Renewable Energy Coordination Group (RECG) Work Programme 2025/2026

List of activities

1. Planning, programming, and permitting RES projects, including aspects on integrating BESS

The European Commission has taken proactive steps to address administrative barriers and public acceptance issues in renewable energy project planning and permitting. The Renewable Energy Directive 2018/2001/EU (REDII) introduced measures to streamline these processes, but effective transposition remains challenging. To further expedite permit-granting, the Commission issued Recommendation C/2022/3219, promoting a "one-stop-shop" approach and improved coordination among directives. In September 2023, the European Parliament and Council amended the REDII to introduce sitting and acceleration areas for faster renewable energy development, providing more clarity on environmental assessments and permitting procedures. In response, the Energy Community Secretariat is assessing the planning and permitting processes for renewable energy projects within its region, with the goal of formulating policy recommendations and guidelines for faster deployment. At its 22nd meeting in December 2024, the Energy Community Ministerial Council adopted a Recommendation on accelerating renewable energy deployment, incorporating the RAAs provisions of the revised REDII into the Energy Community acquis.
The Energy Community Secretariat, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), is working on a project to assist Contracting Parties (CPs) in streamlining their planning and permitting processes. This initiative, aligned with the RAAs concept, incorporates TNC's smart sitting methodology, recognised as a best practice by the European Commission's guidelines.

Activity 1. Develop Blueprint for Renewable Acceleration Areas RAAs (solar PV and wind) including supplementary Annexes to the RAAs Blueprint related to grid and co-located storage

A draft Operational Blueprint was developed, providing actionable guidance for CPsto identify and designate low-conflict, high-potential RRAs. The document incorporates TNC's smart-siting methodology, recognised by the European Commission as a best practice for RAA designation, and references practical case studies to enhance its applicability. On 27 November 2024, the RECG hosted an interactive session on the draft Blueprint. Stakeholder feedback led to the inclusion of new chapters on grid integration and co-located storage. Additionally, two annexes were developed to provide technical guidance on data inventory and analysis, as well as

strategies for mitigating negative environmental impacts. The final version of the Blueprint was prepared and published in February 2025.

In the upcoming period the main focus of the project will be the development of the supplementary annexes to the RAAs Blueprint related to grid and co-located storage. Once the annexes are drafted, they will be shared with the RECG for feedback or discussion, and once finalised, the Secretariat supported by the project team will provide hands-on support based on the implementation experience in Montenegro. RECG members will have the opportunity to initiate targeted support for the implementation of the Blueprint and the Annexes themselves once prepared. Through this collaborative approach, CPs can benefit from expert advice and tailored support.

Implementation timeline: March 2024 - July 2025

Activity 2. Targeted support to CPs implementing the blueprint – concept notes for cooperation and cross-border initiatives for RAAs

The launch of the Montenegro Energy Growth and Acceleration (MEGA) Project, led by TNC and supported by the Secretariat, is a high-impact initiative focused on identifying optimal sites for wind and solar energy installations in Montenegro. Backed by an Advisory Committee comprising national authorities, TSOs, DSOs, the EBRD, experts, and NGOs, the MEGA Project aligns with Montenegro's national energy transition strategies. It aims to deliver concrete results by identifying and designating key RAAs, in line with the Operational Blueprint developed throughout the project. The first tangible outcome – a draft acceleration map – is expected by July 2025. The project team will prepare an information sheet on Montenegro's experience, which will be shared with the RECG for reference.
Initial discussions with the North Macedonian and Serbian governments have successfully laid the groundwork for deeper collaboration in 2025, including the development of a Concept Note outlining support and priorities for RAA development.
Targeted support was secured for Ukraine for assistance in identifying cross-border RAAs that could be developed jointly with the EU Member States.

Implementation timeline: November 2024 - July 2026

Activity 3. Organise joint event matching RAAs and IFIs – joint activity with the Environmental Task Force

Within the partnership, the Secretariat will identify and assess programs from IFIs that offer fast-track support for renewable energy projects in RAAs, focusing on solar PV and wind power within the Energy Community region. To achieve this, the project team will promote the RAAs, emphasizing their potential to address critical gaps and challenges in financing concrete

projects. Additionally, the project team will establish a platform to facilitate information exchange and foster collaboration, driving discussions with potential cooperation partners and donors to secure financial support.
A key activity will be organising a joint event that convenes current and potential donors, RES investors, and CPs representatives from the renewable energy sector. The platform will also facilitate the formation of strategic partnerships, enable collaborations and help secure funding commitments for the future RAAs.

Implementation timeline: September 2025 - May 2026

Activity 4. Develop Protocols on digitalisation and simplified notification, training materials and organise a Workshop

Within the partnership, the Secretariat will develop detailed governance protocols to ensure effective information sharing, decision-making, and coordination among participating authorities, while incorporating the "*do no significant harm*" principle in line with the European Commission's guidelines. The protocols will define the roles and responsibilities of participating authorities, integrate transparency and accountability mechanisms, and include digitalisation options. The aim is to provide practical solutions and best practices to streamline and enhance the permit-granting process for renewable energy projects and access to the electricity grid, drawing from successful models in EU Member States. The permitting protocol for the one-stop-shop model will be defined for both RAAs and regions outside these zones.
A key activity will be organising a joint workshop for the RECG and the Task Force on Environment members to present the protocols and related materials, where engagement and feedback from participants will be crucial. Additionally, the project will include a mock case simulation exercise with participant interactions, focusing on the realism and relevance of the scenarios and evaluating outcomes through a detailed report. The deliverable will be the governance protocols for the one-stop-shop model, with key performance indicators focused on alignment with administrative modifications, workshop effectiveness, and securing formal acceptance or approval from relevant authorities. The Secretariat will provide continuous support to CPs interested in introducing the Protocols at the national level.

Implementation timeline: November 2024 – December 2026

2. Improving Data, Access to Finance, and the Regulatory Framework in Heating and Cooling (H&C)

The period covered by the previous work program (2023–2024) saw important policy developments, such as the transposition of the RED II into national legislation and the submission of draft National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) to the CPs. These milestones have provided necessary grounds for reassessing the status of decarbonization in the heating and cooling sector, highlighting the most prominent challenges and identifying further actions needed to accelerate progress in this area.

It is evident that the current policy direction falls short of fostering an ambitious transformation in the heating and cooling area. The transposed RED II and draft NECPs did not reflect a particularly progressive outlook on the sector. Most of the CPs have set their sectoral renewable energy share in heating and cooling (RES-H&C) targets below the recommended annual increase specified in Article 23(1) of RED II. Additionally, only one CP has so far considered utilising waste heat as a viable option for meeting RES-H&C targets and decarbonising district heating (DH) systems.

While heating and cooling accounts for roughly half of the total energy consumption in CPs, approximately 65% of the generated heat still relies on fossil fuels. The remaining 35% primarily comes from solid biomass combustion, often in inefficient individual or large-scale boilers. Given that biomass is also largely sourced unsustainably, there is an urgent need for a new set of policies and measures based on a multi-technology approach to ensure a cost-effective and long-term transition away from fossil fuels. CPs shall explore and integrate untapped renewable energy sources, including solar thermal, geothermal, ambient energy through heat pumps, and waste heat recovery for district heating systems.

The initial round of work for the Integrated National Energy and Climate Progress Reports (NECPRs) has revealed that beyond the technological shift, structural challenges, particularly persistent problems in data collection also hinder progress. These challenges lead to lack of reliable data or, in some cases, no data at all, ultimately obstructing effective planning, accurate forecasting, and data-driven policymaking. Moreover, while the transposition of RED II into national RES laws has provided an important foundation and general framework, further efforts are needed to develop secondary legislation and ensure effective implementation, particularly in areas such as Third Party Access (TPA) regulation.

To address these challenges, this work program includes targeted activities aimed at improving data availability, strengthening policy frameworks, and fostering the deployment of renewable energy technologies in the heating and cooling sector.

Activity 1: Gap analysis of the status of the H&C sector in Contracting Parties

This activity involves conducting a comprehensive gap analysis of the Heating and Cooling sector in CPs.

On the content side, the focus will be on assessing the transposition and implementation of relevant legal and regulatory frameworks, covering both primary and secondary national legislation. Additionally, a detailed analysis of H&C-related trajectories and measures outlined in the adopted NECPs will be undertaken. This will provide a clear understanding of the sector's strategic direction in each CP and identify the key decarbonisation technologies that are being prioritised for achieving the energy and climate objectives. The activity will be carried out in close collaboration between the RECG and Energy Efficiency Coordination Group (EECG) due to the inclusion of H&C-related topics within the scope of both groups. The draft Gap Analysis will be presented to the RECG and EECG for review and feedback, ensuring the findings reflect the practical realities. The finalized version with incorporated RECG and EECG feedback will be used as an evidence-based grounds for tailoring future support for group members in implementing obligations related to H&C.
On the functional side, the activity will support practical implementation by mapping ongoing and planned infrastructure projects within the sector. The RECG and EECG will be invited to provide input on infrastructure mapping, ensuring the analysis captures the most up-to-date and relevant projects. A stakeholder mapping exercise will also be conducted to update the list of key actors, ensuring the accompanying contact database remains current and comprehensive to support effective communication and engagement. The RECG and EECG will be asked to contribute by identifying additional stakeholders and validating the final mapping to ensure it accurately reflects the sector's current landscape.

Implementation timeline: January 2025 – August 2025

Activity 2: Initiating a workstream to establish a structured data collection process for H&C related NECP progress reporting (Annexes II and XVI)

A new set of challenges has emerged due to the recent work process for the Integrated National Energy and Climate Progress Reports (NECPRs). While a workstream has already been initiated to address capacity building and training needs for the technical aspects of reporting, this activity introduces a new workstream to facilitate the data collection process itself and address its associated challenges. As part of this workstream, the Secretariat will collaborate with the RECG members to identify gaps in current data flows. This assessment will help to tailor future activities - webinars and written guidance materials - to better address the specific needs of the RECG members. The first phase of capacity building will focus on the methodological aspects of data collection. In this cycle the Secretariat will provide guidance to RECG on defining classification criteria, structuring data accordingly, and selecting relevant data sources. In the next phase, the Secretariat together with RECG will explore the best practices for structuring roles, designating key agencies, and ensuring effective coordination. Insights from EU member states will be shared and discussed to support the development of efficient data collection processes.

Implementation timeline: April 2025 – August 2026

Activity 3: Strengthening access to financing for District Heating Systems (DHS) decarbonisation

The modernisation of district heating networks in CPs has been progressing at a slow pace. One of the main barriers to DHS decarbonisation is lack of access to finance. Allegedly the complexity of project preparation is what often prevents stakeholders from accessing available funding opportunities. To address this challenge, the Secretariat will collaborate with relevant IFIs and donors to promote a systematic approach to preparing district heating decarbonisation projects. Our goal is to facilitate access to EU funding opportunities, including the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) III and the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF). The activity will consist of webinars/training sessions, which will have two main components. First, they will focus on capacity-building to train the RECG alongside other relevant stakeholders in preparing project applications. Second, they will create opportunities for networking and interaction between potential financiers and project beneficiaries, helping to bridge the gap between project development and financial support.

Implementation timeline: May 2025 – June 2026

Activity 4: Initiating a workstream on regulatory policies facilitating decarbonization of District Heating and Cooling (DHC) systems, including regulation of Third Party Access

To support the fulfillment of RES-H&C target, Article 24(4) of RED II suggests two key approaches: (i) increasing the share of energy from renewable sources and from waste heat and cold in district heating and cooling systems or (ii) introducing TPA to foster competition within the sector. Under this workstream, in collaboration with the Energy Community Regulatory Board (ECRB), RECG will explore two main avenues and develop dedicated policy guidelines: 1) regulatory policies facilitating decarbonisation, which includes evaluating the implementation of these policies that drive the increase in the share of renewable energy and waste heat and cold. The focus will be on identifying technical and economic challenges, as well as best practices that could be applied to CPs; and 2) third party access, which will focus on practical implementation of TPA as a key mechanism to stimulate competition within the sector. One of the key focuses will be addressing the relationship between TPA, heat tariff setting, and overall heat market operations. The policy guidelines will ultimately aim at providing actionable insights into how these two approaches can optimise DHC network operations and accelerate their decarbonisation.

Implementation timeline: January 2026 – October 2026

3. Biofuels obligation and Sustainability and Greenhouse gas emissions saving criteria for biofuels, bioliquids and biomass fuels

RED II establishes the framework for increasing the share of renewable energy in the transport sector (RES-T) by 2030, setting mandatory targets and specific sustainability requirements for biofuels, bioliquids, and biomass fuels. Only fuels that comply with the sustainability and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions saving criteria are eligible to count toward these targets. Furthermore, to mainstream the consumption of renewable energy in transport and ensure the fulfilment of RES-T obligations, Article 25 of RED II requires Contracting Parties to set obligations for fuel suppliers to provide sufficient volumes of renewable fuel and renewable electricity in national markets. Implementing these obligations effectively requires clear legislative framework and robust monitoring and verification mechanisms.
CPs, except for Serbia, are yet to fully transpose the provisions of Articles 25–31 of RED II and establish comprehensive systems for imposing and monitoring biofuel obligations on fuel suppliers. While progress has been made, further efforts are needed to ensure full compliance with RED II. To facilitate these efforts, the Secretariat actively supports the CPs through direct technical assistance. As part of the RECG the following activities will also be implemented.

Activity 1: Technical discussions about the delegated acts based on the Articles 25-29 of RED II and the Database on tracking liquids and gaseous fuels for transport

Based on the Articles 25-29 of RED II the European Commission adopted a number of delegated acts which prescribe technical guidance and methodology for implementation of the biofuel obligation for fuel suppliers and sustainability and greenhouse gas emissions saving criteria. The members of the RECG will review and discuss these delegated acts[1] and prepare a technical report that will be presented to the Permanent High Level Group (PHLG). The report will serve as a basis for the invitation to the European Commission to present the draft decisions with adapted texts for consideration and possible adoption by the PHLG.
Article 28 of RED II prescribes the obligation of establishing a Database for tracking liquid and gaseous fuels used in the transport sector. The RECG will discuss the technical aspects of the national databases and the possibility for CPs to join the Union Database established and operated by the European Commission. The RECG will draft a working paper to be presented to the PHLG.

Implementation timeline: April 2025 – July 2025

1 EC Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/807 of 13 March 2019, EC Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/2448 of 13 December 2022; EC Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/996 of 14 June 2022; EC Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/1184 of 10 February 2023; EC Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/1185 of 10 February 2023; EC Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/1640 of 5 June 2023; EC Delegated Directive (EU) 2024/1405 of 14 March 2024, EC Decision of 10 June 2010 (2010/335/EU); EC Regulation (EU) No 1307/2014 of 8 December 2014; EC Decision of 12 January 2011 (2011/13/EU).

Activity 2: Development of policy guidelines

This activity focuses on developing clear and concise policy guidelines for transposing RED II provisions related to the implementation of systems for imposition and verification of: (a) the biofuels obligations for fuel suppliers and (b) sustainability and greenhouse gas emissions saving criteria.
Given the complexity of biofuel supply chains, which requires coordination between multiple stakeholders, including biofuel producers, fuel suppliers and designated authorities, most of the EU Member States have adopted "step-by-step" implementation guidelines to streamline implementation. A selected number of the national "biofuel obligation systems" from the EU Member States and the respective implementation guidelines will be referenced.
RECG will develop similar policy guidelines, incorporating the specificities of national legislative frameworks in CPs.
The section addressing the sustainability of biofuels, bioliquids and biomass fuels will focus the best practices in the EU Member States, practical implementation of the Voluntary Schemes recognised by the European Commission and functioning of the Union Database for tracing liquid and gaseous biofuels for transport.

Implementation timeline: July 2025 – January 2026

Activity 3: Capacity building and exchange of experience

RECG members and key stakeholders in the CPs will have the opportunity to strengthen their knowledge and skills through dedicated workshops and webinars focused on sharing experiences and best practices. These sessions will cover essential topics, including RES-T targets, the legislative framework for imposing obligations on fuel suppliers and respective monitoring and verification system, and the sustainability criteria for biofuels, bioliquids, and biomass fuels.
Additionally, good practice examples from EU Member States will be presented at RECG meetings and workshops, based on the needs and interests of RECG members.

Implementation timeline: September 2025 – March 2026

4. Bioenergy and biomass reporting

As part of NECP reporting, CPs must provide detailed information on biomass and bioenergy, as outlined in Annex II and Annex IX of the Governance Regulation. This includes their role in electricity consumption, renewable energy consumption in heating and cooling, and the transport sector. Additionally, reporting should cover the use of solid biomass for energy and the impacts of biofuel production and use on natural resources, as well as food and feed prices.
Since bioenergy and biomass reporting requires data collection across multiple sectors and coordination among various stakeholders, the RECG will initiate a dedicated workstream to support CPs in establishing a structured data collection process for reporting on biomass and bioenergy.

Activity 1: Capacity needs and good practices in bioenergy and biomass reporting

In collaboration with RECG members, an assessment will be conducted to identify national capacity needs, such as through a questionnaire survey, and to define the scope and concept for capacity development. Based on this assessment, training materials and guidance will be developed on reporting requirements, incorporating good practice examples of methodologies and data collection organization from both EU MSs and CPs.

Implementation timeline: April 2025 – August 2025

Activity 2: Strengthening capacities and exchange of experience

RECG members and their colleagues involved in NECP reporting will have the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills through dedicated workshops and webinars. These sessions will feature good practice examples from EU MSs and facilitate the exchange of experiences and best practices among CPs.

Implementation timeline: August 2025 – December 2026

5. Guarantees of Origin

As part of a regional project implemented by the Energy Community Secretariat in 2022, electronic registries for guarantees of origin were created for Albania, both entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Ukraine. Georgia led the way by signing the first direct agreement between its designated issuing body and the service provider Grexel in January 2023. Since then, six more issuing bodies have followed suit. The registries in Albania, Georgia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republika Srpska (BiH) and Ukraine are already operational. Serbia had already operationalised its registries several years before the regional project began.

As Contracting Parties began utilising the registries, concerns emerged regarding the restrictions outlined in Article 19(11) of the Union's Directive 2018/2001/EU of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, since those restrictions prevent EU Member States from recognising guarantees of origin issued by Contracting Parties. In the Energy Community Ministerial Council of 14 December 2023, the European Commission presented the Roadmap for the Recognition of guarantees of origin issued by Contracting Parties of the Energy Community in the EU. The Roadmap provides a preliminary assessment of the conditions specified in Article 19(11) of the Union's Renewables Directive and outlines the criteria that must be met to enable mutual recognition of guarantees of origin.

Furthermore, all efforts so far have been focused on guarantees of origin for electricity. However, given the emerging interest in renewable gases among CPs, as well as ongoing developments in this area within the EU, RECG will closely monitor these advancements and explore opportunities for the implementation of guarantees of origin for gas and heating or cooling.

Activity 1: Support recognition of Guarantees of Origin issued by Contracting Parties of the Energy Community in the EU

The RECG will closely monitor developments regarding the Decision on the recognition of guarantees of origin issued by CPs in the EU and will provide the necessary input and feedback to the European Commission, PHLG, the Secretariat, and others involved in the process of developing and adopting the Decision. Furthermore, RECG members will coordinate the exchange of information with relevant stakeholders in their respective CPs.

Implementation timeline: April 2025 – December 2026

Activity 2: Issuing and management of GOs for biogases and the functioning of the Union Database for gaseous fuels

The RECG will closely monitor developments within the European Union regarding gas GOs, the integration of the Union Database (UDB) with national GO registries, and the impact of these developments on the Energy Community.

Implementation timeline: April2025 – December 2026

6. Horizontal issues

Activity 1: Coordination of donors support on renewable energy in CPs

RECG shall play an important role as coordinator and implementation partner of diverse regional technical assistance and investment programmes. The strong support offered by the European Commission and other donors such as AFD, GIZ, IRENA, UNDP as well as IFIs EBRD, EIB, KfW, World Bank Group (IBRD, IFC) is very important and valuable for a successful implementation of the RECG Work Programme.

Beside this, the RECG will assess the existing assistance available from donors and IFIs and it will propose priority areas for technical assistance to promote and de-risking investments in renewable energy. RECG will discuss the extension of donor support and coordination of such activities for candidate and potential candidate countries of the Energy Community.

In particular, a dedicated session on sustainable finance and donor coordination is planned for the members of the RECG in order to consider and discuss the following topics:

- Case studies of innovative financing models
- Potential of de-risking instruments for PPAs
- Governmental support for self-consumption
- CPs need further financing (in both private & public sector) through donors & IFIs.

Implementation timeline: April 2025 – December 2026

Activity 2: Storage in self-consumption

The growing number of self-consumers across the CPs highlights the increasing relevance of storage solutions in the context of self-consumption. To support this development, the Secretariat will organise dedicated webinars and share relevant information and best practices from EU Member States with RECG members, including examples of potential government support mechanisms such as financial incentives, regulatory adjustments, and targeted programmes.

Implementation timeline: June 2025 – June 2026

Renewable Energy Coordination Group
Work Programme 2025/2026

No.	Activities	Coordination with other WG	2025				2026			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
A	PLANNING, PROGRAMMING, AND PERMITTING RES PROJECTS, INCLUDING ASPECTS ON INTEGRATING BESS									
A.1	Develop Blueprint for Renewable Acceleration Areas RAAs (PV and wind) including supplementary Annexes to the RAAs Blueprint related to grid and co-located storage									
A.2	Targeted support to CP implementing the blueprint – concept notes for cooperation and cross-border initiatives for RAAs									
A.3	Organize joint event matching RAAs and IFIs	Environmental Task Force								
A.4	Develop Protocols on digitalization and simplified notification, training materials and organize workshop									
B	IMPROVING DATA, ACCESS TO FINANCE, AND THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IN HEATING AND COOLING (H&C)									
B.1	Gap analysis of the status of H&C sector in contracting parties	Energy Efficiency Coordination Group (EECG)								
B.2	Initiating a workstream to establish a structured data collection process for H&C related NECP progress reporting (Annexes II and XVI)									
B.3	Strengthening access to financing for District Heating Systems (DHS) decarbonization									
B.4	Initiating a workstream on regulatory policies facilitating decarbonization of District Heating and Cooling (DHC) systems, including regulation of Third Party Access	Energy Community Regulatory Board (ECRB)								
C	BIOFUELS OBLIGATION AND SUSTAINABILITY AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS SAVING CRITERIA FOR BIOFUELS, BIOLIQUIDS AND BIOMASS									

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	FUELS									
C.1	Technical discussions about the delegated acts based on the Articles 25-29 of REDII and the Database on tracking liquids and gaseous fuels for transport									
C.2	Development of policy guidelines									
C.3	Capacity building and exchange of experience									
D	BIOENERGY AND BIOMASS REPORTING									
D.1	Capacity needs and good practices in bioenergy and biomass reporting									
D.2	Strengthening capacities and exchange of experience									
E	GUARANTEES OF ORIGIN									
E.1	Support recognition of Guarantees of Origin issued by Contracting Parties of the Energy Community in the EU									
E.2	Issuing and management of GOs for biogases and the functioning of the Union Database for gaseous fuels used in the transport sector									
F	HORIZONTAL AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES									
F.1	Coordination of donor`s support on renewable energy in CPs									
F.2	Storage in self-consumption									

