PROSPECT

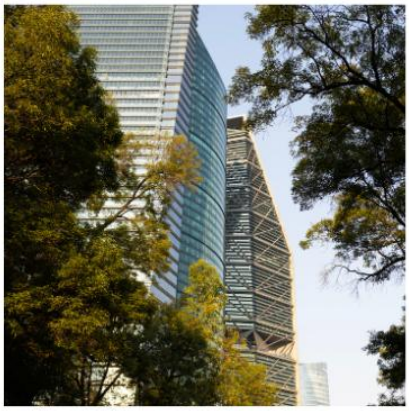












# Energy Agencies - Learning Handbook at a Glance

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# Technical information

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# About the project

PROSPECT aims to strengthen the capacity of local and regional authorities (LRAs) across Europe to implement sustainable energy and climate actions by reducing reliance on public funding and increasing the use of innovative financing schemes (e.g., one-stop-shops, energy agencies, energy communities). The project offers a peer-to-peer Capacity Building Programme (CBP) tailored to the needs and time constraints of LRAs, available in multiple languages and structured in adaptable learning modules. Through large-scale outreach, including very small and remote LRAs, PROSPECT CUBE acts as an entry point to EU programmes and financing opportunities for authorities with limited experience in the field.

PROSPECT CUBE builds upon two successful Horizon 2020 initiatives: PROSPECT (2017–2020) and PROSPECT+ (2022–2025).

# Disclaimer

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# 1. About this guide

This concise guide highlights the key concepts, applications and takeaways of the full PROSPECT CUBE Learning Handbook on Energy Agencies, offering an accessible introduction to the role, establishment and development of local and regional Energy and Climate Agencies. It explores how these publicly mandated, non-commercial organisations help translate energy and climate policy objectives into concrete actions, services and investments at the territorial level.

Drawing on the experience of the PROSPECT initiative and broader European practices, the publication outlines the institutional, strategic, operational and financial considerations involved in developing effective Energy Agencies and ensuring their long-term sustainability.

## 1.1. What the full learning handbook covers?

The full learning handbook is structured as a learning and reference resource covering:

- The role, added value and evolution of Energy Agencies in Europe
- Political and administrative mandates and strategic policy alignment
- Legal status, governance arrangements and organisational structures
- Assessment of local and regional energy needs and target groups
- Service portfolios and stakeholder engagement
- Value proposition and strategic positioning
- Initial funding options and long-term financial sustainability

By bringing together key considerations and practical guidance, the publication helps readers identify suitable approaches, navigate institutional and operational challenges, and tailor solutions to their specific territorial needs and priorities.

## 1.2. Who should use the full learning handbook?

The full learning handbook is designed for both newcomers and experienced practitioners involved in the planning, financing, management, or implementation of energy-related investments. Developed in the framework of the PROSPECT initiative, it primarily addresses local and regional authorities (LRAs) and existing or emerging Energy Agencies seeking to establish or strengthen their mandates, governance and services. It is also relevant to policymakers, public utilities, funding bodies, housing agencies, social services, business support organisations and civil society actors involved in the energy transition.

By highlighting the distinct roles and added value of Energy Agencies, the handbook encourages stronger collaboration among public institutions, technical experts, financial actors and local communities.

# 2. What are energy agencies?

Local and regional Energy and Climate Agencies are publicly mandated, non-commercial organisations established to support the design, coordination and implementation of energy and climate policies within a defined territory. Operating at the interface between public authorities, citizens, businesses and financial stakeholders, they provide independent expertise, technical assistance and coordination capacity to turn strategic objectives into practical solutions.

Their role extends beyond traditional energy advice. Energy Agencies increasingly facilitate investment, develop project pipelines, support renewable energy deployment, coordinate building renovations and help communities respond to climate challenges.

## 2.1. How do energy agencies work in practice?

Energy Agencies operate through institutional arrangements adapted to their territorial context, public mandate and available resources. Their effectiveness depends on a combination of political legitimacy, technical expertise, organisational capacity and sustainable funding.

Establishing or strengthening an Energy Agency involves several interconnected building blocks:

- Political and administrative mandate: Securing institutional backing and defining responsibilities, objectives and territorial scope.
- Strategic alignment: Ensuring coherence with local priorities, national policies and relevant EU energy and climate frameworks.
- Legal status and governance: Selecting an appropriate legal form and balancing operational autonomy with public accountability.
- Organisational capacity: Building multidisciplinary teams with the expertise needed to deliver the agency's mandate.
- Territorial assessment: Identifying local energy challenges, stakeholder needs, existing services and market gaps.
- Service portfolio and positioning: Developing targeted services and a clear value proposition for different beneficiaries.
- Financial sustainability: Combining suitable start-up funding with a long-term strategy for stable and diversified resources.

These elements do not necessarily follow a fixed sequence. Their development may take place in parallel, depending on local conditions, institutional arrangements and the maturity of the agency.

## 2.2. Where can energy agencies make a difference?

Energy Agencies provide a broad range of services that respond to local and regional energy and climate priorities. Their activities may include:

- Energy and climate planning: Supporting the development, implementation and monitoring of Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs), local energy strategies and climate policies.
- Technical assistance and project development: Providing energy audits, feasibility assessments, project preparation, procurement support and implementation guidance for sustainable energy investments.
- Building renovation and One-Stop Shops (OSSs): Offering integrated technical, administrative and financial guidance to public authorities, households and SMEs throughout the renovation process.
- Financing and investment facilitation: Identifying funding opportunities, structuring investment projects, aggregating smaller initiatives and facilitating access to public and private financing.
- Renewable energy deployment: Supporting renewable energy installations, system integration, local energy infrastructure and the development of sustainable energy solutions.
- Energy communities and citizen participation: Facilitating community-led renewable energy initiatives, stakeholder engagement and inclusive participation in local energy projects.
- Capacity building and awareness raising: Delivering training, advisory services and information campaigns to strengthen technical knowledge, institutional capacity and sustainable energy practices.
- Energy data and monitoring: Collecting and analysing energy data, developing observatories and monitoring systems, and supporting evidence-based policy decisions.
- Industrial decarbonisation and innovation: Helping businesses adopt clean technologies, improve energy performance and participate in research, innovation and pilot projects.
- Climate adaptation and resilience: Supporting climate risk assessments, adaptation planning and measures that strengthen the resilience of local infrastructure and communities.

The scope and combination of services vary according to each agency's public mandate, territorial characteristics, target groups and available resources, allowing Energy Agencies to respond to evolving local needs and policy priorities.

## 2.3. Why do energy agencies matter?

Energy Agencies provide LRAs with dedicated institutional capacity to accelerate sustainable energy and climate action, overcome implementation barriers and mobilise stakeholders and investment.

Their main benefits include:

- Policy delivery and continuity: Translating long-term energy and climate commitments into coordinated local action.
- Independent expertise and institutional capacity: Providing trusted, specialised support that strengthens public-sector decision-making and implementation.
- Investment mobilisation and project development: Aggregating projects, reducing transaction costs and improving access to financing opportunities.
- Stakeholder coordination and inclusion: Connecting public authorities, businesses, citizens and communities while supporting wider participation.
- Territorial impact and resilience: Delivering locally adapted solutions that advance decarbonisation, energy security and climate adaptation.

Realising these benefits requires a clear public mandate, effective governance, skilled teams, strong stakeholder relationships and sustainable funding. With these foundations in place, Energy Agencies can become long-term partners in delivering Europe's energy and climate ambitions at local and regional level.

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