



Save the Homes

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1 Introduction

To support EU-wide replication, building on the Save the Homes (StH) Replication and Exploitation Plan and StH on the Move Campaign (project tasks 5.2 and 5.5 respectively), consortium partners engaged in a range of measures to unlock local capacities to roll-out OSS that draw inspiration from the citizen hub concepts pioneered in Rotterdam and Valencia. The European Covenant of Mayors (EUCoM) initiative proved to be an effective vehicle to deliver capacity building work, but other formats were also adopted to ensure a needs-tailored approach.

Whilst conceived as a public stand-alone deliverable, the primary intended audience of this report are the consortium of partners themselves – reflecting on their own achievements and opportunities for future impactful work on catalysing One-Stop-Shop (OSS) establishment – as well as the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA), which is tasked with assessing project results overall. As is noted in relation to the Exploitation Campaigns Deliverable (D5.4), this report is kept as concise as possible, to avoid duplication and to focus on the demonstration of effort invested into capacity building during project implementation. The report effectively represents an Annex to the Replication and Exploitation Plan.

Overall, the various capacity building activities supported 56 local governments, to pave the way for OSS setup and their long-term operation.

2 Overview of capacity building activities

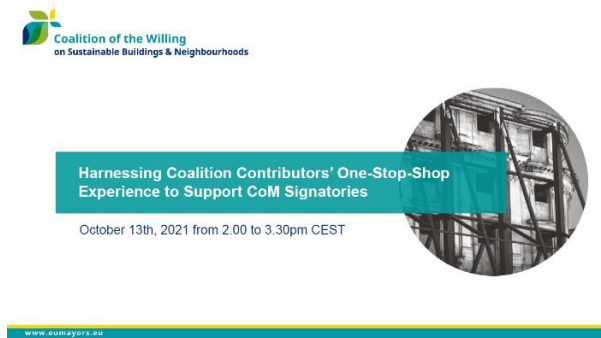
In light of anticipated COVID-related delays in progressing with the setup and operationalisation of OSS activities in Valencia and Rotterdam, capacity building activities were launched earlier in the project, focussing not exclusively on subnational governments expressing interest in replication as an outcome of StH T5.4 activities. Rather, the net was cast wider to include subnational government (and other stakeholders) more broadly across the EU. This was achieved by tapping into the EUCoM, ICLEI membership as well as via direct contacts of StH consortium partners. This chapter summarises the diverse capacity building activities implemented.

2.1 Enhancing capacities via the EUCoM

Capacity building via the EUCoM spanned across a number of activities, namely [1] the setup of a so-called EUCoM “Coalition of the Willing” on Sustainable Buildings and Neighbourhoods (CSBN); [2] the co-organisation of a European Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) session on One-Stop-Shops; [3] the imparting of StH knowledge in the context of the Covenant of Mayors Investment Forum; [4] the supporting of the EUCoM booth at the Smart Cities Expo Barcelona; and [4] the production of a EUCoM factsheet on OSS in which the Save the Homes project is featured. The below subchapters provide a more detail account of individual activities. Overall, EUCoM engagement resulted in elevated technical OSS capacities of 43 local government representatives.

2.1.1 EUCoM CSBN on Sustainable Buildings and Neighbourhoods

StH partner ICLEI oversaw the establishment of a Coalition of the Willing, hereafter referred to as CSBN, under the EUCoM, to support enhanced coordination across key stakeholder groups (including StH Replication Board Members and EU institutions as well as subnational representatives). The coalition was operational between 2021 and 2024, to allow for the peer-to-peer knowledge transfer on a variety of relevant topics, such as the Renovation Wave, the EPBD as well as circularity and procurement. A non-public 6-person workshop was held by the CSBN on October 13th, 2021 - leveraging StH findings to jointly reflect on how the roll-out of renovation advice and support services can be accelerated at subnational level to drive the decarbonisation of the built environment in Europe. Amongst others, the workshop featured presentations and interventions by StH Replication Board Members BEUC and EBC, statements by a senior representative of the European Investment Bank (ELENA Programme) as well as Save the Homes partners GNE Finance and UIPI.



Figures 1 & 2: Internal CSBN meeting on OSS October 13th, 2021 – Slides and Agenda | Source: ICLEI

2.1.2 EUSEW workshop session on One-Stop-Shops

ICLEI co-organised a EUSEW workshop via the EUCoM together with DG ENER and StH partner UIPI to catalyse OSS replication. The event was held in October 2021 and attracted an audience of 42 participants of which 8 were local government representatives. The session examined the differing forms of OSS, their legal frameworks and how these hubs operate under European state aid rules. It explored the range of services that OSS provide and examines how these could potentially be concentrated at regional or national level, to harness synergies and allow local hubs to focus on face-to-face advisory, mediation and support efforts on the last leg of renovation journeys as well as on complex projects. Panellists, speakers and participants also reflected on the long-term support

needs of OSS to ensure their continued operation and identify possible funding streams to be tapped into or created in future.

In the session entitled “One-Stop-Shops: Overcoming legal and organisational challenges to power local renovation waves” speakers discussed:

- How Covenant of Mayors signatories, local and regional governments across Europe go about setting up citizen information and support services to facilitate the renovation of homes. Specifically, participants delved into available legal structures and their potential benefits and implications?
- Services that an OSS can and should provide and how limited resources available to OSS are balanced in practice to accomplish their goals – highlighting good practices is addressing both low hanging fruit as well as more complex / time-intensive projects.
- The long-term operation and maintenance of OSS – with national support schemes being identified as a key enabler for local OSS sustainability.
- With regard to specific needs of local governments and the available support at European and Member State level, participants highlighted financial resources, data and supply side quality concerns, amongst others. EU-funded project funding was flagged as a key enabler, whilst national support was also highlighted as being important.

Speakers provided presentations about what legal and organisational challenges local governments face and how these can be overcome. Specific examples of services which OSS provide were presented as well as the support services they need.



Figures 3 -5: EUSEW Session Banner and Workshop Agenda | Source: ICLEI

2.1.3 Exploiting StH in the context of the CoM Investment Forum

StH was also prominently featured in the Covenant of Mayors Investment Forum on October 18th, 2022, with Ana Tisov (StH project coordinator from Huygen Engineers & Consultants) giving a presentation that introduced the citizen hub concept, outlined key features of the Save the Homes such as the customer journey definition and shared some of the key characteristics of – and tailoring needs for - OSS implementation in Rotterdam and Valencia. Additional information passed on to stakeholders related to business models and implementation ecosystem details in both local contexts. Key takeaways of the session included: (1) the importance of working with a strong network of local actors; (2) the need to channel funding effectively (and tap into different revenue streams); (3) the necessity to articulate a clear value proposition; (4) the criticality of establishing an online presence and platform and (5) the value inherent in broadening the scope of the discourse (and OSS functionality) to address key built environment considerations such as health, aesthetics and circularity.

In total, the Investment Forum was attended by over 400 participants (of which 250 joined online). Whilst a survey was not conducted to gauge enhanced subnational government capacities, it can be conservatively estimated that at least 20 local government representatives attended the session and benefitted from StH insights shared.

2.1.4 EUCoM and ICLEI at the Smart City Expo in Barcelona

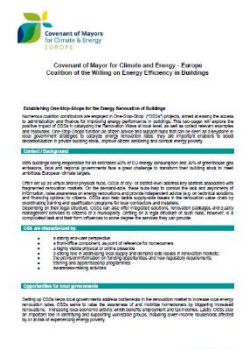
Whilst ICLEI’s presence at the Smart City Expo in Barcelona was not funded by the Save the Homes project, it is important to note that staff were present at the event, both in their capacity as ICLEI experts as well as members of the EUCoM. The ICLEI stand alone was visited by 500 participants between November 7-9, 2023, with an estimated 100 of these being linked to subnational governments. Breaking this figure down further and going beyond mere dissemination, ICLEI’s senior expert (and EUCoM office support staff) Andreas Jaeger actively engaged at least 15 local government representatives in deep topical exchanges on building decarbonisation and energy efficiency – focussing in particular on OSS establishment and drawing from StH experiences. Knowledge on StH good practices, approaches and tools was thereby effectively transferred to local government representatives from Finland, Germany, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey.



Figures 6 & 7 (top row): Impressions from the CoM Investment Forum session in 2022 | Source: [CINEA](#)
 Figures 8 & 9 (bottom row): ICLEI-EUCoM Presence at the Smart City Expo | Source: [EUCoM](#) (left) and ICLEI (right)

2.1.5 EUCoM factsheet on OSS, featuring StH outputs

Whilst not formally a KPI that requires reporting in the context of trainings / capacity building, it should be noted that ICLEI produced a EUCoM factsheet on OSS that provides an introduction to the concept and provides links to valuable resources, including StH as well as of other impactful EU-funded projects. Considering that many EUCoM signatories have populations below 10,000 inhabitants, it was felt that such a document would represent a valuable resource to pave the way for eventual replication endeavours. As a result of the EUCoM’s website migration, the resource is currently offline, but efforts are ongoing to make the factsheet accessible again.



2.2 Capacity building efforts beyond the EUCoM

In addition to leveraging the EUCoM to catalyse OSS replication overall, ICLEI also engaged in complementary efforts to pave the way for broader OSS roll-out. This was achieved by exploiting synergies with efforts focused on building renovation that were primarily funded via other EU-funded projects. As Save the Homes knowledge was leveraged, these are highlighted in brief below. Overall, the complementary activities resulted in enhanced capacity to replicate of at least 11 further local governments. Considering that other funding sources besides Save the Homes were availed of to implement actions, knowledge building of 13 local government stakeholders is directly attributable to Save the Homes (underlined below for clarity).

ICLEI's Mannheim 2020 Conference (taking place from 30.09. - 02.10.2020) provided an opportunity to build capacities of 16 subnational stakeholders in relation to building stock renovation. Whilst funded by another project on renovation - and despite StH having only just launched - the workshop could already pick up on some of the conceptual underpinnings of the StH citizen hub approach.



Malmö Creating Green Cities Conference: Linked to Sweden's EU-Presidency, ICLEI co-organised and moderated a session on June 14th, 2023, focused on building capacities related to building renovation and circularity. Components related to building renovation benefitted significantly from StH learnings on OSS. The session itself was attended by approximately 50 persons, with 8 participants associated with local governments. Beyond the session itself, the conference also enabled peer-learning exchanges involving ICLEI and subnational government representatives.



Emmendingen Workshop: As mentioned in D5.4, a highly impactful workshop that engaged 5 local governments was held on July 27th, 2021 in the City of Emmendingen. Whilst the workshop itself was realized in the context of another EU-funded project, OSS knowledge was directly transferred from the Save the Homes project to enhance capacities (and secure replication interest of participants). The workshop's success is underscored by the fact that the cluster of local governments is exploring EIB Elena funding to establish an OSS with similar elements to that in Valencia.



Bilateral exchanges / knowledge sharing: ICLEI engaged in direct (StH-funded) knowledge sharing activities with representatives from the Cities of Milan (May 26th, 2021), Paris and Tartu (both on May 3rd, 2021), Hauts-de-France (April 8th, 2022) and Leiedal in Belgium (April 12th, 2022). Bilateral exchanges focused on good practices emerging from the whilst also delving into bottlenecks (e.g. organizational and administrative). Bilateral capacity building efforts proved to be highly effective, but also resource intensive).





3 Conclusion

Capacity building events drew in considerable numbers of stakeholder during Save the Homes project lifetime and the consortium can be content with having reached and unlocked capacities of at least 56 local government stakeholders overall. It is worthy of note that a number of organised events that specifically targeted subnational government actors, often attracted a much greater number of other stakeholders (e.g. NGOs, think tanks, private sector representatives) than the actual core focus group.

The lack of time (and possibly interest) of local government stakeholders in participating in formal top-down and lengthy training events was compensated by alternative modes of capacity building, with peer-exchanges being a very well-received format. This observation was supported by the successful replication workshops delivered by ICLEI and StH partners in the context of the “Save the Homes on the Move Campaign” (see D5.4 for details). Based on feedback received in relation to the diverse D5.5 efforts, local government stakeholders highly valued learning from real-life examples that delved into successes, but also some of the challenges faced in establishing OSS. The EUCoM was found to be an effective vehicle to activate local government stakeholders. In future, it may be prudent to supplement EUCoM-wide workshops on OSS with nationally-focused events, to overcome language barriers (and linked hesitancy in joining) and to address country-specific conditions. This level of engagement went beyond ICLEI’s means and remits as member of the office, but should be explored for future engagement – in collaboration with other relevant city networks.

Arguably the most impactful means of transferring knowledge was found to be in small groups or bilateral settings, which allowed for deep dives into StH homes elements and made room for open, frank and dynamic interactions. It should be acknowledged that bilateral exchanges were highly resource intensive in terms of coordination which places a natural limit on their scalability. Nevertheless, ICLEI will consider such a focus in future project-based work on OSS - in relation to national renovation plan consultation inputs (to underpin recast EPBD transposition) or to assist EIB ELENA funding access / energy efficiency investment pipeline development.