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Introduction

This report presents the results of the evaluation of the participatory processes enacted at the local level, specifically in small towns and peripheral territories targeted in GRAPE, with the objective of developing a local action plan for green and resilience transition policies (LSGRAP). Engaging local communities in the development of sustainable transition policies is essential to ensure relevance, acceptance, and effectiveness. The adopted evaluation methodological framework mainly uses qualitative techniques to collect the feedback and the "lessons learned" from the policymakers, activists, experts and other local stakeholders engaged in the participatory processes. The methodology employed in this analysis comprises an examination of the participatory process, including document review and observations of public engagement events. The data collected are analysed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the process.

The observed dimensions focus on:
1. Networking capacity and stakeholder involvement
2. Local policy making

It is to be mentioned that, depending on each territory's specificities, different stakeholders have been mobilised using different tools. So, for instance, questionnaires for entrepreneurs and citizens were circulated in Mirabella Imbaccari) whilst a participatory and diffused SWOT analysis was carried out in Sifnos. Apparently, a situated approach to drafting local action plans for green transition is essential because it recognizes the unique and diverse characteristics of each territory and its citizens. This approach ensures that environmental policies and strategies are tailored to the specific needs, resources, expectations, and desires of a particular region.

To further enhance the evaluation of the LSGRAP drafting approach, it would be important to assess the specific outcomes and impact of the LSGRAP on the project's territories in the medium- and long-term, to check the extent to which the LSGRAPs have effectively addressed the needs and expectations identified in the earlier stages of the process and whether the proposed actions are in line with existing strategies for local development, available resources, and schedules.

Experiences in the partner territories

Mirabella Imbaccari (IT)

The development of the LSGRAP in Mirabella Imbaccari included the multifaceted priority of establishing an environmentally sustainable model that is economically viable while safeguarding social rights and the well-being of citizens. In the pursuit of such vision, the following policy objectives were stated:

1. Participatory development, thus promoting the development of a community that adapts its economy and services to address social and environmental challenges. This would be achieved through participatory development plans, integrating contributions from local stakeholders, and enhancing the local environmental, historical-cultural, and social heritage.

2. Environmental and social sustainability. In the attempt to achieve full environmental and social sustainability, the involved local parties need to focus on energy efficiency, renewable energy production, sustainable mobility, natural resource preservation, biodiversity, and the development of a circular economy. Our goal is for the community to absorb more CO_2 than it produces, ensuring the well-being of all citizens.

3. Support to local entrepreneurship by integrating social and environmental sustainability with economic sustainability. This will ensure the resilience of local enterprises, driving economic growth while preserving the environment.

4. Encouragement of civic engagement, associative vitality, and active citizen participation. This would be achieved through consultation, co-development, and co-creation processes to address local needs effectively.

5. Engagement of young generations, by mobilising schools and training centres. Awareness must be raised among young people regarding sustainable development challenges and the collaborative spirit needed to address them. These institutions will serve as centres for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of solutions and best practices for social and environmental transition, tailored to the local context.

6. Support to international cooperation with other resilient and inclusive European territories, fostering transnational cooperation and the exchange of best practices.

As regards the dimension "Networking capacity and Stakeholder Involvement":

The process was led by the partner Municipality of Mirabella Imbaccari with the support of the Fondazione MeSSInA. Targeted actions were carried out, directly engaging segmented groups of local stakeholders:

- The **local entrepreneurs**. They were initially involved in a survey; a questionnaire was circulated, to elaborate an analysis of the inclination towards digital innovation and energy sustainability, with a specific focus on the agri-food and tourism-hospitality sectors. However, some general trends were outlined with respect to the technologies adopted by companies in Mirabella Imbaccari to improve operational efficiency, reduce energy costs, attract and satisfy customers, and address environmental challenges and sustainability regulations. As for the inclination of entrepreneurs towards the development of solutions like Renewable Energy Communities (CER), territorial and supply chain marketing, or circular economy models, this may depend on various factors, including awareness of the benefits of such approaches, available financial resources, and opportunities for collaboration. Entrepreneurs may be encouraged to participate in such initiatives if they see clear economic, environmental, or marketing benefits, as well as incentives or support from local or regional authorities.

- **Local citizens**. A total of 193 questionnaires, only 173 of which were valid and useful for analysis, were received from a sample of citizens aged between 11 and 86 years, 55.5% of whom were female. The areas of intervention perceived as priorities by the respondents are in order: Countering depopulation and an ageing population; Citizens' health and the availability of social and health services; Business development (agriculture, industry, tourism, services, etc.).
The prospect of realising a solidarity CER in Mirabella Imbaccari is considered very attractive by the young-adult subgroup and by the elderly. The principles and values on which people express a very high level of agreement are those concerning the sphere of freedom of opinion and a propensity for openness and confrontation; this is followed by the importance given to culture and knowledge and environmental sustainability. Principles related to environmental sustainability are more present in the 15-64 age group.
- **Associations**. A short questionnaire was also used with associations. In this case, the questionnaire was designed as a tool to map the associations in the area, to bring them closer to the project activities and to engage them in the dissemination of the questionnaires to citizens.
- The **local educational institutions**. Upper secondary schools were contacted and mobilised, leveraging on existing agreements with a focus on preventing early school-leaving. Specifically, the REP (Rete Educativa Prioritaria – *Priority Education Network*) was developed and finalised for signature. The collaboration aimed to enhance the vision and mission of the *educational community* (*comunità educante*) within individual territories, with shared actions for the education and lifelong training of students. The local agreement includes 23 schools, 14 Municipalities, 1 University, 14 local associations.
- The **other GRAPE partner, Fondazione MeSSInA** with which a memorandum of understanding was signed. The memorandum signed with the MeSSInA Foundation pertains to the establishment of a "Park of Knowledge" (*Parco dei Saperi*) that not only fosters socio-economic alternatives but also enriches the educational landscape and supports artistic and scientific research, all with the overarching goal of addressing social inequalities and advancing sustainability in the community. The specific objectives are:
  o Aggregating social and productive organisations. The primary goal is to bring together pre-existing and newly generated social and productive organisations through the activities of the Park. This collaborative effort aims to promote socio-economic systems that provide alternatives in various aspects of human functioning, all interconnected with strategic assets related to the ecological transition. These areas include energy, sustainable mobility, social-green housing, greenhouse gas emissions, agri-food, circular economy, and sustainable urban metabolism.
  o Enhancing educational provisions. Another objective is to enrich the educational provisions in the region, focusing on themes related to the Institute of the Political, Economic, and Social Sciences (IPBS). This will involve creating educational communities capable of addressing social inequalities and fostering recognition and combating educational poverty. The continuous internal relationship within this not widely disseminated humanity serves as the basis for epistemological progress, generating self-awareness in contemporary society. This, in turn, provides the foundation for a reconfiguring era, structuring and explicitly socializing knowledge according to the complexity and prerequisites needed.
  o Supporting artistic and scientific research. The memorandum also seeks to accompany and support processes of territorial metamorphosis, emphasising the concept of beauty. It aims to counteract inequalities and promote the ongoing transformation of the local community.

STAKEHOLDER CLUSTERS	PARTICIPANTS
Local policy makers and administrators	- Municipality of Mirabella Imbaccari: the Mayor's office, several Assessors and the Council - 14 Municipalities in the Eastern area of Sicily
Citizens	- 193 citizens filled the questionnaires
Educational institutions	- 23 schools located in the Eastern area of Sicily - Training agencies
Economic actors	- 7 local enterprises
Social economy actors	- Fondazione MeSSInA
Other stakeholders	- 8 local associations dealing with: social and education inclusion, environmental protection, non formal citizenship education, charities

As regards the dimension "Policy making":

The LSGRAP drafting process was designed as a systematic approach that combined city government-driven policies and top-level guidance with active participation from local stakeholders and the community. The local authorities took a leadership role in implementing the process, with an appointed team responsible for driving the local action plan's development and execution.

Then, the local government launched community engagement efforts to inform residents and local stakeholders about the plan and its objectives. This was done through public meetings, workshops, and information campaigns, to gather input and feedback from local stakeholders. These sessions allowed for the exchange of ideas, identification of priorities, and the co-creation of the action plan.

In April 2023, the Municipality of Mirabella Imbaccari published a "Notice of Expression of Interest" aimed at identifying parties interested in establishing a community of renewable and solidarity energies. This initiative signifies a policy-led approach, demonstrating a proactive stance in promoting sustainability and renewable energy solutions within the local community. In this endeavour, the Municipality harnessed and activated existing networks, which have been dynamic and engaged in various other areas as well.

This policy-driven initiative highlights the Municipality's commitment to not only promote renewable energy but also to foster a sense of collective responsibility and solidarity within the community. By inviting interested parties to join the community of renewable energies, the Municipality of Mirabella has taken a significant step toward enhancing local sustainability and strengthening networks that can address a range of important issues.

This collaborative approach is a proof of the Municipality's forward-thinking vision and its recognition of the power of collective action in achieving sustainable goals. It paves the way for a more environmentally conscious future for Mirabella and its residents.

Malegno (IT)

The LSGRAP drafting process in Malegno was strongly steered by the Social economy partner, Sol.Co. Camunia Consortium. The Municipality acted as an enabler of this process by establishing the overall framework for local strategic development.

As regards the dimension "Networking capacity and Stakeholder Involvement":

One distinctive aspect of the identification of stakeholders in Vallecamonica was the two-step approach that was adopted: in an initial phase only local organisations were involved (such as associations, cooperatives, and local authorities), followed by a subsequent phase broadening the audience starting from the organisations initially involved.

Therefore, at first stakeholders were identified among the Sol.Co. affiliated entities, namely several cooperatives were engaged that had prior experience in agriculture and local retail.

Furthermore, local associations were mobilised, or those with significant local influence, that actively address the same issues. The Biodistrict Association was engaged for matters related to agriculture, while the Legambiente Association, though of national scope, plays a vital role in the Camuno-Sebino area concerning energy communities.

Lastly, the energy service company Fedabo SpA was contacted as a trusted technical partner, given their previous involvement with the Consortium, various cooperatives, and local administrations.

This table shows the main stakeholder clusters:

STAKEHOLDER CLUSTERS	PARTICIPANTS
Local policy makers and administrators	- Municipality of Malegno: the Mayor's office, several Assessors and the Council - Other Municipalities of the Vallecamonica Mountain Community
Educational institutions	- --
Economic actors	- Local cooperatives - Fedabo SpA (Energy Service Company)
Social economy actors	- Social cooperatives - Associations
Other stakeholders	- Biodistrict Association - Legambiente Association

Public assemblies were summoned to explore in a collaborative way the theme of energy communities.

On a political level, in conjunction with the Mayor of Malegno and the President of Solco Camunia, also other local administrations in the area were contacted, having expressed their interest in the GRAPE initiative.

The stakeholder engagement strategy adopted in the early stages of this project showcases a well-considered and systematic approach to identifying and involving key players in Vallecamonica. It is evident that the project partners, specifically the Municipality of Malegno and the Solco Camunia Consortium, are deeply entrenched within the community and possess multifaceted roles within the region.

As regards the dimension "Policy making":

One notable aspect is the Mayor of Malegno's dual role as a councillor at the Vallecamonica Mountain Community. This positioning allows for a comprehensive engagement with the entire valley territory. Additionally, the Comunità Montana's affiliation with the Solco Consortium for the Vallecamonica area strengthens their reach and influence. Furthermore, the presence of various social cooperatives, active throughout the valley, within the Solco Consortium adds to the network's depth and breadth.

The collaboration among municipalities, facilitated by the Comunità Montana and seven territorial communities for common service provision, further underscores the cooperative spirit prevalent in the valley. This cooperative approach not only streamlines shared services but also serves as a catalyst for collaborative projects and initiatives. Vallecamonica's suitability for cooperative ventures on a wide scale is evident.

The decision to identify stakeholders in two phases, starting with key groups and then expanding the engagement base with their collaboration, demonstrates a nuanced approach. This method allows for a more extensive reach across the large and diverse territory while preserving local specificity, especially in terms of involving citizens and local administrations.
The project's focus on agriculture and energy communities aligns with the regional context and the cooperative spirit prevalent in Vallecamonica. By extending the Action Plan to the valley area and adopting a methodical stakeholder engagement strategy, the project lays a strong foundation for its future initiatives.

Sifnos (GR)

The development of the Local Action Plan for the Island progressed in stages, after the missions were accomplished:
- Collaborative, community-based events to develop the SWOT analysis.
- Follow-up open discussion in meetings and community-based events.
- Policy engagement with the Municipal Council and drafting of the LAP.

The three key stages of the process demonstrate a comprehensive strategy for crafting a meaningful and inclusive LSGRAP.

As regards the dimension "Networking capacity and Stakeholder Involvement":

A) Collaborative, community-based events to develop the SWOT analysis

As regards the SWOT analysis, this was developed by launching online and onsite collaboration events. The GRAPE partners joined forces with the Committee for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources of Sifnos, the Agricultural and Beekeeping Cooperative, and other actors of the local social economy. This collaboration strengthened the local action, and made it possible to have access to resources about other experiences in Sifnos, data from surveys as well as the recent recording of local varieties and seeds, as well as observations and suggestions of people from the island.

This collaborative approach not only facilitated access to a wealth of local knowledge and data but also encouraged a sense of ownership and participation among stakeholders. The involvement of the Municipality of Sifnos as a project partner further enhanced the credibility and visibility of the initiative.

B) Follow-up open discussion in meetings and community-based events

These events were also used to jointly look for forms of organisation and new proposals in order to formulate a Green and Social Action Plan as a long-term strategy for the Sifnos society.

The Municipality of Sifnos constantly ensured its collaboration in organising the conferences, workshops and meetings:
- Two conferences on sustainable management of natural resources (June and September 2022).
- A workshop on the social economy (September 2022 with the participation of representatives from European networks but also from small municipalities in Spain and Italy).
- A workshop and discussion on the NATURA area of Sifnos (December 2022).
- A workshop on "Stories about water in Sifnos- from the past to a sustainable future" (January 2023).
- A conference on agriculture and collaborative schemes for the support of sustainable agriculture and farmers, organised by the Municipality of Sifnos (February 2023).
- Recording of the memory of a sustainable local farming and of local varieties / species that were cultivated in Sifnos and collection of samples of local seeds, plants and trees.

These events not only encouraged ongoing engagement but also sought to explore new ideas and strategies for the development of a Green and Social Action Plan. The participation of a diverse range of stakeholders, including local policy makers, social economy actors, economic actors, and other community members, demonstrates a broad spectrum of involvement.

Furthermore, the possibility to exchange practices and experiences at transnational scale (with Spanish and Italian project partners and invited stakeholders) represented an added value that shaped the results of the enacted mutual learning processes.

The participants in the workshops, conferences and meetings were:

STAKEHOLDER CLUSTERS	PARTICIPANTS
Local policy makers and administrators	- Members of the Sifnos Municipal Council, like the president, the vice mayor, counsellors - Member of the Regional Council of South Aegean, - Former mayors etc
Social economy actors	- Members of the Committee for the Sustainable Management of Sifnos Natural resources - Members of the Cultural Union of Sifnos - Members of the Cultural Canter of Sifnos - Members of the Women Union of Sifnos SMARI - Members of environmental organisations
Economic actors	- Farmers and beekeepers' cooperative - Local farmers - Members of the Union of local Entrepreneurs - Members of the Union of touristic Enterprises - Rooms to rent
Other stakeholders	- Inhabitants living in Sifnos - School teachers - Sifnians living out of the island, eg in Athens - Experts eg architects, engineers, professors who are friends of Sifnos or are connected with the local people - Researchers supporting projects related to different issues of the insular life

As regards the dimension "Policy making":

C) Policy engagement with the Municipal Council and drafting of the LAP

The launch of the policy-making process occurred at a later stage, when the collected evidence (needs, assets, expectations and aspirations) had to be translated into feasible policy action.

This phase ensured that the LAP was firmly grounded in the needs and aspirations of the local community. The translation of collected data into actionable policy demonstrates a commitment to converting community input into tangible results.

The Local Action Plan for Sifnos demonstrates a sophisticated and comprehensive approach to addressing the island's sustainability challenges. This approach is characterised by its complex structure and rich contents, both of which reflect the depth and breadth of considerations that were taken into account when developing the Plan. A holistic approach to sustainability involved recognising that various aspects of community life are interconnected and interdependent.

The plan's structure likely accounts for different sectors, such as environment, economy, and social well-being, and how they influence each other. This integrated structure allows for a more nuanced and interconnected set of solutions, as required by the multiple stakeholders convened. In the case of Sifnos, the collaboration between local government, Social economy organisations, community organisations, businesses, and residents ensured that a wide spectrum of voices and viewpoints were considered in the plan's development.

The richness of the plan's contents implies that it goes beyond surface-level recommendations and addresses the multifaceted challenges and opportunities within the community. It likely contains a diverse range of initiatives, policies, and projects that tackle environmental conservation, economic development, social inclusivity, and cultural preservation. This comprehensive approach acknowledges that true sustainability encompasses a wide array of elements.

The implemented participatory method demonstrates a strong dedication to the co-construction of a common knowledge base among the engaged community actors, built on a bottom-up approach to sustainability planning. The co-design the Local Action Plan for the Island's sustainability emerge from the process if a variety of stakeholder clusters are involved and their opinions are taken into account.

Bonares (SP)

The GRAPE project incorporates communication actions as a vital component of its development to raise awareness and facilitate the socialization of an initiative aimed at engaging and involving local residents. The Bonares City Council, in collaboration with the Coopinte cooperative, has undertaken various informative and outreach efforts. These actions encompass the use of social media channels, online platforms, and face-to-face meetings with community members, all of which are designed to elucidate the participation process within this European project.

As regards the dimension "Networking capacity and Stakeholder Involvement":

To foster local ownership and responsibility for designing the local action plan, a structured work plan was devised. This plan, initiated with a preliminary phase of information/dissemination, was led by the City Council and Coopinte. The project was presented to various entities, including the municipal corporation, the City Council's technical team, local leaders, and the Governing Council of the Coopinte cooperative. Moreover, the project's progress and associated activities were shared through multiple communication channels to ensure widespread awareness among the municipality's population.

In terms of the participation process, a hybrid methodology was adopted, blending elements of participatory action research and future studies. The IAP approach allows for a deeper understanding of the community's reality by involving the population in the research process, fostering awareness and active participation. Concurrently, the project recognized the implicit concern for the future associated with socio-ecological transition and local innovations as precursors of potential futures. It aligns with future studies, acknowledging these innovations as early signals of change.

Two key actions have been executed to engage the community:
1. Participatory Video. This instrument, complementing the participatory action research methodology, serves to identify community needs, challenges, and dreams while making participatory action visible. It prompts critical awareness and has the potential to trigger personal, social, political, and cultural changes.
2. Futures Workshop. The Bonares City Council and Coopinte organized a workshop that brought together around twenty stakeholders from the municipality. The session was facilitated by Dr. Blanca Miedes, an expert in Economics and director of the Ibero-American Innovation Laboratory for socio-ecological transition. The workshop sought to analyse current challenges and envision the town's sustainable future. Participants included diverse representatives, such as business professionals, retirees, members of social collectives, educational institutions, local development centres, and City Council representatives. The issues of utmost concern to them were discussed, along with their collective aspirations for the municipality.

These endeavours aim to foster a sense of community involvement and co-creation, where residents' voices are valued and incorporated into the development of the local action plan for green and digital transition.

STAKEHOLDER CLUSTERS	PARTICIPANTS
Local policy makers and administrators	- City Council representatives
Social economy actors	- Social cooperatives
Economic actors	- Companies - Rural cooperatives

	- Business associations (eg Andalusia emprende)
Other stakeholders	- University of Huelva
	- Interested citizens (retired people)
	- Members of social collectives and associations
	- Educational institutions
	- Local development centres

From the local participatory sessions, many priority themes emerged. It is worth mentioning the focus on Digital Competencies. As part of a training initiative targeting unemployed women, the GRAPE project was introduced, emphasising the crucial need for acquiring digital skills. It is important to underscore that the 2030 Agenda places education and gender equality as pivotal challenges for creating inclusive societies. Furthermore, the agenda places significant emphasis on digital skills, particularly in bridging the digital divide. Statistics indicate that individuals who are unemployed and possess lower qualifications, especially women in vulnerable situations, are more susceptible to exclusion from the job market, training opportunities, and social engagement due to their lack of digital proficiency.

Participants in the programme expressed a desire for training tailored to their specific backgrounds, with a particular focus on enhancing their employability, aligning with the twin transition priorities of fostering green and digital competencies.

As regards the dimension "Policy making":

The Municipality of Bonares ensured policy consistency of the LSGRAP with existing and perspective policy facilities, while granting the protagonism of local Social economy and economic players. The LSGRAP is clearly aligned with existing and forthcoming policy frameworks and faiclties. In doing so, it not only upholds policy consistency but also places local social economy and economic stakeholders in pivotal roles.

Consequently, the plan considers the following core missions:
- Advancement of Renewable Energies. This mission revolves around encouraging and optimizing investments in solar panel installations within municipal structures. It further extends its efforts to bolster community energy projects and enhance energy efficiency.
- Promotion of Sustainable Urban Planning. Sustainability principles are seamlessly integrated into urban planning and infrastructure development. The focus is on fostering efficient transportation, sustainable mobility options, the creation of green spaces, and effective waste management.
- Education and Awareness Initiatives. A series of awareness and educational campaigns are set in motion to enlighten citizens about the significance of sustainability, climate change mitigation, and the transition towards a green and digital economy. These initiatives may encompass workshops, informative talks, and educational programmes conducted within schools and local communities.
- Building Collaborative Alliances. The plan is committed to forging partnerships with other municipalities, institutions, organisations, and relevant stakeholders. This collaborative approach enables the sharing of knowledge, best practices, and resources, ultimately expediting the transition process and distributing the responsibility of implementing resilient strategies.

For each of these missions/objectives, the Plan cleverly foresees practical/concrete endeavours and identifies the responsible subjects – be them public administration offices, economic actors, or social economy entities, or a mix of these.

General concluding remarks

The drafting of Local Action Plans in GRAPE delves into a pioneering participatory process initiated by local alliances made of City Councils and Social Economy entities in small towns and/or peripheral territories, to foster a socially-sustainable green transition.

This approach, involving local stakeholders, marks a significant leap from conventional top-down governance strategies to participatory, community-based envisioning and policy-making. This shift entails the principles of inclusivity, transparency, and collaboration in decision-making, as well as the acceptance of tailor-based and situated approaches, leaving behind the "one-size-fits-all" viewpoint.

A specific evaluation questionnaire has been administered to local partners engaged in the project, to collect their feedback on the LSGRAP process. Most of them has found its participation in the project very positive, especially for the three Social Economy Missions and the consequent exchange of knowledge and good practices.

With respect to the experience of drafting a Local Action Plan for the respective communities, half of project partners has found the guide tool for the elaboration of the Plans "complete, useful and comprehensive" even though sometimes "challenging". In particular, some partners have found the proposed deadlines too tight and other felt the need to give the guide a more "flexible" interpretation in order to make some aspects better fit the target community and its characteristics. Nonetheless, the drafting of the Local Action Plans has allowed communities to experience forms of collective learning and to build future cross-sectorial collaborations.

Despite the challenges connected to achieve the involvement and co-responsibility of territories' key-actors and despite the need for additional resources for the future implementation of the actions outlined in the Plans, the Local Action Plans have been also perceived as a guide for the local administrations to better address the communities' most urgent needs and co-design the future development of the communities.

Taking into account all such elements and the resulting LSGRAPs, it is clear that a context-specific and situated approach allows to value the following elements:

- Every region has its own set of environmental challenges, available resources, and social, economic, and cultural characteristics. What works for one area may not be suitable for another. A situated approach acknowledges these local variations and ensures that plans are relevant to the specific conditions of a territory.
- Local action plans that are developed with the input and involvement of local citizens are more likely to be successful. By accommodating the specific needs and expectations of the community, these plans are more likely to receive support and active participation from residents.
- A situated approach considers the available resources and infrastructure in a region. It takes into account the renewable energy potential, the existing industrial and agricultural base, and other relevant factors. This optimization ensures that investments are directed toward projects that are feasible and effective in a given area.
- Different regions have different cultural and social values. A situated approach respects and incorporates these values, making it more likely for the community to embrace and adopt green initiatives. It avoids top-down, one-size-fits-all solutions that might not align with local culture and values.
- Not all green technologies or practices are suitable for all areas. A context-specific approach allows for the identification of solutions that are most appropriate for a particular territory. For example, coastal areas may focus on renewable energy from offshore wind, while agricultural regions might prioritize sustainable farming practices.

- The economic situation of a region is a key factor. When drafting a local action plan, the existing economic structures need to be taken into account, opportunities for job creation and economic growth through green transition initiatives need to be spotted. This helps ensure that the transition is economically sustainable.
- When local communities are actively involved in the planning and decision-making process, they feel a greater sense of ownership and responsibility for the success of the green transition. This promotes accountability and encourages citizens to actively participate in achieving the set goals.
- Environmental challenges are not static, and a situated approach allows for adaptability. Local plans can be adjusted as conditions change, ensuring that the green transition remains effective and relevant over time.
- When drafting local action plans, involved parties need to consider compliance with national and global environmental goals and regulations, as it takes into account the unique local constraints and opportunities while ensuring broader compliance.

Furthermore, the "GRAPE lessons" suggest that in small towns and peripheral areas there may be encountered **specific bottlenecks and criticalities** that can hinder effective participation. To address these bottlenecks and criticalities, targeted actions can be put in place, such as awareness campaigns, building local capacity, promoting inclusivity, and providing resources to support the participation of all community members. Additionally, fostering a culture of openness and cooperation can help overcome resistance to change and power imbalances, creating a more inclusive and effective participatory process in small towns.

Small towns can be vital contributors to the green transition, but they face unique challenges that require tailored policy responses. By addressing the limitations in financial and human resources, fostering open dialogue, improving technological infrastructure, promoting change awareness, implementing hybrid engagement models, and building local expertise, policymakers can empower small towns to become active agents of sustainable development and environmental conservation. These efforts not only benefit individual communities but also contribute to the broader global effort to combat climate change and protect our planet.