LEAP-RE

Research and Innovation Action (RIA)

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 963530

Start date : 2020-10-01 Duration : 72 Months
http://www.leap-re.eu/

Value proposition and adoption drivers of future partnership

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LEAP-RE - Contract Number: 963530

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Document title	Value proposition and adoption drivers of future partnership
Author(s)	Léonard LéVêQUE, Charlotte Burnod, Tanaj Gillman, Chakib Seladji
Number of pages	101
Document type	Deliverable
Work Package	WP6
Document number	D6.1
Issued by	LGI
Date of completion	2025-10-17 16:35:33
Dissemination level	Public

Summary

This deliverable outlines a strategic framework to sustain and expand the Long-Term Joint EU-AU Research and Innovation Partnership on Renewable Energy (LEAP-RE) contributions beyond 2026, within the broader context of African Union (AU) European Union (EU) collaboration on renewable and sustainable energy. It evaluates potential pathways for the initiative's evolution, aligning with policy frameworks such as the AU Agenda 2063, the Global Gateway, and the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative. The key objective of this deliverable is to ensure the continuity and impact of grant-based projects LEAP-RE and LEAP-SE Cofund, by identifying strategic directions and actionable recommendations. The methodology involves a combination of stakeholder consultations and benchmarking of similar initiatives, supplemented by internal scenario development. These approaches provide critical insights into best practices, stakeholder needs, and potential pathways for future operations. The analysis highlights three main options for the future of LEAP-RE: establishing a formalised legal entity, integrating into a larger initiative, or ceasing operations

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LEAP-RE

Long-Term Joint EU-AU Research and Innovation Partnership on Renewable Energy

Research & Innovation Action

D6.1 Strategic Framework for the Future Partnership

September 2025

Version n°1

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Program under Grant Agreement 963530.

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Program under Grant Agreement 963530.

Document information

Grant Agreement	963530
Project Title	Long-Term Joint EU-AU Research and Innovation Partnership on Renewable Energy
Project Acronym	LEAP-RE
Project Coordinator	Vincent Chauvet – LGI
Project Duration	1st October 2020 – 30 September 2026 (72 Months)
Related Work Package	WP6
Related Task(s)	T6.1
Lead Organisation	LGI
Contributing Partner(s)	DLR, PAUWES
Due Date	September 2025
Submission Date	October 2025
Dissemination level	Public

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Program under Grant Agreement 963530.

Table of contents

1. Executive Summary 10
2. Introduction 11
2.1 A strategy for the future of LEAP-RE 11
2.2 The role of Work package 6 in the planning of the future of LEAP-RE 12
2.3 Scope and objectives of this deliverable 12
3. Overview of LEAP-RE 14
3.1 History and current context 14
3.2 Priorities of LEAP-RE 15
3.3 Organisational structure of LEAP-RE 15
3.4 Stakeholders of LEAP-RE 15
3.4.1 Researchers and academic institutions 15
3.4.2 Investors and funding bodies 15
3.4.3 Policymakers 16
3.4.4 Private sector and industry stakeholders 16
3.4.5 Local communities and civil society 16
3.5 Current activities and services of LEAP-RE 16
3.6 LEAP-RE's co-funding mechanism 17
3.7 Achievements of LEAP-RE 17
4. LEAP-RE's alignment with global, African and European policy frameworks and initiatives 18
4.1 Sustainable Development Goals 19
4.2 Global Gateway 20
4.3 Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative 20
4.4 Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want 21
4.5 AU-EU Partnership on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy 22
4.6 AU-EU Innovation Agenda 23
4.7 LEAP-RE's role in advancing policy goals 24
5. Comparative analysis of African and European initiatives 25
5.1 Overview of analysed African and European initiatives 25
5.1.1 Location 29
5.1.2 Notable trends and commonalities 31
5.2 Funding sources and legal structures 32
5.2.1 Diverse funding approaches 39

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Program under Grant Agreement 963530.

5.2.2 Sustainability and dependencies 39
5.3 Governance structures 40
5.4 Learnings and recommendations 41
5.4.1 Governance 41
5.4.2 Funding mechanisms 42
5.4.3 Legal structure 42
6. Stakeholder insights 44
6.1 Vision building workshops 44
6.1.1 Vision building workshop in Nairobi, 2021 44
6.1.2 Vision building workshop in Pretoria, 2022 45
6.2 Value proposition workshops 46
6.2.1 Workshop with private sector stakeholders in September 2023 46
6.2.2 Workshop with funding agencies in January 2024 47
6.2.3 Workshop with project portfolio partners in January 2024 48
6.3 Stakeholder consultation, October 2024 50
6.3.1 Objectives and format 50
6.3.2 Group work 52
6.3.3 Insights from group outputs 53
6.4 Survey with the LEAP-RE project management board 55
6.4.1 Commercialising research projects 55
6.4.2 Collaboration with other initiatives 56
6.4.3 Funding sources 57
6.4.4 Future involvement and additional feedback 58
7. Services 60
7.1.1 Online community platform 60
7.1.2 Online promotion 61
7.1.3 International events 62
7.1.4 Trainings and capacity building 62
7.1.5 Project management office 62
7.1.6 Impact assessment 62
7.1.7 Twinning and teaming 63
7.1.8 Thematic clusters, peer-to-peer activities, and co-designing new projects 63
7.1.9 Scientific outreach 64
7.1.10 Acceleration services 64

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Program under Grant Agreement 963530.

8. Partnership scenarios and legal entity options 67
8.1 European Partnerships 67
8.1.1 History and current partnerships under Horizon Europe 69
8.1.2 Changes with FP10 69
8.1.3 Institutionalised partnerships 70
8.1.4 Co-programmed partnerships, based on a Memorandum of Understanding 72
8.1.5 Co-funded partnership, based on a program of co-fund actions 74
8.2 Other types of legal entities 75
8.2.1 EEIG 75
8.2.2 Non-profit association 76
8.2.3 Public-Private Partnership 76
8.2.4 Foundation 77
8.2.5 Private company 77
8.3 Overview of legal entity types 78
8.3.1 Insights from EDCTP: A model for evolution 81
8.3.2 Forming a non-profit association as a next step 82
9. Governance model 83
9.1 Principles for governance 83
9.2 Stakeholder involvement and community engagement 83
9.3 No physical headquarters in the short-to-mid term 84
9.4 Proposed governance model for an association 84
10. Recommendations 86
10.1 Formalise LEAP-RE by establishing a legal structure 86
10.2 Align with policy frameworks and stakeholders 86
10.3 Consolidate activities and focus on core services 86
10.4 Develop lab-to-market support 87
10.5 Engage similar initiatives 87
10.6 Diversify funding sources 87
11. References 88
12. Annexes 90
12.1.1 Annex 1: Outputs of vision building workshop held in Nairobi, 2021 90
12.1.2 Annex 2: Outputs of vision building workshop held in Pretoria, 2022 93

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Program under Grant Agreement 963530.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
AEGEI	Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative
AFREC	African Energy Commission
AISBL	*Association internationale sans but lucratif* (international non-profit association)
AU	African Union
AUDA - NEPAD	African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development
CSA	Coordination and Support Action
DG	Directorate-General
DG INTPA	Directorate-General for International Partnerships
DG RTD	Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EIB	European Investment Bank
GA	Grant Agreement
HLPD	High Level Policy Dialogue
INPA	International Non-Profit Association

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LEAP-RE	Long-Term Joint EU-AU Research and Innovation Partnership on Renewable Energy
LEAP-SE	Long-Term EU-AU Partnership on Sustainable Energy
RE	Renewable Energy
R&D	Research & Development
RDI	Research, Development & Innovation
R&I	Research & Innovation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
STI	Science, technology and innovation
TRL	Technology readiness level
WP	Work package

Summary

This deliverable outlines a strategic framework to sustain and expand the Long-Term Joint EU-AU Research and Innovation Partnership on Renewable Energy (LEAP-RE) contributions beyond 2026, within the broader context of African Union (AU) – European Union (EU) collaboration on renewable and sustainable energy. It evaluates potential pathways for the initiative's evolution, aligning with policy frameworks such as the AU Agenda 2063, the Global Gateway, and the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative.

The key objective of this deliverable is to ensure the continuity and impact of grant-based projects LEAP-RE and LEAP-SE Cofund, by identifying strategic directions and actionable recommendations. The methodology involves a combination of stakeholder consultations and benchmarking of similar initiatives, supplemented by internal scenario development. These approaches provide critical insights into best practices, stakeholder needs, and potential pathways for future operations. The analysis highlights three main options for the future of LEAP-RE: establishing a formalised legal entity, integrating into a larger initiative, or ceasing operations. Based on these findings, and including feedback from the European Commission (EC), the authors draw the following conclusions:

- **Focusing on core activities**: Prioritise areas where LEAP-RE provides an added value based on its current service offerings. Additionally, explore opportunities to develop new services, such as lab-to market support, where there is a demonstrated need.
- **Forming a non-profit association**, possibly as a transitional step: The benchmark concludes that no option leveraging an existing structure is well-fitted to reach the long-term ambition and objectives set out by the European Commission when building LEAP-RE. Establishing a new nonprofit association offers a legal identity, ensures

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continuity and alignment, and creates a platform for deeper engagement with stakeholders while maintaining flexibility to evolve.

- **Strengthening stakeholder alignment**: Enhance dialogue with policy actors, funding agencies, and other initiatives on sustainable energy in Africa and Europe, to ensure alignment with shared goals and explore synergies.
- **Exploring diverse funding sources**: Leverage opportunities from Horizon Europe and other public and private funding mechanisms for research and innovation (R&I) on sustainable energy in Africa and Europe.

By consolidating its strengths and addressing stakeholder needs, the future iteration of LEAP-RE is well-positioned to bridge the gap between research and market adoption of innovation, while advancing sustainable energy solutions in Africa and Europe.

List of figures

Figure 1: Timeline of PRE-LEAP-RE, LEAP-RE, and LEAP-SE 14
Figure 2: Location of case studies (headquarters) 29
Figure 3: Legal structures of analysed partnerships 36
Figure 4: Partnership canvas 51
Figure 5: Funding sources 57
Figure 6: Future involvement 58
Figure 7: LEAP-RE service pack 60
Figure 8: Traffic data of LEAP-RE platform, November 2023-November 2024 61
Figure 9: Visits to the LEAP-RE website 61
Figure 10: How can policy makers support the market uptake of research project results65
Figure 11: European partnerships portfolio 68
Figure 12: From Horizon 2020 to Horizon Europe partnerships 69
Figure 13: Timeline of EDCTP's evolution 81

List of tables

Table 1: Overview of relevant policy frameworks and initiatives 18
Table 2: Case studies analysed 25
Table 3: Location of case studies (headquarters) 30
Table 4: Funding sources and legal structures 32
Table 5: Participants of stakeholder consultation, October 2024 51
Table 6: Overview of legal entity types 79

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Program under Grant Agreement 963530.

1. Executive Summary

Securing the Future of AU-EU Renewable Energy Collaboration: The Strategic Imperative for LEAP-RE's Evolution

Since 2020, the LEAP-RE programme has been a flagship example of Africa-Europe collaboration in renewable energy research, development, and innovation (RDI). Through a unique co-funding mechanism and strong institutional partnerships, it has delivered over 30 projects and capacity-building initiatives across 240+ organisations in 33 countries. LEAP-RE's work aligns closely with the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, the Global Gateway's sustainable energy pillar, and the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative.

With LEAP-RE set to conclude in 2026, the programme faces a pivotal moment: how to sustain and scale its achievements beyond the current grant framework. A thorough strategic review identified five future scenarios—of which only one aligns with LEAP-RE's ambition, structure, and stakeholder needs.

Key Findings:

- LEAP-RE has generated a pipeline of innovation, including 8 projects with strong market potential.
- It has built a functioning bi-continental co-funding model, essential for sustainable AU-EU RDI partnerships.
- High-impact services like the LEAP-RE online platform, RE Schools, roadmaps, and stakeholder fora are in active demand beyond the programme's lifetime.
- Continuation through ad hoc networks or passive absorption into other initiatives risks diluting LEAP-RE's identity, impact, and long-term potential.

Strategic Recommendation:
To anchor and expand LEAP-RE's contributions, the creation of an International Non-Profit Association (INPA) is identified as the only viable and forward-looking solution.

An INPA would:

- Provide a formal structure to ensure institutional continuity, effective governance, and strategic alignment.
- Sustain the AU-EU co-funding mechanism, unlocking future investments and diversifying capital beyond public sources.
- Act as a neutral and agile operational backbone, coordinating stakeholders while avoiding duplication with other platforms.
- Enable long-term resource mobilisation, stakeholder engagement, and policy alignment.

Conclusion:
Establishing an INPA is not merely an administrative option, it is a strategic enabler. This structure will ensure that LEAP-RE's legacy continues to deliver actionable scientific knowledge, real-world impact, support Africa-Europe sustainable energy and research collaboration goals and maintain its leadership in the renewable energy RDI space. The moment to act is now—to secure the future, consolidate achievements, and decisively position LEAP-RE as the core institutional vehicle for AU-EU collaboration on sustainable energy RDI.

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2. Introduction

2.1 A strategy for the future of LEAP-RE

Since 2020, the LEAP-RE programme has been instrumental in advancing African Union (AU)-European Union (EU) collaboration on renewable energy RDI through its innovative research projects, capacity-building programmes, and multi-stakeholder engagement. LEAP-RE is based on a Theory of Change framework, where research outputs feed into mid-term capacity-building outcomes, which in turn contribute to longer-term impacts on the energy transition. This ambition is fully aligned with the **Global Gateway** priority on Sustainable Energy, the **Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative**, and the **AU-EU Innovation Agenda**.

Funded under the EU's research and innovation framework programme Horizon 2020, the LEAP-RE consortium operates under a Grant Agreement and a Consortium Agreement, with no formal legal entity. As LEAP-RE is set to conclude in 2026[1], the next steps for the programme must be carefully considered. LEAP-RE's activities and outputs have the potential to continue providing value beyond the formal end of the programme. These deliverable outlines potential pathways for sustaining these activities.

The future iteration of LEAP-RE should consider the following:

- **Bi-continental co-funding mechanism**: LEAP-RE's calls in 2021 and 2022 funded diverse renewable energy R&I initiatives across Africa and Europe. Future calls, scheduled for 2025 and 2026 through the LEAP-SE programme, use a co-funding mechanism. These calls not only continue to support renewable energy RDI but also broaden the scope to encompass sustainable energy, addressing additional topics and increasing the partnership's impact.
- **Strategic growth potential**: Eight mature projects with significant market potential have already been identified from the first batch in the LEAP-RE portfolio, showcasing the need to scale these projects through innovative financing and commercialisation pathways. The calls in 2025 and 2026 will contribute to a pipeline of projects that could be further developed and commercialised.
- **Institutional twinning**: LEAP-RE has fostered long-term collaboration between African and European institutions, providing a strong foundation for joint research and shared decision-making.
- **High-level scientific and policy fora**: Annual forums in Nairobi, Pretoria, Kigali, and Milan have brought together diverse stakeholders to advance discussions on renewable energy solutions across Africa and Europe.
- **Peer-to-peer and teaming on six roadmaps:** Successful collaboration was achieved through webinars and an online platform, structured around 6 roadmaps (assessment of renewable energy sources and their integration into sustainable energy scenarios; end-of-life and second-life management and environmental impact of renewable energy (RE) components; smart stand-alone systems, smart grids of varying scales for off-grid applications; processes and appliances for productive uses; innovative solutions for priority domestic needs such as clean cooking and cold chain systems).

[1]In October 2024, the LEAP-RE Project Management Board voted to extend the end of LEAP-RE from 2025 to 2026.

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- **Renewable Energy Schools ('RESchools'):** Opportunities for skills development and technical training for researchers and graduate students, fostering bi-continental exchange.
- **LEAP-RE online platform:** With over 3000 active users (and growing), the platform provides a space for networking, exchanging information, events, and a knowledge repository.

As will be described in Section 2, LEAP-RE is a multifaceted initiative encompassing three pillars, each with its own work packages, and involving 85 partners from 33 countries, and **a total of 242 beneficiaries' organisations**. This complexity highlights the need for the future iteration of LEAP-RE to focus on consolidation and streamlining, ensuring that its structure remains efficient and manageable while continuing to deliver excellent research and impactful outcomes.

2.2 The role of Work package 6 in the planning of the future of LEAP-RE

Work package 6 (WP6) plays a critical role in designing a strategic framework for the future of LEAP-RE. The primary responsibilities of WP6 include:

- **Engaging stakeholders:** Gathering input from consortium members, funders, policymakers, and the broader LEAP-RE community to understand key priorities and needs.
- **Benchmarking and informational interviews:** Analysing lessons learned from similar initiatives, in renewable energy and AU-EU cooperation initiatives, to identify best practices and gaps.
- **Scenario development:** Utilising desk research, business model canvas, strategic foresight, and SWOT analysis[2] to evaluate potential pathways for the future structure and operations of LEAP-RE.

2.3 Scope and objectives of this deliverable

This deliverable outlines a strategic framework to sustain and expand LEAP-RE's contributions beyond 2026. It consolidates insights from stakeholder consultations, benchmarking of similar initiatives, and internal scenario development to evaluate viable options for the future of LEAP-RE's activities. The consortium faces several options to sustain its activities:

1. **Continuation of the current setup** (reliance on Horizon grants): this is not viable in the long term, and would impede the ability to raise different types of capital to not solely rely on public funding (EU and country contributions).

2. **A network governed by a memorandum**, without a legal entity, but still able to raise fees via one of its members designated as treasurer: while this is interesting as a transitional solution (e.g. EERA, the European Energy Research Alliance, before it became an INPA), it lacks the structure for supporting the ambition of building a long-lasting partnership.

3. **Establishing a dedicated legal entity**: LEAP-RE could theoretically transition into several forms of legal entities, such as a partnership (European partnership, public-private partnership, etc.) or a standalone entity (non-profit, foundation, for-profit enterprise, etc.). A legal entity could provide stability and enable direct fundraising and operational management. This entity could continue providing current activities,

[2] A strategic planning tool used to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

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or maintain specific core activities, and offload others to complementary organisations in order to optimise resources and maintain focus. In the short term, establishing an International Non-Profit Association (INPA) provides a concrete, scalable solution to anchor AU-EU energy R&I efforts, ensuring lasting coordination, resource mobilisation, and stakeholder engagement beyond the project's duration, in particular regarding AU-EU cofounding mechanism sustainability. Establishing a legal entity (INPA) as a permanent operational backbone for AU-EU collaboration would enable long-term coordination, resource mobilisation, and stakeholder engagement.

4. **Dissolution**: Concluding operations entirely at the end of the LEAP-RE and LEAP-SE Grant Agreements, ceasing all activities and services without additional administrative or financial commitments. However, this option would signify a failure from the EC and the AU's original ambition to build a long-lasting partnership.

5. **Absorption by a larger initiative**: LEAP-RE's activities and outputs could become part of an existing initiative or entity, leveraging established networks and structures (EERA, AEEP, SE4ALL, SACREEE, EACREEE or other regional centres). However, this option required careful consideration of the strategic alignment of such structures with the ambition to build a bicontinental partnership on sustainable energy RDI.

The continuation of LEAP-RE should aim to leverage LEAP-RE's assets while addressing actual needs, taking into account the current ecosystem of organisations and initiatives to avoid duplication and ensure that the future iteration of LEAP-RE delivers real added value.

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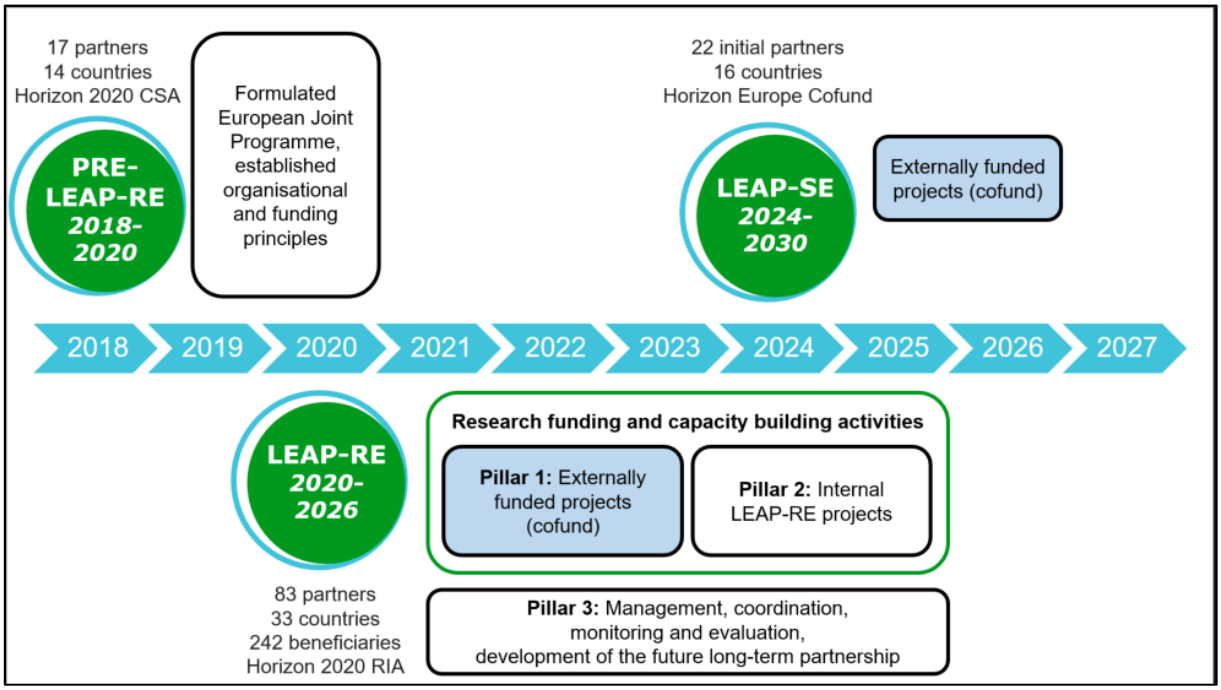
3. Overview of LEAP-RE

LEAP-RE has built a large-scale, bi-continental partnership. Its work is structured around three pillars: external project funding, internal research initiatives, and long-term partnership development. A co-funding mechanism pools resources from African and European funders to fund projects, eight of which show strong market potential.

LEAP-RE fosters collaboration between Africa and Europe in renewable energy research, innovation, and capacity building. It operates with a bi-continental co-funding mechanism involving over 15 African and European funders and 240+ partners across 30 countries, advancing renewable energy solutions to address shared energy challenges.

3.1 History and current context

Figure 1: Timeline of PRE-LEAP-RE, LEAP-RE, and LEAP-SE



PRE-LEAP-RE served as the preparatory phase for the LEAP-RE. It focused on establishing the foundational principles and structures needed for a sustainable partnership. This phase developed the organisational and funding frameworks under Horizon 2020, setting the stage for the launch of LEAP-RE.

LEAP-RE built upon the groundwork laid by PRE-LEAP-RE, expanding the consortium to 83 partners from 33 countries and supporting 242 beneficiaries. Operating under Horizon 2020, it concentrated on three main areas: externally funded projects, internally managed research activities, and overall coordination. LEAP-RE became a key driver of renewable energy innovation and collaboration between Africa and Europe.

LEAP-SE is a continuation of LEAP-RE's Pillar 1, funding projects through a co-funding model, with calls planned for 2025 and 2026. Its scope broadens from renewable energy to sustainable energy, reflecting this evolution in its name change (from *RE Renewable Energy* to *SE Sustainable Energy*). LEAP-SE addresses wider sustainable energy challenges, including green hydrogen development, while building on the assets and networks established by LEAP-RE, such as its online platform and stakeholder connections.

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The design of the future iteration of LEAP-RE, while developed within the framework of LEAP-RE, must also incorporate the activities and outcomes of LEAP-SE. Both LEAP-RE and LEAP-SE are instruments supporting broader policy frameworks and ambitions (as detailed in Section 3). It is also important to consider the incoming pipeline of projects that will result from LEAP-SE's two calls.

3.2 Priorities of LEAP-RE

LEAP-RE's activities are structured around six strategic priorities and multiannual roadmaps:

1. Evaluation of joint research and innovation actions for renewable energy systems.
2. End-of-life and second-life management and environmental impacts of renewable energy components.
3. Smart stand-alone systems to improve energy access in all forms.
4. Smart grids for off-grid applications capable of integrating diverse renewable energy sources.
5. Processes and appliances to boost small-scale farmers' productivity and incomes, and create off-farm employment.
6. Innovative solutions for domestic uses (clean cooking and cold chain) to address challenges in traditional systems.

LEAP-SE has introduced a seventh strategic priority, on the production and utilisation of green hydrogen.

3.3 Organisational structure of LEAP-RE

LEAP-RE's work is organised into three pillars:

- **Pillar 1, External Research Funding and Capacity-Building Activities:** Funding to external projects that promote renewable energy innovation and enhance capacity building.
- **Pillar 2, Internal Consortium Research, Innovation, and Capacity-Building Projects:** Eight key projects addressing critical renewable energy challenges through innovation and skills development.
- **Pillar 3, Management, Coordination, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Future Partnership Development:** Focused on ensuring effective program management and laying the groundwork for a long-term structure beyond 2025.

3.4 Stakeholders of LEAP-RE

LEAP-RE engages a wide range of stakeholders, fostering a collaborative platform to address renewable energy challenges across Africa and Europe. By bringing together governments, research institutions, the private sector, and civil society, LEAP-RE ensures that renewable energy solutions are tailored to diverse regional priorities and contribute to shared global objectives.

3.4.1 Researchers and academic institutions

LEAP-RE provides funding opportunities for researchers and universities to advance renewable energy innovations through its international calls for projects. By participating, researchers gain access to an extensive network of partners, enhancing their capacity to deliver impactful research. The partnership offers a unique platform to co-design projects, collaborate with global peers, and secure long-term involvement in renewable energy initiatives.

3.4.2 Investors and funding bodies

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For funding agencies and investors, LEAP-RE delivers a structured approach to investing in renewable energy projects. Its co-funding mechanism ensures that resources are allocated efficiently to high-impact initiatives. By supporting LEAP-RE projects, funding bodies can drive systemic change, maximise their investment's societal benefits, and align their contributions with global sustainability objectives.

3.4.3 Policymakers

LEAP-RE enables policymakers to engage with renewable energy stakeholders and leverage its outputs to shape evidence-based policies. The programme's collaborative structure fosters alignment with AU-EU policy priorities, such as the Green Energy Initiative and the Global Gateway. Policymakers benefit from insights generated through LEAP-RE projects, which address energy access, sustainability, and innovation challenges, through policy alignment established with the organization of LEAP-RE Calls for projects.

3.4.4 Private sector and industry stakeholders

For the private sector, LEAP-RE offers opportunities to access cutting-edge research, collaborate on new technologies, and bring innovations to market. Industry players can leverage LEAP-RE's outputs to enhance their competitiveness while contributing to sustainable energy transitions. By working with LEAP-RE, companies gain visibility and access to partnerships that drive growth in the renewable energy sector.

3.4.5 Local communities and civil society

LEAP-RE empowers communities by addressing their energy challenges through sustainable and accessible solutions. Its grassroots projects, such as clean cooking technologies and solar microgrids, directly improve quality of life while fostering socio-economic development. Civil society actors can engage with the renewable energy ecosystem, share their experiences, and benefit from inclusive solutions that address their specific needs.

By addressing the unique needs and priorities of these stakeholders, LEAP-RE creates a holistic framework for renewable energy research and innovation. This ensures that its activities are inclusive, impactful, and aligned with the overarching goals of the AU-EU partnership.

3.5 Current activities and services of LEAP-RE

LEAP-RE offers a comprehensive service pack to support stakeholders and advance renewable energy solutions:

- **Online community platform**: A hub for resources, information sharing, and networking.
- **Promotion and visibility**: Campaigns via the LEAP-RE website and social media channels.
- **Stakeholder forums**: Platforms for dialogue and strategic alignment.
- **Thematic clusters**: Collaboration on topics such as energy storage, clean cooking, and off-grid solutions.
- **Acceleration services**: Support for translating research into marketable solutions.
- **Capacity building**: Programmes like RESchools, MOOCs, and technical training sessions.
- **Project management office**: Administrative and financial support for project implementation.
- **Impact assessment tools**: Mechanisms to evaluate project outcomes and effectiveness.

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- **Twinning and teaming**: Institutional partnerships and knowledge exchange between African and European stakeholders.

3.6 LEAP-RE's co-funding mechanism

LEAP-RE's co-funding mechanism is an important part of its approach, supporting international collaboration in renewable energy research and innovation by combining resources and expertise from different partners. The mechanism pools resources from African and European national funding agencies, supplemented by top-up funding from the European Commission. This mechanism ensures robust support for the direct participation of African beneficiaries, addressing regional energy challenges through collaborative projects.

Between 2020 and 2024, LEAP-RE successfully organised two calls for proposals, resulting in the funding of 23 projects with a combined budget of €16.2 million.

3.7 Achievements of LEAP-RE

Since its inception, LEAP-RE has accomplished significant milestones in renewable energy innovation and capacity building. LEAP-RE's portfolio of 31 collaborative research and development (R&D) projects address critical areas such as clean cooking, energy storage, off-grid electrification, geothermal energy, and more.

Among its portfolio, LEAP-RE has identified eight mature projects with strong market potential based on a strategic assessment conducted in 2024. This assessment prioritised projects based on several key criteria: advanced Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) indicating their proximity to commercialisation, and Commercial Readiness showcasing their readiness for or near-readiness for market introduction:

- **RE4AFAGRI**: Develops decision-support tools for policymakers to optimise agriculture, irrigation, and energy solutions, addressing the agriculture-water-energy nexus in Africa.
- **SOLCHARGE**: Provides modular, mobile solar charging systems for off-grid applications, supporting clean mobility and economic growth in remote areas.
- **PURAMS**: Focuses on low-power solar cooking technologies tailored to local needs, reducing reliance on biomass and promoting sustainable development.
- **SUNSAFE**: Introduces a smartphone app to simplify solar system sizing, improve safety, and ensure installation compatibility in underserved regions.
- **LEDSOL**: Offers portable UV/LED water disinfection systems powered by renewable energy, addressing water scarcity in vulnerable communities.
- **LEOPARD**: Establishes clean-energy microgrids in West Africa, combining local expertise with innovative solar solutions to enhance energy access and reduce emissions.
- **SHE**: Converts crop residues into biofuel pellets and biochar, reducing deforestation and promoting climate-smart practices.
- **Geothermal Atlas for Africa**: Maps geothermal resources across Africa, enabling eco-friendly energy solutions and supporting sustainable economic growth.

These projects demonstrate significant potential for further development, making them important considerations in shaping the future of LEAP-RE. While not yet fully scalable or market-ready, they address critical energy challenges with innovative solutions that could eventually lead to impactful outcomes. A future iteration of LEAP-RE could play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between lab and market.

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4. LEAP-RE's alignment with global, African and European policy frameworks and initiatives

LEAP-RE aligns closely with major policy frameworks including the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the AU Agenda 2063, and the EU's Global Gateway and Green Energy Initiative. Its activities directly support goals such as energy access, climate resilience, and sustainable economic growth. Through projects like RE4AFAGRI and PURAMS, LEAP-RE contributes to clean energy adoption, innovation, and rural development. It also complements AU-EU strategies by fostering capacity building, public-private collaboration, and deployment of locally relevant technologies.

LEAP-RE and LEAP-SE support global policy frameworks and initiatives such as the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs), the **Global Gateway**, as well as bi-regional African and European policy frameworks such as the **AU Agenda 2063**, the **Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative**, and the **AU-EU Innovation Agenda**. These frameworks establish key priorities for sustainable energy, economic growth, and climate resilience. This section highlights their objectives and explores how LEAP-RE and LEAP-SE activities align with and contribute to these goals.

Table 1: Overview of relevant policy frameworks and initiatives

Policy framework	Geographic scope	Initiating stakeholders	Objectives of relevance for LEAP-RE, LEAP-SE and future activities	Timeline
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Global	United Nations	Address global challenges by eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, combating climate change, and promoting sustainable development, including universal access to clean energy (SDG 7).	2015-2030
Global Gateway	Global	European Commission (DG INTPA), Team Europe	Fund sustainable infrastructure, expand access to clean and affordable energy, promote renewable energy investments, and enhance energy efficiency and resilience.	2021-2027
Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative (AEGEI)	Africa, Europe	European Commission (DG INTPA)	Expand energy access, promote large-scale renewable energy investments, enhance energy efficiency, and foster a green and inclusive energy transition.	2021-2027

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Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want	Africa	African Union Commission, AUDA-NEPAD	Ensure universal energy access, drive industrialisation through energy infrastructure, promote renewable energy technologies, and enhance climate resilience.	2013-2063
The AU-EU Partnership on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE)	Africa, Europe	European Commission (DG RTD), African Union Commission	The Partnership supports renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives, emphasising human capital development, capacity-building, open data, and open access. With a €84 million investment, the Partnership focuses on two main pillars: adapting to and mitigating climate change by generating and applying climate-related data, and promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency to enhance energy access across Africa	2010 onwards
The AU-EU Innovation Agenda	Africa, Europe	European Commission (DG RTD), African Union Commission	Collaborative framework designed to strengthen R&I ties between the AU and the EU. It aims to translate R&I efforts into tangible outcomes, such as products, services, businesses, and jobs, benefiting both continents. Under the priority area of Green Transition the topic of renewable and sustainable energy is addressed.	2023-2033
Renewable Energy Directive	Europe	European Commission (DG ENER)	Target of 42.5% renewable energy at the EU level by 2030, with an aspirational aim of 45%[3].	By 2030

4.1 Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, provide a universal framework for addressing critical global challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation, by 2030. Among the 17 goals, **SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)** emphasises the need to ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy services. Its key objectives include increasing the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix and doubling the rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030. SDG 7 is intrinsically linked

[3] European Commission, 'Renewable Energy Directive', n.d., https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/renewable-energy/renewable-energy-directive-targets-and-rules/renewable-energy-directive_en.

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to other goals such as **SDG 13 (Climate Action)**, which promotes transforming energy systems to reduce emissions, and **SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure)**, which supports sustainable industrialisation and innovation.

LEAP-RE contributes significantly to advancing SDG 7 and related goals through its innovative portfolio of projects and capacity-building initiatives. For example, the **SOLCHARGE** project offers modular, mobile solar charging solutions that expand energy access for underserved areas, while **SUNSAFE** simplifies solar installation processes to accelerate deployment in rural regions. Additionally, LEAP-RE supports SDG 9 by fostering innovation in renewable energy systems and advancing sustainable infrastructure, and **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)** through projects like **RE4AFAGRI**, which integrates renewable energy into agricultural practices to boost productivity. By aligning its activities with these global priorities, LEAP-RE underscores its commitment to addressing energy challenges holistically and fostering sustainable development.

4.2 Global Gateway

The Global Gateway, launched by the EU Commission and the EU High Representative in December 2021, is a €300 billion investment framework running from 2021 to 2027[4]. It funds sustainable infrastructure projects across key sectors, including digital technology, climate and energy[5], transport, health, education, and research. Operating under a Team Europe approach, it unites the EU, financial institutions like the European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and Member States to support partner countries worldwide.

In Africa, renewable energy is a central pillar of the Global Gateway, which aims to mobilise €150 billion for energy infrastructure, connectivity, and electrification projects[6]. The initiative is expected to bring new energy access solutions to over 100 million people, enabling socio-economic growth and industrialisation in underserved regions.

LEAP-RE aligns closely with the Global Gateway's goals by advancing renewable energy projects that address Africa's energy challenges. In addition, LEAP-RE's emphasis on co-investment and public-private partnerships reflects the Global Gateway's approach.

4.3 Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative

The **Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative (AEGEI)**, part of the Africa Investment Package and the Global Gateway, aims to address Africa's energy paradox: abundant renewable energy resources but limited energy access for much of its population. The initiative focuses on expanding energy access, promoting renewable energy investments, and improving

[4] European Commission, 'Global Gateway', n.d., https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en.
[5] Marcin Szczepanski, 'The Global Gateway: Taking Stock after Its First Year (European Parliament Briefing)', 2023, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/739296/EPRS_BRI(2023)739296_EN.pdf.
[6] Szczepanski.

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energy efficiency. It seeks to foster a green and inclusive energy transition that aligns with the EU's climate ambitions and Africa's sustainable development goals.

By 2040, Africa's electricity demand is expected to triple, requiring annual investments of $120 billion to meet the growing needs.[7] The initiative's goals include increasing access to affordable and modern energy services, supporting large-scale renewable energy investments, and catalysing private sector participation to drive energy efficiency.[8] Key actors include the EC, AU Commission, private sector stakeholders, and international financial institutions. In addition, AEGEI aims to "support transformational infrastructure projects", "assist African partners to create an environment conductive to the deployment of clean energy technologies and uses, through technical assistance to develop adequate regulatory legal and business frameworks", and "ensure EU coordination, information exchange and overall visibility of the EU at its Member States efforts to support green investments in Africa under one brand"[9]

LEAP-RE significantly contributes to the goals of the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative through its focus on renewable energy innovation and infrastructure development. The **PURAMS** project, for example, develops low-power solar cooking technologies that promote energy efficiency and provide sustainable cooking solutions for rural communities. Similarly, the **GEOTHERMAL ATLAS FOR AFRICA** enhances renewable energy mapping capabilities, enabling strategic deployment of geothermal energy resources to meet local energy demands. In addition, LEAP-RE aligns with the initiative's emphasis on private sector engagement by fostering public-private partnerships and supporting innovations to transition from lab to market.

4.4 Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want

Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want is the AU's plan and strategic framework to "achieve inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development."[10] Adopted in 2013, Agenda 2063 outlines a vision for a prosperous and integrated Africa by addressing critical challenges such as energy poverty, industrialisation, and climate change.

The framework has three key energy-related goals: ensuring universal access to affordable and sustainable energy for all Africans, promoting industrialisation and economic diversification through energy infrastructure, and enhancing climate resilience by adopting

[7] European Commission, 'Global Gateway: EU and US Boost Cooperation on Green Energy in Africa - Press Release', 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_22_6083/IP_22_6083_EN.pdf.
[8] European Commission, 'EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package - Green Energy Initiative', 2023, https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-12/aegei-factsheet-nov-2023_en.pdf.
[9] European Commission.
[10] AUDA - NEPAD, 'Second Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063', 2022, https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/41480-doc-2nd_Continental_Progress_Report_on_Agenda_2063_English.pdf.

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renewable energy technologies.[11] Key actors involved in Agenda 2063 include the AU Commission, national governments, regional economic communities (RECs), and international partners. With over 600 million people in Africa lacking access to electricity—80% of whom reside in rural areas—renewable energy investments are projected to create more than 2 million jobs by 2030, driving economic growth and improving livelihoods.[12]

LEAP-RE plays a pivotal role in addressing energy access challenges and supporting the energy goals of Agenda 2063 through its innovative projects and collaborative initiatives. For instance, the **RE4AFAGRI** project integrates renewable energy into agricultural practices, enabling rural communities to enhance productivity and reduce dependence on traditional energy sources. Similarly, **LEOPARD**, a micro-grid project focused on West Africa, improves rural electrification and strengthens community energy resilience.

In addition to project implementation, LEAP-RE prioritises capacity-building activities, such as RE Schools, and fosters stakeholder engagement to ensure the scalability and sustainability of its initiatives. By aligning its activities with Agenda 2063's energy priorities, LEAP-RE contributes to a vision of a prosperous and sustainable Africa, positioning renewable energy as a driver of socio-economic transformation.

4.5 AU-EU Partnership on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy

The Partnership on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE) is a key initiative under the AU-EU High-Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology, and Innovation. It aims to enhance cooperation between Africa and Europe in tackling climate change and promoting sustainable energy solutions. The partnership supports research, innovation, and capacity-building in renewable energy and energy efficiency while ensuring open data and knowledge sharing. A total of €84 million has been allocated to fund projects that align with its objectives. The initiative focuses on two core areas: climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as expanding access to clean and efficient energy sources. By generating and applying climate-related data, the partnership helps policymakers make informed decisions to support environmental resilience. It also promotes the use of renewable energy technologies to improve energy access, particularly in remote and underserved communities. Capacity-building efforts include training programmes, knowledge transfer, and the development of human capital to drive long-term sustainability. Through collaboration between governments, research institutions, and private sector stakeholders, the CCSE fosters innovative solutions to address climate and energy challenges. Ultimately, this partnership plays a crucial role in strengthening AU-EU cooperation for a more sustainable and climate-resilient future.

LEAP-RE actively contributes to the Partnership on CCSE by fostering collaborative research and innovation in sustainable energy. It supports projects that enhance renewable energy deployment, improve energy efficiency, and develop innovative technologies tailored to African contexts. Through capacity-building initiatives, LEAP-RE strengthens research networks, empowers local experts, and promotes knowledge transfer between Africa and Europe. By funding pilot projects and scalable solutions, it helps improve energy access in underserved communities, aligning with the CCSE's goal of expanding clean energy sources. Furthermore, LEAP-RE facilitates policy dialogue and stakeholder engagement to ensure that research outcomes translate into actionable, sustainable energy strategies. LEAP-RE programme and funded projects are instrumental to assess the implementation of the 2017 AU-EU CCSE Roadmap (focus on the sustainable energy pillar) and drafting a renewed

[11] AUDA - NEPAD.
[12] AUDA - NEPAD.

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roadmap for 2027–2032. The assessment can be fed from case studies, gap analyses, and lessons learned. The new roadmap is co-designed through inclusive consultation processes and by integrating AU-EU priorities including digitalisation, climate finance, and inclusion, as well as major global frameworks such as the European Green Deal, AU Agenda 2063, and the Global Gateway strategy. LEAP-RE directly supports the AU-EU CCSE Partnership by providing research and capacity building protocols, evidence-based policy inputs, facilitating stakeholder engagement, and contributing to strategic dialogues within the AU-EU HLPD on STI. The project acts as a knowledge and coordination hub, aligning R&I activities with AU-EU policy priorities and providing inputs to the HLPD, ensuring that research outcomes inform and strengthen bi-regional cooperation frameworks. This aspect must be pursued in order to capitalize on it and amplify it.

4.6 AU-EU Innovation Agenda

The AU-EU Innovation Agenda aims to strengthen R&I collaboration between Africa and Europe, focusing on sustainable development, economic growth, and job creation. It builds on shared priorities established between the AU and EU R&I Ministers in 2020. The Agenda identifies five priority areas: public health, green transition, innovation and technology, capacities for science, as well as cross-cutting topics. Key stakeholders include the EC, AU Commission, Member State governments, private sector actors, and civil society organisations.[13]

The objectives of the Agenda: "translate innovative capacities and achievements of AU and EU researches into tangible outputs", "foster and/or strengthen innovation ecosystems to enhance socio-economic impact on the ground", "develop sustainable, long lasting and mutually beneficial higher education, research, and innovation partnerships", "scale-up instruments that can take forward existing successful programmes and projects between AU and EU partners."[14]

The green transition priority specifically supports the development and market uptake of innovative renewable energy solutions that can be adopted by energy communities, villages, and households, ensuring affordable and sustainable energy access for disadvantaged regions. The priority emphasises deploying emerging technologies from existing projects in CCSE to prevent rural degradation and enhance urban environments. This objective aligns closely with broader AU and EU goals for a green and just energy transition.[15]

LEAP-RE actively contributes to the goals of the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, particularly under its green transition priority. LEAP-RE supports the deployment of renewable energy solutions tailored to local needs, addressing gaps in energy access and promoting sustainable development. For example, **PURAMS** develops solar-powered cooking technologies, and the **Geothermal Atlas for Africa**, maps renewable energy resources. **RE4AFAGRI** integrates renewable energy into smart farming technologies, enhancing agricultural productivity, while **LEDSOL** delivers clean water solutions using UV/LED technology powered by renewable energy systems. **LEOPARD** facilitates rapid rural electrification through containerized solar mini-grids, and **SolChargE** supports scalable solar charging solutions for electric vehicles and

[13] Global Gateway, 'The AU-EU Innovation Agenda', 2023, https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/ec_rtd_au-eu-innovation-agenda-final-version.pdf.
[14] Global Gateway.
[15] Global Gateway.

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off-grid applications. These projects align with the Innovation Agenda's aim of empowering energy communities and accelerating the adoption of green technologies.

Additionally, LEAP-RE's emphasis on stakeholder collaboration and capacity building enhances knowledge transfer and innovation management, key areas identified as needs in the AU-EU Innovation Agenda. This alignment ensures that LEAP-RE not only advances renewable energy solutions but also strengthens the broader innovation ecosystem critical to achieving the Agenda's objectives.[16] As the Agenda evolves, future iterations of LEAP-RE could further align with its actions, leveraging its project pipeline and collaborative frameworks to maximise impact.

4.7 LEAP-RE's role in advancing policy goals

LEAP-RE's alignment with these frameworks demonstrates its vital role as an instrument serving broader global and regional objectives for sustainable energy, socio-economic transformation, and climate resilience. Together with LEAP-SE, it provides the tools and mechanisms necessary to address the pressing challenges of energy access, renewable energy adoption, and capacity building in Africa and Europe. By strengthening its partnerships with key political actors and stakeholders, such as the EC and the AU Commission, LEAP-RE can enhance its alignment with these policy frameworks, better coordinate efforts, and amplify its impact.

Currently, LEAP-RE engages primarily with the EC's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD), but should foster interaction with the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), which leads many initiatives relevant to LEAP-RE´s goals. Bridging this gap would enable more cohesive engagement with the EC and better integration with complementary initiatives.

Moreover, LEAP-RE brings unique value by delivering on-the-ground, community-focused projects that address local needs and contexts. Several LEAP-RE projects have conducted pilots with local communities, ensuring that solutions are tailored to specific socio-economic and environmental challenges. These practical initiatives, such as clean cooking solutions and rural electrification programmes, complement the high-level strategies and actions of these political frameworks. The future iteration of LEAP-RE has the potential to become a key player in AU-EU energy cooperation, contributing meaningfully to shared energy and development ambitions.

[16] Global Gateway.

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5. Comparative analysis of African and European initiatives

This chapter analyses 30 African and European renewable energy initiatives to extract lessons for LEAP-RE's long-term structure. Most initiatives rely on mixed funding from public and private sources. Common trends include strong AU-EU collaboration, emphasis on sustainable energy access, and the provision of services like policy support and capacity building. The analysis highlights the importance of having a legal structure, diversified funding, and clear governance for long-term viability.

To support the development of the framework for the long-term partnership, a benchmarking exercise was conducted, focusing mostly on renewable energy and AU-EU cooperation initiatives. This analysis examines funding mechanisms, legal structures, and governance models from comparable initiatives, offering valuable insights and best practices to inform the design of a long-term strategy for LEAP-RE. However, these comparisons are not entirely equivalent, as the initiatives studied represent a diverse range of entities, including partnerships, political initiatives, associations, European partnerships, intergovernmental programmes, foundations, and EC entities.

5.1 Overview of analysed African and European initiatives

A total of 30 case studies were analysed, which are representative of cooperation initiatives between Africa and Europe in the areas of sustainable energy, R&I, and structural partnerships. This section provides a general overview of the benchmarked initiatives, including the location, geographic scope distribution and notable trends and commonalities. The table below provides a description of the selected case studies.

A case study was deemed relevant if it possessed any combination of the following characteristics, with the inclusion of characteristic 1 being mandatory:

- It involves an international partnership between two or more countries (partnership understood broadly, not necessarily as a legal entity);
- It pertains to a project in the area of sustainable energy;
- It is underwritten by the EU or AU;
- It has an established governance structure.

Table 2: Case studies analysed

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Name	Description
Africa Energy Market Place	Collaborative investment platform established by the African Development Bank (AfDB) as part of the New Deal on Energy for Africa. This initiative is designed to attract private investment in Africa's energy sector through a tri-partite model that brings together governments, private sector entities, and development partners.
Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI)	AREI is a transformational initiative founded and led by Africa to accelerate, scale up and utilise the continent's enormous renewable energy potential. It is an African-led policy decision for Africa to increase and accelerate the domestication of the continent's renewable energy potential.
Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative	Initiative aimed at enhancing green energy cooperation between Africa and the EU. AEGEI is a pivotal component of Europe's collaborative effort with Africa to transform the continent's energy landscape.
African Energy Commission (AFREC)	AFREC is a continental specialised agency of the African Union responsible for coordinating, harmonising, protecting, conserving, developing, rational exploitation, commercialising and integrating energy resources on the African continent.
Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE)	A global business association that promotes a sustainable decentralised renewable energy industry for the 21st century, activating markets for affordable energy services and creating local jobs and inclusive economies.
African Institute for Sustainable Energy and Systems Analysis (AISESA)	A transdisciplinary and international collective of experts dedicated to advancing sustainable energy and development solutions across Africa. The institute focuses on designing context-specific energy pathways, supporting evidence-based policymaking, and fostering collaborations that drive sustainable and resilient development.
Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (also known as Clean Hydrogen Partnership)	The Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking is a unique public-private partnership in the EU, dedicated to supporting R&I in hydrogen technologies.
Ecowas Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE)	ECREEE is a specialised agency established by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to develop and promote renewable energy and energy efficiency in West Africa.
EDCTP 3	The European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) is a public-public partnership between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa, supported by the EU. The main activity of EDCTP is funding clinical research to develop new or improved medical tools for detecting, treating, and preventing poverty-related infectious diseases in sub-Saharan Africa.
ENRICH in Africa	ENRICH in Africa was an initiative funded under Horizon 2020, aimed at strengthening innovation and collaboration between Europe and Africa. The ENRICH in Africa Centre is the outcome of the initiative, and its mission is to strengthen the EU-Africa tech and innovation ecosystems, supporting innovators collaboration, connecting incubators and accelerators, investors,

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	corporates and policymakers with the aim of enabling positive social impact and green business.
EU-GCC Clean Energy Technology Network	A network aimed at strengthening the EU-GCC cooperation on clean energy technologies.
EURAXESS Africa	EURAXESS is a pan-European initiative that serves as the leading portal for the research community, offering a comprehensive platform for researchers, universities, businesses, and other research-performing organisations. It provides free, personalised information and assistance to researchers at all career stages, helping them advance their careers by facilitating mobility and providing access to job, funding, and hosting opportunities. EURAXESS Africa is an initiative of the EC established with the aim to provide free access to information about research in Europe, opportunities for research funding, international collaboration and trans-national mobility. It links researchers in Africa to Europe.
GET.pro	GET.pro is a European multi-donor platform designed to advance international energy and climate goals. The platform provides streamlined support to fast-track European flagship initiatives in the energy and climate sectors. It operates globally, with a primary focus on Africa.
GET.transform	GET.transform is a technical assistance program that supports national and regional partners in advancing energy sector transformations. It operates globally, focusing primarily on Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.
GOGLA (global association for the off-grid solar energy industry)	GOGLA is the global association for the off-grid solar energy industry. GOGLA supports its over 200 members by fostering a sustainable and profitable market for off-grid solar products and services, including solar lighting, power, irrigation, cooling, and communications technologies.
International Clean Energy Partnership	Collaborative initiative focusing on clean energy transitions.
International Solar Alliance	Founded by India and France, the ISA is a coalition of solar resource-rich countries aiming to address their energy needs through solar power. ISA is an action-oriented, member-driven, collaborative platform for increased deployment of solar energy technologies as a means for bringing energy access, ensuring energy security, and driving energy transition in its member countries.
LEAP-Agri (long term EU-Africa research and innovation partnership on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture)	LEAP-Agri was an ERA-Net Co-fund joint Europe-Africa R&I initiative focused on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA). The initiative brought together 30 partners, including 24 ministries and funding agencies from 18 European and African countries, to enhance bi-regional collaboration in FNSSA, with a specific focus on reducing research fragmentation and increasing coordinated investments. LEAP-Agri concluded its activities in 2022. CEA-FIRST (Consortium Europe-Africa for Research and Innovation on Food Systems Transformation) operationalises an IRC (International Research Consortium), with partners from LEAP4FNSSA and new ones (December 2023-November 2027).
Mission Innovation	A global initiative of 23 countries and the European Commission to dramatically accelerate global clean energy innovation. It aims to catalyse action and investment in research, development and demonstration to make clean energy affordable, attractive and accessible

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	to all this decade. This will accelerate progress towards the Paris Agreement goals and pathways to net zero.
PRIMA (Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area)	The Partnership on Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) is a public-public institutionalised Article 185 European Partnership between the EU and Participating States. It was established in 2017 to address the environmental, social, and economic challenges facing the Euro-Mediterranean region. The program is primarily focused on funding projects that contribute to sustainable use of natural resources, economic growth, and stability in the Mediterranean area.
RES4Africa (Renewable Energy Solutions for Africa)	Founded in 2012, the RES4Africa Foundation (Renewable Energy Solutions for Africa) is a non-profit organisation committed to supporting Africa's just energy transition. Its mission is to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all, aligning with SDG7.
SACREEE (SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency)	SACREEE is a subsidiary organization of SADC established to promote the adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies within Southern African Development Community (SADC) Member States. SACREEE aims to increase access to modern energy services and enhance energy security, thereby supporting the region's economic and social development in an environmentally sustainable manner.
Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All)	Independent organisation hosted by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), with a global mandate to accelerate progress on energy transitions in emerging and developing countries. It works at the intersection of energy, climate, and development to end energy poverty, deploy renewable energy solutions, and combat climate change
The Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP)	AEEP was launched by African and European Heads of State in 2007 at the AU-EU Summit in Lisbon, Portugal. A central partnership of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, the AEEP is the key political platform through which both continents work together on energy.
The African Union-European Union Cooperation on Climate and Energy	Collaborative framework focusing on climate and energy issues between the AU and the EU.
The Clean Energy Transition Partnership	Initiative focused on accelerating the clean energy transition through international cooperation.
The EU-Africa Partnership	The Africa-EU Partnership is a key initiative of the EU that fosters political and policy dialogue between Africa and Europe. It aims to strengthen cooperation between the two continents across various sectors, including energy.
Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)	The UfM is an intergovernmental organisation uniting 43 countries to enhance regional cooperation and dialogue through concrete projects and initiatives. The UfM focuses on inclusive and sustainable development, stability, and integration across the Euro-Mediterranean area. Joint R&I priorities include climate change, renewables energies and health.

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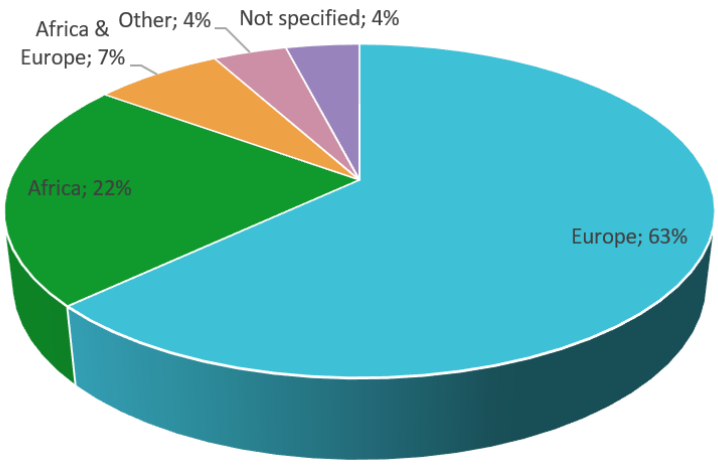
West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL)	A large-scale research-focused climate service centre designed to help tackle climate change and improve livelihoods in West Africa.
Joint Research Centre (including Africa Knowledge Platform) (JRC)	JRC is the EC's science and knowledge service, providing independent, evidence-based knowledge to support EU policies. Established under the Euratom Treaty, the JRC has expanded its mandate to cover a wide range of scientific disciplines, contributing to almost all EU policy areas.
LEAP4FNSSA	Did not answer survey process. LEAP4FNSSA is a Coordination and Support Action (CSA) whose main objective is to provide a tool for African and European institutions to engage in a Sustainable Partnership Platform for R&I on Food and Nutrition Security, and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA). LEAP4FNSSA is built under the aegis of the AU-EU HLPD and its Bureau, building upon former EU funded projects such as RINEA, CAAST-Net Plus, ProIntensAfrica and linking with the ongoing ERANet Cofund LEAP-Agri.

5.1.1 Location

The analysed initiatives are primarily headquartered in various parts of Africa and Europe. However, one notable exception is the International Solar Alliance (ISA), which is headquartered in India. While these initiatives may have a central location, their impact often extends well beyond their headquarters, reaching multiple regions and contributing to broader international energy and climate goals.

The graph below illustrates the geographical distribution of these initiatives' headquarters, acknowledging that their influence and operations may span across different continents or regions.

Figure 2: Location of case studies (headquarters)



The distribution of headquarters for the energy initiatives analysed shows a clear concentration in Europe, with 63% of the initiatives being based in this region. Africa follows with 22% of the initiatives headquartered on the continent, reflecting the region's

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growing involvement in renewable energy development. Additionally, 7% of the initiatives have offices located in both Africa and Europe, demonstrating collaborative efforts between the two continents.

Only 4% of the initiatives do not disclose the specific location of their headquarters, which could either reflect their global reach or a decentralised operational model. A small portion, 4%, are classified as "Other," indicating that these initiatives are headquartered outside of the primary regions of Africa and Europe.

This location distribution highlights the significant role Europe plays in driving renewable energy initiatives, while Africa is emerging as a key player, particularly in partnerships that span both continent

Table 3: Location of case studies (headquarters)

Name	Continent	City/Country
Africa Energy Market Place (AEMP)	Africa	Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI)	Africa	Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative (AEGEI)	Europe	Bonn and Eschborn, Germany
African Energy Commission (AFREC)	Africa	Algiers, Algeria
African Institute for Sustainable Energy and Systems Analysis (AISESA)	Africa	Not specified
Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE)	Europe	Brussels, Belgium
Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (also known as Clean Hydrogen Partnership)	Europe	Brussels, Belgium
Ecowas Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE)	Africa	Praia, Cape Verde
European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP)	Africa & Europe	The Hague, Netherlands Cape Town, South Africa
ENRICH in Africa	Africa	Cape Town, South Africa
European Union-Gulf Cooperation (EU-GCC) Council Clean Energy Technology Network	Europe	Brussels, Belgium
EURAXESS	Europe	Brussels, Belgium
Global Energy Transformation Programme (GET.pro)	Europe	Not specified
Global Energy Transformation (GET.transform)	Europe	Bonn, Germany
Global Association for the Off-Grid Solar Energy Industry (GOGLA)	Europe	Utrecht, the Netherlands
International Clean Energy Partnership (ICEP)	Europe	Netherlands

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International Solar Alliance (ISA)	Other (India)	Gurugram, Haryana, India
Long term EU-Africa research and innovation partnership on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture (LEAP-Agri)	Europe	Paris, France
Mission Innovation (MI)	Europe	United Kingdom
Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA)	Europe	Barcelona, Spain
Renewable Energy Solutions for Africa (RES4Africa)	Europe	Rome, Italy
Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All)	Europe	Vienna, Austria Satellite offices in Abuja, Nigeria, and New York City, USA
SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE)	Africa	Windhoek, Namibia
The Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP)	Europe	Bonn and Eschborn, Germany
The African Union-European Union Cooperation on Climate and Energy	Not specified	Not specified
The Clean Energy Transition Partnership (CETPartnership)	Europe	Various Locations (decentralised)
The EU-Africa Partnership	Africa & Europe	Brussels, Belgium Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)	Europe	Barcelona, Spain
West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL)	Africa	Accra, Ghana
Joint Research Centre (including Africa Knowledge Platform) (JRC)	Europe	Brussels, Belgium

5.1.2 Notable trends and commonalities

Several key trends and commonalities have emerged from the analysis of the selected renewable energy initiatives. A dominant focus across these initiatives is the **promotion of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable development**, which aligns closely with global frameworks such as the Paris Agreement and the United Nations SDGs. This alignment underscores the role of these initiatives in addressing urgent global energy challenges while advancing climate action and sustainability.

Africa faces a dual challenge: on one hand, rapid population growth and soaring energy demand, coupled with persistent energy poverty and high vulnerability to climate change; and on the other, the complex task of managing its rich natural endowment of energy resources (including raw materials) and increasingly strategic geopolitical role in a way that avoids dependency and maximises sustainable, inclusive benefits. Another significant trend is the growing cooperation between African and European countries, particularly in

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the context of energy and climate sectors. Many initiatives reflect this AU-EU partnership, fostering collaboration on technology transfer, capacity building, and policy coordination. This partnership highlights the increasing interdependence between the regions in achieving mutual energy transition goals. A common structural feature among the initiatives analysed is that they are organised as intergovernmental entities or formal partnerships. This trend suggests a move towards more coordinated, long-term approaches in addressing energy and climate challenges. By adopting formal legal and governance frameworks, these initiatives can leverage stronger political and financial support, enhancing their ability to deliver impactful results at scale. Additionally, many of the initiatives analysed offer comprehensive services, including funding for research and innovation, capacity building, and policy support. They also play a key role in facilitating investment and market development for renewable energy technologies. These services are critical to accelerating the deployment of renewable energy solutions and fostering sustainable economic growth in the regions they serve.

Despite these successes, the landscape currently lacks a permanent, structured governance mechanism to coordinate and sustain AU-EU R&I efforts in sustainable and just energy beyond individual project cycles. Furthermore, the efforts undertaken by LEAP-RE and LEAP-SE Cofund in terms of clustering, market access, engaging new funding agencies, and political dialogue with Member States on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) must be continued. Additionally, there is no dedicated platform to consolidate project outcomes, support widespread uptake, and translate innovation into real-world solutions that address African and European societal needs. Crucially, a clear vision for financial sustainability beyond traditional EU funding needs to be finalised and adopted.

5.2 Funding sources and legal structures

This section provides an overview of the funding sources and legal frameworks that govern the initiatives analysed. The funding mechanisms play a crucial role in their ability to achieve long-term sustainability and impact. Many of the initiatives analysed rely on a combination of public and private sector contributions, with the primary sources of funding coming from governmental bodies and international organisations. The main sources of funding include contributions from membership fees, member country contributions, and EU funding.

In addition to the key funding streams, several initiatives also secure additional sources of funding. These supplementary funds often come from partnerships with private sector stakeholders, philanthropic organisations, and development banks, broadening the scope and reach of the initiatives' activities.

The following information is based on desk research.

Table 4: Funding sources and legal structures

Legal structure: Initiative under AU/EU

Partnership name	**Main funding sources**	**Additional funding sources**
Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI)	Member country contributions	International donors
ENRICH in Africa Centre *Note: The Centre was developed in the frame of the*	EU funding (2021-2024, as a Horizon 2020 project)	Contributions from African countries, private sector investment

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Horizon 2020 ENRICH in Africa project (2021-2024.)		
EURAXESS	EU funding (EU Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD))	National governments of the 42 participating countries
Global Energy Transformation Programme (GET.pro)	EU funding	European donor countries
Global Energy Transformation (GET.transform)	EU funding	Governments of Germany, Norway, Sweden, Austria, and the Netherlands
Long term EU-Africa research and innovation partnership on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture (LEAP-Agri)	EU funding	Participating national funding agencies
Joint Research Centre (including Africa Knowledge Platform) (JRC) *Note: Being a Directorate-General within the EU, the JRC is not directly comparable to the other listed initiatives.*	EU funding	Contract work for third parties

Legal structure: Partnerships and alliances

Partnership name	**Main funding sources**	**Additional funding sources**
Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative (AEGEI)	Member country contributions	Contributions from African countries, private sector investments
European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP)	EU funding, in-kind and financial contributions from members	
International Clean Energy Partnership (ICEP)	Member country contributions	Private sector investment
Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (also known as Clean Hydrogen Partnership)	EU funding (€1 billion euro for the period 2021-2027)	Investment from private members of the partnership (at least €1 billion euro for the same period)
Mission Innovation (alliance)	Member country contributions	European Union

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The Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP)	EU funding	Government of Germany
The African Union-European Union Cooperation on Climate and Energy	EU funding	Contributions from African countries
The Clean Energy Transition Partnership (CET Partnership)	National funding agencies	
The EU-Africa Partnership	EU Funding	
Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (PRIMA) *Note: PRIMA foundation implements the partnership, which is a Public-public institutionalised Article 185 European Partnership between the EU and participating states*	EU funding (Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe)	Contributions from participating countries

Legal structure: Intergovernmental organisation/specialised agency

Partnership name	**Main funding sources**	**Additional funding sources**
African Energy Commission (AFREC)	Member country contributions	Gifts, bequests and other donations
Ecowas Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE)	Community levy funds	African Development Bank, EU funding (Horizon), GIZ, UNDP, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), USAID, WASCAL, ADA, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Agence Sénégalaise d'Electrification Rurale (ASER)
International Solar Alliance (ISA)	Member country contributions	Funding from international organizations
Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) *Note: United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)-hosted entity (United Nations Office for Project Services)*	Member country contributions	Project/program funding, fee-for-services advisory assignments

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SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE)	Financial and in-kind commitments from governments, multilateral agencies, private foundations, corporations, and NGOs	
Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)	EU funding	Contributions from member states, European Investment Bank, World Bank
Africa Energy Market Place (AEMP) *Note: programme coordinated by the African Development Bank*	African Development Bank, private sector investors, development partners	

Legal structure: Non-profit organisation

Partnership name	**Main funding sources**	**Additional funding sources**
Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE)	Membership fees (structured on a sliding scale to accommodate both corporate members and NPOs)	
Global Association for the Off-Grid Solar Energy Industry (GOGLA)	Membership fees	Contributions from supporting partners, project-based funding, various international donors and development agencies
Renewable Energy Solutions for Africa (RES4Africa)	Membership fees	

Legal structure: Network

Partnership name	**Main funding sources**	**Additional funding sources**
European Union-Gulf Cooperation (EU-GCC) Council Clean Energy Technology Network	EU funding	Contributions from member states

Legal structure: International organisation

Partnership name	**Main funding sources**	**Additional funding sources**

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West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL)	German Federal Ministry of Education and Research	Contract work for third parties and specific contributions for nuclear-related activities

Legal structure: Under development, likely a network/collective

Partnership name	**Main funding sources**	**Additional funding sources**
African Institute for Sustainable Energy and Systems Analysis (AISESA)	EU funding (EU Climate Dialogues (EUCD) projects via DG Climate Action)	FCDO / UKAID program Climate Compatible Growth

Many initiatives adopt hybrid funding models that combine multiple sources of financing, ensuring greater financial sustainability and the ability to address diverse project needs. Common combinations include EU funding alongside member state contributions, as well as public funding supplemented by private sector investment or international donor support.

The Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP) blends EU and member country contributions to advance energy initiatives. Similarly, the Southern African Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE) combines public funding with international donors to fund energy efficiency projects. Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) receives financial and in-kind commitments from governments, multilateral agencies, private foundations, corporations, and non-governmental organisations such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland, UK International Development, The Rockefeller Foundation, Google, and the ClimateWorks Foundation.

These hybrid models allow for more robust and sustainable funding structures, ensuring that initiatives can scale effectively while addressing the diverse needs of stakeholders.

The legal structure of each initiative plays a critical role in determining its operational framework, decision-making processes, and the extent of collaboration among stakeholders. Various legal forms have emerged, reflecting the diverse approaches taken to address energy challenges on both regional and global scales.

The legal structures identified include networks, public-private partnerships (PPPs), international organisations, non-profit organisations, intergovernmental organisations or specialized agencies, initiatives under the AU or EU, and formal partnerships. Each of these structures offers distinct advantages in terms of governance, flexibility, and stakeholder engagement.

Figure 3: Legal structures of analysed partnerships

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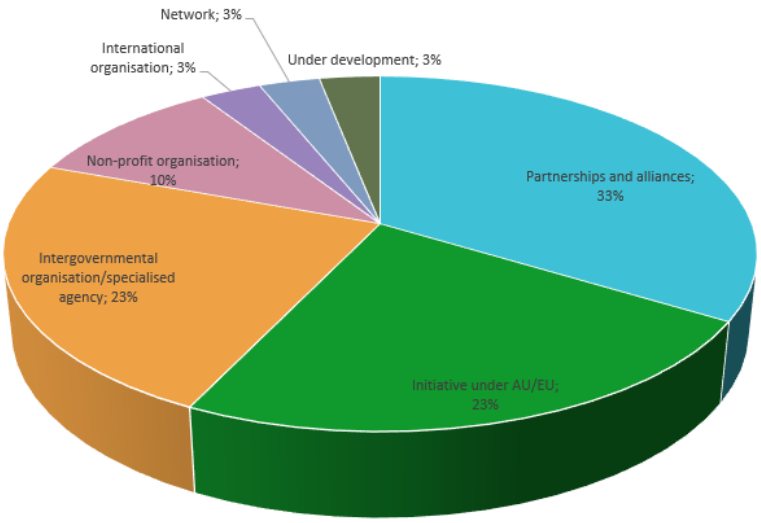

The analysis of the legal structures of the initiatives reveals that *partnerships* make up the largest share, accounting for 27% of the initiatives.

Initiatives under the AU/EU follow closely at 23%, indicating a strong reliance on frameworks developed under the AU and EU. This is a catch-all category that includes Horizon 2020 projects, EU Directorates-General, and other initiatives.

Intergovernmental organisations or specialised agencies constitute 23% of the legal structures. This highlights the importance of formal, government-backed institutions that facilitate international cooperation on energy and climate issues, often with a strong policy or regulatory mandate.

Non-profit organisations account for 13% of the initiatives, playing a significant role in advocacy, research, and capacity building, often working in conjunction with other legal entities to advance energy transitions and sustainable development.

In smaller proportions, studied initiatives also include networks (7%), public-private partnerships (3%), and international organisations (3%). Networks offer a more informal structure for knowledge sharing and collaboration, while PPPs and international organisations bring together public and private actors in more structured frameworks to drive investment and innovation.

This distribution highlights the varied approaches that stakeholders take in structuring initiatives, each providing unique advantages for the specific needs and goals of renewable energy and climate-focused programmes.

Based on the analysis of the legal structures of the initiatives, with a focus on those that emerged from European research projects, here's an overview of their transitions:

- **EDCTP (European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership)**
    - Initial structure: European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) (EDCTP 1)
    - Transition: Article 185 Initiative under Horizon 2020 (EDCTP 2)
    - Current form: Joint Undertaking (Article 187 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) (EDCTP 3)
    - EDCTP's evolution showcases a common pathway for successful European research initiatives. It started as an EEIG, then transitioned to an Article 185

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Initiative, and finally evolved into a partnership under Article 187. This progression demonstrates increasing formalisation and integration with EU structures.[17]

- **LEAP-Agri**
    - Structure: R&I initiative under H2020/ERA-Net Cofund
    - Funding: Co-funded by the European Commission and participating national funding agencies
    - LEAP-Agri represents a common model for research partnerships, operating within the Horizon 2020 framework and leveraging both EU and national funding.
- **PRIMA (Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area)**
    - Legal form: Article 185 partnership between the EU and participating states
    - Role: launches yearly calls for proposals via annual work programmes
    - The PRIMA foundation (non-profit organisation under Spanish law) implements the Partnership on Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area
- **Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking**
    - Legal form: Public-private partnership
    - Structure: Evolved from the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (FCH JU)
    - This initiative demonstrates the evolution of a research project into a formal Joint Undertaking, a common pathway for large-scale, long-term EU research initiatives.

Some of the commonalities are outlined below:

- ***Increasing formalisation:*** A notable trend is the shift from informal partnerships or projects to more structured, formal organisations. Initiatives that begin with flexible, collaborative frameworks tend to evolve into joint undertakings, non-profit organisations, or intergovernmental bodies, reflecting the growing need for sustained coordination and governance in energy sectors.
- ***Public-Private Partnerships:*** Some initiatives employ public-private partnership (PPP) models, enabling close collaboration between EU bodies and private sector stakeholders. This approach helps leverage private investment and expertise while aligning with public policy goals, ensuring that research and innovation in energy solutions are market-relevant and scalable.
- ***Integration with EU research programmes:*** Certain initiatives are deeply connected to EU research programmes like Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe. These programmes provide essential funding and strategic direction, with initiatives often originating as research projects within these frameworks before expanding into larger, more permanent entities.
- ***Legal flexibility:*** Some initiatives adopt hybrid legal models, such as being established under national law while managing or implementing EU-level

[17] 'EDCTP3: EU–Africa Global Health Partnership. European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership Programme 3 (Draft Working Document)', August 2020, https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/57fc56b2-2f10-48aa-be9c-ceb716eb8dd6_en?filename=edctp3_draft_proposal_14_august_2020.pdf.

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programmes, or being an initiative under the AU or the EU. This flexibility allows for easier adaptation to specific legal environments while maintaining the capacity to operate across borders and within broader research contexts.

- ***International collaboration*:** Particularly in AU-EU partnerships, many initiatives evolve beyond their original scope to include non-EU partners. As these initiatives expand geographically, they promote cross-border cooperation and knowledge exchange, broadening their impact on sustainable energy development globally.
- ***Transition from project to permanent structure*:** Successful research projects frequently transition into more enduring entities, such as foundations or joint undertakings, to ensure their long-term sustainability. This pathway reflects the EU's emphasis on moving from short-term research outputs to lasting contributions in the renewable energy and climate sectors.

These pathways demonstrate the EU's strategic approach to fostering impactful research and innovation initiatives. By starting with targeted projects and progressively evolving into more formalised structures, these initiatives align with broader EU goals in energy transition, sustainability, and international cooperation as outlined in chapter 3

5.2.1 Diverse funding approaches

Several renewable energy initiatives have adopted innovative funding mechanisms to enhance flexibility and align with the priorities of donors and stakeholders. One notable example is the GET.pro platform, which centralises fund management from European donor countries and the EU. This platform enables flexible investments into the GET.invest and GET.transform initiatives, allowing donors to allocate resources based on their specific priorities while maintaining efficiency in fund distribution.

The Global Off-Grid Lighting Association (GOGLA), on the other hand, employs a tiered membership fee structure. This approach adjusts membership fees according to the size and turnover of the member organisations, ensuring a fair contribution model that scales with organisational capacity, thereby making membership accessible to a wide range of participants.

The Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking represents a public-private partnership model that combines EU funding with private sector contributions. This collaborative model not only enhances the financial base for hydrogen projects but also integrates private sector expertise and innovation, creating a balanced approach to funding large-scale energy initiatives.

PRIMA (Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area) is an Article 185 European Partnership between the EU and participating states. Member states advocated for the thematic areas (water management, farming systems, food value chain) on a political level, leading to the creation of the partnership.

5.2.2 Sustainability and dependencies

Sustainability is a key concern for many initiatives that rely heavily on external funding sources. For instance, EU funding plays a crucial role in supporting various programmes and projects. However, this reliance on continued EU support can create dependencies that may jeopardise long-term sustainability if the funding environment changes.

To mitigate this risk, initiatives with diversified funding sources tend to have more sustainable long-term prospects. These sources might include member contributions, private sector investments, and international donors. By spreading financial reliance across multiple channels, organisations can better withstand shifts in any single funding stream.

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Public-private partnerships (PPPs) exemplify an effective strategy for increasing adaptability to changing funding landscapes. Initiatives that leverage private sector investment alongside public funding often benefit from greater flexibility and resilience, allowing them to adjust more readily to evolving financial conditions.

Additionally, tiered membership structures, such as those employed by GOGLA, offer a strategic approach to ensuring stable funding. This model accommodates organisations of varying sizes and financial capacities, thereby enhancing the overall stability and sustainability of the initiative.

These approaches highlight the importance of strategic funding models and diversified financial strategies in promoting long-term sustainability and reducing dependency risks.

Ultimately, regardless of whether funding comes from public or private sources, long-term sustainability depends on addressing real needs and delivering tangible value

5.3 Governance structures

The governance structures employed across various energy initiatives reveal a number of best practices that contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of these programmes. A core element common to most governance models is the implementation of multi-level governance frameworks, which balance strategic oversight, technical advisory functions, and operational management. For instance, the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) utilises a multi-tiered system comprising a board for oversight, an independent delivery unit for implementation, and a technical committee for expert guidance.

A key aspect of these governance models is balanced representation. It is critical to ensure that all key stakeholders, including African and European partners, are represented to encourage inclusivity and bring diverse perspectives to the table. An example of this can be seen in the African Energy Commission (AFREC), which employs a conference of ministers and an executive board representing various member states, ensuring both political and technical input.

Another best practice is the establishment of independent technical advisory bodies to provide scientific rigor and expert guidance. Independent bodies, such as AFREC's technical advisory body and AREI's technical committee, play a crucial role in ensuring that decisions are informed by high-level expertise and are based on sound evidence.

Executive leadership also emerges as a significant governance feature, with initiatives often appointing dedicated executives such as executive directors or CEOs to oversee day-to-day operations.

A well-established secretariat is another critical component in the governance structures of many energy initiatives, providing essential administrative and operational support. The secretariat typically coordinates day-to-day activities, ensuring smooth communication between various governance bodies and stakeholders, and facilitating the implementation of strategic decisions. It often serves as the backbone of the organisation, managing logistics, documentation, and reporting while ensuring compliance with governance protocols.

Specialised working groups or thematic clusters are also frequently used to focus on specific areas of expertise or programmatic themes. Initiatives like ARE's working groups or the Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking's advisory groups provide platforms for in-depth discussions and targeted project development in key thematic areas.

Stakeholder engagement mechanisms are an essential feature in the governance of many initiatives. Formal processes for engaging with civil society, private sector actors, and

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academic institutions create opportunities for broader participation and knowledge sharing. For example, the UfM is a stakeholder dialogue platform facilitating ongoing engagement with a wide range of partners.

Clear and transparent decision-making processes are another commonality across successful governance models. Clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each governance body, as seen in the West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL), ensures accountability and smooth operational functioning.

Flexibility and adaptability are key to ensuring governance structures remain effective over time. Mechanisms for periodic review and adaptation, such as those employed by the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP), allow governance frameworks to evolve in response to changing contexts and needs.

Public-private partnership integration is also emerging as a key trend, particularly in initiatives that seek to leverage the resources and expertise of both sectors. The Clean Hydrogen Joint Undertaking exemplifies this model by involving public and private sector partners in its governance structure.

Finally, a robust monitoring and evaluation framework is essential for assessing both governance effectiveness and the overall performance of initiatives. WASCAL's Governing Board, for instance, plays a critical role in monitoring progress and ensuring financial integrity, setting a benchmark for governance accountability.

These best practices collectively reflect the diverse and evolving nature of governance structures in international energy initiatives, offering valuable lessons for the design and operation of future programs.

5.4 Learnings and recommendations

The recommendations provided in this section are designed to guide LEAP-RE in developing a sustainable, impactful structure for its operations and governance framework. Drawing on best practices from the analysed renewable energy initiatives, these recommendations aim to enhance LEAP-RE's capacity to effectively address energy challenges, foster international collaboration, and secure long-term viability.

5.4.1 Governance

The following learnings are being considered in shaping potential design options for the future iteration of LEAP-RE.

- Establish a high-level steering committee with balanced representation from African and European partners to provide strategic direction and oversight.
- Create an independent technical advisory board composed of experts from both continents to ensure scientific rigor and provide technical guidance.
- Appoint an executive director and a small, efficient secretariat to manage day-to-day operations and implement decisions.
- Form thematic working groups aligned with LEAP-RE's focus areas (e.g., renewable energy technologies, policy and regulatory frameworks, capacity building) to drive specific initiatives.
- Develop a stakeholder forum that meets regularly to gather input from a wide range of actors, including civil society, private sector, and academia.
- Implement a clear decision-making process with defined roles for each governance body and transparent procedures for project selection and resource allocation.

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- Include a mechanism for periodic review and adaptation of the governance structure to ensure it remains effective and addresses the most urgent questions.
- Consider establishing a public-private partnership component to leverage additional resources and expertise from the private sector.
- Design a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework that includes regular reporting to all governance bodies and stakeholders.
- Ensure that the governance structure allows for flexibility in project implementation while maintaining overall strategic coherence and accountability.

5.4.2 Funding mechanisms

- **Diversify funding sources:** While relying on primary sources such as EU funding and member country contributions, LEAP-RE could explore opportunities to secure additional funding from international donors, private sector investments (investing in mature projects from the LEAP-RE portfolio), and philanthropic organisations. This will broaden the initiative's financial base and enhance long-term sustainability.
- **Leverage EU and national contributions:** EU funding, which accounts for 48% of the total for other initiatives, remains a significant resource. As LEAP-RE contributes to AU and EU policy frameworks (refer to Chapter 3), LEAP-RE should continue to prioritise EU funding while encouraging stronger financial commitments from participating member countries, as these contributions form 41% of the funding in comparable initiatives.
- **Consider membership fees:** LEAP-RE can introduce a tiered membership fee structure depending on the type of membership, similar to other initiatives like GOGLA, where member fees are based on the size and turnover of the organisation. Although membership fees accounted for only 7% of funding across the initiatives analysed, they provide a consistent stream of resources and help ensure stakeholder engagement. Members would benefit from various services and activities (refer to Chapter 6).
- **Encourage flexibility in fund allocation:** LEAP-RE can benefit from centralised platforms , which pool contributions from multiple European donors and allow flexible allocation of funds to various projects based on donor priorities. This model supports adaptability and targeted funding for specific initiatives within the LEAP-RE framework.

5.4.3 Legal structure

The option to leverage an existing cooperation structure has been considered. However, the benchmark of the current landscape has shown that no existing structure fits the strategic ambition and the following high-level requirements addressed by the LEAP-RE programme:

1. Explicitly dedicated to sustainable energy **research and innovation**, connecting with later-stage initiatives focusing on energy deployment, while keeping its independence
2. Explicitly focused on the **EU-AU geography**, and not drawn into larger global or multicontinental initiatives
3. Enabling the **mobilisation of public funding sources** at EU and Member States levels, by proven co-funding mechanisms

The recommendations by LEAP-RE are therefore to:

- **Leverage AU/EU legal frameworks:** LEAP-RE should maintain and reinforce its alignment with AU/EU priorities, and leverage AU/EU legal frameworks. Ensuring alignment with priorities at a high institutional level would help secure institutional support.
- **Transition to a formal, permanent structure:** LEAP-RE should establish a standalone entity to ensure continuity of operations and formalise the relationships developed in the consortium. As a European partnership (Article 185 or 187)

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requires political support and significant efforts to implement, it is not recommended for LEAP-RE to transition into a formal European partnership at this stage.

- **Incorporate as a non-profit association in the short term:** In the short term, forming an INPA (international non-profit association under Belgian law) is a practical solution to maintain operations, continue collaborating amongst core consortium members, apply for funding, and attract new stakeholders (refer to sections 7.2.2 Non-profit association and 7.3.2 Forming a non-profit association as a next step). The association could evolve into a more complex kind of entity if needed.

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6. Stakeholder insights

This chapter presents insights from LEAP-RE stakeholders gathered through workshops, consultations, and surveys held between 2021 and 2024. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of continuing bi-continental collaboration, improving support for commercializing research, and strengthening connections with other initiatives. Private sector actors highlighted the need for clearer entry points and value propositions, while funding agencies called for better alignment and impact measurement. Feedback also pointed to the need for a stable legal structure and diversified funding to ensure sustainability.

To plan for the future iteration of LEAP-RE, capturing the perspectives and priorities of its diverse stakeholders is crucial. Engagement efforts have included LEAP-RE consortium members, funding agencies, private sector actors, and renewable energy project coordinators. These interactions provided valuable insights into the expectations and requirements of LEAP-RE partners and the broader renewable energy community.

6.1 Vision building workshops

Two vision building workshops were organised, one in Nairobi in 2021 and one in Pretoria in 2022. Both workshops sought participants' feedback on policy & cooperation, innovation, services, community management, impact, and sustainability/business model. The full workshop outputs are included in the Annex.

6.1.1 Vision building workshop in Nairobi, 2021

Policy and cooperation: Participants emphasised the importance of fostering AU-EU cooperation to **jointly address global challenges** such as renewable energy adoption and achieving the 1.5 degree target adopted in the Paris Agreement in 2015. They highlighted challenges like limited political will, unequal access to renewable energy technologies, and the need for frameworks to support joint research infrastructures. **Cooperation was seen as crucial for sharing expertise, reducing risks, and unlocking innovation.** Suggestions included integrating renewable energy into national policies, fostering long-term research platforms, and positioning LEAP-RE as a recognised platform for multilateral discussions and policy influence.

Innovation: Harnessing African innovation was seen as key to LEAP-RE's success, with a focus on **fostering innovation clusters, involving SMEs and start-ups,** and connecting renewable energy innovators to other sectors like food systems. Participants highlighted the need for dedicated funding, **collaboration with private sector actors**, and the development of inclusive knowledge management frameworks. **Linking LEAP-RE projects with African-European initiatives like ENRICH in Africa** was suggested to support scaling of impactful solutions and long-term innovation ecosystems.

Services: Proposed services for LEAP-RE included a **centralised platform** to showcase projects and facilitate matchmaking, co-development of priorities and investment approaches, and knowledge-sharing through workshops and training. Participants emphasised the need for effective communication tools such as newsletters, social media, and online platforms to create spaces for knowledge sharing and collaboration between African and European stakeholders. LEAP-RE was expected to provide structured support for coordination, promote African innovations, and create resources like repositories for proven solutions and practical tools.

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Community management: Building an active LEAP-RE community involved creating **online collaboration platforms**, newsletters, and social media channels to engage over 83 organisations and 200 researchers. Suggestions included organising regular workshops, developing alumni networks, and **clustering projects by specialisation**. Participants also emphasised complementarity between work packages, involving non-traditional actors like NGOs, and leveraging media to raise the visibility of LEAP-RE projects and results.

Impact: Success indicators for LEAP-RE included the **number of patents, partnerships, and follow-up projects,** as well as **measurable improvements in energy access and socio-economic outcomes such as job creation and community development.** Participants stressed **aligning project outcomes with SDG targets**, assessing community-level impacts through surveys, and fostering AU-EU collaboration to scale renewable energy solutions. Metrics like private sector involvement and long-term funding sustainability were also identified as crucial.

Sustainability/business model: To sustain LEAP-RE beyond the project's lifespan, participants suggested **transforming it into an international association** with funding from membership fees, premium services, and public-private partnerships. Emphasis was placed on **open-access tools, rotational leadership, and leveraging existing networks for long-term relevance.** Recommendations included promoting LEAP-RE-labelled labs, providing capacity-building services, and involving governments and communities to maintain momentum and attract future funding.

6.1.2 Vision building workshop in Pretoria, 2022

Policy and cooperation: Participants identified key policy challenges, such as **aligning with global targets** like the 1.5 degree target adopted in the Paris Agreement in 2015, as well as the "green transition" priority of the AU-EU HLPD on Science, Technology and Innovation.. They emphasised creating equitable opportunities for African companies, fostering grassroots collaboration, and addressing political barriers to renewable energy adoption. A **just transition** was seen as critical for socio-economic fairness, while building long-term AU-EU coordination frameworks and positioning LEAP-RE as a recognised stakeholder were highlighted. **Cooperation** was viewed as essential for innovation, risk mitigation, and knowledge-sharing, with joint research infrastructures and flagship projects serving as key enablers.

Innovation: Participants highlighted the importance of leveraging local resources and combining advanced technologies with local knowledge to harness African innovation in renewable energy. They emphasised fostering effective innovation clusters, **linking innovators with funders and industries**, and raising awareness through workshops and training. Collaboration with initiatives like ENRICH in Africa and establishing platforms for innovation observatories were proposed to build long-term capacity. **Protecting patents and scaling innovations** were seen as crucial to driving impactful renewable energy solutions.

Services: Participants proposed several services to enhance LEAP-RE's impact, including a **centralised platform** to showcase projects and innovations. **Networking and matchmaking** were identified as critical, along with thematic workshops, training sessions, and real-time communication tools. Long-term strategic functions, such as co-developing investment approaches and knowledge transfer frameworks, were seen as essential to **bridge gaps between R&I and policy.** Visibility through media, conferences, and tailored support for SMEs were also emphasised to strengthen LEAP-RE's ecosystem.

Community management: Participants suggested creating a vibrant community through tools like **an online collaboration platform**, newsletters, and social media to connect over 83 organisations and 200 professionals. They emphasised **clustering projects by specialisation**, leveraging alumni networks, and fostering collaboration through

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workshops and co-supervised PhDs. Events like conferences and media engagement were recommended to increase visibility and sustain engagement, while tailored interactions within thematic clusters were proposed to drive meaningful collaboration.

Impact: Participants identified **success indicators such as increased energy access, job creation, and measurable socio-economic improvements in communities.** Metrics like the number of patented innovations, partnerships, and follow-up projects were highlighted as critical. They emphasized the integration of innovations into value chains, scaling renewable energy solutions, and fostering AU-EU collaboration. Long-term success was tied to funding sustainability, community-level impact assessments, and environmental improvements, such as reducing deforestation through clean cooking technologies.

Sustainability/business model: Participants emphasised transforming LEAP-RE into an international association with **diversified funding streams**, including membership fees, workshops, and premium services. Establishing "LEAP-RE-labelled" labs, international universities, and open-access resources were proposed to sustain momentum. Rotational leadership between African and European actors and **leveraging existing networks for joint funding opportunities** were seen as critical. Community involvement, government engagement, and promoting success stories were highlighted as key to maintaining impact and attracting new resources.

6.2 Value proposition workshops

The value proposition workshops aimed to collect stakeholders' needs and expectations for a lasting AU-EU partnership in R&I for renewable energies. The goal was to define the value proposition of the future partnership to inform its long-term strategic role and business model. Three value proposition workshops were held online:

- With private sector stakeholders, September 2023
- With funding agencies, January 2024
- With project coordinators of renewable energy research and development projects, January 2024

6.2.1 Workshop with private sector stakeholders in September 2023

Participating organisations included:

- Africa Energy Services Group
- Afrilabs
- Converge!
- FFG
- LGI Sustainable Innovation
- Nanoé
- Odit-e
- TFE Energy

The workshop aimed to understand the long-term priorities and value propositions for private sector stakeholders working with LEAP-RE and the future partnership. Participants answered questions regarding their priorities and what they hoped to gain from their involvement. Key priorities and gains for private sector stakeholders included:

- **Visibility:** Stakeholders emphasised the importance of assessing and communicating project impacts. They sought to broaden their prospect base within the LEAP-RE community for commercial activities and create a showroom or

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reference for their technologies in the African context. This would increase their legitimacy when seeking funding for wider deployment. Additionally, they aimed to raise awareness among African policymakers and international financial institutions about the solutions tested during the LEAP-RE project and benefit from the LEAP-RE brand.

- **Funding:** Stakeholders highlighted the need to provide funding opportunities for higher Technology Readiness Level (TRL) projects. They stressed the importance of identifying tech partners and securing funding to industrialise the solutions tested during the LEAP-RE project. Ensuring flexibility in funding for SMEs was also seen as crucial.
- **Project management and capacity building:** There was a call for support based on the project's impact level. Stakeholders wanted to overcome administrative challenges in cooperating with African countries and implement solutions tested during the project in other countries.
- **Business considerations:** Stakeholders discussed the importance of re-investing profits in Africa.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Engaging with local policymakers and stakeholders was highlighted as a key priority to ensure the success and sustainability of their projects.

6.2.2 Workshop with funding agencies in January 2024

Participating organisations included:

- Agence nationale de la recherche (France)
- Department of Science and Innovation (Republic of South Africa)
- FFG (Austria)
- Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (Portugal)
- LGI Sustainable Innovation
- Ministry of National Education Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research (Morocco)
- National Council for Scientific Research and Technologies (Algeria)

The workshop aimed to identify what aspects of LEAP-RE are working well and should continue in the long-term partnership. Participants discussed their priorities and provided insights on successful elements to be maintained:

- **LEAP-RE as the single-entry point for R&I community in renewables:** Stakeholders emphasised the importance of maintaining LEAP-RE as the central hub for the research and innovation community in renewable energy.
- **Funding agencies:** Participants highlighted the effective collaboration among funding agencies as a key aspect to continue.
- **Calls:** Stakeholders noted the success in call implementation and the cascade funding mechanism. They also stressed the importance of continuing to launch new calls for projects.
- **Projects:** Ongoing projects were reported to be running well. Participants emphasised the need to scale up project outcomes for market uptake, maintain robust project evaluation processes, and continue clustering related projects for greater impact.
- **Networking and visibility:** Networking was identified as a crucial element that should be sustained. Additionally, stakeholders highlighted the value of organising international events in Africa and Europe to enhance visibility and foster connections.

The workshop also highlighted areas for change and action that should be addressed in the long-term partnership:

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- **Long-term funding considerations**: Participants emphasised the need for possible involvement in AU/EU co-funding and involving new funding agencies. They suggested moving towards joint calls to foster collaboration between AU and EU agencies, providing higher funding rates for NGOs, and broadening the scope of the projects. There was a call to look at innovation holistically beyond technology, incorporating social and financial innovation, and implementing social studies and on-the-ground experiments.
- **Innovation acceleration**: Stakeholders identified a gap in addressing innovation acceleration and proposed the possible creation of an innovation acceleration lab. There were concerns around the TRL (Technology Readiness Level) assessment of funded projects. Suggestions included evaluating projects' TRL, readiness for market uptake, and value proposition to the private sector, as well as funding projects at higher TRLs (e.g., 6-7), although certain funding schemes currently cannot accommodate this.
- **Platform enhancement**: There was a need for additional functionalities on the online platform for knowledge exchange and the creation of a marketplace for innovators.
- **Visa issues**: Participants raised concerns about visa delivery issues affecting certain project teams, which need to be addressed.
- **Organisational challenges**: Resource constraints faced by small countries involved in many Horizon Europe activities, such as lack of dedicated staff, were highlighted as a significant challenge.
- **Political challenges**: It was noted that funding agencies are influenced by government cycles and agency boards, which could lead to potential missed opportunities. Even a partnership at the highest governmental level (participants cited PRIMA as an example) is dependent on continued political commitment.

6.2.3 Workshop with project portfolio partners in January 2024

Participating organisations included:

- European Commission
- FFG (Austrian Research Promotion Agency)
- ICLEI
- KTH Royal Institute of Technology
- LGI Sustainable Innovation
- Republic of South Africa, Dept. of Science and Innovation
- RINA
- Strathmore University
- TU Delft
- University of Genova

As the participants currently coordinate R&D projects, they listed several challenges they encounter:

- **Regulatory challenges**: Participants noted difficulties in implementing some technologies on the ground due to regulatory challenges or a lack of regulatory framework, such as for hydrogen.
- **Organisational challenges**: Participants faced difficulties engaging in both funded projects and academic work. Institutions and projects are engaged in different countries in parallel, leading to fragmentation of efforts. There is variation in research capacity among African partners, and differences in organisational structures between EU H2020 projects and collaborations with African institutions create difficulties in navigating funding schemes. Aligning projects with demand and

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coordinating between different projects to understand needs and share knowledge is also essential.

- **Financial challenges**: Limited budgets impact the ability to address unexpected needs for interactions. Budget constraints hinder the physical engagement required for workshops and activities. Additionally, there are differences in how EU and non-EU funding schemes can be used.
- **Stakeholder engagement**: Language barriers due to the various languages spoken in Africa present a challenge. Engaging with local communities, policymakers, and stakeholders is difficult due to cultural differences. There are limited proactive initiatives from local African partners, requiring consistent guidance and monitoring. Overcoming biases and enhancing communication within project teams to foster shared experiences and capacity is necessary. Participants also noted difficulties in reaching out and joining forces with funders and financing organisations worldwide.

Given these challenges, participants had several suggestions:

- **Mapping tool**: Participants expressed interest in a mapping tool to map projects by regions and create a directory of experts and contacts.
- **Reducing fragmentation**: LEAP-RE was seen as having a potential role in reducing fragmentation, moderating connections between projects, and facilitating engagement with national entities and local associations.
- **Organising collaborations**: Participants mentioned challenges in organising collaborations with local communities and suggested that LEAP-RE could act as an intermediary to connect projects and innovators with local communities for co-designing or testing new products and services.
- Participants also suggested a range of additional services to enhance the long-term partnership:
    - **Capacity-building**: Ideas included creating a platform to exchange and co-develop open access teaching and training materials. They also suggested supporting educational program development in Renewable Energy (RE) at key African institutions beyond summer schools, and facilitating researchers' exchange through an AU-EU Erasmus approach with financial support.
    - **Knowledge repository**: Participants recommended utilising the LEAP-RE platform's knowledge repository and encouraging participants to share relevant materials and links.
    - **Partnerships and networking**: Engaging in joint actions and services with local actors, cities, and civil society was highlighted. Participants suggested exploring partnerships with SE4All, IRENA, and other institutions in the same space, organizing contributions to the UN High-Level Political Dialogue (HLPD) on energy, enhancing outreach activities, and joint policymaking with other partnerships, international initiatives, and global players. Organising a presence at the COP was also recommended.
    - **Clusters**: Developing a database of needs and demands from policymakers and stakeholders, and responses (outputs of projects) per theme was suggested.
    - **Funding and mobility**: Facilitating mobility funding, especially for south-south collaboration across EU-funded projects and initiatives, was highlighted.
    - **Business incubation and SME cooperation**: Participants suggested exploring business incubation and cooperation between SMEs, encouraging exchanges between SMEs of different countries to share insights on dealing with issues in the African context.
    - **City involvement**: Actively involving cities in future initiatives was recommended. Participants suggested collaborating with cities via organisations like ICLEI Europe and ICLEI Africa, and leveraging their courses and webinars.

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- **Education and research collaboration**: Ideas included facilitating connections between the research community and educators involved in programme development, supporting the revamping and creation of graduate programmes in sustainable energy at African universities, and assisting in accessing educational funding programmes, especially for PhD-level researchers. Participants also recommended exploring innovation in funding programmes and tools to offer flexibility to engage new actors, considering the inclusion of students and schools in future funding calls and projects, and creating a platform for educators to collaboratively develop open-access materials for curriculums.

6.3 Stakeholder consultation, October 2024

6.3.1 Objectives and format

The objectives of the stakeholder consultation session, held during the fourth Annual LEAP-RE Forum in Milan, Italy, were to present partnership scenarios and strategic pathways to guide the future iteration of LEAP-RE, as a basis for the consultation, and to gather feedback from stakeholders.

Different partnership scenarios can be envisioned with varying levels of governance structure and funding, and stakeholder involvement and community engagement.

- A **Virtual Centre/Co-fund Project** with minimal governance and funding requirements but high stakeholder engagement.
- A **Physical Headquarters with Article 185 Public-Public Partnerships (P2P)**, requiring substantial governance and funding, alongside strong community engagement.
- A **"Light" Physical Headquarters** that prioritizes high governance and funding but involves limited stakeholder engagement.
- A **Virtual Platform** model that minimizes both governance/funding and stakeholder involvement.

The strategic pathways describe potential future states for the global partnership, focusing on strategic objectives and actions based on previous stakeholder consultations (vision building and value proposition workshops). They do not yet address operational considerations. Each pathway has a different focus and stakeholder priorities but collectively contributes to the overarching goal of advancing renewable energy research and solutions through AU-EU cooperation. The pathways can be combined into a hybrid pathway.

- **Pathway 1: Collaboration, regional Integration, and project preparation**
  - A catalyst for extensive cross-sectoral cooperation between the EU and AU, encompassing the public and private sectors, NGOs, and academic institutions
  - Critical activities: thematic cluster, capacity-building, twinning and teaming, co-designing new projects
- **Pathway 2: Integration, alignment and project implementation**
  - Support projects that not only generate renewable energy but also contribute to sustainable economic and social development of local communities in Africa

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- Critical activities: thematic clusters, capacity building, impact assessment, twinning and teaming, co-designing new projects

- **Pathway 3: Market acceleration and project exploitation**
  - An engine of innovation and commercial acceleration for renewable energy technologies, with a focus on rapidly transitioning from concept to market
  - Key activities: acceleration services, capacity-building, twinning and teaming, co-designing new projects

Participants included representatives from various stakeholder types (including research and academia, finance and funding entities, policymakers, private sector, community organisations) with a strong interest in continued participation in the long-term partnership.

Table 5: Participants of stakeholder consultation, October 2024

Surname	Name	Organisation	Country
Elouga	Nicobert	MINRESI	Cameroon
Loucif Seiad	Mohamed	DGRSDT	Algeria
Maseko	Thapelo	DSI	South Africa
Moisan	François	ANR	France
Moner	Magda	Joint Research Centre	Italy
Nardini	Isabella	Fraunhofer	Germany
Ndhlukula	Kudakwashe	SACREEE	Namibia
Nocera	Rachele	MUR	Italy
Ntshongwana	Tinyiko	DSI	South Africa
Onyango	Susan	Geo2D	France
Sellami	Mokhtar	MESRS	Algeria
Shanker	Anjali	IED	France
Simion	Elena	UEFISCDI	Romania
Wambugu Wacera	Anne	SU	Kenya
Wassim	Seb	ANR	France

Participants were split into three groups and asked to fill out the partnership canvas.

Figure 4: Partnership canvas

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Partnership name: _____

Cost structure *What are the major costs? How can we reduce or share costs for long-term sustainability?*	**Pathway description and key services/activities** *What (if any) new services/activities could be included? Why? What kind of service providers would be needed?*	**Governance structure** *What governance structure ensures effective decision-making? How can we ensure equitable representation and participation between African and European stakeholders in decision-making?*
Revenue streams *What **public funding** (grants, government subsidies, international organizations) can we leverage for long-term sustainability? How can we attract **private sector funding** (e.g., investments, corporate partnerships, or donations)? Can we generate revenue from **commercialization** (e.g., licensing, monetizing research ouputs)? What other potential sources of **recurring funding** (e.g., membership models, philanthropic contributions) can support the partnership?*	**Stakeholders** *What additional organizations or stakeholders, beyond the current LEAP-RE consortium, should be engaged for the long-term success of the partnership?*	**Partnership scenario and legal status** *What is the most appropriate partnership scenario and legal status? Why?*
Parking lot *additional ideas, concerns, or unresolved points for future discussion*		

6.3.2 Group work

6.3.2.1 Group 1

The **AU-EU "Move 2 Market, Build 4 Market" partnership**, as envisioned by group 1, is structured to **support the scaling of R&I projects by initially covering costs through private funding**. This financial approach prioritises prototyping and scale-up, reducing the financial burden on public funds while engaging private investors early in the development process. The partnership aims to enhance project viability by **integrating private sector stakeholders** who contribute not only financially but also with their expertise, aligning with the group's vision of fostering a shared commitment to innovation.

In this model, group 1 **built on the activities and services described in pathway 3**, focusing on providing business training and intellectual property (IP) management for R&I initiatives. Governance involves **inviting private sector entities as shareholders**, creating a shared-risk environment that strengthens project support through a **regional AU-EU consortium and a network of regional incubators**. This governance structure reflects the group's intent to **foster collaboration between public and private sectors**, enabling a structured pathway for projects to transition from prototype to market-ready solutions.

Revenue generation, as proposed by the group, stems from the **business models of successful prototypes, with equity offered to stakeholders as an incentive.** By leveraging parafiscal tax benefits and incentives, the partnership seeks to encourage private sector participation and drive innovation. Stakeholders in this framework include funding agencies, private companies, universities, and regional authorities across AU-EU regions, all working together to establish a **public-private partnership framework.** Group 1 also highlighted future focus areas, including policy engineering integration and

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addressing local companies' capacity needs, to **ensure the initiative remains responsive to regional innovation demands.**

6.3.2.2 Group 2

Group 2 emphasised **the need to distinguish between projects at various TRLs, as each level has unique challenges and support requirements.** The group identifies an **opportunity to facilitate the transition from concept to market for high TRL projects**, ensuring that mature innovations can be effectively commercialised.

The partnership model prioritises **in-kind participation** and targeted funding for piloting infrastructure, particularly focusing on **proof-of-concept funding**. Co-funding opportunities and small-budget grants under €50,000 could helping early-stage projects progress. **Engaging private sector stakeholders is crucial**, with suggestions to organise **funders' forums for matchmaking** and **develop specific messaging to attract private sector interest.**

Revenue generation strategies include public-private partnerships that create win-win scenarios and equity partnerships. The group suggested securing support from various funding entities, including **venture capital** and **organisations like Banque Publique d'Investissement (BPI) in France.**

Key services proposed include **business modelling, market analysis, and IP commercialisation**, echoing strategic pathway 3, along with **high-skill training aimed at building capacity in Africa and Europe**. Governance should involve **collaboration with various stakeholders**, including **public development banks** like the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the African Development Bank (ADB). The future LEAP-RE partnership should also **coordinate with established organizations to ensure that efforts are not duplicating existing initiatives.**

The group stressed the importance **of incorporating local communities into project design and implementation to build trust and understand their needs**, recognising that this takes time and effort. Challenges identified include balancing research and commercialisation goals, ensuring private-sector involvement across project stages, addressing the distinct needs of projects at different TRL levels, and **avoiding the pursuit of too many objectives or goals, which could dilute focus.**

6.3.2.3 Group 3

The results of this group discussion were that the future partnership shall be **an umbrella organisation with a balanced representation of AU and EU representatives.** Ideally, it shall work under a **blended mechanism as a private-public partnership** comprising different organisations and shareholders, among others, the EU Delegation, African policymakers, regional governments in Africa, development agencies, funding agencies, businesses and community-based organisation (SMEs, NGOs, cooperatives, etc.).

The holistic and long-term aspect of the partnership is important, so different crucial thematic priorities can be tackled, such as food, health, water, renewable energies, etc. and initiatives and projects involved can have continuing impact.

6.3.3 Insights from group outputs

6.3.3.1 Common themes across groups

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The stakeholder consultation workshop provided essential input on shaping the future LEAP-RE partnership beyond 2026. Through discussions in three breakout groups, several common themes emerged:

- **Emphasis on commercialisation and market transition:** A central theme across all groups was the need to **support the commercialisation of research outcomes and accelerate the transition of innovations to market.** This aligns closely with strategic pathway 3 and **highlights the importance to offer services such as business modelling, IP management, and market analysis.** Importantly, there was a consensus on the need to focus commercialisation efforts on countries that have the necessary infrastructure, skilled labour, and supportive policies, as not all regions are equally prepared. The groups recognised that a **tailored, rather than a "one-size-fits-all," approach is essential for effective market entry.**
- **Support for demonstration projects, prototyping, and scaling up:** All groups acknowledged the need for specific funding mechanisms and support for demonstration projects, proof-of-concept initiatives, and scaling up prototypes. This common recognition reflects the importance of these stages in bridging the gap between research and commercialisation. Moreover, there is **significant potential within the current portfolio of LEAP-RE projects that have higher TRL,** suggesting that many initiatives could benefit from additional support and guidance to achieve commercialisation.
- **Balanced and inclusive governance structure:** Groups emphasised the importance of **establishing a governance framework that ensures equitable representation between AU and EU stakeholders.** It was also highlighted that the benefits of the partnership's results need to be equitably shared, including fair distribution of IP credits to prevent European actors from disproportionately gaining from innovations developed through AU-EU collaboration.
- **Diversified funding sources beyond public funding:** There was unanimous agreement on the need to diversify funding sources and **reduce dependency on the current funders (European Commission – DG RTD, and national funding agencies).** The groups recommended exploring private investments, development bank financing (e.g., African Development Bank, European Investment Bank), and philanthropic contributions. Engaging a broader range of stakeholders, including venture capital and angel investors, is seen as critical to reduce dependency on a single source of funding and ensure financial sustainability.
- **Capacity building and community involvement:** All groups highlighted the importance of capacity building, with a focus on high-skill training and thematic clusters. **Involving local communities and stakeholders in the design and implementation of projects was also emphasised**, ensuring that innovations are tailored to meet local needs and build trust. This approach aligns with the goal of fostering local ownership and long-term impact.

6.3.3.2 Key differences in preferred legal structures and partnership scenarios

The groups proposed different legal structures, influenced by their strategic priorities and vision for the partnership's services:

- Group 1 favoured a public-private partnership (PPP) model, emphasising strong engagement with private sector stakeholders to support scaling and commercialisation.
- Group 2 suggested exploring a foundation model but stressed the need to coordinate with institutional stakeholders (e.g., IRENA, SE4All) to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure complementarity. This reflects a strategic focus on leveraging existing international networks and expertise.

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- Group 3 leaned towards a non-profit organisation (NPO) structure, prioritising a mission-driven approach with a broader thematic focus, including renewable energy, food security, and health.

These variations indicate that the choice of legal structure was shaped by the services and activities each group deemed most critical. It underscores the need for a flexible framework that accommodates diverse priorities while aligning with a cohesive strategic vision.

6.3.3.3 Aligning with existing initiatives

It is worth considering a refined approach to the partnership's objectives, focusing on streamlining service offerings and aligning strategically with existing initiatives. This will help concentrate resources on core strengths, reduce duplication, and enhance the overall impact of the partnership.

- **Limiting objectives and refining service offerings:** Group 2 raised **concerns about having too many objectives, which could dilute the partnership's focus and effectiveness.** This suggests a need to streamline the service offerings of the partnerships, potentially integrating certain activities to other initiatives that have similar goals and expertise. By narrowing the focus, the partnership can better allocate its resources and enhance its effectiveness in core areas.

- **Strategic integration and avoiding duplication:** A major overarching consideration was the need to carefully evaluate which services the partnership should continue offering independently and which could be integrated with or absorbed by existing organisations. Group 2, in particular, highlighted the importance **of collaborating with other stakeholders (such as IRENA and SE4All) to avoid redundancy.** Strategically aligning with these organisations can help enhance impact while streamlining the partnership's focus.

6.4 Survey with the LEAP-RE project management board

Following the stakeholder consultation in October 2024, a consultative survey was distributed to the LEAP-RE project management board in November 2024. The survey sought to gather insights on the future iteration of LEAP-RE.

Although the survey received only six responses (as of January 2025)—from consortium organisations LGI, DSI, POLIMI, DLR, and PAUWES—the feedback provided qualitative insights that add valuable depth to the development process. This section presents the survey questions alongside a synthesis of the responses received.

6.4.1 Commercialising research projects

Commercialising research projects: Participants of the stakeholder consultation emphasised the opportunity of advancing promising projects with TRLs to market. Suggested approaches include providing business modelling support, IP management training, finding private funding or investors, and proof-of-concept funding.

- *Do you agree that the partnership should focus on bringing high-TRL projects to the market?*
- *Please share any additional commercialisation support you think would be most effective for high-TRL projects (e.g., investor matchmaking, mentorship programs, tailored business development services) that the partnership could offer, and any other comments.*

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All respondents agreed that the partnership should prioritise bringing high TRL projects to market. One respondent highlighted the need for a "network of laboratories and research centres" to provide technological support, alongside business modelling and investor matchmaking services. Another respondent noted that high-TRL projects, typically at TRL 7 and above, "require less time and investment to transition into successful products or services," allowing the partnership to use resources more efficiently and deliver quicker returns on investment. It is important to note that certain funders may have restrictions on the TRL level of projects they can fund.

Suggested commercialisation strategies included proof-of-concept funding, mentorship programmes, tailored business development services, access to prototyping facilities, market research and analysis, customer engagement, navigating regulatory requirements, and IPR and licensing support. As one respondent explained, these approaches "significantly enhance the likelihood of successful market entry for innovative technologies" while mitigating associated risks. Another respondent emphasised the need to determine whether funding is available specifically for this task, suggesting that funded projects could benefit from financial support during their regular project phase to develop market strategies. Additionally, the importance of hosting international business forums in Africa was mentioned as a way to connect with funding stakeholders. Another respondent recommended profiling projects beyond LEAP-RE to attract private investment and broaden their visibility.

The importance of leveraging synergies with technology transfer officers in participating countries was also highlighted. Another recommendation was the combination of investor matchmaking and mentorship programmes, to connect the business community with innovative technologies.

The responses underscore the need for a comprehensive and targeted approach to commercialisation, combining technical, financial, and strategic support to bring high-TRL projects successfully to market.

6.4.2 Collaboration with other initiatives

The consultation participants suggested collaborating with established initiatives (e.g., IRENA, SE4All) to avoid duplicating efforts.

- *Should the partnership become a standalone entity, fully integrate with a broader initiative, or offload certain activities to other initiatives while retaining independence for specific core services?*
  - *A. Become a standalone entity (e.g., non-profit, foundation, public-private partnership)*
  - *B. Fully integrate with an existing initiative (e.g., AFREC African Energy Commission)*
  - *C. Offload certain activities to other initiatives and remain standalone for key services*

Out of the six respondents, two respondents chose the option to become a standalone entity, with one respondent emphasizing establishing MoUs with relevant initiatives, and the other suggesting a foundation or NGO, as "foundations…can play an important role in bringing together several types of partners under a less "divisive" umbrella".

One respondent chose the option to fully integrate with an existing initiative. Three respondents chose the option to offload certain activities to other initiatives while remaining standalone for key services.

If you selected Option C:

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- *Which services or activities from the LEAP-RE service package could be effectively integrated with existing initiatives?*
- *Which services or activities should be retained by the future partnership? Please feel free to share any additional feedback.*

Respondents provided insights into which LEAP-RE services could be integrated with existing initiatives and which should be retained by the future partnership. Suggested services for integration included **thematic clusters** (peer discussions on specialised topics), **acceleration services** (translating research into marketable solutions), and **twinning and teaming** (facilitating transnational mobility). These activities were identified as areas where leveraging resources and expertise from established initiatives could enhance efficiency and avoid duplication.

In terms of retained services, respondents emphasised the importance of maintaining independence for core functions critical to LEAP-RE's mission. As one respondent noted, "Maintaining a balance between integration and independence is crucial for the partnership's effectiveness." Key areas to be retained include **long-term funding mechanisms**, **expanding the pool of funders**, and **scaling-up relevant projects**. Another suggestion was for the partnership to act as a "startup studio" for sustainable energy projects, fostering innovation between the AU and EU.

Overall, respondents highlighted the need for strategic collaboration that creates synergies and optimises resource allocation, while ensuring LEAP-RE retains its unique value proposition and mission-critical activities. Policy dialogue, for instance, was suggested as a domain better suited to initiatives like the African-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP), allowing LEAP-RE/SE to focus on funding and scaling impactful projects (via a startup studio, for example).

6.4.3 Funding sources

Diversifying funding sources: The stakeholder consultation highlighted the need to diversify funding beyond the European Commission and national funding agencies. Alternative sources could include private investments, financing from development banks (e.g., African Development Bank, European Investment Bank), philanthropic contributions, and membership models.

- *Which of these funding sources should be prioritized? (Select all that apply)*
  - *Private investments*
  - *Development banks (e.g., African Development Bank, European Investment Bank)*
  - *Philanthropic contributions*
  - *Venture capital and angel investors*
  - *Membership models (e.g., paid consortium membership)*
  - *Other*

Figure 5: Funding sources

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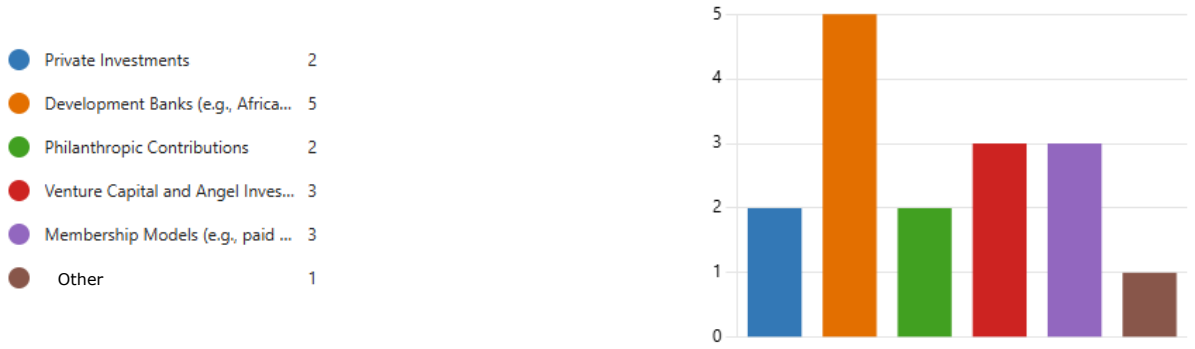

The most selected funding source was development banks, chosen by five respondents. Venture capital and angel investors, and membership models, tied as the next most selected options, each receiving three votes. Private investments, and philanthropic contributions, were selected by two respondents each. One respondent suggested EU funds under the "Other" category.

What specific actions would you recommend to attract these new funding sources? Please feel free to share any additional feedback.

Respondents provided a range of suggestions for attracting new funding sources. One emphasised the importance of showcasing the LEAP-RE/SE portfolio through demo days at high-level policy events, such as the AU-EU Summit, to engage potential funders and demonstrate impact. Another respondent recommended focusing on pitching projects and their potential impact directly to funders to build interest and secure investment. Another respondent suggested sharing LEAP-RE success stories and demonstrate tangible benefits to potential investors.

A more comprehensive list of strategies included building relationships with development banks, networking with private investors and venture capitalists, exploring niche philanthropic institutions and investor communities, as well as smaller family firms, beyond Europe, and creating a membership model.

Overall, the feedback highlights the need for targeted outreach strategies, including direct engagement through events and personalised pitches, to effectively attract and diversify funding sources.

6.4.4 Future involvement and additional feedback

Future involvement: Are you prepared to engage in the future partnership? If yes, please specify the type(s) of commitment you are willing to make:

- *Financial resources (e.g., membership fees)*
- *In-kind contributions (e.g., expertise, access to facilities)*
- *Other (please specify)*
- *Not interested at this time*

Figure 6: Future involvement

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Five respondents expressed their willingness to engage in the future partnership through **in-kind contributions**. Three respondents selected **financial resources**, and one respondent selected "other" but did not specify anything.

Do you have any suggestions for the name of the future partnership? (that builds on LEAP-RE and LEAP-SE activities)

Respondents provided the following suggestions for the name of the future partnership:

- LEAP-JET (Long-term EU-AU Partnership - **Just Energy Transition**)
- The AU-EU Joint Partnership for a **Just Energy Transition**
- The AU-EU Joint Partnership for **Sustainable Energy Futures**
- **LEAP Energy**
- Africa-Europe **Sustainable Energy** Partnership (AESEP)
- Retaining the current name, **LEAP-SE**.

Please share any additional comments, concerns, or suggestions regarding the future partnership.

Respondents provided thoughtful feedback on priorities for the future partnership. One emphasised the importance of a **structured selection of competencies** based on each partner's goals and roles to create an efficient and effective partnership that can move quickly and deliver results.

Another respondent highlighted the need to better **align with DG INTPA** initiatives, particularly the Global Gateway and Team Europe, to leverage synergies with ongoing EU-African collaborations.

Lastly, it was suggested that the future partnership should prioritise **supporting projects towards market readiness** and serve as a bridge between projects and potential funders. Facilitating **collaboration among existing projects** was also seen as critical to maximising the partnership's impact.

Another raised concerns about **dependence on external funding**, noting the risks associated with changes in funding availability or priorities. To address this, they recommended developing a **sustainable financial model** with diverse revenue streams.

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement 963530.

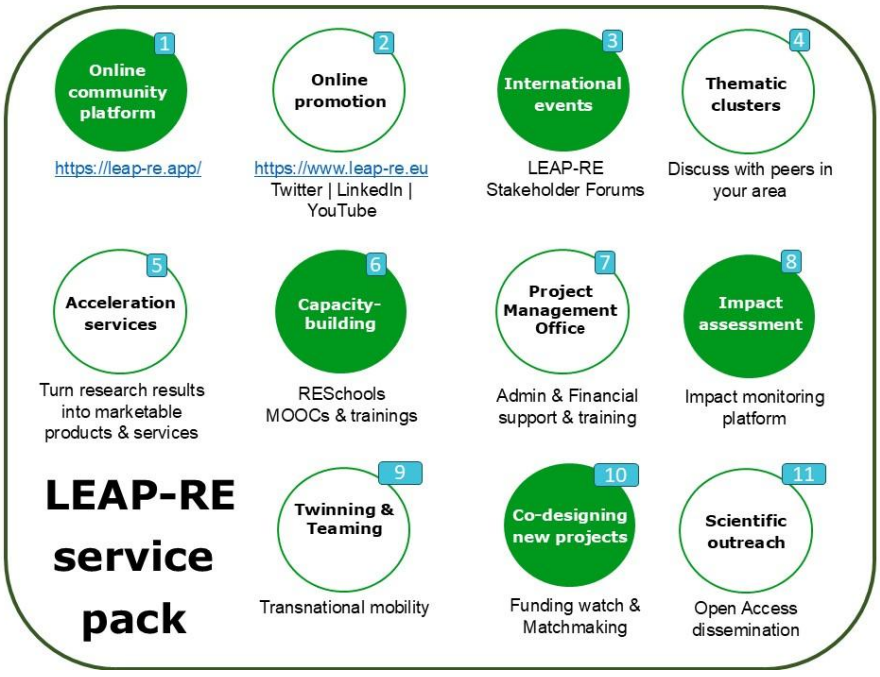
7. Services

This chapter details the range of services LEAP-RE offers to support research, innovation, and stakeholder engagement. These include a growing online platform with over 1,300 users, promotion through events and media, and capacity-building programs like Renewable Energy Schools. Additional services such as project management, impact assessment, twinning, and acceleration help bridge the gap between research and market.

This section provides an overview of LEAP-RE's current services, assessing their relevance and effectiveness. It examines which services could be continued in the future iteration of LEAP-RE. The section also identifies potential new services that could be developed based on emerging needs, opportunities, and the expertise within the LEAP-RE consortium.

LEAP-RE offers a comprehensive suite of services designed to support a diverse range of stakeholders to advance renewable energy solutions.

Figure 7: LEAP-RE service pack



7.1.1 Online community platform

The LEAP-RE online community platform is a central space for sharing resources, exchanging information, and networking. It includes features like topic-specific groups (channels), the ability to post messages and comments, an events calendar, a user directory, and a shared repository for documents and resources. These tools help peers in renewable energy connect and collaborate effectively. As of 17 March 2025, there were 2,413 users on the platform, among which 682 are "contractual stakeholders" (have a link with a LEAP-RE/LEAP-SE partner) and 980 are "simple users" (no link with a LEAP-RE/LEAP-SE partner). The rest are platform administrators.

There has been significant year-over-year growth from 2023 to 2024, with total registrations more than doubling. Progression through 2024 was uneven, and significantly lower in Q3, possibly due to the seasonal effect of summer break. The registration activity

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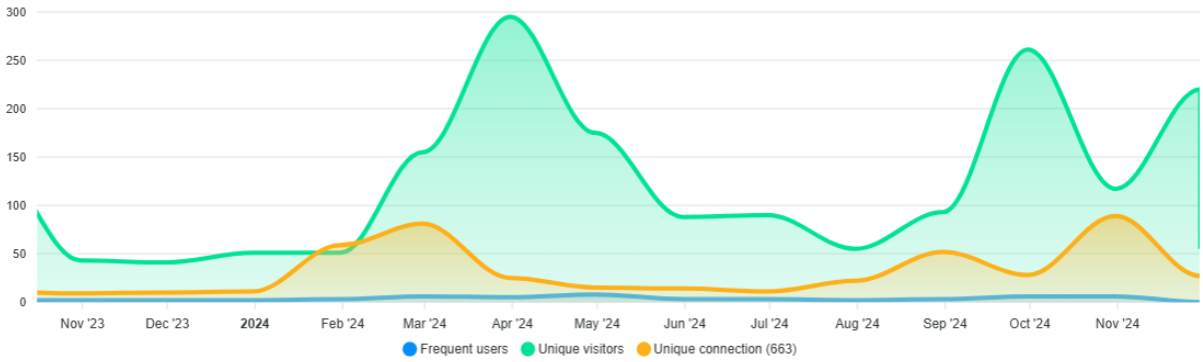
shows seasonal patterns with peaks in spring and year-end. Registrations as of early January 2025 suggest a continued growth.

Figure 8: Traffic data of LEAP-RE platform, November 2023-November 2024



Recommendations: The platform has strong potential and should continue as a central tool in the future. The development of a mobile app is recommended to improve accessibility and encourage even greater usage.

7.1.2 Online promotion

LEAP-RE enhances visibility through its website and active social media presence on X, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Connections to the LEAP-RE website have been growing since 2020:

Figure 9: Visits to the LEAP-RE website

Time period	Total visits
2020	25,640
2021	32,206
2022	28,062
2023	37,988
2024	46,765
January 2020-December 2024	170,161

LEAP-RE's podcast series highlights key initiatives and success stories, reaching diverse audiences to promote renewable energy solutions. Four podcast episodes have been produced, with a total of 679 downloads recorded between June and November 2024. The top 10 countries for downloads are led by France with 287 downloads, followed by Kenya (97), the United States (65), Belgium (23), Italy (17), Germany (16), Algeria (16), Rwanda (15), and both Spain and South Africa with 14 downloads each.
As of 13 March 2024, LEAP-RE's LinkedIn account has 2,944 followers. From March 2024-February 2025, its LinkedIn activity has generated 103,751 impressions, 2,329 reactions, 12 comments, and 25 reposts. Additionally, the LEAP-RE newsletter has 1,741 subscribers.

Recommendations: LEAP-RE's online presence has been effective in increasing the visibility of the project and showcasing its successes, while also engaging stakeholders through the website, social media, newsletters, and podcasts. These efforts should

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continue, with opportunities to create content that further highlights success stories and impact of projects on rural and urban communities.

7.1.3 International events

The annual Stakeholder Forums (Nairobi, Pretoria, Kigali, and Milan) have been impactful in fostering dialogue and strategic alignment among diverse stakeholders. The Forum has been organised in 2021 for the first time and then took place on an annual basis, involving 750+ participants since 2021. In 2024 the Forum, hosted at Politecnico di Milano in Italy and online, attracted over 380 participants from government, academia, and industry.

Recommendations: For the future iteration, align these events with other high-level gatherings (e.g., AU Summit) to maximise reach and align with global and regional policy agendas.

7.1.4 Trainings and capacity building

Capacity building initiatives, such as Renewable Energy Schools (RESchools), online videos, and technical training sessions, provide valuable opportunities for skill development. These programmes are particularly aimed at academics, graduate students, and researchers, equipping them with the knowledge and expertise needed to advance renewable energy technologies and solutions. Three RESchools have been organised, gathering 150+ participants (91 women). 57 participants have completed the sessions and certificates of attendance have been awarded.

Recommendations: Collaborate with other projects, networks, and initiatives to create synergies and broaden the reach and impact of capacity-building efforts. Improve the knowledge repository especially on capacity building activities and materials. Continue organising RESchools, technical training sessions, and adding resources to the LEAP-RE platform's knowledge repository, to foster bi-continental exchange.

7.1.5 Project management office

The project management office offers administrative and financial support to beneficiaries, including training and cascade funding distribution. This service ensures smooth project implementation and compliance with funding requirements. Two online trainings have been delivered, gathering 100+ consortium members.

Recommendations: Continue developing robust project management systems to support effective implementation and compliance. Depending on the future entity type of LEAP-RE, the project management function may need to transition (e.g., secretariat, …) to align with the entity type.

7.1.6 Impact assessment

LEAP-RE has paused the development of an impact monitoring platform to evaluate project contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While progress has been made, additional resources are required to advance this work. By 2026, the platform will help measure the effectiveness and long-term outcomes of the funded projects, providing valuable insights into their societal and environmental impacts.

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Recommendations: Resume development once new funding has been secured. Explore the opportunity to develop an impact assessment platform that can be utilised not only by LEAP-RE but also by other projects of DG RTD's and the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency's (CINEA) portfolio. Determine the potential for incorporating additional indicators beyond SDGs to address stakeholder needs.

7.1.7 Twinning and teaming

LEAP-RE has fostered long-term collaboration between African and European institutions, providing a strong foundation for joint research and shared decision-making.

Recommendations: Further expand efforts to foster these transnational collaborations and strengthen partnerships with initiatives like Erasmus+ and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) to enhance mobility and collaboration opportunities.

7.1.8 Thematic clusters, peer-to-peer activities, and co-designing new projects

Thematic clusters enable focused collaboration by connecting projects and stakeholders working on shared topics, such as energy storage, clean cooking, and off-grid solutions. These clusters foster deeper exchanges of information and insights, promoting a detailed understanding of common challenges and opportunities. 20 workshops took place between 2020 and 2024 (online and in person) organised around these clusters, often in partnership with other renewable energy organisations and initiatives.

The partnership supports co-design of new projects through a funding watch (launched in March 2025) on the platform, enabling users to search for grants and calls. Matchmaking features allow researchers and peers to initiate discussions and form collaborations for future opportunities.

Recommendations: After 4+ years of regular, multi-channel mobilisation of the LEAP-RE AU/EU community of researchers and innovators, it is vital to **capitalise on the existence of this network.** The LEAP-RE community has made significant progress in fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among quadruple helix stakeholders. LEAP-RE has organised 20 online events and peer-to-peer activities. Additionally, four high-level policy forums have been held, featuring activities such as innovation camps, pitching sessions, and networking.

- Looking forward, the next phase of community management will focus on creating a **network of local communities and entrepreneurs to maximise the impact of LEAP-RE's research initiatives.** Efforts will continue to convert this platform into a single-entry point that will serve both as a resource centre for sustainable energy research and innovation and as a matchmaking and teaming platform for future opportunities (Horizon Europe calls, LEAP-SE, etc.)This network will act as a bridge between research outputs and real-world applications, enabling the **piloting of research projects in local settings** and the **scaling of mature innovations from lab to market.** By engaging local communities, this initiative will ensure that research projects address specific needs and contexts, increasing their feasibility and relevance.

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- A **comprehensive mapping of existing collaborations** beyond the research community can be undertaken, with a focus on EU-funded projects addressing AU-EU green energy initiatives. This initiative aims to identify synergies, strengthen networks, and enhance the alignment of research outputs with practical applications. Additionally, targeted efforts will be made to facilitate opportunities for stakeholders to connect and collaborate, enabling them to jointly respond to project calls.

- Continue developing the platform's capability to facilitate **matchmaking** (for LEAP-SE calls but also other funding opportunities). Continue **developing funding watch** feature of the platform.

7.1.9 Scientific outreach

LEAP-RE emphasises open-access dissemination to ensure broad sharing of scientific findings. This outreach promotes transparency and accessibility, contributing to the advancement of renewable energy knowledge globally. In terms of scientific dissemination, 81 publications have been issued as of July 2024 within LEAP-RE.

Recommendations: Continue efforts to promote open-access dissemination as more projects are funded through LEAP-SE and related initiatives.

7.1.10 Acceleration services

LEAP-RE's acceleration services aim to support the transition of research into marketable solutions. While still in the early stages, this has included an assessment of the most mature projects in LEAP-RE's portfolio, with 8 selected projects that pitched their concept and fundings needs at an innovation camp in October 2024. The following criteria have been used for the assessment:

- Technology Readiness Level (TRL): Prioritised projects closer to commercialization;
- Commercial readiness: Projects ready or nearly ready for market introduction were favoured;
- Funding needs: Projects with minimal remaining funding requirements indicated higher maturity;
- Market relevance: Addressing significant pain points with a clear target audience;
- Partnerships and collaboration: Established partnerships indicated industry support;
- Innovation and scalability: Potential for significant impact and growth;
- Unique value proposition: Projects offering unique solutions stood out.

31 projects initially identified have been contacted for participation in the Go-to-Market (GTM) assessment. 21 projects responded, providing a 68% response rate—a solid indication of engagement across the project teams.

The need for targeted support to transition innovations from the lab to the market has been clearly demonstrated through stakeholder insights and survey results. A 2024 survey conducted by LEAP-RE work package 4, gathering responses from 21 out of 31 funded projects, identified key gaps:

- **Funding and investment (15 responses):** Projects require financial resources to advance through later development stages.
- **Business development and strategy (13 responses):** Robust business models, scaling strategies, and market entry plans are needed.

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- **Partnerships and collaborations (9 responses):** Strengthened networks are essential for co-development and market access.
- **Market research and validation (8 responses):** Tailored market insights are crucial for adapting innovations to real-world demands.
- **Support services and infrastructure (5 responses):** Technical and logistical support is vital for advancing project readiness.

The *Bridging the Gap from Innovation to Market*[18] policy paper addresses challenges that inhibit the effective commercialisation of innovative energy solutions. Insights were gathered through a survey distributed to 30 industry stakeholders and 60 researchers across 13 European countries, providing a detailed understanding of the barriers and opportunities in advancing energy innovations to market.

Key barriers to market uptake: Public-funded research projects play a crucial role in driving innovation and technological advancements in the energy sector. However, a common challenge is the **"valley of death" phase**, where projects struggle to secure additional resources for commercialisation and market implementation. This funding gap often hinders projects from progressing beyond initial research and development stages, limiting their ability to further develop, validate, and scale innovations for successful market entry. As a result, many promising energy solutions fail to reach their full potential, delaying their contribution to societal and environmental benefits.

The report also highlights regulatory complexity as a significant barrier, with burdensome approval processes delaying market entry and increasing costs. Simplifying these processes is crucial to enabling smoother transitions from innovation to commercialisation.

The survey results underscore the **importance of pilot projects and case studies, particularly in the electricity domain. Pilot projects were identified as the most effective strategy to overcome barriers to market implementation.** They provide opportunities to test and validate innovations, assess real-world performance, and determine market feasibility, helping projects navigate the challenging "valley of death" phase.

Additionally, the report emphasises the need for collaboration between industry and research institutions. Such partnerships accelerate the transfer of research outcomes into practical applications and foster supportive ecosystems for innovative energy solutions.

The report provides several recommendations to address these challenges:

- Enhanced funding mechanisms to bridge the gap between research and market readiness, including targeted support for pilot projects and commercialisation phases.
- Simplified regulatory frameworks to reduce administrative burdens and facilitate smoother market entry.
- Stronger public-private partnerships to integrate resources and expertise, supporting innovation at critical stages of development.

Figure 10: How can policy makers support the market uptake of research project results

[18] Directorate-General for Energy and CINEA, 'Bridging the Gap from Innovation to Market', 2024, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/89324d61-b6ac-11ef-91ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

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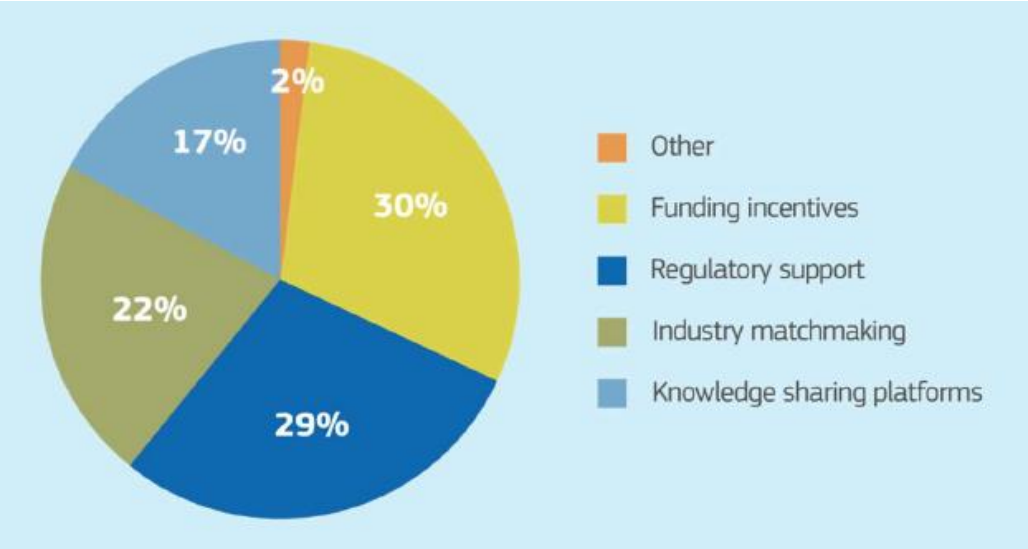

Based on results of a survey sent to 30 industry stakeholders and 60 researchers, from 13 European countries

By addressing these financial, regulatory, and collaborative barriers, policymakers can ensure that innovative energy solutions successfully navigate the "valley of death" and achieve their market potential, driving sustainable energy transitions and societal benefits.

Recommendations: Bridge the gap from lab to market

- Further exploit LEAP-RE/SE portfolio for growth assessment.
- Revisit benchmark on African accelerators conducted in 2022 to identify potential partners.
- **The need for lab-to-market support:** Stakeholder insights and survey results highlight **significant barriers to transitioning innovations from research to market.** Challenges include funding gaps, regulatory complexity, and limited partnerships. Pilot projects and tailored market validation strategies are recommended to **overcome the "valley of death,"** ensuring innovations reach commercialisation. Enhanced funding, simplified regulations, and public-private collaborations are key enablers.
- **Strategic assessment of growth potential:** LEAP-RE's portfolio includes 31 R&D projects co-funded by the EC, national funding agencies, and research and innovation practitioners, with 8 identified as most mature. Taking into account the larger community of EU-funded projects on green energy in Africa, as well as future projects to be funded under LEAP-SE, a cohort **of over 100 innovative ventures** may arise between 2025 and 2030.
- **Develop a startup studio: Following feedback from the European Commission, the future iteration of LEAP-RE should aim to bridge the gap between lab and market, and support R&D projects by bringing them to a sufficient maturity level to be connected with existing structures such as acceleration facilities.**

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8. Partnership scenarios and legal entity options

This chapter explores potential legal and partnership models for LEAP-RE's future, evaluating European partnership types and other legal entities. It reviews options such as institutionalised, co-programmed, and co-funded partnerships under Horizon Europe, as well as independent entities like non-profit associations, foundations, and private companies. A non-profit association is highlighted as a flexible, low-risk next step that can ensure continuity and stakeholder engagement. Lessons from initiatives like EDCTP suggest that gradual evolution toward more formal structures can support long-term sustainability and impact.

As LEAP-RE currently operates under a GA, consortium members must decide whether to formalise its structure to ensure continued operations beyond 2026. If the decision is made to sustain LEAP-RE's activities, it will be necessary to establish a more formalised structure, potentially taking the form of a partnership or other legal entity.

This section provides an overview of the different partnership options and legal entity types available for formalising LEAP-RE. These include various partnership models such as European Partnerships under Horizon Europe, as well as non-partnership legal entities like associations, foundations, or private companies.

8.1 European Partnerships

European Partnerships are initiatives in which the EU Commission and private and/or public partners commit themselves to jointly support the development and implementation of a R&I programme. They make a significant contribution to achieving the EU's political priorities, such as the Green Deal, Europe's digital strategy or pandemic preparedness. European R&I partnerships shall furthermore develop the European Research Area (ERA), overcome the fragmentation of the R&I landscape, avoid duplication with national or regional research activities and promote competitiveness and innovation[19]. Under Horizon Europe, European Partnerships can take on different forms:

- Institutionalised partnerships: the most complex
  - Based on Article 185
  - Based on Article 187
  - EIT-Knowledge and Innovation Communities
- Co-programmed partnerships, based on a Memorandum of Understanding. These are the simplest to prepare and implement.
- Co-funded partnerships, based on a programme of co-fund actions

The next Framework Programme for R&I is currently referred to as FP10 and is due to start in January 2028. Discussions have already begun on how it should shape European funding for research, technology and innovation. Different shapes of European Partnerships may be applied in the next Framework Programme (see for more detail 7.1.2.).

[19] ERA LEARN, European Partnerships, n.d., https://www.era-learn.eu/partnerships-in-a-nutshell/european-partnerships.

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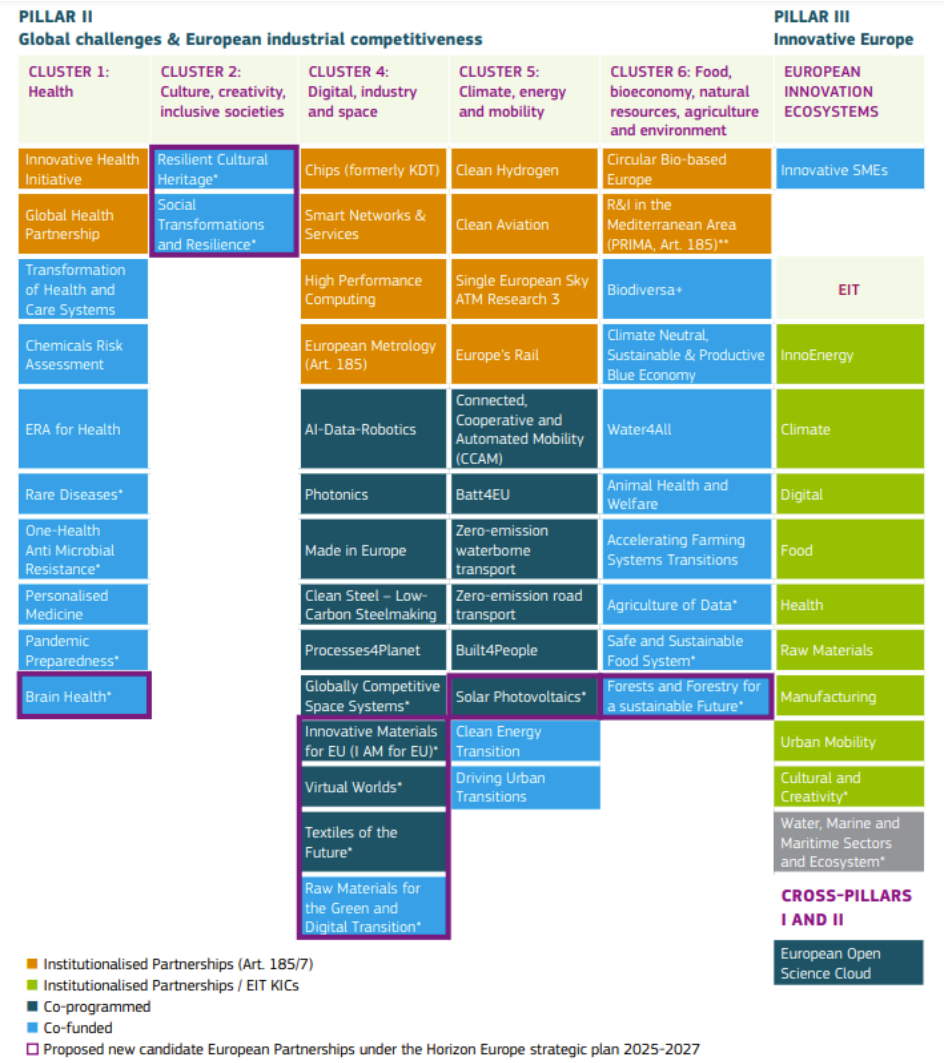
The European Partnerships portfolio currently includes 49 Partnerships, as part of the first Strategic Plan of Horizon Europe (2021-2024), and nine Partnerships as part of the second Strategic Plan (2025-2027).[20]

Figure 11: European partnerships portfolio[21]



[20] ERA Learn, 'European Partnership Portfolio', n.d., https://www.era-learn.eu/partnerships-in-a-nutshell/european-partnerships/european-partnership-portfolio.

[21] European Commission, 'Performance of European Partnerships: Biennial Monitoring Report 2024 on Partnerships in Horizon Europe - Factsheet', n.d., https://european-research-area.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024-11/performance%20of%20european%20partnerships%20biennial%20monitoring-factsheet.pdf.

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* Partnership not yet launched
** Direct continuation of a H2020 partnership

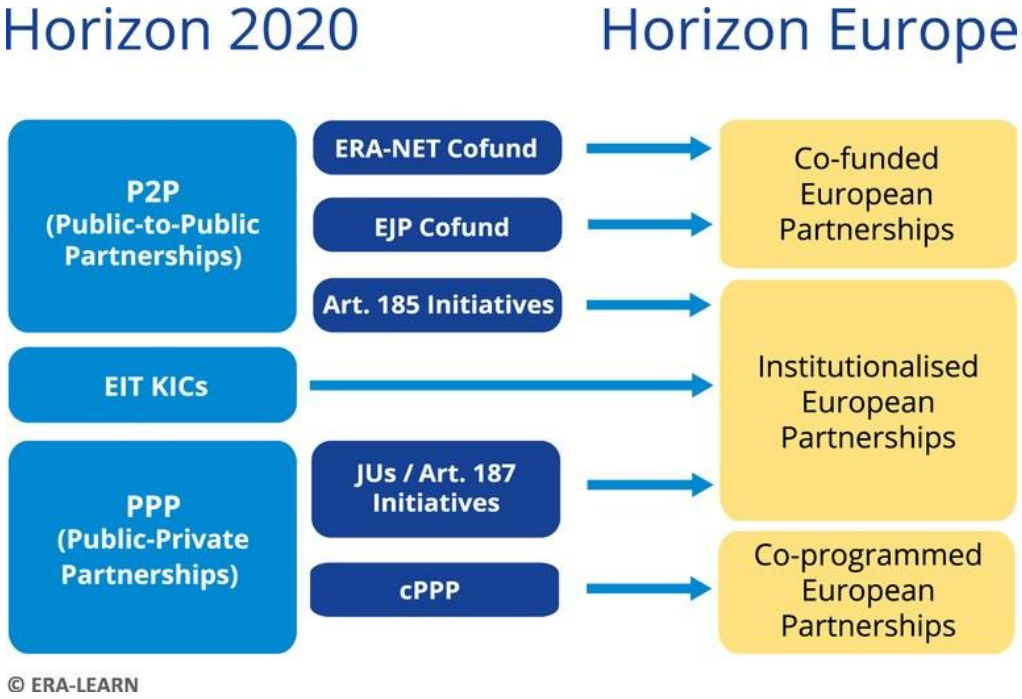
The BMR 2024 covers 43 partnerships officially launched at the time of publishing this report.

8.1.1 History and current partnerships under Horizon Europe

The European Partnerships in Horizon Europe are an evolution from certain partnership types in Horizon 2020. The Co-funded partnerships are successors of the European Joint Programme (EJP) Cofund and ERA-NET Cofund actions under Horizon 2020.

The graph below shows the transition of partnerships from Horizon 2020 to Horizon Europe. It is important to note, that existing initiatives and actions did not stop or change to the new format with the start of Horizon Europe.

Figure 12: From Horizon 2020 to Horizon Europe partnerships[22]



8.1.2 Changes with FP10

Looking ahead to Framework Programme 10 (FP10), set to begin in 2028, the European Commission has indicated plans to simplify the governance of partnerships. Early signals suggest a smaller number of partnerships under a simplified framework, as highlighted by Rosalinde van der Vlies, Director of the Commission's Clean Planet Directorate. She noted that partnerships will remain critical to EU R&I but will require streamlined governance

[22] ERA Learn, 'Types of Partnerships', n.d., https://www.era-learn.eu/partnerships-in-a-nutshell/type-of-networks.

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structures. Additionally, an expert group advising the Commission has recommended phasing out "ineffective" partnerships and enhancing the role of industry in steering collaborative R&I efforts.[23] The growing emphasis on programmes like the European Research Council (ERC) and the European Innovation Council (EIC) may also influence the future role of collaborative R&I initiatives.

In EARTO's analysis of the role and future of EU partnerships[24], they have indicated that co-programmed and institutionalised partnerships are the most effective instruments for linking EU Research, Development, and Innovation (RD&I) policy with EU industrial strategy. These partnership types have demonstrated the highest levels of industry participation in Horizon Europe, highlighting their strategic importance in fostering collaboration between public and private sectors.

Institutionalised partnerships, in particular, have shown a remarkable ability to leverage private sector contributions, often doubling or tripling the EU's funding. These contributions, whether in cash or in-kind (e.g., personnel costs, know-how, or equipment), demonstrate significant financial commitment and confidence from industry and research stakeholders in the value of collaborative RD&I efforts.

EARTO also points out significant challenges associated with co-funded partnerships, which depend heavily on national investments from Member States and Associated Countries. These contributions are often inconsistent and insufficient due to national constraints, complicating timelines, participation rules, and funding availability for beneficiaries. Addressing these issues is critical for the success of co-funded partnerships.

EARTO has outlined several key recommendations to improve the effectiveness of EU partnerships under FP10. First, it emphasises the need to strategically focus on co-programmed and institutionalised partnerships, as these models are most effective in strengthening EU industrial competitiveness and aligning with strategic goals. Second, EARTO advocates for a coordinated approach to managing the partnership portfolio to reduce duplication and foster synergies, thereby increasing the overall impact of these initiatives. Third, the organisation highlights the importance of reinforcing the policy advisory role of co-programmed and institutionalised partnerships, ensuring they provide valuable strategic guidance for the framework programme. Fourth, EARTO recommends simplifying administrative and participation rules to reduce burdens on stakeholders and encourage broader engagement. Lastly, it stresses the need to address challenges associated with co-funded partnerships by ensuring reliable and sufficient national investments while aligning timelines and participation rules to improve effectiveness and accessibility for beneficiaries.

8.1.3 Institutionalised partnerships

Institutionalised partnerships are between the EU, EU member states and/or industry, in the field of research and innovation. In order to be set up, they require legislative proposals

[23] Martin Greenacre, 'R&I Partnerships Will Have "Important Role" in FP10', *Science|Business*, 2024, https://sciencebusiness.net/news/fp10/ri-partnerships-will-have-important-role-fp10.

[24] EARTO, 'EARTO Paper on EU Partnershpis in FP10: How to Boost Future EU Public-Private Partnerships?', 2024, https://www.earto.eu/wp-content/uploads/EARTO-Paper-on-EU-Partnerships-in-FP10-Final.pdf.

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from the European Commission, based on a Council Regulation (Article 187), or a Decision by the European Parliament and Council (Article 185). A dedicated structure is created for the purpose of implementing the partnership. In addition, these partnerships are only created if other parts of Horizon Europe (including other types of partnerships) cannot achieve the desired objectives or expected impacts.[25] EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) are also a type of institutionalised partnership.

Institutionalized partnerships are to be **implemented only in the cases where other forms of European Partnerships are not considered appropriate to achieve the objectives or generate the expected impacts**, require the participation of at least 40% of the EU Member States, and if justified by a **long-term perspective** and **high degree of integration**. They usually cover very specific value chains, where a significant integration of private and public R&I efforts are needed to achieve the results of ambitious SRIAs.

8.1.3.1 Institutionalised partnership based on Article 185 and Article 187

An institutionalised partnership based on Article 187 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union is also known as a "joint undertaking" (JU).

Article 187 allows the EU to set up such a "joint undertaking" (or any other necessary structure) for the "efficient execution of Union research, technological development and demonstration programmes"[26].

For European Partnerships established under Article 185 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the EU, it is mandatory that at least 40% of the EU Member States participate.

Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 establishes nine JUs, as public-private partnerships, within Horizon Europe. The joint undertakings are meant to "strengthen and integrate scientific, innovative and technological capacities and collaboration", "enhance competitiveness, resilience and sustainability", "help achieve a stronger European research area", "secure sustainability-driven global leadership and resilience in important technologies and industries in line with industrial and small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) strategies, the European Green Deal, the recovery plan for Europe and other policies", "improve the uptake of innovative solutions, addressing climate, environmental, health and other global

[25] European Commission, 'European Partnerships in Horizon Europe', n.d., https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/european-partnerships-horizon-europe_en.

[26] European Union, 'Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Part Three - Union Policies and Internal Actions. Title XIX - Research and Technological Development and Space. Article 187 (Ex Article 171 TEC)' (n.d.), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12016E187.

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challenges", and "help achieve the United Nations sustainable development goals and climate neutrality by 2050, in line with the Paris Agreement."[27]

These JUs are set up for a period from 30 November 2021 to 31 December 2031, and are financed under the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework. They represent an investment of nearly €10 billion from the EU, with partners matching at least an equivalent amount. The 9 JUs are: Circular Bio-based Europe; Clean Aviation; Clean Hydrogen; Europe's Rail; Global Health EDCTP 3; Innovative Health Initiative; Single European Sky ATM Research 3; Smart Networks and Services; Chips.

8.1.3.2 EIT-Knowledge and Innovation Communities

EIT-Knowledge and Innovation Communities, also known as KICs, "aim to address skills shortages and are already established under Horizon 2020. Key partners in EIT KICs are higher education institutions, research organisations, companies and other stakeholders."[28]

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology runs the KICs which are Europe-wide networks that address specific societal challenges and are an integral part of Horizon Europe, in particular of Pillar 3 of HE (Innovative Europe). KICs aim to strengthen sustainable innovation ecosystems, promote entrepreneurial and innovation skills, support European universities to integrate entrepreneurial education, foster new solutions to societal challenges to the market, and create synergies within Horizon Europe.[29]

8.1.4 Co-programmed partnerships, based on a Memorandum of Understanding

The co-programmed partnership is between the European Commission and private partners (although sometimes public partners may be involved). It is based on a Memorandum of Understanding specifying the "partnership's objectives, the commitments from both sides and the governance structure."[30]

On June 14 2021, the EC adopted Commission Decision C(2021)4113, which approved 11 co-programmed partnerships that will run from 2021 to 2030, in order to boost investments in research and innovation, and contribute to the European Green Deal and Europe's Digital Decade policy programme:

- European Partnership for the European Open Science Cloud
- European Partnership for Artificial Intelligence, Data and Robotics
- European Partnership for Photonics
- European Partnership for Clean Steel – Low Carbon Steelmaking

[27] European Union, 'Public-Private Partnerships under Horizon Europe. Summary of Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 Establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe' (n.d.), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/public-private-partnerships-under-horizon-europe.html.
[28] European Commission, 'European Partnerships in Horizon Europe'.
[29] European Institute of Innovation and Technology, 'EIT at a Glance', n.d., https://eit.europa.eu/about-us/eit-glance.
[30] European Commission, 'European Partnerships in Horizon Europe'.

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- Europe Partnership Made in Europe
- European Partnership Processes4Planet
- European Partnership for People-centric Sustainable Built Environment (Built4People)
- European Partnership towards Zero-emission Road Transport (2Zero)
- European Partnership for Connected, Cooperative and Automated Mobility
- European Partnership for Batteries
- European Partnership for Zero Emission Waterborne Transport

The total commitments from Horizon Europe, private partners and member states amount to €22 billion. Horizon Europe funding represents €8 billion.[31]

The co-programmed partnerships are mainly implemented through the Horizon Europe Work Programmes and the calls for proposals, as the partnerships provide inputs on the relevant call topics to be included in the work programmes, and the grants that result from the calls are fully funded by Horizon Europe.

The private partners also develop additional activities which are not funded through Horizon Europe, but are included in the Partnership's Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas. These activities typically focus on market deployment, skills development or regulatory aspects.

Of the 10 new candidate European Partnerships under the Horizon Europe 2nd Strategic Plan 2025-2027, four seek the co-programmed partnership status as indicated in their draft concept papers:[32]

- European Partnership "Innovative Materials for EU" ("I'M for EU")
- European Co-Programmed Partnership on Solar Photovoltaics (PV)
- European Partnership on Textiles of the Future
- European Partnership for Virtual Worlds

Key advantages of co-programmed partnerships

Based on the draft concept papers of the four candidates for co-programmed partnership status, several key advantages and justifications emerge for this model of collaboration. These highlight the strategic benefits and operational strengths of co-programmed partnerships in aligning public and private sector goals, leveraging investment, and driving innovation.

- **Private investment mobilisation**
  - Co-programmed partnerships are particularly effective at unlocking private capital by aligning public and private sector goals under a shared research and innovation agenda. This approach ensures that private sector resources

[31] European Commission, 'Commission and Industry Invest €22 Billion in New European Partnerships to Deliver Solutions to Major Societal Challenges', 2021, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_2943.

[32] DG RTD, 'Co-Funded and Co-Programmed European Partnerships under the Second Horizon Europe Strategic Plan - Draft Concept Papers for Proposed Candidate Partnerships', 2023, https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/document/download/04162ca0-b5db-4773-bd47-d75ff1af1723_en?filename=ec_rtd_candidate-list-european-partnerships.pdf.

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are mobilised to complement public funding, amplifying the scale and impact of investments.
    - For instance: The European Partnership on Solar Photovoltaics underscores the critical need for private sector engagement to rebuild a competitive, innovative PV industry in alignment with the EU Solar Energy Strategy and REPowerEU.
    - The co-funded model is deemed insufficient, as it prioritises public resources, whereas co-programmed partnerships facilitate direct industrial investment across the value chain. Similar dynamics apply to other partnerships like Textiles of the Future, where private sector leadership is essential for boosting SME innovation capacity and achieving systematic deployment of solutions.
- **Flexibility and coordination**
    - A key strength of co-programmed partnerships lies in their governance structure, which balances flexibility and strategic coordination: The European Commission retains significant control over priority programming under Horizon Europe, ensuring alignment with EU policy goals like the European Green Deal. Private sector partners drive implementation, fostering responsiveness to market dynamics and ensuring efficient resource utilisation.
    - For example, the Virtual Worlds Partnership benefits from a co-programmed approach by engaging industry, SMEs, and research organisations in a way that optimises synergies and cross-sector innovation while maintaining high adaptability to emerging opportunities.
- **Scalability and impact**
    - By engaging industry stakeholders as primary partners, co-programmed partnerships are well-positioned to scale innovations and achieve substantial societal impact:
    - The Virtual Worlds Partnership aims to overcome ecosystem fragmentation by creating an integrated approach to innovation across diverse application areas, ensuring solutions transition from research to real-world impact effectively.
    - Similarly, Solar Photovoltaics leverages industrial resources to enable scaling across the full PV manufacturing value chain, meeting critical sustainability targets like those in the Green Deal Industrial Plan.

8.1.5 Co-funded partnership, based on a program of co-fund actions

The co-funded partnership involves EU countries, with research funders and other public authorities at the core of the consortium.[33] The current co-funded partnerships are (organised by Pillar and cluster):

- Pillar II: Global challenges and European industrial competitiveness)
    - **Cluster 1 – Health**: Health Assessment of Risks of Chemicals (PARC); Transforming of Health Care Systems; ERA for Health; Rare Diseases; One-Health Antimicrobial Resistance; Personalised Medicine; Pandemic Preparedness ()
    - **Cluster 5 – Climate, Energy and mobility**: Clean Energy Transition, Driving Urban Transition
    - **Cluster 6 – Food, bioeconomy; natural resources, agriculture and environment**: Biodiversa+; Blue Economy; Water4All; Animal Health and

[33] European Commission, 'European Partnerships in Horizon Europe'.

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Welfare; Accelerating Farming Systems Transformation; Agriculture of data; Safe and sustainable food systems

- Pillar III: Innovative Europe and cross-pillars
  - **European Innovation Ecosystems:** Innovative SMEs

Of the 10 new candidate European Partnerships under the Horizon Europe 2nd Strategic Plan 2025-2027, 6 seek the co-funded partnership status as indicated in their draft concept papers.[34]

Key advantages of co-funded partnerships

The draft concept papers for candidate partnerships under the second Horizon Europe Strategic Plan (2025–2027) outline several key advantages of the co-funded model:

- **High leverage effect**
  - Co-funded partnerships significantly amplify the impact of public investments by mobilising additional national and European funds. For example, partnerships like the European Raw Materials initiative have demonstrated substantial leveraging of resources.
- **Enhanced European and global visibility**
  - Co-funded collaborations provide a unified platform that elevates the profile of participants, enhancing their visibility both within Europe and internationally. This was evident in the European Partnership on Brain Health and the In-Orbit Demonstration and Validation partnership.
- **Resource pooling and synergies**
  - These partnerships enable EU Member States and Associated Countries to pool resources efficiently, aligning national and EU funding programs for greater impact. This approach fosters synergies and facilitates systematic responses to policy and societal challenges, as seen in the Forestry and Cultural Heritage partnerships.
- **Flexibility and long-term continuity**
  - The co-funded model offers the necessary adaptability to respond to evolving policy priorities and ensures the continuity of collaborative initiatives. This is particularly critical in addressing long-term challenges like climate change and the energy transition.
- **Focus on policy implementation**
  - Co-funded partnerships support the implementation of EU and national policies by fostering cooperation among public authorities, research organisations, and funding agencies. This alignment ensures the delivery of impactful R&I outcomes that directly address policy needs.

8.2Other types of legal entities

8.2.1 EEIG

The EEIG is a flexible legal partnership model designed to facilitate cross-border collaboration within the European Union. Its primary objective is to enable members to pool resources, share knowledge, and pursue common goals without creating a fully independent legal entity. This structure has been recognised for its simplicity and ability to coordinate efforts among multiple stakeholders.

[34] DG RTD, 'Co-Funded and Co-Programmed European Partnerships under the Second Horizon Europe Strategic Plan - Draft Concept Papers for Proposed Candidate Partnerships'.

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- **Advantages**
  - Ease of establishment: Minimal formalities required compared to more complex partnership models.
  - Collaborative framework: Supports shared governance while maintaining the independence of members.
  - Cross-border efficiency: Well-suited for EU-based initiatives that involve multiple countries.
- **Challenges**
  - Liability concerns: Members may face joint liability for the group's financial obligations.
  - Limited funding access: EEIGs may not attract significant external investments due to their collaborative, non-profit nature.

8.2.2 Non-profit association

Non-profit associations, such as **AISBL (Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif)** under Belgian law, are legal entities designed to facilitate collaboration between stakeholders for non-commercial purposes. These associations are well-suited for initiatives that prioritize knowledge-sharing, capacity building, and long-term partnerships without seeking profit as a primary objective. The AISBL model is widely recognised for its ability to foster collaboration among international or multi-stakeholder groups while ensuring a mission-driven focus.

- **Advantages**
  - **Mission-driven governance:** The non-profit nature of AISBL ensures alignment with long-term goals and societal impact over commercial interests.
  - **Flexibility in membership:** Open to diverse stakeholders, including governments, academic institutions, private organisations, and NGOs, fostering broad collaboration.
  - **Legal recognition:** As a legal entity, an AISBL can enter contracts, receive funding, and represent its members internationally, offering a robust framework for accountability and operations.
  - **Tax exemptions:** Non-profit associations often qualify for tax benefits, making them cost-effective for philanthropic or development-driven projects.
- **Challenges**
  - **Funding constraints:** The non-profit structure may limit access to significant private investments or commercial revenue streams.
  - **Administrative overhead:** Regulatory compliance, particularly in an international context, can introduce complexities and administrative burdens.
  - **Limited risk-sharing mechanisms:** Compared to models like PPPs, non-profit associations may lack mechanisms to distribute financial and operational risks among stakeholders.

8.2.3 Public-Private Partnership

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are structured collaborations between public entities and private organisations to achieve shared objectives. These partnerships are particularly beneficial for large-scale projects that require significant investment, leveraging the private sector's innovation and operational capabilities to complement public sector objectives.

- **Advantages**
  - Resource mobilisation: PPPs attract private sector funding, reducing the financial burden on public resources.

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- Innovation driver: They encourage the adoption of advanced technologies and methods, especially in high-tech sectors.
- Risk distribution: By sharing financial and operational risks between public and private entities, PPPs make ambitious projects more viable.

- **Challenges**
  - Complex agreements: Developing governance structures and agreements that balance public and private interests can be time-consuming.
  - Private sector dependency: Project outcomes may be influenced by market conditions or changes in private sector priorities.
  - Accountability issues: Balancing profit motives with public interest objectives can lead to misalignment in project goals.

8.2.4 Foundation

Foundations are independent legal entities established to pursue specific philanthropic, research, or innovation-related goals. They are typically funded through endowments, donations, or grants and operate under a board of trustees to ensure accountability and alignment with their mission. Foundations are particularly effective for initiatives that require stable funding and a dedicated focus on long-term objectives. **Res4Africa Foundation** operates as a leading platform to promote renewable energy deployment across Africa. The foundation focuses on capacity building, policy advocacy, and innovative financing solutions to address Africa's energy challenges. Res4Africa's success demonstrates the potential of foundations to foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders while advancing targeted objectives, such as energy access and sustainability.

- **Advantages**
  - Long-term stability: Foundations benefit from secure financial structures, such as endowments or recurring donations, which provide predictable and sustainable funding.
  - Mission-driven focus: This model ensures a strong alignment with defined goals, making it an effective choice for initiatives with clear and measurable objectives.
  - Enhanced credibility: Foundations often enjoy a reputation for integrity and professionalism, which can help in attracting high-profile partnerships and donors.
- **Challenges**
  - High initial funding requirements: Establishing a foundation typically requires substantial financial resources, which may limit accessibility for smaller initiatives.
  - Governance complexities: The need for a formal board of trustees and rigorous accountability mechanisms can slow decision-making and add administrative overhead.
  - Restricted flexibility: Foundations are bound by their charters and objectives, limiting their ability to pivot or adapt to evolving needs.

8.2.5 Private company

A private company is a for-profit legal entity that can engage in commercial activities while advancing research and innovation goals.

- **Advantages**
  - Financial sustainability: Revenue generation and reinvestment capabilities provide long-term viability.
  - Operational efficiency: Private companies can streamline decision-making and execution processes.

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- Attractiveness to investors: Companies are more likely to attract private sector investment and partnerships.

- **Challenges**
  - Profit orientation: There is a risk of diverting focus from societal goals to revenue generation.
  - Regulatory burdens: Private companies face stricter legal and financial reporting requirements.
  - Limited inclusivity: Stakeholder representation may be narrower compared to other legal structures.

8.3 Overview of legal entity types

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Table 6: Overview of legal entity types

Legal entity type	Description	Pros	Cons	Relevance for future iteration of LEAP-RE
Institutionalised Partnership (Article 185/187)	Partnerships between the EU, Member States, and/or industry, established via Council Regulation or Decision.	High integration with EU R&I goals, possibility to significantly leverage private and public funding. Long-term stability.	Complex to establish, requiring political backing and legislative approval. A partnership under Article 185 of the TFEU requires 40% participation of member states.	Not feasible for immediate needs. Consider only for long-term future iterations if significant political will and industrial backing are achieved.
Co-Programmed Partnership	Partnership between the EC and private/public partners, based on a Memorandum of Understanding.	Relatively simple to establish; possibility to mobilise private investment; encourages public-private collaboration.	Limited autonomy; closely tied to EU priorities; requires strong private sector participation.	Aligns with LEAP-RE's collaborative goals and supports increased industry involvement while maintaining EU alignment
Co-Funded Partnership	Partnership involving EU countries and other public authorities, relying on aligned national and EU investments.	Leverages national and EU resources.	Highly dependent on national contributions; variability in funding and participation rules.	Viable for continuity but requires careful management of national commitments. Useful if funding variability can be mitigated; less effective for private sector engagement
EIT-Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC)	A network addressing societal challenges, part of Horizon Europe's Pillar 3.	Strong focus on skills and innovation; access to EU funding.	Requires integration into the EIT ecosystem; limited to specific thematic areas.	Moderate relevance: Offers access to innovation ecosystems but may limit flexibility and scope for LEAP-RE. Consider identifying potential collaborations with existing KICs (such as the Sustainable Energy KIC). Focus seems more on European context

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Non-Profit Association	Independent legal entity with governance defined by members, often used for public interest initiatives.	Easy to establish and manage. Opportunity to broaden stakeholder representation, including industry. Possibility to have members from different countries.	May lack visibility compared to formal EU partnerships. Requires robust fundraising mechanisms/funding sources.	High relevance: Can act as an intermediary step toward future European partnerships while offering operational flexibility and autonomy. Practical option for near-term implementation
Foundation	Independent legal entity managing funding for philanthropic or research purposes.	Mission-driven focus and strong governance can enhance credibility, attracting high-profile donors and partnerships	Need to ensure stable sources of funding	More appropriate for niche or specific philanthropic initiatives rather than comprehensive partnership activities
EEIG	A flexible partnership model for cross-border collaboration within the EU.	Effective for resource pooling	Joint liability concerns for financial obligations	Better suited for partnerships involving exclusively European partners
Private Company	A for-profit entity focused on commercial activities.	Revenue generation potential	Misaligned with LEAP-RE's public and societal goals	Low relevance: Could be useful for spin-off activities but not aligned with LEAP-RE's core mission of public benefit and R&I collaboration

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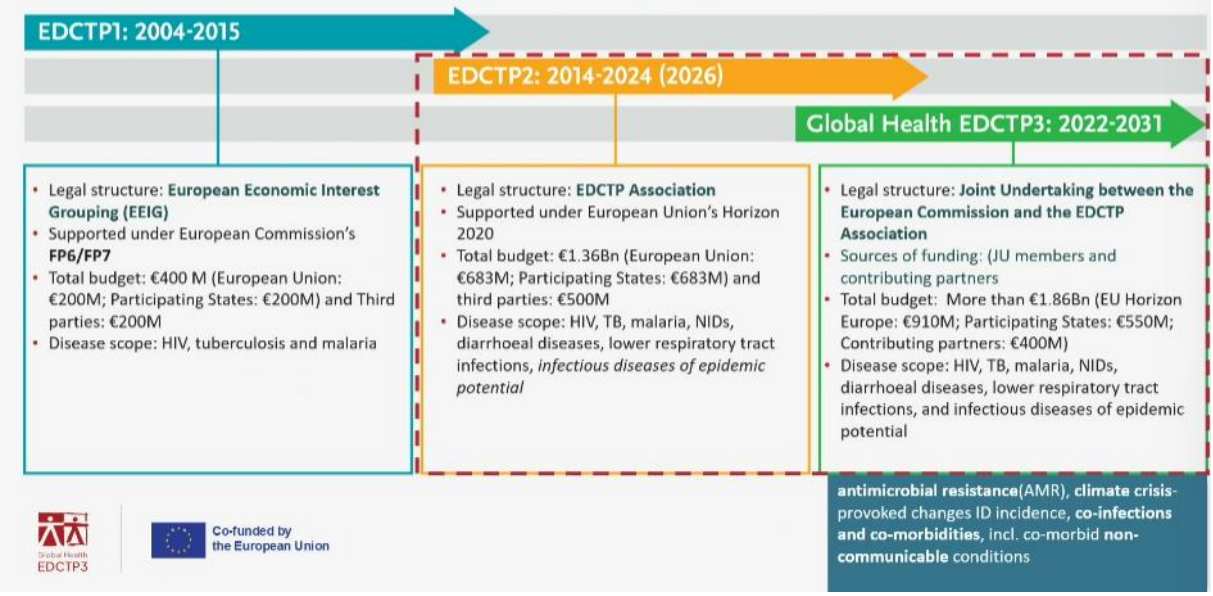
8.3.1 Insights from EDCTP: A model for evolution

The European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) provides an illustrative case study on how an initiative can evolve through different legal and operational frameworks to achieve long-term sustainability and impact[35]. Initially established in 2003 as an Article 185 initiative under the EU's sixth Framework Programme (EDCTP 1), EDCTP's trajectory highlights a strategic evolution aligned with its changing needs, funding landscapes, and policy objectives.

Figure 13: Timeline of EDCTP's evolution



In its early phase, EDCTP operated as a public-public partnership, bringing together EU Member States and African countries under a joint research framework to accelerate the development of clinical interventions for poverty-related diseases in sub-Saharan Africa. The governance structure emphasized collaborative decision-making, with shared leadership between European countries, the European Commission, and African representatives. This model allowed for coordinated research efforts but revealed limitations in operational autonomy and funding flexibility as the initiative grew.

Recognising the need for a more autonomous structure, **EDCTP transitioned into the EDCTP Association in 2014 (EDCPT 2). This step provided the initiative with a legal identity, enabling it to raise funds directly, expand membership, and formalise its governance while maintaining its collaborative essence**. The association format also allowed EDCTP to streamline its operations and prepare for future growth.

In its latest iteration, EDCTP became an Article 187 initiative under Horizon Europe in 2021 (EDCTP 3). As a Joint Undertaking, this institutionalised structure formalised governance and funding arrangements, allowing EDCTP to scale its activities, attract private sector partners, and align with broader EU priorities such as the Green Deal and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The transition to a Joint Undertaking represented a significant milestone, demonstrating EDCTP's capacity to operate at a larger scale while maintaining its focus on collaboration and impact.

[35] EDCTP, 'The Establishment of EDCTP', n.d., https://www.edctp.org/about-us/the-establishment-of-edctp/.

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For LEAP-RE, the EDCTP example underscores the strategic value of adopting a phased approach. Starting with an association as an intermediary step would enable LEAP-RE to formalise relationships and governance, consolidate partnerships, and prepare for a potential future transition into a more formalized structure, such as a European Partnership or a Joint Undertaking. The association would provide the necessary flexibility to respond to emerging opportunities, secure funding, and align with policy frameworks while preserving the consortium's collaborative spirit.

8.3.2 Forming a non-profit association as a next step

Establishing a non-profit association is a logical next step to ensure the continuity of LEAP-RE's activities and formalise the relationships built among its consortium members beyond the Horizon 2020 project. Transitioning into a formal legal entity will provide a permanent governance structure, allowing for ongoing collaboration, the ability to enter into contracts, and access to new funding opportunities. A non-profit association, such as an AISBL, is particularly well suited due to its flexibility in membership, enabling participation from a diverse range of stakeholders—including governments, academic institutions, private sector actors, and NGOs—across both Africa and Europe.

Compared to other legal entity types described in this chapter, an AISBL is a more practical option for near-term implementation; a partnership under Article 185 or Article 187 involves a lengthy political approval process and is not recommended by the European Commission at this stage. However, this structure allows for future evolution into a European Partnership if deemed relevant later on. For example, EDCTP successfully transitioned from an EEIG (EDCTP 1) to an association and later into a Joint Undertaking (EDCTP 3).

For the European Commission, the formalisation of LEAP-RE would capitalise on the initial funding provided under the Horizon 2020 project, building on its achievements and ensuring continued progress towards advancing research and innovation in renewable energy while strengthening Africa-Europe cooperation.

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9. Governance model

This chapter proposes a governance model for LEAP-RE's future, emphasizing inclusivity, flexibility, and stakeholder engagement. It recommends a structure without a physical headquarters in the short to medium term, relying instead on distributed coordination. A non-profit association model is suggested, with a general assembly, board of directors, and thematic working groups to ensure representation and responsiveness. The model is designed to balance operational efficiency with broad participation from African and European partners.

A robust governance model is essential for ensuring the sustainability, inclusivity, and efficiency of LEAP-RE's future iteration. It must prioritise balanced representation, stakeholder engagement, and operational adaptability while aligning with the initiative's mission to foster collaboration between Africa and Europe.

9.1 Principles for governance

No matter the legal entity type, the governance framework for the future iteration of LEAP-RE should adhere to the following principles:

- **Balanced AU-EU representation:** Governance bodies must ensure equal representation from African and European stakeholders, reflecting the bi-continental identity and shared ownership of the partnership.
- **Diverse stakeholder inclusion:** The governance model should include representation from academia, research organisations, private sector actors, civil society, and government bodies to provide comprehensive perspectives.
- **Adaptability and flexibility:** Governance must allow adjustments to evolving challenges and opportunities in renewable and sustainable energy sectors.
- **Policy framework alignment:** Governance should align strategically with policy frameworks such as the Global Gateway, AU Agenda 2063, and the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative.

9.2 Stakeholder involvement and community engagement

Stakeholder involvement and community engagement are integral to LEAP-RE's success. These elements ensure that activities remain relevant, inclusive, and impactful:

- **Broad stakeholder participation:** Include representatives from all sectors—academia, industry, civil society, and government—across Africa and Europe to ensure a comprehensive approach.
- **Community-centric engagement:** Incorporate mechanisms for communities directly impacted by LEAP-RE projects to provide input, fostering local ownership and relevance.
- **Advisory input:** Establish an External Advisory Board composed of stakeholders from policy frameworks (e.g., Global Gateway, Green Energy Initiative) and community leaders to guide strategic alignment.
- **Capacity building:** Enhance capacity for stakeholders to participate in governance and decision-making processes effectively.

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9.3 No physical headquarters in the short-to-mid term

At this time, it is not recommended for the future iteration of LEAP-RE to establish a physical headquarters in the short- to mid-term. Instead, the initiative will operate through a virtual platform for the following reasons:

- **Cost efficiency:** Avoids overhead costs associated with physical office spaces, enabling more resources to be directed toward project implementation and stakeholder engagement.
- **Flexibility:** A virtual setup allows for remote collaboration and adaptability to changing circumstances.
- **Inclusivity:** Ensures participation from stakeholders across diverse geographic locations without requiring significant travel or relocation.

LEAP-RE's **online platform** can continue to play a central role in facilitating communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing among stakeholders. This platform, developed during the current phase, provides a robust digital infrastructure for hosting virtual meetings, managing project workflows, and disseminating research outputs.

9.4 Proposed governance model for an association

As forming an association is the recommended immediate step for LEAP-RE, the governance structure should be designed to suit this legal entity. This may include the following bodies:

- **General Assembly**
  - Role: Serves as the highest decision-making body, responsible for strategic direction, resource allocation, and oversight.
  - Composition: Includes representatives from all member organizations, ensuring balanced AU-EU and sectoral representation.
  - Functions: Approves budgets, elects governance members, and oversees key initiatives.
- **Executive committee**
  - Role: Oversees daily operations and implements the decisions of the General Assembly.
  - Composition: Rotating leadership from African and European representatives, reflecting geographic and sectoral diversity.
  - Functions: Manages day-to-day activities, prepares policy recommendations, and ensures compliance with strategic priorities.
- **Scientific and innovation advisory committee**
  - Role: Provides technical and strategic guidance on research and innovation priorities.
  - Composition: Experts from academia, industry, and civil society with specialised knowledge in renewable and sustainable energy.
  - Functions: Reviews project proposals, identifies research gaps, and ensures alignment with global energy transition goals.
- **External Advisory Board**
  - Role: Aligns LEAP-RE's activities with major policy frameworks and ensures the initiative remains relevant to global and regional priorities.
  - Composition: Representatives from policy frameworks like the Global Gateway and Green Energy Initiative, as well as key community leaders.
- **Secretariat**

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- Role: Handles administrative, financial, and operational functions, supporting all governance bodies.
- Composition: Staff members with expertise in project management, finance, and communication.

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10. Recommendations

As LEAP-RE approaches the end of its current funding cycle, it is essential to adopt a focused and sustainable strategy that builds on its achievements while ensuring long-term impact.

10.1 Formalise LEAP-RE by establishing a legal structure

Per European Commission recommendation, given the complexity and time required to establish a European Partnership, **forming an AISBL association (international non-profit association under Belgian law) in the short term is a practical and immediate solution.**

An association would provide an immediate framework to maintain operations, continue collaboration amongst core consortium members, and secure additional funding opportunities in the interim. Quick to set up compared to more complex legal entities, it would consolidate relationships with current consortium members while allowing space to attract new stakeholders. By creating a single entity to continue LEAP-RE activities, an association ensures a sustainable mechanism to engage committed consortium partners and attract new members, fostering deeper collaboration between African and European stakeholders.

In addition, the association could serve as a platform to explore synergies with other initiatives (**via a Memorandum of Understanding**, for example). It would position LEAP-RE as a cohesive entity capable of applying for additional funding opportunities, such as Horizon Europe calls, grants, and sponsorships, while ensuring continuity beyond the end of the LEAP-RE funding period. **Establishing the association by Q1 2026 is recommended to prevent disruptions in LEAP-RE's activities post-2025.**

The association would also provide a stable foundation for maintaining core activities, such as thematic clusters, acceleration services, and project management, while collaborating with complementary initiatives, such as AEEP, for tasks like policy advocacy. This phased approach would allow LEAP-RE to build momentum, engage new stakeholders, and remain agile in responding to emerging opportunities. To reflect LEAP-RE's legacy and link with LEAP-SE Cofund, the association should adopt an overarching name. EC feedback indicated that LEAP Energy is too generic (and could include fossil fuels), and LEAP JET (Just Energy Transition) would cause confusion with aviation.

10.2 Align with policy frameworks and stakeholders

LEAP-RE must ensure ongoing dialogue with the European Commission's DG RTD, and engage in discussions with other relevant stakeholders (such as DG INTPA and JRC) and representatives of relevant policy frameworks such as the Global Gateway, AU Agenda 2063, and the Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative. Active engagement with political actors, funding agencies, and other stakeholders will not only strengthen LEAP-RE's role as a catalyst for systemic change but also help to understand their needs and objectives. This engagement will enable LEAP-RE to concretely discuss how its future iteration can effectively address these priorities and align with broader energy and sustainability goals.

10.3 Consolidate activities and focus on core services

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LEAP-RE should prioritise its unique strengths and focus on activities and services that are not adequately addressed by other initiatives or partners. This includes bridging gaps between research and market readiness. The future iteration of LEAP-RE should prioritise accompanying and supporting the portfolio of projects funded under the LEAP-RE programme and those expected to be funded through the upcoming LEAP-SE calls.

10.4 Develop lab-to-market support

A key focus for the future entity should be supporting high-TRL projects on their path to commercialisation. Establishing mechanisms to bridge the gap between innovation and market actors will enable the future iteration of LEAP-RE to drive tangible progress and foster sustainable energy solutions. In addition, the future entity should take into account the pipeline of projects that will be funded through the LEAP-SE Cofund, running from 2024 to 2030.

10.5 Engage similar initiatives

To position itself strategically, LEAP-RE should continue reaching out to similar partners and initiatives to identify areas of complementarity (via a Memorandum of Understanding, for example) and avoid duplication. Understanding where LEAP-RE can offer unique added value will enable the future iteration to focus on filling gaps and enhancing synergy with existing efforts.

10.6 Diversify funding sources

LEAP-RE should actively explore additional funding opportunities to ensure financial sustainability in the short, mid, and long term. This may include pursuing other private funding sources, engaging with private sector funders, philanthropic organisations, and blended finance mechanisms. Depending on the TRL of the projects, different funders will need to be involved.

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12. Annexes

12.1.1 Annex 1: Outputs of vision building workshop held in Nairobi, 2021

Group 1

Policy & cooperation

- Propositions to legislative documents & decrees by LEAP-RE to governments with deficits, especially in renewable energy (RE).
- Governments need to cooperate with LEAP-RE.
- Enabling off-grid legislative frameworks and frameworks for grid connection.
- Research policies and infrastructure are not conducive.
- Lack of political will; cooperation unlocks bottlenecks and fosters innovation.
- Policy needs to promote uptake of RE and off-grid systems.
- Just transition in introducing renewables as a socio-economic factor.
- Create synergies between work packages and develop new project propositions.
- Align with the EU-Africa Roadmap and Sustainable Development Goals.
- Foster co-creation of knowledge on renewable energy.
- Transform RE research into national policies.
- Support grassroots collaboration beyond institutional levels.
- Build North-South frameworks for cooperation for a Just Energy Transition.
- Identify synergies and concrete win-win themes to ensure long-term commitment.

Innovation

- Harness African innovation in renewable energy.
- Demonstration sites at local/regional levels for innovation projects.
- Increase interoperability and reduce costs.
- Develop joint research infrastructures.
- Promote flagship projects demonstrating co-innovation.
- Connect LEAP-RE projects with other tech communities.
- Leverage climate services for resilient RE infrastructures.
- Build industrial and manufacturing capabilities.
- Promote digital technologies in the RE sector.
- Establish matchmaking platforms to connect funders and innovators.
- Showcase innovation products and their integration into value chains.

Services

- Develop frameworks to support joint research infrastructure.
- Enhance visibility of innovation and research outputs.
- Build a "smart" repository of proven solutions.
- Provide tailored services: tech watch, innovation support, partner search.
- Launch annual prizes for innovators and startups.
- Maintain institutional commitments for long-term funding.
- Develop simulation tools for students and companies.
- Provide training on emerging technologies and social innovation.
- Create online platforms for community practices and idea sharing.

Community management

- Build a vibrant community of 83 organizations and 200+ researchers/energy professionals.
- Host general workshops and thematic sessions.
- Use social media to increase visibility of running projects.
- Create a LEAP-RE alumni network with official recognition.
- Develop interactive and inclusive formats for diverse stakeholders.
- Publish annual reports highlighting success stories.

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- Foster collaboration between universities, industry, and innovation ecosystems.

Sustainability/business model

- Plan for LEAP-RE's sustainability after the project ends.
- Create long-term funding mechanisms with funding agencies and investors.
- Develop an economic model to transform LEAP-RE into a sustainable platform.
- Promote institutional funding for key activities.
- Explore premium services such as tailored innovation support.
- Establish international laboratories and associations with LEAP-RE branding.

Impact

- Define key success indicators for LEAP-RE (e.g., technologies developed, rural communities reached).
- Increase private sector involvement in RE projects.
- Focus on socio-economic indicators like job creation and energy cost reduction.
- Promote RE solutions that demonstrate measurable socio-economic impact.
- Ensure end-user products are developed by large companies for scalability.
- Leverage flagship projects to achieve significant community impact.
- Raise awareness among stakeholders about RE implementation.
- Integrate and disseminate results across work packages to ensure legacy impact.

Group 2

Policy & cooperation

- Establishing a common understanding of stakeholders, necessary dialogues, and support required from the platform.
- Focus on inclusivity, transparency, and flexibility.
- Promote research-policy dialogue.
- Cooperation between countries can accelerate development by sharing knowledge and resources.
- Make multilateral cooperation a more prominent issue in the AU-EU HLPD processes.
- Use the cyclic programming approach as a basis for cooperation and development of services.
- Learn from shared challenges, including global warming, across regions.
- Emphasize joint efforts for making the planet safer.
- Policies should protect patents developed by African innovators and ensure recognition.
- Establish networks of innovation actors and connect innovators with decision-makers.

Innovation

- Involve SMMEs active in renewable energy (RE) and work with rural-area innovators.
- Co-develop an inclusive Knowledge Management and Communication Framework (KMCF).
- Foster meaningful clusters of knowledge, interest, and funding interactions.
- Provide dedicated funding for supporting innovation actions.
- Link innovators in RE with actors in other sectors, including food systems.
- Promote innovation hubs, TTOs, labs, and interfaces connecting innovators and funders.
- Increase capacity in renewable energy innovation and promote private sector inclusion.
- Establish mechanisms for networking with potential partners.

Services

- Functions to include:
- Co-development of program priorities.

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- Investment approaches and implementation.
- Knowledge transfer to practical applications.
- Application integration into societal systems.
- Develop a platform to facilitate exchanges between AU and EU actors.
- Provide structured coordination and networking between stakeholders, including NGOs/CSOs.
- Bridge gaps between R&I in RE and the AU-EU policy space.
- Offer support for conferences, summer schools, and communication.
- Create a service to build and manage clusters linked to other actors in RE.

Community management

- Build guidance mechanisms for cluster building and maintenance.
- Promote complementarity among work packages to avoid duplication of efforts.
- Profile projects online, at events, and in high-level meetings.
- Co-develop communication platforms with tools for chat, group discussions, and document storage.
- Include more journalists and experts in activities.
- Host biannual workshops for updates and discussions.
- Establish social networks and online communities for shared practices.
- Use smaller groups (e.g., by WPs) for better engagement.

Sustainability/business model

- Ensure developed instruments are open-access and not tied to specific organizations.
- Involve institutions that share LEAP-RE's values to maintain momentum.
- Develop a funders' network/cluster for sustained cooperation.
- Plan sustainability by defining clear platform goals and aims.
- Use business models from WPs to attract project investors.
- Ensure joint research grant applications and publications on geothermal and other topics.
- Establish tandem management teams (Africa/Europe) for platform operations with revolving leadership.
- Explore innovative funding approaches and involve African institutions post-2025.

Impact

- Define indicators such as the number of patented innovations, SDG targets addressed, and private sector involvement.
- Conduct community-level impact assessments to evaluate technology implementation.
- Develop KPIs collaboratively with scientists, funders, and end-users.
- Focus on job creation, quality of life improvement, and capacity-building opportunities.
- Promote active member states in the platform and measure their engagement.
- Highlight new projects established between LEAP-RE partners post-2025.
- Assess socio-economic impacts such as renewable energy share increases and community benefits.
- Test and validate appropriate business models for scaling solutions.

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12.1.2 Annex 2: Outputs of vision building workshop held in Pretoria, 2022

Group 1: Policy and cooperation

What are LEAP-RE's main policy challenges?

- Jointly meet the policy and global challenges
- To meet the IPCC 1.5ºC
- To meet the UE-Africa Roadmap on priority 2 from the HLPD
- How to ensure fair opportunities for African companies
- Develop opportunities at the continental scale
- Support "grassroots" collaboration, not just institutional
- The use of fossil, governments not willing to transition to RE. Lack of political will
- Defining the role of LEAP-RE and possibility to invest in AU countries with low income
- Policy needs to promote the uptake of renewable energy and off-grid systems. Just transition in the introduction of Renewables is an important socio-economic factor that cuts into politics
- To create a North- South framework for cooperation to contribute to successful and Just Energy Transition
- Maintain agency commitment to secure some level of institutional
- Policy challenge is to transform the RE research into national policies
- To meet the UE-Africa Roadmap on priority 2 from the HLPD
- Policy needs to promote the uptake of renewable energy and off-grid systems.
- Just transition in the introduction of renewables is an important socio-economic factor that cuts into politics.
- Identify Synergies and concrete win-win thematic areas and formats in order to ensure long-term commitment and activities.
- Understand needs in order to tackle jointly challenges and move into the right direction
- Convert LEAP-RE into a platform recognised as a stakeholder by multilateral organisations
- Propositions to legislative documents & Decree by LEAP-RE to governments having lack in this aspect (especially RE)
- Making multilateral cooperation a more prominent issue in the AU-EU HLPD processes (AU-EU HLPD SOM, Bureau & Working Groups)
- Creating successively a long-term Coordination infrastructure that is supported by the member states in the AU and EU
- Linking to the CCSE Partnership
- Some European Regions will meet same challenges of Africa in the next decades with global warming and there's a need to learn from each other
- Cofounding of projects to improve ownership in localities
- Open new business opportunities AU / EU
- Meet project objectives
- Support researchers in how to engage policy makers
- Tech transfer
- Access to patents

Why is cooperation necessary?

- Need for frameworks to support the build & operation of joint research infrastructures
- Do develop the interaction between different kinds of energy
- Increase the knowledge on several aspects technical economic societal
- Cooperation opens up the scope for innovation and may unlock bottlenecks
- Decrease the risk, as well financial, technological than societal

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- Foster the co-creation of knowledge on the topic of renewable energy addressing ongoing challenges faced by the African continent
- Governments need to cooperate with LEAP-RE program
- The use of fossil, governments not willing to transition to RE
- Cooperation opens up the scope for innovation and may unlock bottlenecks
- Exchange best practices on a regular basis as well as difficulties and hurdles in order to avoid same mistakes
- Strategic collaboration for long-term research agenda
- Synergies between WPs at mid-annual and creating new projects propositions
- Cooperation is necessary because each continent (AU/EU) have knowledge, expertise, added value to share to each other notably in the field of R&I in renewable energy
- Flagship projects to demonstrate the potential of co-innovation (Desertec as a counter-example)
- Develop joint programs to decrease the risk
- Establishing a common understanding and practice of clusters, cluster networks and cluster mechanism in cyclic programmes
- Making the cyclic programming approach the basis for the cooperation and the development of the services of the Platform and the coordination infrastructure
- Cooperation between countries is NB because it can accelerate development. Shared knowledge and resources = faster efficient responses to shared/global challenges.
- Multi factorial issues need cooperation to be mitigated
- Knowledge sharing strategies
- Synergies to access international infrastructures and build local infrastructures
- Increase links with other funding agencies
- Different legal procedures and policies among institutions, policy gaps

Group 2: Innovation

How to harness African innovation in renewable energy?

P1 & P2

- Demonstration on innovation projects demonstration sites at local/regional scale
- Building the capacity to leverage natural sources of renewable energy that may be a comparative advantage and ensuring that policy is an avenue to stimulate this
- Combining know-how and latest technologies with the knowledge of local realities and needs in order to develop best fitting innovation.
- Foster meaningful, effective and efficient clusters of knowledge, of interest, and of funders/investors and ensure their interaction
- Ensure knowledge management and communication in combination
- Involve local communities through involving local organizations to learn from themselves

WP4

- Raising awareness to citizens, program owners and program managers
- Country focus: Countries to present their endeavours in RE for using synergies and finding complementary actions
- Increase visibility: Running projects to be connected to community and to new projects
- Connect with existing tech communities
- Collaborate with impact finance to support scaling of solutions
- Develop link between academic and industrial/start-ups in Africa
- Link with established innovation communities on digital, raw materials, etc.
- Organization of workshops with universities and high school students
- Linking innovators in RE with food systems and other sectors
- Utilize innovation hubs and networks of innovation actors

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- Inclusion of the private sector means to focus on Innovation hubs, TTOs, labs and any other interface of innovators and funders/ investors and decision makers
- Link innovators with funders
- Organize bootcamps competitions on innovation
- Startups acceleration programs
- Make IRP support an element of the Platform's services
- Design thinking training
- Involvement of non-technical energy practitioners like lawyers, financial managers, invited in capacity building activities

WP5

- Change the mind set from African policy-makers
- EU-AU R&I collaborations should look into building long-term research platforms that allow co-learning and technology sharing
- Link LEAP-RE projects with ENRICH Africa Project dedicated to provide innovation services between UE-Africa
- Build an EU-AU innovation observatory on RE
- Foster cooperation between universities and stakeholders of innovation ecosystems
- Integrating large scale of Universities and start-ups to work about RE implementation
- Mapping: Common ground beyond funding…platform/format for presenting energy policies and understanding needs and stage of development in RE
- By considering each country assets and making scenario for production and consumption of RE (the mix of these REs
- Ensuring constant link between research and society, industry (citizen, start up, tec.) "out of the lab research"
- Link with the future Innovation Agenda (under the AU-UE cooperation)
- Involve SMEs are active in RE. Work with innovators who have developed tech that shows potential impact, esp. in rural areas.
- Co-develop an inclusive Knowledge Management and Communication Framework (KMCF)
- Establish policies that protect patents developed by African innovators
- Patents for African innovators / recognition, ownership of innovation
- Networking and kind of clusters of innovations
- Relations with AEIP
- Access to IPR knowledge, IP commercialization

WP6

- Building the industrial and manufacturing capabilities
- Tap into youth innovative potential in research
- Tap into the potential of digital technologies in the RE sector
- Develop official out-wall laboratories at UE-UA scale
- Capacity building in HE, changing the teaching practice to allow students/ researchers more agency
- Launch annual Prize for innovators/status
- Leverage climate services to design resilient RE infrastructures
- Provide funding that will solely go towards SMMEs in Africa, work with institutions such as AfDB.
- Dedicated funding for supporting innovation actions
- Sensitization and advertisement of available opportunities

Group 3: Services

What services and functions would you expect or like to obtain from LEAP-RE?

- To build in LEAP-RE website a tool where all the projects will be inserting the experiments/demonstration site and different countries

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- To provide all the innovation products produced under the LEAP-RE projects in the website linked with the geographic position and project
- Develop thematic actions : research networking, industrial applications, cofounding networks
- Replicating projects of WP in other WPs countries if possible
- The general workshops will be very important for allowing partners across projects and WPs to connect and synergise. Looking forward to this
- Guidelines related to different fields and why not having platform like GitHub with community to rely on them
- Different formats for different stakeholders, practical, easy to implement, interactive and inclusive dependent on the goal
- Exchange of information and mutual learning (trainings, summer schools)
- Planning of joint projects and activities (workshops, coaching)
- Strategic networking and decision making (advisory groups, policy recommendations)
- Develop a blackboard where collaboration proposition could be put and see by everybody
- Promote innovative activities in collaboration with big industrial partners
- Having web application (or phone application) to communicate about ideas in real-time without losing a lot of time in communication
- Give visibility to innovative project and matchmaking
- Build a "smart" repository of proven solutions
- Topical training e.g. on emerging technologies, social innovation, using climate data, etc.
- Services: successive co-development of a coordination infrastructure to support all actors in all 4 phases of a programme cycle of around 10 years
- Communication support for projects
- Funders network support
- Knowledge management support
- Match making
- Functions:
- co-development of priorities in programmes
- co-development of investment approaches and their implementation
- co-development of a valorisation approach to transfer knowledge into practice
- co-development of an application approach in societal systems
- Expect LEAP-RE to support and profile knowledge /innovations developed by African scientists
- Expect LEAP-RE to bridge the gap between R&I in RE and the AU-EU policy space
- Visibility of our solutions
- Influence Regulators
- Networking with potential partners
- A kind of platform which will facilitate exchanges between AU and EU actors
- To provide structured coordination / networking between key stakeholders within the AU-EU RE space, involve non-traditional actors such as NGOs/ CSOs, etc.
- Support in conference or summer school's organisation
- Better coordination Effective communication
- Transparency
- Prompt responses to inquiries or concerns
- Inter college and university scholarships and exchange programs, internships with institutions, organizations
- Interviews with end users on the products produced at the end of the project
- Media visibility
- Person of the month for LEAP-RE on website and on newsletters, EAB, SAB, etc.
- Advisory services to SMEs by LEAP-RE experts
- Linkages with other RE initiatives
- Subscriptions to: research journals, modelling tools, design software

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- Good practices and lessons learned from transnational call for funding organizations
- Innovation acceleration: innovators are linked to entrepreneurs to sell their ideas
- Thematically organized, cluster-based
- Capacity building of non-technical energy professionals on energy systems (lawyers, etc.)
- Private and public fundings
- Updating MARs for future applications in potential calls
- Legal understanding, advocacy
- Capacity building on energy modelling, programme management, project management, data science, data analysis, design thinking
- Intellectual property management

Group 4: Community management

How can a community of 83 organisations and more than 200 researchers/energy professionals be brought to life and animated?

- Building multifactor communities that are based on a quadruple helix approach
- Create an online community of practice platform
- Creating Newsletter periodically to update on progress and
- Having flyers with WP members and share them with all members
- Community building measures such as consultations, input gathering, joint exercises
- Social media for increasing visibility of running projects, events, results, Workshops, webinar series, dialogues on actual topics and thematic that are relevant to different communities, stakeholders, policy makers
- Annual or biannual general workshops in hybrid format
- Publish annual reports flagging success stories
- Community social network
- Community of LEAP-RE alumni (PhDs or postdocs in the project) with a official recognition
- Webinar workshops
- Developing jointly policy briefs/articles on given thematic
- Sharing ideas/ opportunities for funding
- Occurrence of workshops starting from bottom to top level
- Using an appropriate tool to gather everyone for exchange idea, capacity, etc.
- Project co-design application
- Enable individual contributions from anywhere to new projects
- Present each member's expertise
- Projects that are funded to be docked to national promotion activities, strategies and initiatives
- Cluster all EU & AU RDI projects in the field
- Guidance for cluster building and maintenance
- Guidance for cluster network activities
- Establish a common understanding of and co-development for cluster mechanisms
- Clustering based on specialization
- Create a service about how to build and run a cluster and how to link it to other actors (clusters) in the field of RE and beyond
- Co-develop communication platforms, including work spaces, while following social network principles
- Inclusion of actors in decision making processes, like the development of an TCIP
- Create a polycentric system of coordination hubs to have also local support
- Manage dedicated and specific working groups with shared objectives and planning
- The Scientific Advisory Board members also act as ambassadors for LEAP-RE, they could profile the projects in their respective networks, especially since they occupy positions in international institutions.

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- It would also be good to ensure that there are networking events between these researchers. Many of the past AU-EU initiatives have resulted in partners collaborating in other projects as well. Networking between researchers can lead to new non-LEAP-RE projects.
- Platform of communication with some tools like chat/ group discussions/ documents storage - Available at any time
- It is not easy. But the smaller groups created in terms of WPs will help in getting many of involved. Workshops will then be organised like twice a year for updates from the various groups
- Complementarity among WPs to avoid duplication of efforts
- Finance conjoint activities, such as PhDs etc. and let subset of the community supervise them. Ideally, a call for PhD for example
- Co-supervised PhDs / students to work together
- Communication - profile the projects online, at physical events and at high level meetings such as the AU-EU Summit, or the Africa Energy Forum. Some of the projects will be developing exciting tech which definitely needs to be profiled as much as possible
- Addressing journalists in a systematic way
- Social Media / engage with relevant people and organisations
- Involvement of private sector
- Media visibility, blogs, international press
- Conferences
- Broaden consortium beyond LEAP-RE
- Research journals or personal publication
- LinkedIn groups
- Social media, Twitter, Facebook
- Partnerships with organizations (discount on membership)
- Data dashboard (Power for AU)
- Incubation centre
- Entrepreneurship hub
- Cluster-based tailored interactions
- Frequent physical workshops
- Virtual meetings

Group 5: Impact

What are from your perspective the key success indicators for LEAP-RE?
Within Pillar 1?
Within Pillar 2?

- End-user products are promoted and built by big companies
- Number of people accessing energy
- That Research findings reach main stakeholders including government
- Pillar 1 through clearly defined indicators (e.g. technologies/services developed and deployed, IP registered from projects, number of rural communities reached) etc.
- Innovation products/ research products/ and how their integration in the value chain
- Involvement of governments in LEAP-RE projects
- LEAP-RE is a model for other fields of AU-EU cooperation
- Need for socioeconomic indicators (jobs, energy cost...)
- Number of researcher/student who participated in a research mobility at the end of the project
- Joint endeavours and strategic input for policy-makers
- Number of active partnerships
- Numbers of projects in preparation at the end of the program
- High education impact : Universities works with LEAP-RE case studies
- Project consortia and their long-term networks and follow-up projects

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- Higher and measurable socio-economic impact of RE projects
- Finding an economic model to pursue LEAPRE (demonstrates commitment)
- LEAP-RE contributes to accelerating RE / climate roadmaps in African countries
- Increase the number of funding agency willing to fund the programme after its 5 years of implementation in order to have a long lasting programme
- RE communities and regional outreach
- Innovations from LEAPRE have scaled
- Increase of private sector involvement in RE projects
- WPs Projects that result in on the ground changes for communities: e.g. RE infrastructure, with operational capabilities by the local community
- Increased wellbeing and reduced inequality
- Awareness of the society about RE solutions and their implementations
- Beneficiary communities livelihoods improvement
- Private investment to conduct industrial projects (e.g. geothermal)
- Increase on number of partnerships between actors in order to increase impact of projects
- New jobs
- Clean cooking technologies have a positive impact on halting deforestation
- joint vision
- ESG metrics
- P1 & P2 indicators for me are similar – the number of patented innovations funded in each Pillar, as well as the impact they reach.
- Pillar 1: -number of consortia funded - number of submitted proposals to see the impact of the calls of projects and if the communication works
- pillar 2 KPI on Renewable energy shares
- An agreed concept for a coordination infrastructure that could be implemented/maintained after the Project
- The SDGs that have been addressed with the activities (selection of SDGs and of their specific targets)
- Job creation Improved quality of life Private sector involvement
- Number of SMMEs/ researchers that have benefited from LEAPRE
- New projects being established between LEAP-RE partners post- 2025, based on the success of their engagements in LEAPRE
- It would also be good to assess impact at community level, once projects have concluded, conduct surveys in areas where the tech was implemented, see if community members derived any impact from it. (this is also for both pillars)
- Following the TCIP methodology, the success indicators should have been developed along the MAR, where the desired outputs, outcomes and impact has been defined. (Remark: KPI should be developed together with scientists and funders, and if possible with end-users of knowledge)
- Numbers of replications issued
- Capacity building opportunities and employment created under LEAP-RE
- Number of active Member States in the Platform
- Actual implementation and application of the research number of project
- Knowledge building
- Community skills on resources management
- Enhanced collaboration with pillar 1 projects
- Diversity of energy solutions in the project
- Funding for future projects
- Stakeholders responsive to resources management
- Number of new MSc /PhD students / scholars
- New consortia responding to other calls
- Community building between pillar 1 & 2 projects
- Clustering of thematic in projects
- Knowledge on geothermal potential
- Number of new projects launched
- Effective monitoring and evaluation models, umber of successful projects

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- Participants trained / sensitized
- Pitch contests in front of investors
- New skills developed through the project

Group 6: Sustainability/business model

How do we plan sustainability of LEAP-RE as a service platform after the end of the project?

- Cross fertilization with Enrich Africa project and with the future EUAfrica Innovation Agenda
- Workshop fees
- Premium services e.g. tech watch, innovation support, tailored partner search...
- Promoting Laboratories and departments labelled "LEAP-RE" to continue on roadmap plan
- Create a network platform to connect different actors and promote partnerships
- Create international laboratories with the Leap-re label
- LEAP-RE could become a shareholder in the start-ups it supports
- With outcomes on innovation new products
- Maintain the website
- Mapping all partners in different countries and facilitating collaboration after the project
- Creating simulation tools for students and companies to avoid material transportation of each field
- Transformation of LEAP-RE as an international association raisin annual fund and requesting membership
- Implemented by different agencies screening for Calls and investments (public, private
- Partnership and cluster of long-term funding by a consortium of funding agencies and investors
- Promote success stories to support long term financing
- Creating new trainings to be included as courses in the universities in order to update their program
- Institutional funding for specific activities (UN?)
- Different member categories to adapt annual fee
- On-demand training
- Creating training/ capacity building for the already existent companies, in order to share knowledge on social impact and innovative business models Create an international university named Leap-re
- Define the aims/goals of the platform, ensure it is clearly communicated to those that are within the LEAP-RE network.
- Ensure that you have the right stakeholders who have the same shared values. Involving institutions that do not share the same interests will make it difficult to maintain the momentum
- By addressing the cyclic programming approach in the discourse of the Au-EU HLPD for attracting funders to institutionalise the cooperation
- The funders network/ cluster would be key here, that's why the maintenance and services offered to funders for their cooperation are highly relevant
- With a clear definition/ business model' of which services the coordination infrastructure provides and to which functions in a programme cycle they contribute
- Build acceptance from stakeholders and funders Have tandems (Africa/ Europe) to run it, and tandems that change every few years
- Define who will run the infrastructure of the platform
- Make sure that the instruments that have been developed are not bond to a certain organisation but follow an open access approach

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- Ensure that the management of the coordination infrastructure/service platform will not become a domain of one organisation but will be run in a system of revolving partners who coordinate the platform for a certain limited time.
- With a dedicated work group that will continue to animate the cooperation and let the platform accessible for new actors
- Leverage money to private sector/other international donors
- To use business models from WPs to search for project investors
- Find innovative ways to fund any costs that may arise, ways to involve African institutions beyond 2025
- The network already created by the current project can enable joint research grant applications, publications on the same topic of geothermal
- Extend services to citizens, mobilize communities around projects
- Availing open source software or place code in open source platforms
- Continuous training
- Community involvement, network of local communities included
- Repository that open access and searchable on projects
- Funding opportunities
- Awareness raising on project results and impact
- FAQ in the website for interaction
- Accessible educational online modules
- Academia research momentum on RE after the project both in EU and AU
- Matchmaking facilities
- Involve government engagement
- EC bringing new fundings after LEAP-RE

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