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Exploitation and sustainability strategy of LOCALISED outputs

D9.3

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List of Project Partners

The report uses the following names and/or abbreviations of the single LOCALISED partners (in alphabetical order):

City of Barcelona	City Council of Barcelona, Department for Mobility, Infrastructures and Urban Services, Spain
City of Vienna	City of Vienna, Department for Energy Planning, Austria
CMCC - EIEE	Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change (CMCC), RFF-CMCC European Institute on Economics and the Environment (EIEE), Italy
CMF	Climate Media Factory
FZJ	Forschungszentrum Jülich, Institute for Energy and Climate Research, IEK-3, Germany
IMP	Szewalski Institute of Fluid-Flow Machinery, Polish Academy of Science, Poland
IREC	IREC – Catalonia Institute for Energy Research, Spain
MAGGS	Metropolitan Area Gdansk-Gdynia-Sopot, Poland
ÖGUT	ÖGUT – Austrian Society for Environment and Technology, Austria
PIK	Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Germany - Project Coordinator
T6	T6 Ecosystems srl, Italy
UT	University of Twente, Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC), Netherlands

List of Abbreviations

CAST	LOCALISED Climate Action Strategiser
CE	Citizen Engager
DSP	Data Sharing Platform
EC	European Commission
ECCA	European Climate Change Adaptation
EU	European Union
KEO	Key Exploitable Output
LAU	Local Administrative Unit
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
NZBC	Net-Zero Business Consultant
SECAPs	Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans

Executive Summary

The Horizon 2020 project LOCALISED supports the decarbonisation of European regions and municipalities by disaggregating national decarbonisation plans, consistent with Europe's net-zero target, to NUTS3 (regional) and LAU (local) levels across the EU. It provides climate action measure sets optimised for investment costs, emission reduction, climate vulnerability and social impacts. The project also helps businesses with informed decision-making and strategic planning, paving the way for sustainable, low-carbon business practices and the effective integration of emerging technologies.

The project, ending in September 2025, has produced a set of Key Exploitable Outputs, aiming at creating scientific, societal and economic value beyond the project duration and to contribute to the decarbonisation of European society. These include the Climate Action Strategiser, the Data Sharing Platform, the ETHOS.MIDAS model, the Citizen Engager, the Net-Zero Business Consultant, the Sustainable Business Models Canvas, as well as policy briefs and scientific publications.

For each KEO, the consortium partners responsible have defined specific sustainability measures and exploitation routes with the aim to ensure that the outputs of LOCALISED remain available, functional and relevant beyond the project's end.

The exploitation strategy identifies routes such as follow-up research, policy uptake, capacity building, education, uptake by professional and community networks, and, where feasible, commercialisation. Potential obstacles to sustainability and exploitation have been identified. The report also shows that the European funding led to new cooperation among partners and with external stakeholders, creating a durable network that will facilitate the continued use of the results.

1 Introduction

The Horizon 2020 Project LOCALISED disaggregated national decarbonisation plans, consistent with Europe's net-zero target, to NUTS3 (regional) and Local Administrative Unit (LAU) - local - levels across the European Union (Patil et al., 2024). By this, it aims to provide regions and municipalities with various climate action measure sets optimised for investment costs, emission reduction, climate vulnerability and social impacts. Previously, this was possible only with great effort and detail for individual regions. LOCALISED also helps businesses assess the impacts of decarbonisation on local economies and facilitates informed decision-making and strategic planning, paving the way for sustainable, low-carbon business practices and the effective integration of emerging technologies. LOCALISED does this through a set of tools defined as key exploitable outputs (KEOs), as they are aimed to create scientific, societal and economic value as well as to contribute to decarbonising European society.

The Exploitation and sustainability strategy of LOCALISED outputs describes these KEOs and the related approaches to ensure sustainability and exploitation, also after the end of the project. It is the result of a consortium's effort in determining the most suitable actions to be undertaken during and after the end of the project. The deliverable is based on a consultation process that started in March 2025 during an in-person consortium meeting (considering related discussions and preparations in previous meetings) and developed through a series of dedicated internal interviews investigating the partners' interests and plan for output sustainability and exploitation bilaterally.

2 LOCALISED Key Exploitable Outputs

During LOCALISED, partners developed the following exploitable results. They are all connected one to each other, but can be considered as stand-alone outputs:

LOCALISED Climate Action Strategiser

The LOCALISED Climate Action Strategiser (CAST)[1] can be considered the main output of LOCALISED. It is a science-based tool providing regions and municipalities with various climate action measure sets optimised for investment costs, emission reduction, climate vulnerability and social impacts. The CAST builds on downscaled national decarbonisation trajectories aligned with Europe's net-zero target, supports the development of Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs) and gives an indication of related Sustainable Development Goals. It also includes the assessment of social impacts of chosen measures. Designed to support climate action coordinators in regional and local administrations in planning, together with departments, policymakers, as well as external stakeholders, the CAST supports their journey towards climate resilience.

[1] Link: https://localisedclimateaction.eu/

LOCALISED Data Sharing Platform

The LOCALISED Data Sharing Platform[2] is a pan-European database providing detailed national decarbonisation pathways alongside regional climate projections, climate impact assessments, and spatial characteristics. Through spatial disaggregation, it offers highly granular data at the Local Administrative Unit (LAU) level for all 27 EU Member States and also supports queries at broader spatial scales, including NUTS3, NUTS2, NUTS1, and NUTS0. By delivering harmonised, location-specific data, the platform enables data-driven decision-making for local climate action and fosters coherent, effective transition planning across multiple levels of government within Member States.

ETHOS.MIDAS model

The ETHOS.MIDAS (Modular and Integrated Decarbonisation and Adaptation Solver) model is a regional climate policy optimization tool designed to support the identification of cost-effective and feasible decarbonisation strategies for European regions. Operating at high spatial resolution (NUTS3 and LAU levels), MIDAS integrates regional baseline inventories and decarbonisation pathways from the LOCALISED Data Sharing Platform with a comprehensive measure database of over 400 mitigation and adaptation options. Using a genetic optimization algorithm, MIDAS evaluates thousands of measure combinations against multiple objectives - such as cost minimization, emission reduction, resilience, and social equity - across five-year increments from 2025 to 2050. The model provides actionable, region-specific pathways that are technically viable, policy-aligned, and adaptable to varying economic, environmental, and social contexts.

Citizen Engager

The LOCALISED Citizen Engager[3] is a practical toolbox and step-by-step guide for citizen participation in climate policy. It enables the co-creation of climate policies between citizens and local decision-makers in a socially just way. The guide leads users through identifying, reaching out to, and engaging with the specific citizen groups, with a focus on vulnerable groups, as well as through the actions to be taken to implement the results of engagement processes. All steps and methods are tailored for use at local and regional levels and can be adapted to different contexts and experience levels. By fostering meaningful public involvement, the Citizen Engager helps ensure that climate action is equitable, grounded in community needs, and supported by those it affects most.

LOCALISED Net-Zero Business Consultant

The LOCALISED Net-Zero Business Consultant[4] is an interactive online tool for local and regional businesses and business organisations. It engages directly with end-users from the business sector, providing clear insights into decarbonisation potentials and

[2] Link: https://github.com/FZJ-IEK3-VSA/LOCALISED-Datasharing-API-Client
[3] Link: https://www.localised-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Citizen-Engager.pdf
[4] The link of the tool will be available in September 2025.

opportunities in each sector and region. The tool helps regional businesses to identify their strengths and weaknesses and also highlights the potential of emerging technologies that can be introduced within the regional context, helping businesses identify opportunities for innovation and sustainable growth. Regional best practices are also highlighted across main sectors, showcasing successful examples that serve as guidance and inspiration for other companies.

LOCALISED Sustainable Business Models Canvas

The LOCALISED Sustainable Business Models Canvas[5] aims at helping organisations to identify nine key parts of their business model (supplies and outsourcing, production, functional value, materials, end of life, distribution, use phase, environmental impact, environmental benefits). It also shares best practices in sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, construction, and transport. Case studies show useful measures, financial incentives, and programs for investing in decarbonisation. Combined with the Net-Zero Business Consultant, the canvas helps businesses better understand their operations and where to improve.

Policy Briefs

LOCALISED has released a range of policy briefs[6] that identified key messages from LOCALISED research for decision makers, consultants and technicians from municipalities and regions as well as from European Commission (EC) institutions. These briefs are designed to be of direct interest to individuals and organisations involved in the implementation and execution of decarbonisation strategies, providing clear, actionable insights to support informed policy and planning.

Peer-reviewed publications

Scientific Achievements[7] of LOCALISED are published and will continue to be published through peer-reviewed publications and are made available on open repositories.

For all these outputs the consortium (and in particular the partner mainly responsible for the dedicated output) defined sustainability plans and identified exploitation routes.

So in the following analysis, sustainability plans for most of the outputs are summarised in Chapter 3. The exploitation routes are specified and presented in Chapter 4, while potential sustainability and exploitation obstacles and strategies for their mitigation can be found in Chapter 5.

[5] Link: https://zenodo.org/records/14534036
[6] Link: https://www.localised-project.eu/policy-briefs-and-factsheet/
[7] Link: https://www.localised-project.eu/publications/

3 Sustainability strategies

This chapter presents the sustainability strategies for selected KEOs described in the previous chapter. In this context, the term "sustainability" refers to the planned measures and mechanisms of consortium partners at the time of writing to ensure that these outputs continue to deliver scientific, societal, and economic impact beyond the project's lifetime through being publicly available for further use.

Concretely, with sustainability, the project means that a KEO remains accessible, functional, and relevant beyond the duration of the project. This includes (1) continued availability to stakeholders through stable and reliable channels; (2) preservation of technical quality, usability, and interoperability; and (3), where partners have this interest, to look for resources and partnerships required for its long-term maintenance and further development.

3.1 LOCALISED Climate Action Strategiser

The sustainability of the LOCALISED Climate Action Strategiser (CAST) beyond the duration of the LOCALISED project appears promising, albeit conditional on the acquisition of further funding. The partners who were mainly in charge of its development are very interested and motivated to find a way to keep the CAST alive and develop it further. Ensuring sustainability through further public funding was one of the recommendations from the European Commission's Horizon Exploitation Booster Service to which LOCALISED participated, as other exploitation routes, e.g. commercialisation, was disregarded due to the technological level that the CAST currently has. Substantial financial investments would be needed for the further technological development as well as a detailed Business Plan in order to ensure market readiness or interest by e.g. city networks and initiatives. Nonetheless, the tool has significant potential to assist municipalities in developing climate action plans, even with currently incomplete or imperfect data: it has the ability to provide an integrated overview of necessary mitigation and adaptation measures aligned with national decarbonisation strategies. *CMF, FZJ, IREC* and *T6* are therefore planning to apply for further EU funding under the LIFE Clean Energy Transition programme, teaming up with a city network and through them with some municipalities in different European countries that would use the tool for their detailed climate action planning. This potential follow-up project aims to improve the CAST, concretise and scale up the process of using CAST in municipalities and regions, and make the tool known in an umbrella organisation representing regional and local authorities as well as apply it in a number of different European municipalities. Should this funding be secured, CAST would be maintained and further embedded in municipal workflows to support climate mainstreaming. However, the long-term sustainability of the CAST's front-end is less certain in the absence of continued financial and technical support. While institutional funding has been secured to maintain and improve the underlying ETHOS.MIDAS model

for at least two years (see Chapter 3.2), the CAST's user interface and functionality depend on development personnel whose availability will end with the project's conclusion.

Regardless of immediate funding prospects, *CMF* is dedicated to securing CAST's continued availability through internal investment in hosting and basic maintenance, recognizing its dual value as both a company reference and a capability demonstrator for engaging with national funding agencies and city networks to secure follow-up funding for widespread adoption.

Without further funding the tool would likely not receive updates or technical support, limiting its potential for long-term impact. To ensure greater visibility and availability, efforts are also underway to present the tool to established European knowledge-sharing platforms such as Climate-ADAPT, which could enhance its discoverability and relevance for local policymakers.

3.2 LOCALISED Data Sharing Platform and ETHOS.MIDAS model

FZJ outlined the structure and future direction of the Data Sharing Platform (DSP), which includes three categories of data: current time data from statistical sources, climate data from *PIK*, and future scenario data from the EUCalc model[8]. The platform is not only meant to store and share data but also to continuously improve its quality - for example, by replacing the EUCalc-derived future data with more accurate national or sector-specific decarbonisation plans. To support the long-term sustainability of the ETHOS.MIDAS model and the DSP, *FZJ* has secured two years of institutional funding for a dedicated staff member to continue development and maintenance. This commitment reflects the strategic importance attributed to both the MIDAS and the DSP, and the intention to ensure its usability and relevance beyond the project's duration.

3.3 LOCALISED Citizen Engager

The long-term sustainability of the Citizen Engager (CE) is actively pursued through strategic communication efforts and institutional integration. *ÖGUT* confirmed that they are developing a dedicated communication strategy aligned with their internal participation department, underlining the tool's relevance within their organisational priorities. Dissemination plans include leveraging *ÖGUT*'s network and initiating dialogues with city partners, starting with discussions with the *City of Vienna* on deploying the tool in international municipal meetings, particularly targeting non-German-speaking communities. *ÖGUT* also reached out to the *City Council of Barcelona*'s Department of Mobility, Infraestructures and Urban Services to explore

[8] https://www.european-calculator.eu/model/

opportunities for broader distribution. From the city partner side, the *City of Vienna* advocated for the creation of a dedicated website and the documentation of practical case studies to enhance the tool's accessibility and usability. They emphasized that showcasing smaller-scale applications of the CE would increase its relevance for municipalities and regions with limited resources. Moreover, the importance of strengthening the conceptual link between the CE and the CAST was highlighted, supporting their joint use in local and regional climate engagement strategies. To realise these activities, further funding is necessary, which could be integrated in the plan for a future project, e.g. on national level.

3.4 LOCALISED Net-Zero Business Consultant

The sustainability strategy for the Net-Zero Business Consultant (NZBC) is currently focused on continuous refinement to enhance usability and long-term value. *CMCC* emphasized their commitment to fine-tuning the tool based on feedback received during dissemination events, such as the European Climate Change Adaptation (ECCA) conference, as well as from internal consortium partners. This iterative improvement process aims to ensure that the NZBC becomes increasingly accessible and intuitive for end users, which is considered a top priority for maintaining its relevance beyond the project's lifespan. While no dedicated long-term maintenance funding or institutional hosting arrangements were reported, *CMCC* expressed a clear willingness to keep the tool publicly available on accessible platforms, such as the Horizon Results Platform or similar repositories. This openness to sharing the tool through freely accessible channels reflects a pragmatic approach to sustainability, ensuring that the NZBC remains discoverable and usable by stakeholders after the project's end, even in the absence of structured support mechanisms.

4 Exploitation strategies

Exploitation considers the use of project results for scientific, social or economic purposes during and after the project ends (European Commission, 2023). Therefore possible exploitation routes discussed in LOCALISED were: (1) research, including follow-up research, citations by project-external researchers and informing further research; (2) commercialisation, including business models and consultancy service portfolios to cities and businesses, based on the project tools; (3) influencing policy; (4) uptake within professional or community networks to address societal needs as well as (5) capacity building and education, using project research findings in teaching and training.

The next subsections describe the overall exploitation plan for the upcoming months and years with a summary of the partners' individual exploitation plans. Exploitation

efforts aim at ensuring that project results are actively used to create measurable impact.

Generally, all tools and results have been or will be uploaded on the Horizon Results Platform and public deliverables are automatically published on the LOCALISED CORDIS page[9]. Data is publicly findable through the Zenodo LOCALISED community[10].

4.1 LOCALISED Climate Action Strategiser

The CAST is regarded by many consortium and municipal partners as the key exploitable output of the project with considerable potential for post-project uptake, particularly among local authorities. Several routes for exploitation have been explored. *CMF and T6* highlighted efforts to connect with the Covenant of Mayors, proposing an integration with their online portal to simplify data submission, although this collaboration has not yet materialised. Alternative pathways include positioning the CAST as a paid public service or partnering with consultancies, although these are currently constrained by the tool's TRL level and lack of sufficiently comprehensive user testing. Discussions around commercialisation through spin-offs or start-ups were met with scepticism due to technical limitations and IPR related issues in relation to the ETHOS.MIDAS model which is owned by the public research institution FZJ. However, collaboration with complementary initiatives, such as Climate View, which has a more advanced municipal user base, could offer a promising route for integration and broader dissemination and might be followed-up in case that a follow-up project is funded (see Chapter 3.1).

Meanwhile, academic partners such as *UT* applied for listing the CAST on national-level climate platforms in the Netherlands and the National Climate Adaptation Implementation Programme, potentially boosting its visibility and institutional legitimacy. Multiple city partners confirmed the CAST's practical relevance. *MAGGS* highlighted its capacity to simplify climate action planning for smaller municipalities and expressed their intent to promote it regionally and in larger cities such as Warsaw and Poznań. *IMP* will present LOCALISED (with a focus on the CAST) at the Forum of Polish Cities[11] in September 2025 which should increase the visibility of the tools in Poland. The *City of Barcelona* saw value in CAST's integrated approach, particularly for addressing climate and social justice aspects, and is actively engaging with Barcelona metropolitan area stakeholders to disseminate the tool more broadly. The *City of Vienna* also committed to promoting the CAST at the regional level, including through their departmental newsletter.

Additionally, *IMP* reported successful engagement with Polish municipalities, where CAST has served as a starting point for strategic discussions on thermal renovation and ecological financing.

[9] Link: https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101036458/results
[10] Link: https://zenodo.org/communities/localised/
[11] Link: https://forummiasteczek.pl/

LOCALISED partners also applied for adding the CAST in the MIP4Adapt Tools Database[12] of Climate-Adapt.

While not all outreach efforts - such as those with the Covenant of Mayors - have been fruitful, targeted collaboration with interested actors like the Climate Alliance continues, particularly through ongoing Horizon proposal partnerships. Collectively, these initiatives show that while exploitation remains a work in progress, the CAST can be considered already to be positioned as a valuable tool for municipal climate strategy development across Europe.

4.2 LOCALISED Data Sharing Platform and ETHOS.MIDAS model

FZJ identified the DSP and the ETHOS.MIDAS model as key exploitable software outputs, with plans to utilize and further develop both in upcoming research projects. While dissemination outside the consortium remains limited, scientific visibility is increasing: two publications have already been submitted by *FZJ*'s researchers for peer reviews, with more planned despite delays linked to data issues. *FZJ* acknowledged the need for clearer guidance on how to cite and use the DSP and noted that a basic "READ.ME" exists, but a more complete software documentation is needed and will be realised by the end of the project. Importantly, the Data Sharing Platform deliverable (Patil et al., 2024) is publicly accessible, providing essential data descriptions.

ETHOS.MIDAS is positioned as an independent scientific tool that complements national energy models by incorporating local constraints - such as workforce limitations or social acceptance challenges - offering more realistic assessments of policy feasibility. *FZJ* demonstrated commitment to ETHOS.MIDAS' sustainability through two years of internal funding for continued development. *UT* further highlighted the database of adaptation and mitigation measures they developed as another exploitable output, which may be renamed "Integrated database on adaptation and mitigation measures in Europe" for broader clarity and uptake. *PIK* emphasized that while their future use of the DSP is uncertain, local authorities have shown strong interest in the platform for addressing data gaps. *IMP* confirmed intentions to use the DSP for developing new data methodologies and uncertainty assessments in future projects. Finally, the *City of Barcelona* noted that while scientific outputs like the adaptation/mitigation database require dedicated time to absorb, they offer considerable potential for consultants and institutions to apply them in policy planning and evaluation.

4.3 LOCALISED Citizen Engager

The exploitation of the CE is carried out across multiple fronts, including institutional use, education, dissemination, and policy integration. *ÖGUT* confirmed that they intend

[12] MIP4Adapt is a platform that supports European regional and local authorities to prepare and plan their adaptation pathways to climate resilience. It is part of Climate-ADAPT.

to use the tool as a reference in future national and international project proposals and integrate it into the national participation website (https://partizipation.at/), an initiative of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Climate and Environmental Protection, Regions and Water Management managed by *ÖGUT*. Additionally, *ÖGUT and T6* are exploring its inclusion in consulting marketplaces like the MAIA project[13]. *ÖGUT* also highlighted scientific interest, particularly through a research grant application on citizen science and the impact of engagement activities. Moreover, the tool's contents are being embedded into *ÖGUT*'s daily work with certified moderators and co-creation processes, supported by case study references such as Barcelona and St Stefan Afiesl. The CE also holds strong educational value. *UT* highlighted its education and capacity building potential, emphasizing its applicability in urban planning courses and project-based learning. *IMP* found the tool useful as a hands-on manual for engagement processes, being ordered, compact, and realistic.

The tool is already being used internally by many LOCALISED partners, and in particular the city partners, like the *City of Vienna*, whose Office for Participation and Empowerment values the CE as a scientific validation of their practices. They plan to share it internationally via QR codes and newsletters, while also emphasizing its alignment with their day-to-day work. However, both the *City of Vienna* and *ÖGUT* called for better highlighting the synergy between the CE and the CAST. *MAGGS* also identified the tool as a key resource for educating governments and citizens, praising its clarity and accessibility, while the *City of Barcelona* recognized its potential for reshaping public engagement strategies as part of Barcelona's climate planning beyond 2027. *IMP* used various aspects from the Citizen Engager for engaging with citizens/general public in other projects.

Overall, the Citizen Engager is emerging as a widely adaptable resource - useful for municipalities, researchers, educators, and policy professionals - demonstrating high potential for impact beyond the immediate scope of the project.

4.4 LOCALISED Net-Zero Business Consultant

The exploitation strategy for the NZBC centers around its integration into consultancy work, policy support, and dissemination through established stakeholder networks. *CMCC* emphasized that business associations are considered the primary users, as they engage directly with businesses on a daily basis. The tool can support these associations in identifying regional gaps and advising their members on improving capacities in key sustainability dimensions. *CMCC* also highlighted the tool's potential value for national and regional policymakers, who could use it to assess business readiness and design targeted support measures. Preliminary engagement with their associate partner Assolombarda was reported, suggesting that future events co-hosted by such institutions could offer venues to promote the NZBC. However, attempts to participate

[13] Link: https://maia-project.eu/

in promotional events have sometimes been limited by cost barriers, as some require registration fees typically associated with for-profit tool providers. Given the NZBC's non-commercial nature and free availability, *CMCC* expressed reluctance to pursue these paid opportunities. This highlights a broader challenge in promoting publicly funded tools in commercialized environments.

4.5 LOCALISED Sustainable Business Models Canvas

IREC developed the LOCALISED Sustainable Business Models Canvas which could be used by, for example, consultancy companies in their collaboration with companies. However, *IREC* emphasized that as a research institution, their role is not to commercialise tools but to develop and transfer research outputs to external stakeholders. Therefore, in the context of the LOCALISED project, the LOCALISED Sustainable Business Models Canvas is intended to be disseminated through academic and professional channels and is freely accessible. *IREC* reinforced this approach, explaining that they have promoted the tool via webinars targeting consultancies, universities, and business schools. While direct engagement with companies has proven difficult, *IREC* remains open to organizing additional webinars and has proposed making a recorded tutorial available on the project website to expand reach. External experts added that transforming the canvas into an interactive, web-based format could significantly improve usability for companies, though this would require additional resources and possibly external consultancy support.

4.6 Policy briefs

The LOCALISED policy briefs published so far[14] have been disseminated through partners and project channels, at relevant events (such as the European Climate Change Adaptation (ECCA) conference and the European Urban Resilience Forum, both in 2025) and through direct contacts. They will be further promoted, together with the upcoming ones, to topic- and target-group related networks and initiatives by the end of the project and beyond. In addition, a common webinar with a partner project is envisaged to promote the common policy brief to a wider audience. Dissemination to European Commission bodies is sought, as policy messages or all briefs are targeted particularly at the EU-level.

UT initiated the dissemination of policy briefs, particularly those focused on justice, vulnerable groups, and the renovation wave. However, they noted that distribution relies on personal networks and the *UT Climate Centre*, though their reach is somewhat limited. *PIK* plans to scale up dissemination in Germany and Italy, promoting the briefs and related tools through national networks with collaborators within the LOCALISED consortium. *IMP* confirmed alignment of the renovation-focused brief with Polish legislation and expressed willingness to promote it, though their influence remains

[14] Link: https://www.localised-project.eu/policy-briefs-and-factsheet/

technical rather than political. They also acknowledged that translation into local languages and distribution to municipalities is feasible, though large-scale advocacy is beyond their scope, so the translation was disregarded.

The *City of Barcelona* raised the issue of language accessibility, suggesting that a Spanish version of the briefs would be the most efficient way to reach a broader audience, but a translation was disregarded due to lack of resources. However, the messages in the policy briefs, relevant for the local and regional level, will be spread through e.g. integrating them in presentations. Similarly, the *City of Vienna* confirmed interest in the briefs, especially if translated into local language. In fact, they had already reviewed a draft brief on justice dimensions in local climate co-creation and found it useful as scientific backing for Vienna's activities. So a translation of this policy brief into German is considered.

4.7 Scientific publications

Scientific publications and academic outputs represent a central exploitation pathway for several consortium partners, mainly of course the academic partners. They emphasized that, as a research institution, their primary focus lies in the production of scientific articles. They highlighted that two ongoing PhD projects are expected to yield further publications after the project's conclusion, including works on NZBC and co-creation theory. Additionally, the conceptual frameworks and methodologies developed during the project - such as those on climate risk assessment and citizen engagement - are anticipated to be further elaborated and applied in future initiatives by researchers at *PIK* and their collaborators.

CMCC is advancing a scientific publication detailing the design and implementation of the NZBC, with particular emphasis on its embedded vulnerability assessment framework. They aim to submit the article to a business management journal, underlining the broader methodological contribution of the framework, which enables the identification of business vulnerabilities at regional and sub-sectoral levels. Beyond this, *CMCC* highlighted the versatility of the framework, suggesting its applicability in different domains such as wildfire risk assessment.

FZJ has published and plans further scientific publications in relation to the DSP and the MIDAS-ETHOS model. The same holds for *UT* and *IREC* on their respective scientific results. A publication on the overall LOCALISED approach is also being considered by different partners.

Summarising, Table 1 below provides an overview of the exploitation routes identified for the different LOCALISED KEOs, as discussed in the previous sub-chapters.

Table 1: LOCALISED Key Exploitable Outputs and identified exploitation routes

x: route which will be followed up; (x): route which the consortium considers important, but up to now no concrete collaboration has been established. However, the partners will continue to try to follow up.

Key Exploitable Outputs	Exploitation route			
	Follow-up research	**Informing policy**	**Uptake by networks**	**Capacity building/ Education**
LOCALISED Climate Action Strategiser		x	(x)	x
Data Sharing Platform	x	(x)		
ETHOS.MIDAS model	x			
Citizen Engager		x	(x)	(x)
LOCALISED Net-Zero Business Consultant	x		(x)	(x)
Sustainable Business Models Canvas				x
Policy briefs		x		x
Scientific publications	x			x

5 Potential sustainability and exploitation obstacles and strategies for their mitigation

Consortium partners outlined potential common obstacles for exploitation of the project results, as well as strategies to mitigate them. These challenges span technical, institutional, linguistic, and user-engagement dimensions, influencing the long-term sustainability and uptake of the project's tools, frameworks, and knowledge outputs.

Language barriers and localisation

A recurring theme across interviews was the need for local language support. Many partners, including *ÖGUT*, *IMP*, *PIK*, *IREC*, as well as all our city partners (i.e., *MAGGS*, the *City of Vienna*, and *the City of Barcelona*) observed that English-only tools and documentation significantly limit accessibility, especially for smaller municipalities and regional authorities. In particular, *MAGGS* and *ÖGUT* stressed that language localisation is essential for adoption, while *UT* noted that in some national contexts (e.g., the Netherlands), English proficiency may mitigate the issue, although translation should still be considered if demand increases. Local partners also suggested allocating budget and time for translation and adaptation for future uptakes.

Technical complexity and usability

The complexity of tools like the CAST was cited by *PIK* and *City of Barcelona* as a potential deterrent for new users. The *City of Vienna* also emphasized the challenge of translating complex scientific outputs into usable formats for local decision-makers. Strategies to improve usability included developing simpler entry points, visual guides, training materials, and ideally web-based interfaces, as suggested by *PIK* and *CMCC*.

Offering some tools as a service rather than standalone software was also proposed to lower the entry barrier.

Maintenance, updates, and data sustainability

Long-term data maintenance and tool updating emerged as a crucial concern. Partners such as *IMP*, *FZJ*, and *CMF* noted that tools like the DSP and CAST rely on timely and transparent data updates, which are resource-intensive and require institutional commitment. The absence of clear responsibilities for future maintenance was seen as a risk. *PIK* and *CMF* recommended exploring partnerships for regular updates. *CMF* also noted that parts of CAST's backend and database are human-readable and could be updated externally, but this still requires coordination and resources.

Political will and institutional priorities

The lack of national mandates for integrated climate planning limits the motivation of smaller municipalities to adopt project tools, as noted by *PIK*, *MAGGS*, and the *City of Vienna*. *MAGGS* further highlighted that many local governments prioritise immediate concerns - such as education or waste management - over climate planning. Urban climate planning, although important for local governments, requires time, space, and resources that local governments don't always have. *CMCC* mentioned a shift in policy focus from sustainability toward growth and competitiveness, which may also reduce interest in climate-related tools. Partners recommended that increased incentives or requirements from EU or national policies could drive future uptake, along with clearer communication of the tools' relevance to local priorities.

Institutional capacity and budget constraints

Some tools, like the CAST, may involve licensing or implementation costs that exceed the budget or capacity of smaller cities. Without dedicated personnel or long-term hosting, such tools may not be sustained in the long run. A strategy mentioned by *CMF* is to upload the tools to public platforms such as Climate-ADAPT. This could provide visibility and reduce hosting costs.

Exploitation in the educational sector

Despite efforts to engage business schools and universities, *IREC* reported limited success in involving the educational sector (for the use of the Sustainable Business Canvas), primarily due to a lack of direct contacts with relevant faculty. It was suggested that future projects establish connections with the education sector early, involving them in tool development and dissemination strategies. However, *UT* showed an interest in using LOCALISED results in their university course.

6 Collaboration with partners and external stakeholders

One of the most valuable and enduring outcomes of the LOCALISED project has been the development of collaborative networks and synergies among consortium and city partners. This includes also the fruitful connections with the associated partners (in particular during the co-design and replication activities) and the Advisory Board. While not all partners currently have plans for direct follow-up projects, the relationships and mutual understanding built during the project have laid a strong foundation for future collaborations.

UT acknowledged the absence of immediate follow-up proposals directly linked to LOCALISED's adaptation and mitigation work but emphasized the value of newly established connections for potential future partnerships. One of their researchers expressed interest in pursuing a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions fellowship that could align with continuing work initiated during the project. *UT* explicitly appreciated the communication and exploitation support from *CMF* and *T6*, and expressed strong interest in collaborating again on future initiatives. *PIK* confirmed their intention to maintain and expand collaborations with the project's broad and diverse network, which includes academic institutions, city partners, and companies. They highlighted that the established relationships with policy networks and city actors will serve as a springboard for future EU-funded projects on climate and urban issues. *FZJ* demonstrated the concrete impact of the project's network by referencing one newly funded joint project already starting in October 2025 with several LOCALISED partners, as well as a follow-up proposal under development. They indicated hopes for at least two additional proposals, illustrating the sustained momentum of project-induced collaborations. *CMF* also recognized emerging collaborations, notably with *FZJ* and *T6*. While CMF's direct follow-up opportunities may be limited, the project content was considered highly strategic and aligned with their core focus on local transformation.

Key synergies emerged between local scientific institutions and their respective city partners. In the case of *ÖGUT* and the *City of Vienna*, both described valuable mutual learning from the collaboration. In particular, the city partner noted that the project contributed to establishing the new Office for Empowerment and Participation and emphasised plans to disseminate the final outputs to the relevant strategic planning departments. *IREC* and the *City of Barcelona* also reported new collaborative pathways. Specifically, *IREC* confirmed their desire to continue working with the *City of Barcelona* on technical issues such as building stock indicators and decarbonisation, while the city partner highlighted that LOCALISED opened new, previously unexplored opportunities with *IREC*, leading to discussions around projects on energy resilience in the metropolitan area. *IMP* benefited from stronger collaboration with *MAGGS*, especially for communication and replication activities in Poland. They also cited technical

cooperation, such as work on electric bicycle battery testing, and gained valuable insights into EU-level funding rules. *MAGGS* likewise underlined the benefits of participating in a diverse, international network, pointing out how the exposure to real-world challenges from cities across Europe enriched their understanding and sparked ideas for future collaborative projects and conferences.

Across the consortium, partners agreed that the LOCALISED project catalysed a network of passionate, complementary actors with shared ambitions for future collaboration, both within and beyond the scope of climate-related research and policymaking.

7 Conclusions

The LOCALISED project will finish at the end of September 2025. The sustainability and exploitation strategy provides an overview of the measures and commitments agreed by the consortium to ensure that the project's key exploitable outputs remain available, functional and relevant beyond the project duration.

Several outputs – in particular the Climate Action Strategiser, the Data Sharing Platform, the ETHOS.MIDAS model and the Citizen Engager – have clear post-project perspectives supported by committed partners and, in some cases, secured or planned funding. Other outputs, such as the Net-Zero Business Consultant and the Sustainable Business Models Canvas, will be maintained through open access and targeted dissemination to relevant user groups, while policy briefs and scientific publications will continue to support the transfer of knowledge to policy, professional networks and the scientific community.

The project has also resulted in strong collaborative links between partners and with external stakeholders, which provide a solid basis for future cooperation. These networks will play a key role in supporting the continuation and uptake of the results, ensuring that the knowledge, tools and methods developed within LOCALISED will contribute to climate action in European regions and municipalities beyond the end of the project.

8 References

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