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# *Initial insights from the stakeholder interaction following the LOCALISED methodology*

D8.4

*Tobias Gralke, Andrea Ancona,  
Katja Firus, Bernd Hezel, David  
Horvath, Jordi Pascual, Noah  
Pflugradt, Soheil Shayegh,  
Christiane Walter*



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<b>Authors</b>	Tobias Gralke (CMF) Andrea Ancona (T6) Katja Firus (T6) Bernd Hezel (CMF) David Horvath (ÖGUT) Jordi Pascual (IREC) Noah Pflugradt (FZJ) Soheil Shayegh (EIEE) Christiane Walter (PIK)
<b>Reviewers</b>	Simona de Rosa (T6) Luís Costa (PIK)

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>AB</b>	Advisory Board
<b>CMF</b>	Climate Media Factory
<b>CoM</b>	Covenant of Mayors
<b>D</b>	Deliverable
<b>EIEE</b>	European Institute on Economics and the Environment
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FZJ</b>	Forschungszentrum Jülich
<b>IREC</b>	Catalonia Institute for Energy Research
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>MAGGS</b>	Metropolitan Area Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot
<b>ÖGUT</b>	Österreichische Gesellschaft für Umwelt und Technik
<b>PIK</b>	Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SECAP</b>	Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans
<b>SOI</b>	SDG-oriented Indicator
<b>T</b>	Task
<b>T6</b>	T6 Ecosystems srl
<b>UITP</b>	Union Internationale des Transports Publics
<b>UT</b>	Universiteit Twente

## Executive Summary

One integral part of LOCALISED is the systematic interaction with different stakeholders to understand the questions and needs of the end users of the project's results and services. This deliverable reports on how the stakeholder interaction methodology (established and introduced in LOCALISED Deliverable (D) 8.1) has been implemented in the first 18 months of the project and discusses the initial insights from this first interaction phase.

The insights reported in this deliverable can be summed up in three categories (*Tool concepts & features, Networking & early dissemination, Other project outputs*). They have been helpful to develop a better understanding of specific decarbonisation challenges and needs of different stakeholders as well as to verify and improve some major conceptual components and features that the LOCALISED tools will implement. They have also been helping verify the general relevance of the LOCALISED tools & data for specific stakeholder groups and build relationships with them early in the process. Finally, insights from this first stakeholder interaction phase have informed parts of LOCALISED that do not directly concern the development of the tools.

While the different Work Packages in the first project phase were mainly interested in task-specific questions when interacting with stakeholders, the main focus of the remaining months of phase 1 of the stakeholder interaction will be to integrate these initial insights, distill more general questions from them, such as how the contributions of different work packages can best become a relevant product for our users, and streamline the process in view of interaction phase 2. This has already started in the form of two working groups (*tool features implementation, soft dimension integration*), each with researchers from different WPs, aiming at thinking about the tool development from users' perspectives. Combined with the insights reported in this deliverable, the results from these two working groups will flow into the start of phase 2 (co-designing forms and functionalities of the tools).

# 1 Introduction

The overriding objective of the LOCALISED project is to develop user-friendly products, data, and methods that support local authorities, citizens, and businesses in planning for deep decarbonisation and climate adaptation, in a way that would speed up the uptake of mitigation and adaptation actions. One integral part of this process is the interaction with relevant stakeholders and future users as established and introduced in the *Stakeholder interaction methodology and schedule (LOCALISED Deliverable 8.1)* (Hezel et al., 2022).

This deliverable gives insights into the interaction with stakeholders in the project's first 18 months, so before the start of the development of the two main LOCALISED tools: the *Decarbonisation Profiler* and the *Net-Zero Business Consultant*. It focuses on interactions with the so-called "wise" group, which were mainly undertaken to get these stakeholders' feedback on research approaches and first results.

The report starts with an analysis of the stakeholder mapping, which was implemented according to the methodology presented in D8.1. The stakeholder mapping belongs to Work Package (WP) 9 "Communication, dissemination, networking, and sustainability of outputs", and in particular Task (T) 9.1 "Communication and Dissemination", but is reported here to better analyse the first stage of the interaction process as a whole.

Then, the report describes in more detail how different interactions with mapped stakeholders took place, and what insights they enabled for the project's specific topics. All accounts are based on the standardised documentation of each stakeholder engagement activity provided by partners in the internal project workspace and interviews with WP leaders. Due to privacy reasons, stakeholder names and other personal data are not disclosed.

Finally, these initial insights from the first 18 months of stakeholder interaction are discussed regarding their meaning for the next steps of the stakeholder interaction process in particular and the project in general.

## 2 Initial stakeholder mapping as a precursor

### **2.1 Background: Stakeholder Interaction Methodology (D8.1)**

As established in the methodology defined in D8.1, interactions with stakeholders are planned at three different stages of the project:

1. to provide information about data and insights the stakeholders need for the considered transformation process, and which types of tools are suited to deliver these;
2. to help co-designing forms and functionalities of the tools;
3. to support sharing the tools and promoting their use.



Three different categories of relevant stakeholders have been identified to work towards these goals (cf. D8.1):

1. the “wise” group, composed of people whose expertise and knowledge about local decarbonisation procedures and adaptation planning is fundamental to understanding the kind of tools to design;
2. the “users” group, which are potential adopters of the tools who are helpful in co-designing the web application;
3. the “community of interest” group, comprising all people that may be interested in LOCALISED results and outputs (including the previous two groups) and including potential multipliers.

To identify relevant conversation partners, a stakeholder mapping was set up: a matrix was developed, containing a set of important organisational and individual details about the stakeholders to be contacted, as well as indications about the LOCALISED partner supposed to contact them. The matrix is shared in a password-protected PIK cloud folder which can be accessed by the LOCALISED partners only, thus complying with the GDPR regulation and data protection policies.

For what concerns organisational attributes, the main variables collected are:

- Name of the identified stakeholder’s institution/organisation
- URL: link to the organisation’s website, including bio and other information
- Country where the organisation is based
- Category in LOCALISED: indicating if the organisation is an associated partner, an Advisory Board (AB) member, or an external partner
- Type: denoting whether the organisation belongs to the public sector, the private sector, academia, civil society, or other
- Sub-type: more specific operational area of the organisation
- Main sector of expertise (among those addressed by LOCALISED, i.e., energy, buildings, transport, agriculture, or manufacturing)
- Geographic area where the organisation operates

Regarding individual attributes, the main variables refer to:

- Name and surname of the identified stakeholder
- Email address or phone number of the identified stakeholder
- Users/Wise/Community of interest: indicating which stakeholder group the stakeholder belongs to
- Title/position of the identified stakeholder in the respective institution
- Function: a set of activities and functions performed by the contact person in the organisation
- Gender: denoting if the contact person identifies as male, female, other, or prefers not to answer.

For implementing the mapping, desktop research was performed, and all partners were asked to add stakeholders relevant to them. After analysing the results, it became

evident that there was a lack regarding types and countries. For instance, stakeholders from Eastern and Northern European countries were missing, as well as French organisations. Moreover, there was an uneven distribution of activity types; in particular, most of them were academic members. Therefore, bilateral discussions and snowball sampling activities were carried out among the consortium partners, asking them to indicate further categories or specific contact persons to engage with.

At a certain point, the composition of the mapping matrix was analysed and reported to all the LOCALISED partners. All WP leaders were asked to provide feedback on whether the actual composition of the stakeholders (in terms of country, activity type, sector of expertise, geographic coverage, and gender) was satisfactory. If not, they indicated in which directions the set of stakeholders should have been enlarged. For specific WPs (e.g., WP4 and WP5), T6 conducted an in-depth analysis to find appropriate missing stakeholders based on specific requests from the WP leaders. To this aim, interactions with Advisory Board members were particularly helpful to get in touch with some relevant stakeholders that then were added to the matrix.

## 2.2 The "wise" stakeholder group in LOCALISED

During the project's first phase, the LOCALISED partners have mainly been focusing on interacting with stakeholders from the "wise" group. The "users" (M19-M39) and the "community of interest" (M37-M48) groups will be more relevant for the yet following phases. In particular, 74 contacts have been identified belonging to the "wise" category, mainly external stakeholders (66), with few associated partners (4) and Advisory Board members (4).

Country-wise, the stakeholders mapped are distributed broadly. Specifically, 54 out of 74 stakeholders are distributed over 14 different countries. The remaining ones cannot be attributed to a specific country as they are active at the European level (18), and 2 are global organisations. Countries with a higher number of identified stakeholders are Spain and Austria, with 19 and 13 contact persons, respectively.

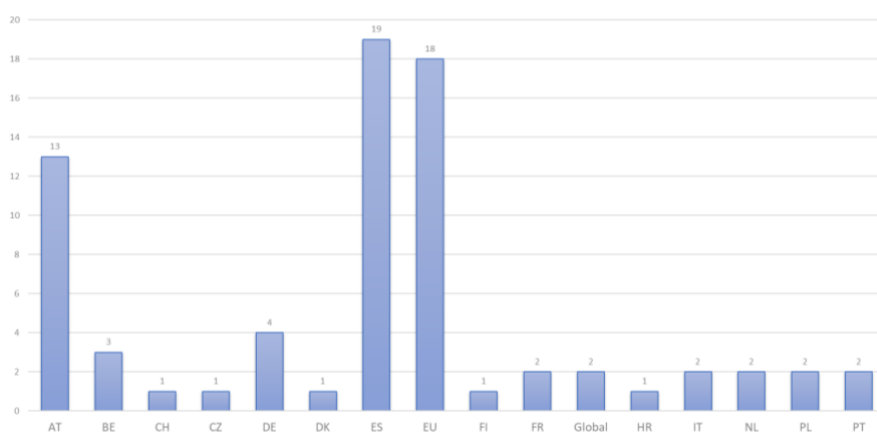
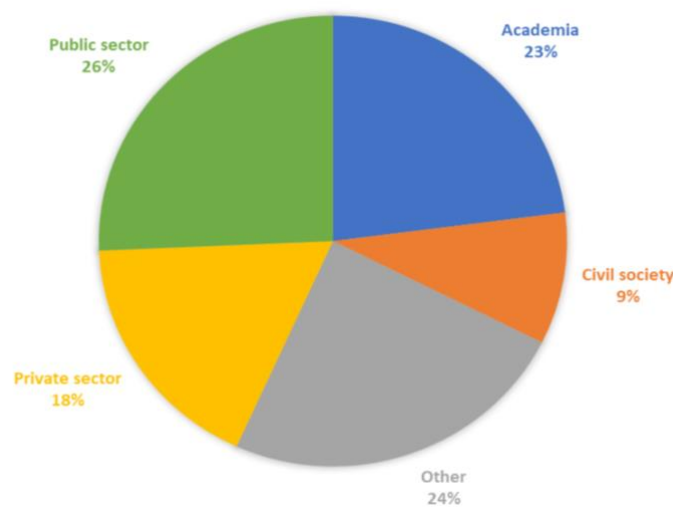


Figure 1: Distribution of "wise" stakeholders over different countries

The majority of the “wise” group operates at the supra-national level (57.6%). In particular, 36.4% of the identified stakeholders operate at the European level, 19.7% run their businesses at a global scale, and one organisation has Mediterranean coverage. The rest of the institutions cover national (19.7%), regional (6%), or municipal (16.7%) areas.

Among them, there is a balance between different activity types. In fact, 23% work in academia, 17.6% belong to the private sector, 25.7% are public institutions, while 9.4% are members of the civil society. The remaining percentage does not belong to any of the previous categories.



**Figure 2: Distribution of “wise” stakeholders over different activity types**

For what concerns each stakeholder’s main sector of expertise, most of the persons mapped are operating in the energy sector (22). A minor share of stakeholders is employed in building (6) and transport sectors (6), while many of them are operating in other sectors than those expected by LOCALISED (and will still be useful for the project at a later stage).

Finally, regarding their gender, 56.4% of the stakeholders (among the ones for which we have the information) identify as male, while 43.6% identify as female, revealing a slight prominence of male-identifying stakeholders within the “wise” group.

### **3 Process and methods of engaging stakeholders in the first 18 months**

From July 2022 (M11) onwards, the different WPs began to select stakeholders from the mapping that they identified as potentially helpful for their specific questions and topics (for more details, see the upcoming subchapters). Contacts then were made through partners who already had a connection to the respective stakeholder or through

cold emails. However, not all interactions targeted stakeholders from the mapping since some of the “wise” group had already been a part of the consortium before, such as stakeholders from the two large partner cities Vienna and Barcelona, or members of the Advisory Board<sup>1</sup>.

The interactions reported in this deliverable took place from August 2022 (M12) to January 2023 (M16) via telephone conferences between a stakeholder and one or more LOCALISED partners, or in the form of bilateral explorative interviews, mainly presenting first research results and asking for feedback. As stated in the methodology, particularly interviews are ideal for very important stakeholders, to get to know their ideas and needs exactly (D8.1, p. 18) – which is why most interactions with the “wise” group took place in the form of eight interviews in total. For these, the minimum set of information to be obtained in any stakeholder interaction (defined in D8.1, p. 22-23) served as a basic orientation.

All interactions were documented by using a standardised template in the password-protected PIK cloud, indicating the stakeholder ID (as derived from the matrix), the stakeholder’s full name, as well as short notes on the content and results of the interaction. More extensive notes on each interaction were taken by the contact persons, but these were not shared with the whole consortium, to avoid the unrequested flow of too detailed information. Some of the interaction’s results have already been processed further (e.g. in *Report on SOIs for SECAPs definition and assessment (LOCALISED Deliverable 5.1)* (Ibañez Iralde & Pascual, 2022)), some others have been evaluated for the first time within this report. All of them have been informing the project’s next stages, WPs, and topics, as the following subchapters expand upon.

### ***3.1 Stakeholder interaction for downscaling pathways and building the LOCALISED data-sharing platform***

One AB member was put in touch by the project management team (WP1) with LOCALISED researchers working on downscaled pathways for EU regions and the data-sharing platform (particularly from WP3) for questions on modeling, down-scaling, and disaggregating data. The AB member showed high interest in the data-sharing platform since the member’s research group has similar problems with disaggregating data and breaking it down to a local level. It was agreed to give a presentation of the data-sharing platform as soon as there is a public version. It was also agreed that the AB member’s research group might be a potential early stakeholder for using the database,

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<sup>1</sup> The AB’s fields of expertise, composition, role, and recruitment process are described in *Role and members of the Advisory Board (LOCALISED Deliverable 1.3)* (Walter, 2022). As argued in D1.3, the Advisory Board can be seen as “the wise” mainly, but for sure belong also to other stakeholder groups defined in D8.1. Three of the AB members were already involved during the project proposal and application phase. One came in later to complete the board with insights from the business realm. This member was selected from the stakeholder mapping by looking at the expertise that could be useful to have on the AB.

and someone to test and compare LOCALISED data against (since they have relevant data for parts of their country).

### ***3.2 Stakeholder interaction for concretising, implementing, and monitoring local decarbonisation plans***

LOCALISED WP5 “Dynamic data and knowledge to concretize, implement and monitor local decarbonisation plans” will introduce an adapted-to-case service that allows the concretion, implementation, and monitoring of Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs). This will serve as the basis for adapting and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to Energy (SDG 7), Climate (SDG 13), and parts of Sustainable Cities (SDG 11). The first main research output – the *Report on SOIs for SECAPs definition and assessment (LOCALISED Deliverable 5.1)* (Ibañez Iralde & Pascual, 2022) – introduces a detailed definition of the SDG-oriented indicators (SOIs) linked to SECAPs, both for public dissemination and as inputs to upcoming research activities.

For getting feedback on the definition of these SOIs and their representation in the LOCALISED results (mainly, the Decarbonisation Profiler), interviews with three “wise” stakeholders have been conducted by project partners mainly from WP5, but also from WP8 and WP9. A questionnaire was prepared for all interviews by the WP5 leaders (see D5.1, p.82) and sent around among the consortium to let other partners contribute questions relevant to their specific research work. The aim of the interviews was to understand the SOIs’ relevance to regions and cities, but also the stakeholders’ perspectives regarding SECAPs – e.g., to see if it is possible to obtain data on concrete mitigation and adaptation measures by the Covenant of Mayors (CoM), which aspects are a priority, and how LOCALISED can contribute to speeding up local and regional SECAP implementation.

The results, which have been reported and evaluated in more detail in D5.1, have informed the final selection of SOIs as well as the (shared) vision that these indicators can help end-users complement some of the SECAP processes (T5.2), large-scale retrofitting plans (T5.3), and SDG compliance (various tasks beyond WP5). Likewise, the interviews have been relevant to verify the SOIs’ need/positive assessment in a recurring monitoring approach of the indicators and scenarios (such as the one proposed in T5.4), and the possibility of introducing benchmarking analyses with equivalent regions and cities.

### ***3.3 Stakeholder interaction for understanding main levers for individual decarbonisation action***

LOCALISED WP6 “Main levers for individual action on decarbonisation to empower citizens, considering equity and justice concerns” addresses the need to engage EU citizens to inform how climate change and different EU net-zero scenarios positively and negatively affect their life. To discuss the conceptualisation of this citizen engagement process, one AB member was put in touch with a researcher from WP6. The AB member’s feedback was integrated into the presentation of the WP6 design. The AB member was also introduced to a researcher from WP8 and gave advice on which groups could be defined in D8.1, and how they could best be addressed.

Interactions were also undertaken via online meetings and email with the City of Vienna (Department for Energy Planning) – not as a project partner, but as the lead of the participatory budgeting project “Klimateams Wien”<sup>2</sup>, which will be subject to a case study in LOCALISED T6.3 “Citizen engagement blueprints and agents of change”. Questions from ÖGUT to the City of Vienna were: When will the project “Klimateams Wien” start? What will the participatory elements look like? How will it be evaluated? What did you learn from previous experiences like the “Klimateams 2022”? As a result of the interaction, it was agreed that ÖGUT can do parts of the evaluation of the “Klimateams” project and use the results for LOCALISED T6.3, and that the City of Vienna will additionally provide results from the evaluation of the last project cycle. Regarding the projects’ next steps, it was also noted that hard-to-reach groups can be reached in the early stages of the project (reach out, brainstorming), but not so easily when it comes to deeper engagement.

### ***3.4 Stakeholder interaction for developing end-user solutions for regional businesses and investors***

Concerning the Business Vulnerability Assessment which is part of WP7 “End-user solutions for regional businesses and investors”, interaction via online meetings took place with a stakeholder expert from sustainable urban mobility. The stakeholder works at UITP (Union Internationale des Transports Publics), the major global network of all public transport stakeholders and other sustainable transport modes, which makes it a highly relevant stakeholder for the LOCALISED project. In particular, the following questions were asked: how do public transportation companies assess their resilience to climate change? What does a sustainable transition in public transport look like? How can UITP and its members benefit from LOCALISED? The stakeholder pointed out several ongoing efforts to characterise and evaluate the sustainable transition in the public sector including reports on renewable energy in public transport and on concrete steps that cities can apply to redevelop more sustainable cities. As mobility and

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<sup>2</sup> <https://klimateam.wien.gv.at/>

transportation are among the key sectors investigated in WP7, the answers and the documents provided by this stakeholder will pave the way for a better understanding of the challenges this sector is facing, help calibrate efforts to investigate regional variation in the vulnerability of transportation businesses, and thus enable the project consortium to provide adequate end-user solutions for the sustainable transition of this sector.

Interactions also took place between stakeholders from the Vienna Business Agency (VBA) and researchers from WP6 and WP7. VBA supports local and international companies at all stages of their business development, providing advice on corporate issues and helping expats in Vienna. The following questions were asked: how do local businesses in Vienna contribute to decarbonisation pathways? How does decarbonisation affect local companies in Vienna? How can VBA and its members benefit from LOCALISED? The stakeholder stated that many of their start-up members were active in developing decarbonisation and sustainability solutions that could be upscaled and used in other EU regions. It was mentioned that VBA is willing to facilitate connections between LOCALISED and local businesses in Vienna. The project also hopes to be able to run business vulnerability surveys among some of the VBA member companies. The interaction results and the general connection to associations like VBA will thus continue to help the consortium understand the needs, concerns, and motivations of local businesses for decarbonisation and ensure that the LOCALISED outcomes are highly relevant for them.

### ***3.5 Stakeholder interaction for project communication and dissemination***

In the first 18 project months, communication and dissemination activities (covered by WP9) concentrated on raising awareness for LOCALISED and on networking with relevant projects and initiatives. These projects and initiatives were listed in the Annexes of the *Dissemination and communication strategy (LOCALISED Deliverable 9.1)* (Firus et al., 2022) and added to the stakeholder mapping in a second step. They mostly belong to the “wise” and the “community of interest” group. So, in terms of communication, they can be considered mainly as replicators and multipliers, in particular for the main upcoming outputs.

To start creating a community of interest around the LOCALISED activities, the stakeholders were mainly addressed for communicating activities and first results, e.g., through social media activities, the project website, talks at events, and by collaborating in the Green Deal Support Office meetings and platforms. A major engagement took place regarding the possibility of making LOCALISED results available through the CoM internal platform. The first output to be shared is D5.1, discussions on publishing it through the CoM are still ongoing. In addition, discussions are also underway with ICLEI, one of the AB members, on the possibility to use their communication channels in order to report about key moments and results of LOCALISED, in case these are interesting for ICLEI members.

The engagement of multipliers and replicators will become more relevant and active once the co-design phase for the tools will start (from M19 onwards). Further associated partners will then be identified from the stakeholder database.

## 4 Conclusion & Next Steps

During the first phase of stakeholder interaction, the LOCALISED consortium intends to learn what kind of data and insights would be most relevant and useful in the transformation processes the project considers and what kind of tools should be built for delivering them. The project partners thus have predominantly been focusing on interacting with stakeholders from the “wise” group, i.e. people whose expertise and knowledge about local decarbonisation procedures and adaptation planning is fundamental to understanding the kind of tools to design. The initial insights from these interactions can be summed up in three categories:

- *Tool concept & features: what should future users be able to do with the Decarbonisation Profiler and with the Net-Zero Business Consultant?* Insights in this category have been helpful to develop a better understanding of specific decarbonisation challenges and needs of different stakeholders (e.g., in regional transport and local businesses). They have also been helping verify and improve some major conceptual components and features that the LOCALISED tools will implement (e.g., SOIs and benchmarking with equivalent regions and cities).
- *Networking & early dissemination: who will use and share the tools for what kinds of purposes?* Insights in this category have been helpful to verify the general relevance of the LOCALISED tools & data for specific stakeholder groups and to find concrete occasions and ways to start reaching out to them early in the process (e.g., by arousing interest in the data-sharing platform and by discussing the possibility of making LOCALISED results available in larger networks).
- *Other project outputs:* Interacting with the “wise” group has also been helpful regarding parts of LOCALISED that do not directly concern the development of the tools (e.g., for designing the citizen engagement process and a case study in WP6). They refer to the importance of including interaction results in the project work that cannot be directly translated into the functionality or the design of the tools (as mentioned in D8.1), for example in corresponding best practice material or in communicative elements.

As this deliverable shows, the results and insights reported have already been informing the research on the project’s different topics on many levels. However, they also reflect the interaction procedure so far, which has mainly been relying on autonomous and early-process interactions by the different WPs, based on the initial stakeholder mapping.

From here on, the focus of the remaining months of stakeholder interaction phase 1 will be to integrate these initial insights, distill more general questions from them, such as



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how the contributions of different work packages can best become a relevant product for our users, and streamline the process in view of interaction phase 2 (co-designing forms and functionalities of the tools). This has already started in the form of two working groups, each with researchers from different WPs, aiming at thinking about the tool development from users’ perspectives. The first working group, led by CMF, is concerned with connecting work processes on the different tool features, their backend side (what is concretely needed from the model?), and their frontend implementation. The other working group, led by ÖGUT and UT, is concerned with questions of how so-called soft dimensions (e.g., matters of social equity, acceptance, etc.) can be integrated into the Profiler’s backend and frontend, i.e. attached to decarbonisation and adaptation measures and respective instruments, as additional criteria for optimisation and/or decision making. Combined with the insights reported in this deliverable, the results from these two working groups will inform the refinement of user personae (cf. D8.1, p. 24-25), kicking off phase 2 of the stakeholder interaction process (from M19 onwards). Figure 3 shows the overall schedule of the process as defined in D8.1.

Although this second phase of stakeholder interaction will focus more on the “users” group, the next steps (not only in the remaining months of phase 1) also concern the continued interaction with the “wise” group. As stated in D8.1, one important element of a good stakeholder interaction practice is informing stakeholders about what happened with their critique, suggestions, and recommendations within the consortium. Therefore, feedback on specific interactions will be given to all “wise” stakeholders, even if contributions couldn’t be considered yet. In doing so, LOCALISED will sustain and deepen the relationships with the first group of stakeholders and thus also continue to build the “community of interest” (third LOCALISED stakeholder group).

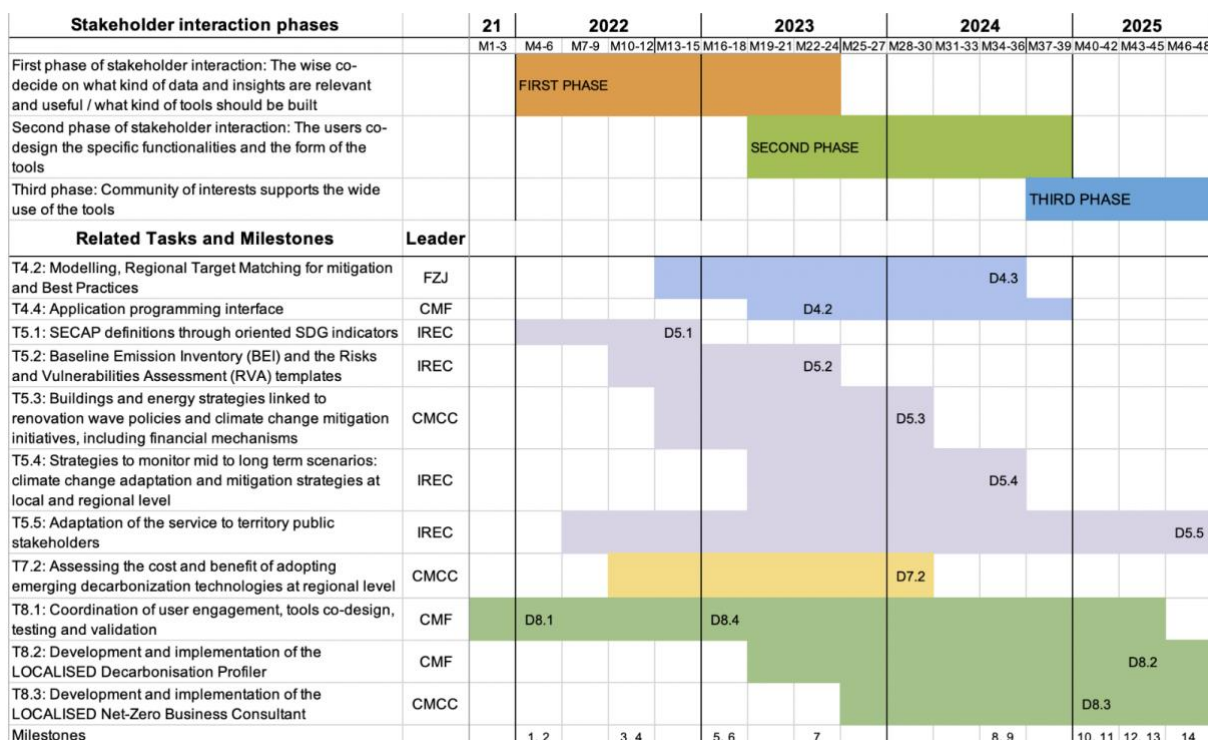


Figure 3: Overall schedule of the stakeholder interaction process

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