-construction phase is the role of a group of interest.

Example: It can happen that some entities are ambiguous, take for instance the energy agency of Portugal (Adene) which can be an expert conducting the audit but can also be a group of interest as a certification institution for buildings rehabilitation. In such cases, it is possible to involve the entity as both expert and group of interest, however the expert will be limited to sharing the result of the audit while the represent of Adene as a group of interest will share Adene's need as certification authority.

THE ROLE OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

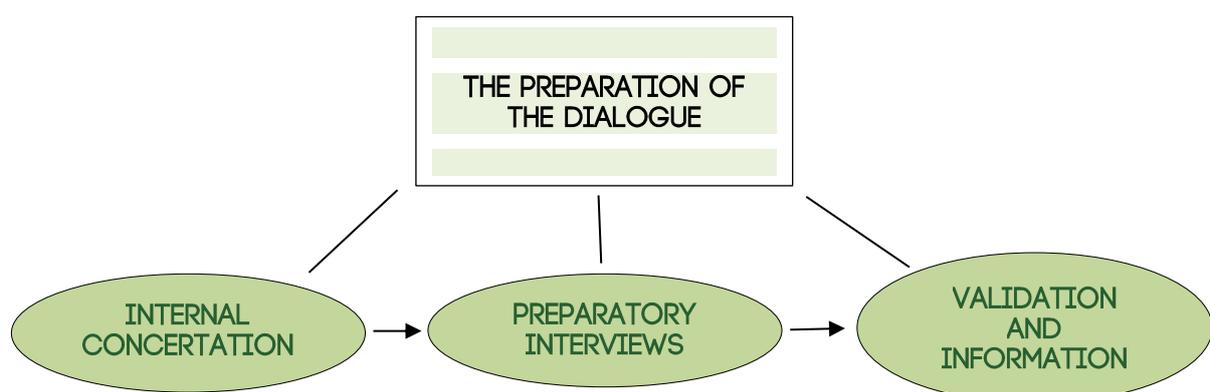
Local elected representatives are key stakeholders in the process of territorial dialogue. Indeed, they are a central group of interest as they are the project owner in our case of public projects (on public buildings). The dialogue is closely related to a decision-making process (municipal council, community council...). The involvement of technicians throughout the dialogue is not sufficient and the presence of elected people during the dialogue (preparatory phase and co-construction phase) is a gage of their interest in hearing from others on this project and considering the outcomes of the dialogue in the final decision by the decisionary body (municipal council or else).

We advise to have a short session of capacity-building with the elected representatives before starting the dialogue process. This session will allow the facilitator to present the added-value of territorial

dialogue and to set with the elected people the local framework of the dialogue, based on the following general framework applicable to any project to conduct using territorial dialogue:

- **What is the objective of the dialogue?** For instance, “to conduct an efficient renovation work on the building to improve users’ experience”
- **What is going to be discussed – or not – during the dialogue?** For instance, the use of the building and its specificities will be discussed but the budget for the work and the choice of the building will not. It is important to fix this in the beginning to avoid losing time discussing something that was already decided ahead.
- **What is/are the product(s) of the dialogue?** In other words, what will concretely come out of the dialogue? A concrete outcome is important to make sure that the meetings are efficient and useful. The main outcome should be the specifications for the renovation work, but it can also be related to a plan of use of the building for instance.
- **When is the dialogue going to take place?** A calendar must be established and approved collectively, it can be influenced by the deadline to apply for funding for the renovation work.
- **How is the dialogue articulated with the decision-making process?** From the beginning this point must be made very clear to all participants: the dialogue will work on a concrete outcome or product to make the project happen but the final decision to engage funding is left to the municipality (or authority in charge). This means that after the outcome of the dialogue is approved by the dialogue group and validated, it will be presented to the municipal council (or similar entity) for its final approval before implementation. The participation of elected people in the dialogue group is of key importance to ensure the outcome of the dialogue responds to the municipality needs as well (budget, priorities...) and is generally approved without problems. If the dialogue group is large, a steering committee can be organized gathering the elected people involved in the dialogue and eventually other key stakeholders for a first validation of the dialogue’s outcomes before presentation to the municipal council.

STEPS TO PREPARE THE DIALOGUE



THE INTERNAL CONCERTATION

Before starting a dialogue process, a first meeting with municipal staff and elected people of the relevant services must be organized. The relevant services can be “buildings and infrastructure” and “energy transition” but also “sports and recreation” in case the building is a public gym or “education”

for a day-care or a school. In small municipalities, the Mayor him/herself can take part in this first meeting. The goal of the meeting is to agree upon the local framework of the dialogue, namely:

- The objective of the dialogue
- The topics to be discussed
- The final product of the dialogue
- The instances of the dialogue (working group...) and how they are related to municipal decision-making
- The calendar of the dialogue and project

It is crucial to have an agreement of these points before starting the dialogue as the framework will ensure that the dialogue is **relevant** (leads to an objective), **interesting** for its participants (through the topics to be discussed), **productive** (leads to a concrete outcome), **transparent** (each role is defined and articulated with municipal decision-making) and **follows a timeline** (calendar).



The objective

The objective of the dialogue must be of interest for all the participants that will be involved, starting with the municipality. A good objective is composed of two aspects, a technical and environmental aspect related to the efficiency of the building, and a social aspect related to the use of the building and the users but also to the role of the building in the community.

Example: An objective can be “Renovate the building X to give it a social purpose for the community with sustainability criteria”

The topics

The topics to be discussed can be difficult to identify at this stage as they are often specified in the next step (the preparatory interviews). However, some topics can already be identified as key challenges to address in the dialogue (the use of the building by the community...) and some others can already have been decided by the municipality and thus not put to discussion (the budget allocated, the choice of the building...). The topics should be clear and straightforward in order to raise the interest of the participants. They should also reflect the needs expressed by the groups of interest in the first interviews, which is why they are usually completed after these interviews.

Examples: Topics can be “the management of the building”, “the use of the building”, “the landscape impact of the building”...

The product(s)

Organizing a dialogue means that we expect something to come out of it. Too many meetings end up with nothing concrete and leave people with a feeling of having lost their time. Defining a concrete product that will come out of the dialogue does not only help mobilizing and keeping mobilized the participants, it also ensures that the dialogue is going somewhere. In our case, the products of the dialogue are of two types: technical (specifications of the renovation or construction work to be done) and social (plan of use of the building, educational programme...). The two products will be developed jointly thanks to the use of the 3D BIM modeling that will facilitate the translation from users’ consideration to technical specifications.

The instances of the dialogue and the relation to decision-making

Conducting a dialogue does not mean that decision-makers will be deprived from their role of taking decisions. On the contrary, one of the strengths of territorial dialogue is the fluent relationship between the instances of the dialogue and the municipality decision-making process. The participants in the dialogue are what we call a working group or dialogue committee. This group encompasses all of the participants involved in the co-construction project, including of course decision-makers, users, institutions...

Another dialogue instance can be built to validate the dialogue process and the final product of the dialogue. This instance is called a dialogue steering committee and is composed of the decision-makers participating in the dialogue and possibly a couple of key stakeholders on the project.

The involvement of these key stakeholders legitimizes the dialogue and its outcome. If the products of the dialogue have been approved by them, it is much more likely that they will be approved by the municipality for the final decision to engage the funding.

The relationship to the municipal decision-making process must also be clear to all since the beginning as the dialogue instances do not replace the decision-making process which remain the only one able to engage the funding for the project. It is part of making the process transparent to all.

Example: The building to renovate is a gym that belongs to the local highschool and the municipality is given funding to renovate the gym. In this case, the dialogue steering committee is composed of the local elected people and the school's director. The certification authority can also be part of the dialogue steering committee in case its approval is necessary for the renovation work to be approved respecting efficiency criterias.

The calendar

Finally, agreeing on a calendar is essential so all the participants know what to expect. The calendar can be influenced by administrative deadlines that the municipality must follow to apply for the necessary funding. The calendar will also have to be specified after the preparatory interviews when the facilitator will collect the availabilities of the participants (day of the time, time of the day...). It is important that the calendar is not only impact by the municipality's needs but also by the availability of the participants.

THE PREPARATORY INTERVIEWS

The preparatory interviews are key in the preparation of the dialogue. They involve the facilitator of the dialogue and the representants of the groups of interest previously identified. They can be bilateral interviews or group interviews in the case where a group of interest does not have a representant (see above).

The preparatory interviews are meant to identify the needs of the different groups of interest regarding the building to be renovated (or built), their interest in taking part in the dialogue and potential barriers in the conduct of the dialogue.

The best way to proceed is to reach out to the person or people to interview on the phone or on site and ask them for their availabilities for an interview (after introducing the project). The place and time of interview should not be set by a formal invitation which can be rather intimidating. The choice of place and time should be left open so the person or people interviewed feel at ease where the interview takes place (on site, in a café...) and it does not conflict with their personnel or professional agenda (afterwork, on a day off...).

During the interviews, the facilitator will adopt a posture of **active listening** which means that they will listen very attentively to what the interviewee is saying, reformulate the points that seem to be the most important to the interviewee and ask for validation. It is important that the interviewer does not imply things that the interviewee has not said because he/she knows the subject. The interview should only reflect the person's feeling and vision about the project and not be influenced by an external point of view (which can be in this case the interviewer him/herself). However, before starting the interview, it is



important to take a few minutes for some small talk and create a connection with the person interviewed, it will ease the atmosphere and make everyone more comfortable.

Example: If the facilitator is a mom or a dad very much familiar with the day-care building to be renovated and she is interviewing another parent, she might be tempted to start a discussion with the other parent, sharing their mutual experiences of the building rather than really listening to what the parent had to share. In the end of the interview, the interviewer will realize that he/she did not get much of any content from her interview.

The interview is an open interview (the interviewer does not follow a list of questions) of approximately 1 hour and should address the three following points:

- **The vision and the needs of the person interviewed regarding the project.** It can be introduced by questions such as: "How do you see the project?" "What is important to you in this project".
Warning: questions like "What do you think of the project?" must be avoided as they expect answers based on opinions which are often contradictory and offer little space to find a compromise. Needs on the other hand can be answered by many different solutions.
- **The barriers that the interviewee foresee in the conduct of the dialogue.** It is important to ask the interviewee if they see any difficulty in the conduct of the dialogue. Difficulties can be related to existing tensions between groups of interest, lack of interest for the building/subject... Identifying these difficulties before hand will help in the conduct of the dialogue and avoid bad surprises in the middle of a meeting. In addition, it is important to ask the interviewee if they can think of a person or a group that should be involved in the dialogue. This is a way to make sure that you did not forget an important group of interest which could lead to tensions later on.
- **The involvement that the interviewee is willing to have in the project.** Indeed, some interviewees may not be interested in taking part in the dialogue in which case it is important to know it ahead and understand why (it is not the same if it is by fear from another participant in the dialogue or by lack of time or interest).

The facilitator (interviewers) will collect all of the visions and needs expressed in the interview and put them in a synthesis without specifying who expressed what and if a need was expressed by one person only or by many. The point of this synthesis, later shared with all the people interviewed, is to build a common ground for the dialogue. The synthesis will be the starting point of the first collective meeting.

VALIDATION AND INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC

After the preparatory interviews, the framework of the dialogue can be adjusted, in particular the topics to be discussed so they fit the interests of the participants and the calendar so it fits their availabilities.

In addition a broader communication to the public must be made to honor **the transparency of the project**. Informing the public is also a way to make sure that as many people as possible got the information about the project and that **no one will feel left behind**. It may also raise some new interest in the project and in the municipality's actions on buildings' efficiency.

Information to the public can take different aspects: having an event, publishing an article in the local newspapers or the municipality's website, putting up a stand in the marketplace, putting up a poster on the site... We are still lacking feedback on the efficiency of these different approaches to reach to population within the COLEOPTER project, partly due to the COVID-19 crisis which led to the cancelation of all in-person events. However, a project event was held in one of the experimentation site and gave a lot of visibility to the project. In case on online events, having an event only focused on this specific project is too specific, we advise to introduce the project within a larger event that will mobilize more people. For example, a webinar dedicated to the local transition strategy presenting different local initiatives, among which the efficiency project.

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER FROM THIS REPORT

If you were to remember only three points from this report, it should be:

- The **quality** of a good territorial dialogue process **relies on the preparation phase** when the dialogue framework and process of implementation will be decided and validated by all the participants
- Territorial dialogue processes follow **progressive steps** in order **to reach the final objective and obtain the expected product**. This progressive process ensures the efficiency and productivity of the dialogue and of the meetings organized.
- Applying territorial dialogue to efficiency projects as proposed by the COLEOPTER approach is a way to **increase citizens' involvement in climate and energy challenges** and it gives **legitimacy** to the municipality's actions in this field.

Now it's up to you to open up the dialogue and develop your own participative projects.

For more information on the next steps of the dialogue (conduct and monitoring), check out the full COLEOPTER approach that will be available in September 2022 on the website www.coleopter.eu.

You can also contact RURENER at contact@rurenener.eu.