



LEAP-SE

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

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D5.5 Online Thematic and Methodological Webinar Strategy – Year 1

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acronym	Description
WP	Work Package
MARs	Multi-Annual Roadmaps
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
KPI	Key Performance Indicators



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Executive Summary

This deliverable presents the Online Thematic and Methodological Webinar Strategy for the LEAP-SE programme. It outlines the objectives, structure, and implementation approach of the webinar and clustering activities designed to strengthen coordination, mutual learning, and knowledge exchange among AU–EU research and innovation (R&I) actors in sustainable energy.

The strategy builds on the legacy of LEAP-RE and leverages the dynamic ecosystem of 31 co-funded projects, over 240 partner organisations, and seven Multi-Annual Roadmaps (MARs). Within LEAP-SE, these webinars and clustering mechanisms act as enablers of cross-project collaboration, capacity development, and policy relevance, thereby contributing to the long-term sustainability of the AU–EU R&I partnership.

The deliverable describes how online thematic and methodological webinars will be organised to:

- Facilitate mutual learning, matchmaking, and synergies across LEAP-SE projects and partners;
- Strengthen the LEAP-SE knowledge base through updated databases, metadata, and shared outputs;
- Foster thematic and methodological exchanges aligned with project needs and emerging research priorities;
- Enhance cross-sector dialogue among researchers, innovators, policy makers, and communities; and
- Feed knowledge, lessons learned, and recommendations into broader policy and impact activities.

The strategy sets the framework for periodic online webinars. It integrates digital tools and inclusive facilitation methods to ensure active participation across both continents. The webinars will be anchored in the LEAP-SE Multi-Annual Roadmaps, while also addressing transversal priorities such as gender equality, digitalisation, and innovation scalability.

By providing a structured yet flexible framework, this strategy ensures that LEAP-SE not only supports research excellence but also translates knowledge into tangible impact—advancing a just and sustainable energy transition in Africa and Europe.



1. Introduction and Context

• 1.1 The LEAP-SE Programme

The *Long-Term Joint EU–AU Research and Innovation Partnership on Sustainable Energy (LEAP-SE)* is the continuation and consolidation of the AU–EU collaboration initiated under the LEAP-RE programme. Its overarching aim is to reinforce and expand cooperation on renewable energy research, innovation, and capacity building between African and European institutions, fostering an enduring and equitable bi-continental partnership.

LEAP-SE provides an integrated framework for joint action on sustainable energy that aligns with the AU–EU Innovation Agenda and contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

1.2 Building on the LEAP-RE Legacy

LEAP-SE builds on the outcomes of LEAP-RE, which launched two joint co-funded calls (2021 and 2022) supporting 23 research and innovation projects across seven Multi-Annual Roadmaps (MARs). These MARs encompass priority topics such as smart grids, clean cooking, energy storage, productive uses of renewable energy, and circular economy approaches for end-of-life management.

The LEAP-RE experience demonstrated the added value of clustering activities to:

- Avoid fragmentation of efforts and duplication of research;
- Enhance learning and exchange across projects;
- Strengthen visibility and policy impact of AU–EU collaboration; and
- Foster innovation pathways from research to deployment.

However, it also revealed the need for stronger engagement of private sector actors, broader geographical representation across African countries, and more systematic mechanisms for knowledge sharing and matchmaking.

1.3 From Clustering to Knowledge Ecosystems

Within LEAP-SE, clustering evolves from a coordination mechanism into a knowledge and innovation ecosystem that connects researchers, innovators, and decision-makers. The programme leverages digital tools, webinars, and structured thematic exchanges to sustain collaboration beyond individual project cycles. Building on the existing online LEAP-RE platform counting more than 3000 active users, the online thematic and methodological webinars are conceived as the primary instruments to animate this ecosystem, offering a regular platform for interaction, dissemination, and collective learning. Through these webinars, LEAP-SE will promote:

- Joint reflection on research methodologies and outcomes;
- Exchange of good practices and lessons learned;
- Cross-sector collaboration between academia, industry, and policy actors;
- The identification of synergies and emerging topics for future cooperation.



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1.4 Strategic Relevance of the Webinar Strategy

During the first year of LEAP-SE implementation, efforts focused on updating the clustering strategy and establishing linkages with LEAP-RE. A collaboration channel with Driving Urban Transition partnership - DUT (GA n° 101069506) was also created, and DUT subsequently participated in a peer-to-peer webinar organised by WP6. The updated clustering strategy now provides a roadmap for implementing clustering and knowledge-sharing activities in Year 2 and beyond. It ensures that online events are strategically aligned with programme objectives and that knowledge generated within the projects is effectively shared, capitalised on, and translated into policy and practice.

By integrating thematic depth with methodological rigour, the webinar strategy contributes to:

- Enhanced coherence among AU–EU energy R&I initiatives;
- Increased visibility and accessibility of LEAP-SE knowledge assets;
- Capacity development for researchers and practitioners across both continents; and
- Strengthened policy dialogue informed by scientific evidence.

2. Objectives of the Online Thematic and Methodological Webinar Strategy

2.1 Operational Objectives

The implementation of the online webinar series pursues six main operational objectives that together underpin the clustering and knowledge-sharing mission of LEAP-SE:

1. Facilitate Knowledge Exchange Across Projects

Establish regular, interactive online sessions where project teams can present ongoing results, share methodological insights, and exchange lessons learned. These sessions ensure visibility and transparency of progress across the LEAP-SE portfolio.

2. Strengthen Thematic Clustering and Matchmaking

Identify and connect projects addressing similar research questions, technologies, or regions. The webinars will act as entry points for cluster formation, enabling partnerships to explore joint dissemination activities, cross-pilots, or policy contributions.

3. Build Research and Innovation Capacities

Offer methodological webinars that enhance participants' skills in project management, impact evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and market uptake of innovations. This responds to the varying levels of experience and institutional capacity within the LEAP-SE community.

4. Promote Policy Uptake and Strategic Dialogue

Facilitate sessions that translate scientific results into policy-relevant insights, aligning with AU–EU dialogues on energy access, climate resilience, and sustainable growth. These webinars will support evidence-based decision-making and visibility of LEAP-SE outputs at continental level.

5. Support Inclusivity and Gender Balance



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Ensure diverse participation by actively engaging women researchers, young scientists, entrepreneurs, and under-represented regions. Inclusive facilitation and language accessibility will be integral to the design of each webinar.

6. Document and Capitalise on Knowledge

Systematically record and synthesise outputs from all webinars into the LEAP-SE knowledge database, enriching metadata with information on partners, topics, outcomes, and links to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This knowledge base will serve as a reference for future clustering, communication, and policy work.

2.2 Expected Added Value

The webinar strategy is expected to generate both short-term and long-term benefits for the LEAP-SE community and for the broader AU–EU partnership:

- **Short-term outcomes**
 - Improved visibility and coordination among projects.
 - Establishment of active thematic clusters around shared research interests.
 - Enhanced methodological alignment and exchange of good practices.
 - Greater engagement of early-career researchers and private-sector actors.
- **Long-term outcomes**
 - Consolidation of a self-sustaining, bi-continental knowledge ecosystem.
 - Increased uptake of research results in innovation, investment, and policy.
 - Strengthened collaboration between research, industry, and decision-makers.
 - Contribution to sustainable, inclusive energy transitions across Africa and Europe.

2.3 Guiding Principles

To achieve these objectives effectively, the LEAP-SE webinar strategy is guided by a set of cross-cutting principles that ensure coherence, transparency, and inclusiveness:

- **Alignment with MARs and programme objectives:**

Webinars are anchored in the seven Multi-Annual Roadmaps (MARs) and their associated thematic priorities to ensure consistency with LEAP-SE’s scientific and innovation agenda.
- **User-driven and participatory approach:**

Webinar topics and formats will be co-defined with project coordinators and cluster representatives to ensure relevance and ownership.
- **Inclusivity and balanced participation:**

Equal representation from African and European partners will be prioritised, alongside gender balance and youth participation.
- **Digital accessibility:**



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Use of open, low-bandwidth digital tools and accessible materials to accommodate diverse connectivity contexts across both continents, mainly capitalizing on the existing and proven LEAP-RE online platform.

- **Knowledge integration and follow-up:**

Outcomes from each session will be summarised, validated, and incorporated into the central LEAP-SE database, ensuring that knowledge remains accessible and cumulative.

By adhering to these principles, the webinar strategy acts as a cornerstone of the LEAP-SE coordination and support activities, ensuring that knowledge generated through the programme is continuously exchanged, applied, and amplified.

3. Thematic and Methodological Webinars: Framework and Design

3.1 Role of Webinars within LEAP-SE

Within the LEAP-SE programme, thematic and methodological webinars are designed as the main instruments to animate the clustering process and to ensure effective knowledge transfer across AU–EU research and innovation actors. They constitute a flexible and inclusive mechanism to connect geographically dispersed partners, stimulate cooperation, and enhance the coherence of the LEAP-SE portfolio.

Each webinar will serve as a structured opportunity for project teams, researchers, innovators, policy makers, and community representatives to exchange ideas, present progress, and explore synergies. Beyond information sharing, these sessions are intended to generate concrete collaborations, such as joint dissemination actions, shared methodologies, common applications, or co-developed policy briefs.

The online format allows for regular and cost-effective engagement, complementing the in-person clustering events that will be organised alongside annual LEAP-SE General Assemblies or Stakeholder Forums.

3.2 Types of Webinars

Two complementary types of webinars will be implemented under this strategy:

1. **Thematic Webinars**

Focused on specific areas of research and innovation aligned with the seven LEAP-SE Multi-Annual Roadmaps (MARs). Their primary objective is to foster dialogue and clustering among projects addressing similar scientific, technological, or contextual challenges.

2. **Methodological Webinars**

Dedicated to capacity building, knowledge management, and methodological alignment across the LEAP-SE portfolio. These sessions will focus on transversal topics such as research design, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder engagement, technology transfer, and innovation financing.

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Together, these two categories form an integrated system for knowledge generation and dissemination, connecting scientific outputs with operational and policy dimensions.

3.3 Thematic Focus Areas

The thematic webinars will reflect the LEAP-SE research priorities, structured around the MARs and extended to new cross-cutting themes emerging from project activities. Table 1 below outlines the indicative thematic areas for planned webinars.

Table 1: Indicative Thematic Focus Areas for Planned Webinars

Cluster Theme	Description and Expected Contribution
Renewable Energy Generation and Grid Integration	Exchange on hybrid systems, microgrids, and digital management of renewable generation
Energy Storage and Flexibility Solutions	Discussion on battery technologies, thermal storage, and system flexibility in African contexts
Clean Cooking and Productive Use of Energy	Sharing of solutions improving energy access, food systems, and rural livelihoods
Circular Economy and End-of-Life Management	Promotion of sustainable business models for recycling and reuse of RE components
Green hydrogen and green industrialisation	Discussions on on-going research in green hydrogen production, standards and applications in hard-to-abate sectors
Energy Efficiency and Smart Systems	Presentation of tools and technologies improving energy efficiency at different scales
Cross-cutting themes	Climate resilience, gender equality, digitalisation, and innovation financing

Each thematic webinar will be linked to existing clusters of LEAP-SE projects, with attention to representation from both continents and inclusion of diverse stakeholders.

3.4 Methodological Focus Areas

Methodological webinars will ensure common understanding and alignment on approaches used across LEAP-SE projects. They will also strengthen the operational capacities of project partners and enhance the impact potential of their activities. Indicative focus areas include:

- **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL):**
Harmonisation of indicators and reporting tools to enable cross-project comparability and impact synthesis under WP2.
- **Knowledge Management and Open Access:**
Guidance on data sharing, use of the LEAP-SE knowledge platform, and dissemination of project results.



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- **Stakeholder and End-User Engagement:**

Participatory research methods and co-design approaches that ensure local ownership and gender inclusivity.

- **Innovation Uptake and Market Deployment:**

Pathways from research to market, entrepreneurship support, and public-private partnerships.

- **Science–Policy Interface:**

Methods for translating scientific results into policy-relevant insights, including preparation of policy briefs and contribution to AU–EU dialogues.

3.5 Webinar Structure and Format

Each webinar will follow a standardised structure to ensure consistency, engagement, and measurable outcomes across sessions:

1. **Opening and Framing (10–15 minutes)**

Short introduction by the LEAP-SE coordination team or relevant WP leader outlining objectives and contextual relevance.

2. **Project Presentations (30–40 minutes)**

Selected projects share key findings, approaches, and challenges, followed by moderated Q&A sessions.

3. **Expert Input or Panel Discussion (20–30 minutes)**

Inclusion of external experts, regional centres, or policy representatives to link project insights to broader AU–EU or regional contexts.

4. **Interactive Discussion or Breakout Groups (30 minutes)**

Facilitated sessions allowing participants to exchange ideas, identify collaboration opportunities, and formulate joint recommendations.

5. **Synthesis and Next Steps (15 minutes)**

Summary of key messages, follow-up actions, and integration into LEAP-SE knowledge base.

The webinars will typically last 90–120 minutes, optimised for online participation across time zones. Interpretation and accessibility features (e.g. captions, low-bandwidth connection options) will be provided where possible.

3.6 Frequency and Scheduling

During its implementation, LEAP-SE will in each year organise:

- 2 thematic webinars, each dedicated to one or two MAR areas, ensuring balanced coverage of the LEAP-SE research spectrum.
- 2 methodological webinars, focusing on transversal aspects such as MEL and innovation deployment.

These sessions will be spaced across the year to maintain regular engagement, with a calendar published in advance through the LEAP-SE internal communication channels and public website.



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One webinar will be organized during the annual LEAP-SE General Assembly, if applicable.

3.7 Facilitation and Participant Engagement

The success of the webinars depends on effective facilitation and inclusive engagement. Each session will therefore be designed to maximise participation and interaction through: pre-event collection of questions or topics from project partners; use of interactive digital tools (polls, breakout rooms, collaborative boards); targeted invitations to relevant stakeholders (industry, investors, regional bodies, civil society); balanced representation from both continents; documentation of key discussion points and recommendations.

Active participation will be encouraged by recognising contributions through online visibility (website features, newsletter mentions) and linking webinar outcomes to future clustering or funding opportunities.

3.8 Expected Outputs of the Webinar Series

Each webinar will produce:

- A summary report outlining key insights, synergies, and next steps;
- Updated entries in the project database, incorporating new collaborations, outputs, and outcomes;
- Recommendations for clustering and policy integration, feeding into WP7–8 activities;
- Communication materials (slides, videos, highlights) shared through the LEAP-SE knowledge platform and public dissemination channels.

Cumulatively, the webinar series will establish a structured learning mechanism and ensure that the knowledge generated by LEAP-SE projects contributes to a coherent and sustainable AU–EU innovation ecosystem.

4. Clustering and Matchmaking Approach within LEAP-SE

4.1 Core Principles of Clustering

The clustering approach within LEAP-SE follows several key principles to ensure effectiveness and inclusivity:

1. **Thematic Alignment:**

Projects are grouped based on shared research areas, challenges, and innovation objectives. Thematic clusters enable focused dialogue, reducing redundancy and promoting complementary initiatives.

2. **Cross-Continental Representation:**

Each cluster actively engages both African and European partners, ensuring bi-continental perspectives and facilitating south–north and north–south knowledge exchange.

3. **Inclusivity and Diversity:**



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Clusters integrate academic institutions, research organisations, startups, industry partners, civil society, and policymakers. This diversity ensures that solutions are technically robust, socially accepted, and policy-relevant.

4. Flexibility and Evolution:

Cluster composition may evolve over time to accommodate emerging research areas, new projects, or opportunities for innovation. This adaptive approach allows LEAP-SE to remain responsive to dynamic energy and climate contexts.

5. Integration with Knowledge Management:

Cluster activities are closely linked with the LEAP-SE knowledge platform, ensuring that outcomes, lessons learned, and innovations are systematically documented and disseminated.

4.2 Matchmaking Principles

Matchmaking is designed to facilitate targeted connections between LEAP-SE participants based on their expertise, objectives, and interests. Key principles include:

- Needs-based pairing: Connecting actors with complementary skills or resources, for example linking researchers with startups for technology transfer.
- Outcome-oriented: Focus on tangible deliverables such as joint publications, co-developed technologies, or policy inputs.
- Inclusive engagement: Ensuring participation from a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including underrepresented groups and early-career researchers.
- Data-driven approach: Using the updated LEAP-SE project database to identify opportunities and track collaborations.

4.3 Expected Outputs and Benefits

The clustering and matchmaking approach is expected to deliver the following tangible outputs:

- A clear mapping of synergies and complementarities across LEAP-SE projects;
- Joint initiatives and collaborations, such as co-authored publications, pilot demonstrations, or shared methodological tools;
- Strengthened connections between research, innovation, industry, and policy actors;
- Identification of potential funding opportunities and co-investment possibilities for high-impact solutions;
- Enhanced visibility of LEAP-SE outcomes through cross-promotion on the knowledge platform and communication channels.

Through these activities, LEAP-SE aims to catalyse innovation, accelerate research uptake, and maximise the societal and policy impact of AU–EU energy research collaborations.

4.4 Coordination and Monitoring

While governance details are not the focus, a light coordination and monitoring framework will ensure the effectiveness of clustering activities:



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- Cluster coordinators (assigned per thematic area) facilitate meetings, track collaboration progress, and report on outcomes.
- Feedback loops collect inputs from participants to refine cluster topics, matchmaking criteria, and engagement strategies.
- Monitoring indicators track the number of interactions, joint outputs, and cross-project engagement metrics, feeding into LEAP-SE's overall impact assessment.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) for Clustering and Webinars

5.1 Purpose and Importance of MEL

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) is a central component of LEAP-SE's strategy to maximize the effectiveness, relevance, and impact of its clustering and webinar activities. By systematically tracking progress, assessing outcomes, and integrating lessons learned, MEL ensures that activities remain aligned with project objectives, responsive to stakeholder needs, and evidence-based.

MEL in LEAP-SE serves three main purposes:

1. **Performance Tracking:** Regularly measure the implementation of clustering and webinar activities, including participation rates, geographic reach, and thematic coverage.
2. **Outcome Assessment:** Evaluate the effectiveness of engagement in fostering cross-project collaboration, knowledge exchange, and actionable outputs.
3. **Continuous Learning:** Identify lessons and best practices to inform the design of future webinars, clusters, and matchmaking activities, ensuring adaptive and evidence-driven decision-making.

5.2 Indicators for Monitoring

A set of key performance indicators (KPIs) has been defined to monitor clustering and webinar activities:

1. **Engagement Indicators**
 - Number of participants per webinar or cluster meeting
 - Geographic diversity of participants (EU vs AU representation)
 - Diversity of stakeholder groups (academia, industry, policymakers, startups)
2. **Collaboration Indicators**
 - Number of cross-project interactions or partnerships initiated
 - Number of joint working groups formed
 - Number of collaborative outputs (publications, pilot activities, policy briefs)
3. **Learning and Knowledge Sharing Indicators**
 - Number of best practices documented and disseminated



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- Level of participant satisfaction and perceived relevance of webinars
- Uptake of methodological guidance or tools shared during clusters

4. Impact Indicators

- Contributions to policy dialogues or recommendations
- Formation of joint funding proposals or initiatives
- Early-stage adoption of innovations in industry or community settings

5.3 Data Collection and Tools

LEAP-SE relies on a combination of digital platforms, surveys, and qualitative assessments to collect MEL data:

- Knowledge Platform: Captures information on participants, clusters, outputs, and engagement metrics.
- Webinar Feedback Surveys: Collect immediate input on relevance, clarity, and applicability of sessions.
- Cluster Reports: Coordinators document outcomes of meetings, collaborations formed, and lessons learned.
- Follow-up Tracking: Periodic check-ins with participants assess progress on joint initiatives or collaborations initiated during matchmaking events.

5.4 Evaluation and Learning Mechanisms

Evaluation is conducted at multiple levels to support **continuous improvement**:

- **Quarterly Reviews:** Assess progress of clustering activities and webinar series, providing recommendations for adjustments.
- **Annual Evaluation:** Comprehensive review of all activities against KPIs and strategic objectives, identifying gaps and opportunities for scaling.

Learning is iterative, ensuring that each cycle of webinars and cluster activities informs the next, adapting to emerging research trends, stakeholder needs, and innovation opportunities.

5.5 Reporting and Integration with Project Management

Monitoring results and evaluation findings are integrated into LEAP-SE's overall project management cycle, supporting decision-making at the coordination level:

- Internal Reporting: MEL outputs feed into internal progress reports, helping coordinators adjust resources, priorities, and activity design.
- Strategic Alignment: Insights from MEL inform cross-cutting activities, ensuring synergies with policy-oriented work packages and impact synthesis efforts.
- Visibility and Communication: Key findings are shared with stakeholders via newsletters, the knowledge platform, and webinars, demonstrating progress, impact, and lessons learned.



6. Communication, Dissemination, and Engagement Strategies

6.1 Purpose and Scope

Effective communication, dissemination, and engagement are central to LEAP-SE's mission to foster cross-continental collaboration, enhance knowledge exchange, and increase the visibility and uptake of research outputs. Section 6 outlines how the project ensures that information flows efficiently between researchers, innovators, policymakers, industry, and wider audiences, while maximizing the impact of clustering activities and webinars.

The strategy emphasizes:

- Raising awareness of project activities and outputs;
- Promoting active stakeholder participation;
- Ensuring accessibility of knowledge, tools, and resources;
- Supporting the translation of research into practice, innovation, and policy.

6.2 Target Audiences and Key Messages

Communication and engagement are tailored to specific stakeholder groups. Table 2 summarizes the main target audiences, their relevance to LEAP-SE, and key messages.

6.3 Communication Channels

A multi-channel approach is employed to ensure wide dissemination and engagement through LEAP-RE communication tools:

1. Digital Platforms

- Project website and knowledge platform: central repository for project information, outputs, and webinar recordings.
- Social media channels: Twitter/X, LinkedIn, and YouTube to share news, events, and success stories.
- Email newsletters: periodic updates to registered stakeholders on upcoming webinars, cluster events, and outputs.

2. Webinars and Virtual Events

- Thematic and methodological webinars serve as both knowledge-sharing and engagement tools.
- Interactive Q&A sessions, polls, and breakout rooms foster networking and discussion.

3. Publications and Reports

- Policy briefs, technical reports, and case studies disseminate research outcomes to both specialized and general audiences.
- Accessible summaries are produced for policymakers, industry, and community stakeholders.



Table 2: Target Audiences and Key Messages

Target Audience	Relevance	Key Messages
R&I agencies / research funders	Support AU-EU policy dialogues and R&I funding alignment.	LEAP-SE enables long-term AU-EU collaboration and coordination of joint research agendas.
Other EU-funded partnerships and programmes	Enhance synergies and coordination across projects.	LEAP-SE catalyzes collaboration, knowledge sharing, and co-creation of solutions in sustainable energy.
AU and EU Researchers (including early-career)	Backbone of research activities and knowledge generation.	LEAP-SE fosters capacity building, collaborative research, twinning, and mobility opportunities.
Entrepreneurs & innovators (startups, SMEs)	Key for transforming research outputs into market-ready solutions.	LEAP-SE supports innovation through the Startup Studio, mentoring, and access to financing.
Industries in the energy sector	Translate research into scalable solutions.	Collaborate with researchers to accelerate innovation uptake and implement sustainable energy solutions.
Public and private investors	De-risk early-stage innovation and identify high-impact ventures.	LEAP-SE provides investment-ready pipelines and foresight tools to guide capital allocation.
Policymakers & AU-EU institutions	Strengthen science-policy interfaces and strategic collaboration.	LEAP-SE provides evidence-based insights for informed policy decisions.
Local communities and end users	Ultimate beneficiaries of research and innovation activities.	Participate in living labs, workshops, and co-creation activities to shape energy solutions.
Science journalists & media	Raise public awareness and visibility.	Highlight AU-EU energy cooperation, scientific advancements, and societal impact.
General public / citizens	Support understanding of project relevance and impact	LEAP-SE drives inclusive, sustainable, and climate-resilient energy solutions.



7. Future Perspectives and Sustainability

7.1 Purpose and Scope

Section 7 addresses how LEAP-SE ensures the long-term sustainability and continued impact of clustering, webinars, and engagement activities beyond the initial project timeframe. Sustainability is understood as both institutional longevity – in terms of maintaining networks, platforms, and collaborative structures – and practical uptake, where research outputs, methodologies, and innovations continue to inform policy, industry, and societal solutions in Africa and Europe.

The section outlines strategies for embedding LEAP-SE practices in ongoing AU–EU energy R&I cooperation and establishing a persistent, self-sustaining innovation ecosystem.

7.2 Sustainability of Clustering and Networking

Clustering activities are designed to extend beyond the project’s operational lifetime by:

- Creating thematic clusters that remain active through periodic virtual and in-person meetings, maintaining momentum and fostering long-term collaborations.
- Facilitating cross-project learning by ensuring that knowledge, protocols, and methodologies developed in LEAP-SE are documented and accessible to future initiatives.
- Leveraging AU–EU networks to integrate new partners, initiatives, and projects, ensuring that clusters grow dynamically rather than stagnate.

Mechanisms to support this include:

1. Shared Knowledge Platforms – Centralized repositories where project outputs, tools, and resources are stored for ongoing access by researchers, innovators, and policymakers.
2. Community of Practice – Online and offline forums where stakeholders continuously exchange lessons learned, methodologies, and best practices.
3. Alumni and Twinning Networks – Engaging past participants in mentoring, collaborative projects, and peer-learning initiatives to maintain connectivity.

7.3 Sustainability of Webinar and Engagement Activities

Webinars and engagement initiatives are a core tool for knowledge dissemination and cross-continental collaboration. Their long-term sustainability is ensured through:

- Institutionalizing webinar series under AU–EU energy R&I frameworks, with periodic thematic updates aligned with evolving research priorities.
- Creating a webinar archive accessible through the LEAP-SE platform, ensuring recordings, presentations, and supplementary materials remain available for future reference.
- Embedding stakeholder feedback loops to continuously adapt content and format to participant needs, increasing relevance and engagement over time.
- Leveraging blended formats—combining virtual and in-person events—to maximize accessibility, participation, and networking opportunities across both continents.



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7.4 Integration with Policy and Industry Uptake

Sustainability is not limited to knowledge retention but extends to real-world application. LEAP-SE supports the translation of research outputs into actionable solutions by:

- Strengthening evidence-based policy engagement: Insights from clusters and webinars feed directly into AU–EU policy dialogues, supporting informed decisions on energy, climate resilience, and innovation funding.
- Facilitating industry adoption: By connecting research teams with startups, SMEs, and established energy companies, LEAP-SE ensures that technical solutions and methodologies have a pathway to market implementation.
- Supporting investor engagement: Tools such as Innovation Watch and Market Intelligence maintain interest from private and public investors, sustaining financial pathways for scalable solutions.

7.5 Knowledge Retention and Capacity Building

Sustainability is underpinned by deliberate efforts to retain and grow knowledge within the AU–EU research ecosystem:

- Documentation of methodologies, case studies, and best practices ensures that expertise is preserved and transferable to future projects.
- Capacity-building programs for researchers, innovators, and policymakers enhance skills that persist beyond the project cycle.
- Peer learning and mobility schemes create enduring connections between institutions and individuals, embedding collaborative habits in the community.

7.6 Strategic Partnerships for Long-Term Impact

LEAP-SE emphasizes collaboration with **strategic AU–EU stakeholders** to guarantee that project outcomes continue to be leveraged:

- Coordination with existing networks, innovation hubs, and research agencies ensures continuity and integration of LEAP-SE outputs.
- Engagement with multilateral organizations, investors, and civil society amplifies reach and supports long-term adoption of solutions.
- Multi-sector collaboration strengthens the resilience of the ecosystem, balancing academic research, industry innovation, and policy uptake.

7.7 Expected Outcomes

The sustainability approach aims to deliver:

- A persistent AU–EU innovation ecosystem with active communities of practice and thematic clusters.
- Long-term visibility and impact of LEAP-SE outputs, ensuring knowledge, tools, and methodologies continue to inform research, industry, and policy.
- Continued capacity building, enhancing the skillset of researchers, innovators, and policymakers.



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- Strengthened AU–EU collaboration in energy R&I that remains effective beyond the project’s lifecycle.

8. Conclusion

This deliverable presents the results achieved by LEAP-SE during the first year of its implementation regarding clustering activities.

During the first year, the Online Thematic and Methodological Webinar Strategy for the LEAP-SE programme was prepared and structured building on the legacy of LEAP-RE. The clustering webinars will be organised in order to facilitate mutual learning, matchmaking, and synergies across LEAP-SE projects and beyond with, for example, other EU initiatives targeting different audiences such as public and private investors. In the coming years, two types of webinar will be organized (thematic and methodological). Prior to the clustering webinars, the LEAP-RE/SE communication tools will be used to ensure wide dissemination of the clustering sessions and clustering results will be carefully monitored.

In addition, in the first year, efforts focussed on establishing the linkages with LEAP-RE and other EU initiatives such as the Driving Urban Transition partnership.