

Guidelines for applicants

November 2021



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1 What is the Capacity-Building Programme of PROSPECT+

1.1 Background and overall objective

From June 2017 to November 2020 the EU-funded H2020 PROSPECT project implemented a peer learning programme in which almost 200 local and regional authorities exchanged knowledge and experience on innovative financing schemes for their sustainable energy and climate actions. The programme built upon successful innovative financing schemes implemented in 31 cities and regions, who acted as mentors in the PROSPECT learning journey. Participants came from 29 European countries and exchanged knowledge on 18 innovative financing schemes through 4 learning cycles and 45 learning groups.

Built on this success and the many lessons learned from this experience, the H2020 project « PROSPECT+ - From learning to action! » is launching a new capacity-building programme for local and regional authorities. The programme will focus on innovative financing for energy and climate actions with a strong focus on the crucial aspects of capacity building, decision-making and replication processes.

By **innovative financing schemes**, PROSPECT+ refers to non-traditional ways of raising funds and facilitating sustainable energy and climate investments by mixing different sources (own funds, public and private funds) or engaging different partners (e.g., citizens, private sector). These innovative financing schemes include:

- Energy Performance Contracting (working with ESCOs)
- Internal contracting (intracting)
- Revolving funds
- Guarantee funds
- Citizen financing (crowdfunding, cooperatives)
- Soft loans
- Third-party financing
- Green Bonds

The PROSPECT+ capacity-building programme will be delivered upon **5 thematic areas**, namely: **public building, private building, public lighting, transport, and cross-sectoral topics**.

The learning programme aims to engage a total of 200 local and regional authorities, directly participating in one of its four learning cycles, either as mentors or mentees. A special focus will be made to ensure that beyond this direct participation in learning groups, trained participants will spread the acquired knowledge within their organisations and with other stakeholders in their local ecosystem.

In each learning cycle, PROSPECT+ aims to create at least 16 learning groups, each of them gathering from 2 to 6 participants.

1.2 Engagement process and calendar

PROSPECT+ will launch four calls for applications to engage public authorities in its four capacity building cycles starting respectively in:

- February 2022
- November 2022
- August 2023
- May 2024

The first call for applications will run from November 2021 to January 2022.

Applications will be selected according to eligibility and evaluation criteria. Selected participants from the different regional and local authorities acting as mentors or mentees will be matched to create the most effective capacity building groups.

Beside the development of a community of practice, the PROSPECT+ capacity-building programme will run online and physical meetings between mentors and mentees, as well as common online sessions for all participants from each learning cycle, and in addition two masterclasses in Brussels for the most-advanced mentees.

1.3 Participation modalities

Regional or local public authorities can participate in the PROSPECT+ capacity-building programme either as **mentors** or **mentees**.

A **mentor** is an individual representing a local or regional authority who has had direct experience with or have specific expertise in financing a sustainable energy and climate action through an innovative scheme and is willing to share insights to a mentee.

A **mentee**, on the other hand, is an individual representing a local or regional authority who wants to learn from an experienced or expert peer on financing a sustainable energy project using an innovative scheme and is interested to apply what they learned in their own context.

Peer-learning methods: peer mentoring, study visit, and local mentoring are the three methods adopted in the PROSPECT+ capacity-building programme, and are summarised below:

- **Peer mentoring** is a one-to-one relationship between a mentor and a mentee that enables deep learning exchanges, joint problem solving, and counselling.
- **Study visit** allows a group of mentees to learn from the mentors how they have implemented their projects, getting first-hand insights and recommendations.
- **Local mentoring** is a study group consisting of participants from the same country (or region), who speak the same language and have common backgrounds and plans.

Depending on the level of maturity of their projects, selected mentees will join either a peer-mentoring (1 mentor and 1 mentee) or a study-visit group (1 mentor and up to 5 mentees).

In peer mentoring, the mentor will travel to the mentee's locality, whereas in the study-visit, the group of mentees will travel to the mentor's locality.

In each of the 4 capacity building cycles, there will be a possibility for some participants to join a local group in their own country, with 1 mentor and up to 5 mentees.

Two masterclasses will be proposed to participants with the most advanced projects. They will take place in Brussels, after the capacity building cycles 2 and 4.

In addition, before each learning cycle starts, mentors will benefit from a dedicated online training session, where they will receive all necessary information on the PROSPECT+ methodology, to be fully equipped for the exchanges with their mentees.

Each group will be accompanied by a member of the PROSPECT+ project consortium, who will organise and facilitate the exchanges and make sure the capacity building programme runs smoothly.

1.4 Course and duration of a capacity-building cycle

Each learning cycle will be implemented in a maximum duration of eight months and will consist of the following steps:

Preliminary steps

- One online training session for new mentors;
- A first general introductory online meeting, gathering all participants from all groups.

Capacity building programme steps

- **Step 1:** an online meeting of about 2-4 hours, where participants in a group will get to know each other and mentors will present their good practices;
- **Step 2:** an online meeting of about 4 hours, where mentees present their projects and learning objectives;
- **Step 3:** a two-day physical meeting, either at the mentor's or mentee's locality to deepen the exchanges, meet relevant local stakeholders and answer mentees' capacity-building and learning needs;
- **Step 4:** an online meeting of about 2-4 hours, on the question of replicability (how the mentees will integrate the acquired knowledge in their projects and increase their financial readiness);
- **Step 5 (optional):** a masterclass in Brussels for mentees with the most advanced projects.

NOTA BENE: due to the Covid-19 pandemic and depending on how the sanitary situation evolves, the planned physical meeting in Step 3 might be replaced by online meetings. Each group will decide in due time with their facilitator if the physical meeting can take place or should be replaced by online meetings.

1.5 In what language will the Capacity-Building Programme be carried out?

The PROSPECT+ capacity building programme and all related exchanges and materials will be carried out in English. Participants must have a B2¹ command of English to be able to communicate easily within their group, in all activities of the programme.

An exception will be made for mentees in local groups, where activities will take place in the national/regional languages, with the services of an interpreter for the exchanges with the mentor.

1.6 What costs will be covered?

Participation to the PROSPECT+ capacity-building programme and all related activities is free.

Mentors will receive a lump sum of 1.400 euros to compensate their working time and contributions.

Participants' travel and accommodation costs will be covered as indicated in the table below:

	Maximum costs reimbursement for the mentor	Maximum costs reimbursement per mentee
In peer-mentoring groups (Mentor travelling to the mentee's locality)	500 euros	160 euros
In study-visit groups (A group of mentees from different countries travelling to the mentor's locality)	180 euros	500 euros
In local groups (Mentor visiting a group of mentees in a same country)	500 euros	340 euros

1.7 Where to find more information on the Capacity-Building Programme?

More information on the capacity building programme can be found on the PROSPECT+ website:

- In the dedicated page of the project website <https://h2020prospect.eu/learning-programme>
- and in the FAQ section <https://h2020prospect.eu/faqs-terminology>

Informative webinars will be organised at the beginning of each call for applications. The first informative webinar will take place in January 2022. The webinar announcement and link for a registration will be published on <https://h2020prospect.eu/get-involved>

¹ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/9_languages_common_european_framework_of_reference_en.pdf

2 What types of participants are targeted?

2.1 Mentors

We look for local or regional authorities that have successfully designed and implemented innovative financing solutions in sustainable energy or climate projects in their territories, and in one or several of the 5 thematic areas of PROSPECT+.

The persons taking part in the capacity-building programme of PROSPECT+ as mentors must have a sound knowledge of how those projects were designed and implemented. If necessary, they should be able to liaise with other experts within their organisation, to gather all elements of information that will help mentees in increasing their knowledge and capacities.

Mentors should have a strong motivation to share their knowledge with their peers in other EU cities and regions. Ideally, they have a former experience in mentoring activities, but this is not compulsory as, when joining PROSPECT+, new mentors will benefit from a training session on the mentoring methodology.

Being a mentor in PROSPECT+ strengthens the perception of their local or regional authority as an expert on innovative financing scheme for sustainable energy and climate action projects. Moreover, mentors represent their city or region at the European level, and they will have the chance to showcase their activities and achievements. PROSPECT+ will feature such city or region as a good practice on innovative financing and give it visibility in the project materials, events, and communication channels.

2.2 Mentees

We seek local or regional authorities that are interested in learning from an experienced peer-mentor on how to finance a sustainable energy and climate project using innovative financing schemes.

The person participating as mentee should be directly involved in the financing and implementation of a local sustainable energy and climate project for which they are seeking the expertise of a mentor. This project should be part of a local or regional sustainable energy and climate action plan or similar and should be at least in the preparatory stage. The mentee should be able to liaise with other experts and political representatives within their organisation to gather all elements of information related to the local project and to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and replication of the innovative financing scheme on the territory.

Mentees will have the opportunity to learn from other projects implemented in Europe and apply what they learned in their own context. Also, they will get tailor-made assistance adapted to their capacity-building objectives and needs, and to confront ideas with peers, and finally share their experience and challenge their knowledge to come up with new solutions.

2.3 What commitments are expected from participants?

When applying to the PROSPECT+ capacity building programme, participants commit to follow the full mentoring/learning cycle and to undertake the necessary preparation and follow-up tasks, according to the instructions and recommendations provided by the group facilitator.

If you are selected to be a mentor or mentee in one of the capacity-building cycles, you will dedicate approximately 7 days for mentors and 5 days for mentees throughout the whole cycle. The duration of a learning cycle is flexible, ranging from 4 to 8 months, depending on the availability of participants and the work plan and time plan of each group.

3 How to apply?

The PROSPECT+ application forms are submitted on the EUSurvey platform. This allows you to download a PDF version of the form. You can also save your application at every step to come back to it at a later stage.

3.1 Calls for applications and deadlines

The first call for mentors will be open from 29th of November 2021 to 17th of December 2021.

The first call for mentees will be open from 10th to 28th of January 2022.

Links to the online application forms for mentors and mentees will be published on <https://h2020prospect.eu/get-involved>

Please note that due to some constraints linked to the project's calendar there will be no deadline extension possible in the first call for applications. Applications must be strictly submitted within the deadlines mentioned above.

3.2 Who is eligible to apply?

PROSPECT+ will accept applications from:

- Staff members of regional or local authorities or their energy/climate agencies, in the eligible countries.
- Staff members of other local or regional organisations (e.g., development agencies, municipal companies, energy cooperatives, ...), in the eligible countries.
- External consultants working for a local or regional public authority in the eligible countries.

Eligible countries are EU-27, the United-Kingdom and H2020 associated countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

Applicants should demonstrate their capacity to manage or contribute directly to local or regional projects in the fields of sustainable energy and climate actions.

One participant can be both mentor and mentee in different capacity-building cycles and thematic areas.

Former participants as mentors or mentees to PROSPECT (2017 – 2020) can apply to PROSPECT+, but mentees must apply with another project.

All applicants are asked to provide a letter of support from the mayor or another political representative of the public authority they will represent in PROSPECT+. A template letter is available for a download from the application forms.

3.3 What information should be included in the application?

For mentor applicants

The application form for mentors includes 3 main sections:

- One section to provide information on the organisation
- One section to provide information about the applicant, including their eventual former experiences in peer-mentoring, and their preferences for one or the other of the PROSPECT+ peer-learning methods
- One section about the applicant's expertise in implementing innovative financing schemes for energy or climate actions, allowing them to become a mentor in PROSPECT+. Here, applicants can choose up to three thematic areas and financing schemes and describe for each of them the successful project/good practice they have implemented. The description is guided by a list of items (see below). In addition, applicants can upload documents to provide further information on their actions, e.g., an already published case study.

Information to provide for the project/good practice description:

- Project/action title
- Starting date of implementation
- (Estimated) date of completion
- Alignment with local (SEAPs/SECAPs/SUMPs) or regional, national plans and policies
- Budget
- EU or national/regional funding sources
- Departments involved within their organisation, other partnerships and stakeholders involved
- Estimated annual energy savings (if appropriate)
- Targeted energy source (if appropriate)
- Estimated yearly CO₂ reduction (tCO₂/a) (if appropriate)
- Estimated RES production (MWh/a) (if appropriate)
- Other benefits or significant outcomes (i.e., annual revenues generated, new jobs created, public awareness raising, improvement of local governance)
- Objective (i.e., targeted problem)
- Solutions (an explanation of the measure outcome and output, i.e., energy refurbishment of public buildings with a paragraph describing it)

- If the project was awarded at EU or national level
- Success factors
- Specific local conditions for implementation (reference to regulations or support schemes on a regional or national level that helped implement this action)

In case of the selected applicants, this information will be used for the publication of good practices on the PROSPECT+ project website.

Applicants must fill-out the application form and especially their project description carefully, as it will serve the organisers to properly evaluate their ability to become a PROSPECT+ mentor. All details provided will also enable the best matching of participants.

For mentee applicants

This section will be completed in an updated version of the “Guidelines for applicants”, that will be published in early January 2022.

3.4 How will applications be evaluated and matched?

Evaluation criteria

Eligible applications will be evaluated by the members of the PROSPECT+ project consortium, according to the following criteria:

- Overall quality of the application (i.e., answers provided are clear, complete, detailed, and consistent).

Specific evaluation criteria for mentors:

- Motivation to share knowledge and expertise with peers in other cities, regions or agencies;
- Proven successful experience in implementing innovative financing schemes in at least one of the PROSPECT+ thematic areas. This will be evaluated through the elements provided in the project description;
- Previous experience in peer-mentoring (not mandatory but will be considered a plus).

Specific evaluation criteria for mentees:

- Clearly identified and described challenges and capacity-building needs in innovative financing;
- Clearly identified and described project in at least one of the five PROSPECT+ thematic areas;
- Motivation to acquire new knowledge from an experienced peer in another city, region or agency;
- Ability to share the acquired knowledge with other colleagues in their organisation.

Matching criteria

Once all applications are evaluated, members of the PROSPECT+ project consortium will proceed with the matching of selected applicants, with the objective to create the most effective capacity-building groups of mentors and mentees, according to the following criteria:

- Mentees’ project(s) and mentors’ experience in the same thematic area;

- Interest from the mentee in financing schemes implemented by the mentor;
- Common challenges;
- Type of organisation;
- Population size;
- Gender-balance groups.

Additional criteria will be used to assign and match selected applicants in groups with different peer-learning methods (peer mentoring, study visit, and local mentoring):

- **In peer-mentoring groups** (one mentor with one mentee, with deeper learning exchanges, joint problem solving, and counselling), will be matched:
 - Mentors who declared a preference for this peer-learning method and were evaluated as able to do so;
 - Mentees with the most mature projects, based on their finance readiness.
- **In study visit groups** (allowing a group of mentees to learn how the mentor's project has been implemented, getting first-hand insights and recommendations), will be matched:
 - Mentors who declared a preference for this peer-learning method;
 - Mentees with common learning objectives.
- **In local mentoring groups** (study groups in which all mentees are in the same country), will be matched:
 - Mentors and mentees who declared a preference for this peer-learning method.

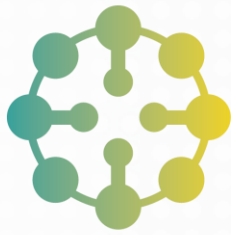
3.5 When and how applicants will be informed of the results?

Selected mentors will receive an email confirmation in the second week of January 2022 at the latest.

Selected mentees will receive an email confirmation in the third week of February 2022 at the latest.

All participants will be informed by email of the results of the matching process, i.e., to which mentor or mentees they have been matched, in the fourth week of February 2022. Facilitators will then contact participants in their groups to launch the capacity-building cycle activities.

All applicants must be aware that depending on the number and on the content of applications received, the organisers might not be able to match some of the mentors or mentees. In that case, applicants will be contacted and encouraged to renew their application in the next call.



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