



## Final Conference

# Look what the neighbours are doing! Communities shaping sustainability

Community level projects play a vital role in sustainability transitions. Be it the planning of a heat network, liberating a neighborhood from transit traffic, or a collective investment in home improvement, social dynamics often determine the success or failure of an innovative community project. The EU SMARTTEES project studied social dynamics of innovation in five types of energy- and mobility-related local social innovations in ten front-runner cities and islands across Europe. These case studies provided rich data and fascinating stories on the complexities of social innovation. Computational social simulation models were developed for a variety of cases, allowing for experimentation based on the modelling of actual community behavior, with different interests, positions and social networks represented through the diverse case selection. The results of these experiments and the robust research done in SMARTTEES are captured in an innovative “Policy Sandbox-tool” that allows planners working with social innovation testing out different scenarios, to help determine the best course of action. During the SMARTTEES conference, attendees will be able to explore the tool and learn about state of the art insights on how to support communities and strengthen local democracy to achieve sustainable energy- and mobility transitions.

**Date:** 14. September 2021

**Format:** completely virtual due to the negative COVID developments in the Netherlands and other European countries

**Conference website:**

[local-social-innovation.eu/final-conference/information/](https://local-social-innovation.eu/final-conference/information/)

**Conference registration:**

[eventbrite.com/e/smarttees-final-conference-tickets-140967913825](https://eventbrite.com/e/smarttees-final-conference-tickets-140967913825)

# Programme

## MORNING AFTERNOON

**9:00 13:15**

GRONINGEN  
WELCOME RECEPTION

SIMULATING DYNAMICS IN SOCIAL  
INNOVATION PROCESSES AND  
LESSONS LEARNED

**9:30**

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

**14:30**

**10:00**

SOCIAL INNOVATION  
ON THE GROUND  
- A HANDS ON PRESENTATION  
OF THE SMARTEES CASE CLUSTERS

HOW TO MAKE SOCIAL  
SIMULATIONS USEFUL IN POLICY  
CONTEXTS - A SANDBOX TOOL  
AND WORKSHOP CONCEPT

**15:10**

BREAK

**11:00**

BREAK

**15:25**

**11:15**  
FACILITATING SOCIAL INNOVATION  
- A RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

HOW TO CREATE POLICY  
ECOSYSTEMS IN WHICH LOCAL  
SOCIAL INNOVATION THRIVES -  
POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF  
SMARTEES FINDINGS

**12:15**

LUNCH

**16:25**

A LOOK AT THE FUTURE

**16:35**

END OF CONFERENCE

# Detailed programme:

## 09:00 Welcome reception for the people visiting physically in Groningen

## 09:30 Opening of the final conference

The conference day will be opened by the Rector of the University of Groningen outlining the importance of interdisciplinary research and sustainability for a thriving university. Afterwards the coordinator of SMARTEES will introduce the main idea and components of the project, before Cristiana Marchitelli from the European Commission will outline the important role the Commission sees in social innovations for the success of the European Green Deal. The first session will finish with a lively report from the early days of social traffic innovations in Groningen, when a group of young politicians set out to change the face of the city overnight.

- The importance of interdisciplinary research in sustainability  
*Opening speech by Cisca Wijmenga, Rector of the University of Groningen (5 min)*
- Linking social innovation and social simulation – The SMARTEES approach  
*Christian A. Klöckner, SMARTEES project coordinator (5 min)*
- The role of social energy innovations for the European Green Deal  
*Cristiana Marchitelli, DG Energy, European Commission (10 min)*
- Social innovation in practice – some insights from the early days  
*Jacques Wallage, Social innovation pioneer from Groningen (10 min)*

## 10:00 Social innovation on the ground – a hands on presentation of the SMARTEES case clusters

In the second session of the conference, you will get the opportunity to hear from the people on the ground and get a hands-on report on how citizen engagement and successful social energy innovations have been realized in our five case clusters. One example case from each cluster case will be presented by people who have been key persons for the implementation. You will hear how the City of Groningen develops holistic mobility plans with citizen involvement, how Samsø turned into the world's most innovative energy island, all through decades of engagement of the islanders themselves, how Aberdeen goes new ways to connect households in danger of energy poverty to the cities heat network, how Vitoria-Gasteiz restructured public space through defining so-called superblocks (with car-traffic banned on the inside of the blocks), and how energy efficiency and social relations can co-benefit when regenerating challenged neighbourhoods.

- Holistic mobility planning in Groningen  
*Terry Albronda, Groningen City Council (10 min)*
- The renewable energy revolution on Samsø  
*Søren Hermansen, Energy Academy Samsø (10 min)*
- Energy efficiency against fuel poverty in Aberdeen  
*Mai Muhammad (tbc), Aberdeen City Council (10 min)*
- Superblocks as a concept to improve traffic and quality of life in Vitoria-Gasteiz  
*Juan Carlos Escudero, Vitoria-Gasteiz City Council (10 min)*
- District regeneration with a focus on energy and social relations in Malmö  
*Trevor Graham, urbanisland – innovation for sustainable communities (10 min)*
- Q&A session facilitated by online question tool (10 min)

## 11:00 Short break

## 11:15 Facilitating social innovation – a research perspective

In the third session, we will present the results from our in depth analysis of the cases, the processes that facilitated their success and barriers that had to be overcome. First, commonalities between our cases, but also specificities in the local contexts will be analysed, before the focus will move to the policy contexts the innovations happened in as well as an analysis of alternative policy scenarios. Then, selected cases in the SMARTEES project will be examined for how social innovation contributes to energy justice. Finally, Flor Avelino will reflect on the SMARTEES findings based on her extensive background in social innovation studies.

- A typology of social energy innovations in practice  
*Gabriele Quinti, Knowledge & Innovation (10min)*
- The policy context of local social energy innovations  
*Adina Dumitru, University of a Coruna (10min)*
- Social energy innovation and energy justice  
*Giuseppe Pellegrini Masini & Erica Löfström, NTNU (10 min)*
- SMARTEES results in the international context of sustainable transition research  
*Flor Avelino, DRIFT for transition (10 min)*
- Q&A session facilitated by online question tool (20 min)

## 12:15 Light lunch with informal conversations

## 13:15 Simulating dynamics in social innovation processes and what can we learn from that?

In the fourth session, the focus shifts to the social simulation part of the project. Four of the agent-based models will be introduced, which simulate the complex social processes with underlying key events in the development of the cases introduced in session two. The first model simulates how voting behaviour in a referendum shapes over the course of a couple of weeks depending on the social communication processes, media statements and citizen meetings. The second model shows the dynamics of public support for superblocks depending on communication and networks between citizens and interest groups. The third model simulates the decision to join a heat network, based on the communication behaviour of key actors and trust levels. Finally, Petra Ahrweiler will comment on the model developments achieved in SMARTEES based on her work as president of the European Social Simulation Association.

- Winning a referendum (presentation of the Groningen model and scenarios)  
*Wander Jager, University of Groningen (15 min)*
- The dynamics of social support (presentation of the Vitoria-Gasteiz model and scenarios)  
*Maria Amparo Alonso Batanzos, University of a Coruna (15 min)*
- To or not to be (part of a heating network) (presentation of the Aberdeen model and scenarios)  
*Doug Salt / Gary Polhill, James Hutton Institute (15 min)*
- SMARTEES models in the international ABM context  
*Petra Ahrweiler, Johannes Gutenberg University, President of the European Social Simulation Association (10 min)*
- Q&A session facilitated by online question tool (15 min)

### **14:30 How to make social simulations useful in policy contexts – a sandbox tool and workshop concept**

In the forth session, we will present a web-based tool to explore the dynamics of social innovation processes and how they depend on the structural-political context. This tool allows to view a large number of model runs under different conditions for the agent-based models developed in SMARTEES. Furthermore, we will present a workshop concept for interested policymakers which unlocks more specific output from the models to help developing local strategies to foster social energy innovations.

- A presentation of the different versions of the SMARTEES sandbox tool

*Elma Meskovic / Niklas Mischowski (15 min)*

- A presentation of the SMARTEES workshop concept

*Tavor Graham, urbanisland – innovation for sustainable communities (10 min)*

- Q&A session facilitated by online question tool (10 min)

### **15:10 Short break**

### **15:25 How to create policy ecosystems in which local social innovation thrives - Policy implications of the SMARTEES findings**

In the final session, we will discuss how policy at different levels (municipalities, countries, EU) can benefit from the SMARTEES findings and what they mean for policy making in the future, where citizen engagement becomes more and more important. SMARTEES researchers will discuss with policy representatives from the different levels to explore the specific perspectives.

- Short opening statements by representatives of local, national, and European policy makers and a SMARTEES researcher

*Janet Sanz (Barcelona), tbc., Cristiana Marchitello, & (5 min each)*

- Panel debate (40 min)

### **16:25 Integrating the SMARTEES findings – A look at the future**

Jed Cohen

To end the conference, Jed Cohen will reflect from an interdisciplinary perspective on what we learned in the project and in which directions further developments might go.

### **16:35 End of conference**

## Project partners



[www.local-social-innovation.eu](http://www.local-social-innovation.eu)