

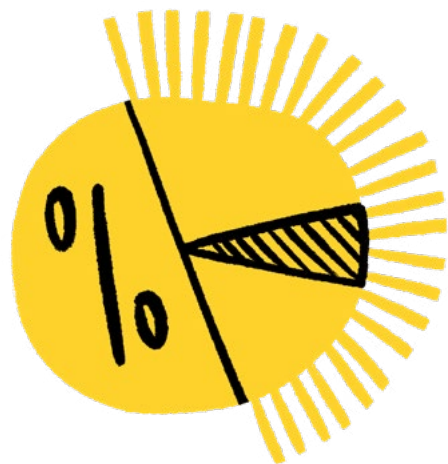
# Energy Citizenship Contracts – An integrative policy tool to facilitate energy citizenship

To reach the goals defined in the Paris agreement, all possible options to reduce carbon emissions need to be realized, including energy citizenship. Placing citizens at the forefront of the European energy transition and enabling them to play an active role in shaping and executing policy measures is a pivotal aspect of the European Green Deal. Energy citizenship can serve as a catalyst for driving the energy transition. It is a collective endeavor requiring a diverse set of stakeholders to collaborate and envision paths towards a sustainable future. Consequently, it is essential to establish, comprehend, and effectively govern fruitful relationships among all involved stakeholders in the transition process.

This policy brief introduces Energy Citizenship Contracts (ECCs) as a policy tool for formalizing and governing mutual benefits, rights and duties among energy transition stakeholders. ECCs bring together relevant stakeholders for collaboration, knowledge exchange and collective commitment to, ultimately, contribute to a more sustainable and resilient future. This approach ensures that energy citizens have a robust and trustworthy foundation upon which to base their future actions.



**Energy Citizenship Contracts (ECCs)** are voluntary agreements between different stakeholders that foster collaboration and encourage the coordination of sustainability goals and practices between energy communities and policy initiatives. ECCs outline community-level goals, involve relevant stakeholders across different sectors, and specify essential resources to achieve collectively agreed-upon objectives. They function as local, regional, or national policy instruments for inclusive, fair, and community-driven energy citizenship activities. GRETA's ECCs constitute a distinct variant of the forthcoming Climate City Contracts, which form the basis of the “100 climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030” mission proposed by the European Commission.



**The objective of ECCs** is to promote an inclusive environment that integrates various stakeholders from civil society as well as business and policy sectors (e.g., local and national policymakers) to develop shared targets and clearly outline rights and responsibilities. By providing reliable frameworks for citizen engagement, they aim to enhance policy transparency and accountability. The mutual development of ECCs fosters a sense of ownership and inclusivity leading to increased collective commitment. While ECCs can be initiated by various actors, such as energy communities or policymakers, they should not be developed in isolation but instead be closely linked to stakeholders' plans and policy frameworks at various levels. It is essential that policymakers actively participate in the development of an ECC to integrate energy citizenship principles into existing policies. This also leads to an increase in knowledge exchange and mutual understanding, providing a trustful basis for future actions.

Especially in the case of well-established energy communities characterized by robust community bonds and close collaboration with policymakers (e.g., GRETA case studies in Italy, Spain and Portugal), ECCs can foster a commitment to energy-just actions. They can play a pivotal role in mitigating risks and addressing potential emerging challenges, such as “community fatigue”, by integrating conflictual viewpoints and preventing undue community burdens. Moreover, ECCs have the capacity to bridge intergenerational differences by providing, for example, digital literacy for diverse citizens while concurrently safeguarding essential needs.

## RECOMMENDATION

Promote energy citizenship contracts (ECCs) and actively engage in exchanges for developing ECCs to facilitate energy citizenship actions and provide a solid basis for energy communities.



Continuous monitoring processes are crucial for preserving an established ECC's relevance and effectiveness over time, especially in response to changes in EU regulations and the need for adaptations on the national level. Periodic reviews of an ECC serve not only to showcase achievements but also openly identify areas for improvement ensuring that ECCs remain agile policy instruments that actively foster positive change within energy transition initiatives, with the consensus of all relevant stakeholders.

Collaboration among the stakeholders involved in the energy transition activities (including policymakers, business stakeholders, and energy communities) can ensure that ECCs align with broader sustainability goals, provide tailored incentives, regulatory support, and funding mechanisms that foster the growth and impact of energy citizenship.

**WHEN DEVELOPING ECCS THE FOLLOWING THREE ASPECTS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY POLICYMAKERS:**

1. Ensure that ECCs are accessible to everyone, i.e. emphasize the involvement of marginalized communities.
2. Explore the integration of digital technologies and platforms to broaden the distribution and impact of ECCs.
3. Foster a culture of collaboration and knowledge-sharing among energy citizens not only within a municipality but also among communities in different regions and countries to learn from each other's experiences, successes, and challenges.



**CASE STUDY EXAMPLE  
Pilastro-Roveri in Italy**

Bologna is one of the 100 cities selected by the 'Mission 100 Climate Neutral Cities' due to develop a Climate City Contract. In the case study of Pilastro-Roveri in Bologna, spatial proximity laid the foundation for the formation of an energy community. Municipal policymakers actively promote the energy community in collaboration with local associations. Similarly, city agencies serve as facilitators, ensuring an increase of energy citizenship initiatives by connecting energy communities and providing access to necessary resources and expertise. Overall, the unique characteristics and supportive context in Pilastro-Roveri provide a solid

foundation for a successful implementation of an ECC for realizing sustainable and just energy goals.

In the context of the Climate City Contract, the Energy Citizenship Contract functions as a versatile tool, offering entry into the policy process to a diverse array of stakeholders, encompassing citizens, associations, businesses, and institutions. Furthermore, the ECC formalizes the commitment of these stakeholders, especially in the context of energy citizenship actions.

Within the GRETA project, ECCs have been successfully implemented in three of the six case studies: Pilastro-Roveri in Italy, Coopérnico in Portugal, and UR BEROA in Spain. The foundation for ECC development in each case study relies on GRETA's Community Transition Pathways (CTPs). CTPs are an effective tool for energy citizenship communities to articulate their energy and sustainability goals and outline required activities and resources to attain these objectives.

## FURTHER READING

### For a template of the ECC and the implemented ECCs within the GRETA project see D5.4

D. Longo, M. Massari, S.O. Boulanger, V. Borghi, G. Manella, A. Kantel, S. Preuss, L. Schlindwein, L. Klein, I. J. Iturriza, L. Polo (2023). Guidelines on Energy Citizenship Contracts – Definition and implementation. D5.4 of the Horizon 2020 project GRETA, EC grant agreement n°101022317, Bologna, Italy [https://projectgreta.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/GRETA\\_D5\\_4\\_Guidelines-on-Energy-Citizenship-Contracts\\_v1-submitted\\_with-appendices.pdf](https://projectgreta.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/GRETA_D5_4_Guidelines-on-Energy-Citizenship-Contracts_v1-submitted_with-appendices.pdf)

### For details on the Community Transition Pathways as preparatory steps for the ECCs see D5.3

Boulanger S.O.M. et al., (2022), Roadmap for Community Transition Pathways. Guidelines, D5.3 of the Horizon 2020 project GRETA, EC grant agreement n°101022317, Bologna, Italy [https://projectgreta.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/GRETA\\_D5\\_3\\_Roadmap-for-Community-Transition-Pathways-Guidelines.pdf](https://projectgreta.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/GRETA_D5_3_Roadmap-for-Community-Transition-Pathways-Guidelines.pdf)



## ABOUT THE PROJECT GRETA

**GRETA aims to foster energy citizenship emergence by enhancing awareness and removing policy barriers within the European Union.** Its primary objective is to comprehensively investigate the conditions and challenges associated with energy citizenship to derive policy recommendations and policy tools to implement a just and green energy transition, ensuring inclusivity for all. The project focuses on the relationship between energy citizenship behavior and the socio-political context, in which people engage in Green Energy Transition Actions. GRETA particularly highlights the crucial role of policies in facilitating and empowering these activities.

**Based on empirical research, the project offers various policy recommendations in a set of six policy briefs to facilitate the engagement of citizens in current energy transition efforts.** The empirical research draws on data from a multinational survey with approximately 10,000 participants across 16 EU countries, as well as six case studies conducted in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, and the Netherlands.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**  
[projectgreta.eu](https://projectgreta.eu)

