

JUST TRANSITION PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

Are transitioning regions heading towards climate
neutrality in a socially just way?



For more information

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Introduction

As part of the European Green Deal, the Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) was set up to leave no person and no region behind in the transition towards a climate-neutral economy.¹

The Just Transition Mechanism consists of three pillars: the Just Transition Fund, a dedicated Just Transition Scheme under the InvestEU package, and a new Public Sector Loan Facility. In total, the different funding sources are expected to mobilise around EUR 55 billion over the 2021 to 2027 budget period. This includes the Just Transition Fund (JTF), which will invest €17.5 billion (in 2018 prices; € 19.2 billion in current prices), out of which € 7.5 billion will be financed under the EU's 2021-2027 budget period in the territories most affected by the transition to a climate-neutral economy. European Union Member States have been required to produce Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs), which are a precondition to accessing the different funding schemes under the Just Transition Mechanism. This amount will be divided amongst all the regions that fulfil the requirements and are approved for funding. The Plans outline the expected transition process of the participating countries, including the most affected regions and the impact the transition will have on these regions, how the process will ensure public participation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as providing an overview of the operations envisaged. Aside from the funds planned within the scope of the Just Transition Mechanism, there are others which are to facilitate the achieving of climate goals on a broader national and European scale, as no region can develop without widespread changes that will foster the process.

Member States have in majority already prepared their [territorial just transition plans](#) and related [recovery and resilience programs](#), and they are now awaiting final approval by the European Commission or currently being amended before being sent in to the Commission. The next phase will involve project implementation, that is – the actual planning and spending of the provided funds in accordance with the approved Plans. This means that this step will involve the preparation, selection and execution of concrete projects that will ensure the phasing out of greenhouse gas emitting industries and achieving climate neutrality in a socially just way.

The goal of the just transition process is to achieve climate neutrality in regions that have thus far been emitting high amounts of greenhouse gases. This includes coal, oil shale, peat, and other carbon-intensive regions.

According to Art. 2 of the Just Transition Fund regulation, the fund “shall contribute to the single specific objective of enabling regions and people to address the social, employment, economic and environmental impacts of the transition towards the Union’s 2030 targets for energy and climate and a climate-neutral economy of the Union by 2050, based on the Paris Agreement.”

The checklist aims to serve as a tool for highlighting both the challenges faced by such regions and the level to which they are prepared to address them. It provides an easy-to-use overview of what each region should have in place in order to make sure it reaches its professed goals.

¹ The JTF Regulation entered into force on 1 July 2021: Regulation (EU) 2021/1056 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 establishing the Just Transition Fund.

The checklist has been divided into three topics that should be taken into account when analysing the project implementation phase of the just transition of the regions:

- 1. Climate neutrality and the environment*
- 2. Social and economic redevelopment*
- 3. Public participation*

1. Climate Neutrality and the Environment

As we begin to implement the just transition plans in the regions, we need to ask whether the implemented projects will enable achieving the overarching goal of climate neutrality by 2050, phasing out carbon-intensive industries and practices as soon as possible (preferably by 2030), and improving the general state of our environment.

1.1 Will the carbon-intensive industries in the region be phased out on time?

One should keep in mind that the transition plans for the regions (based on related national-level strategies, e.g., the National Energy and Climate Plans) should provide a clear timeline for scaling down and ceasing activities hampering the achievement of climate neutrality, such as coal and lignite mining or coal-fired electricity production, oil shale production and use, peat extraction, steel and cement manufacturing, etc. In the implementation phase, one should ask whether the phase outs are actually happening and meeting these timelines.

In addition, we should constantly be checking whether the phase outs are ambitious enough to ensure a meaningful reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. According to the latest [IPCC report](#), greenhouse gas emissions must drop globally from 2019 levels by at least 43% by 2030 to keep temperatures from exceeding 1.5°C. In addition to monitoring whether such industries are actually being phased out, one should also check whether there are any ongoing plans for new fossil fuel activities in the region.

1.2 Do the plans and projects for the region synchronize with national-level decarbonization strategies?

The Plans should contain direct references to the National Energy and Climate Plan (updated NECPs with at least 55% greenhouse gas emission reduction by 2030 as the target) and provide clear targets for the contributions of the regional plan to the adopted national decarbonization pathway. The approach in the National Energy and Climate Plans is rather sectoral, showing how energy production, industry, transport or agriculture can be changed to become less carbon intensive. The priorities and measures included in the Territorial Just Transition Plans should, in principle, be consistent with the decarbonization pathways laid forth in the National Energy and Climate Plans to ensure policy coherence, smooth integration of the new businesses and infrastructures supported by the Just Transition Fund in the future national energy models, etc. All National Energy and Climate Plans need to undergo substantial upgrades of the targets in view of the newly adopted 55% greenhouse gas reduction objectives and urgent need to reduce dependency on Russian gas and other energy

resources While the Territorial Just Transition Plans are required to be consistent with the national objective of climate neutrality as a principle, the low level of ambition in the current national plans should not prevent the regional plans from pursuing higher ambitions. In fact, **consistency with climate neutrality should take precedence over consistency with the national strategy** in cases where these two objectives are difficult to reconcile.

CASE STUDY: The Eastern Wielkopolska and Wałbrzych Territorial Just Transition Plans (both in Poland) state the goal of phasing out coal by 2030 and achieving climate neutrality by 2040, while the Polish National Energy and Climate Plan is much less ambitious, claiming that coal will only be phased out by 2049. It seems obvious that for climate purposes the first option should be considered as more favorable.

1.3 Have comprehensive decarbonization plans been prepared for the region?

While the Territorial Just Transition Plans should have provided a general overview and timeline for phasing out the greenhouse gas-intensive industries and developing a more climate-friendly energy system, the implementation phase requires a specific and detailed strategy for addressing the concrete problems faced by a particular region in achieving this goal. In order to be effective, the transition process needs to directly address the heart of the problem and estimate the yearly greenhouse gas emission reductions that will be achieved through implementing the proposed solutions. This should involve a presentation of the **yearly estimate of reduced installed capacity in the region by type**, showing how this contributes to the reductions on the national level.

If the projects are not realized within the scope of a more comprehensive decarbonization plan, they run a risk of being disjointed and unsuccessful in achieving the climate neutrality target. The decarbonisation plan should include:

- 1) A diagnosis of the situation in the relevant region at the time of initiating the decarbonization plan.
- 2) A comprehensive strategy for achieving the goal of climate neutrality.

A detailed and comprehensive decarbonization plan should provide guidelines for the transformation of a large variety of sectors in the region:

- *Industrial emissions*
- *Electricity generation*
- *Heating and buildings*
- *Transportation*
- *Other relevant sectors*

It should also address the specific problems of a given region. How can the amount of renewable energy sources in use be maximised for this particular area? How can energy saving, energy efficiency and energy sufficiency be increased in the specific circumstances (rural and urban areas)? How can help be provided to energy-poor

parts of society so that they are a part of the green transformation? How can emissions from transportation be reduced? How can the amount of green and blue infrastructure in the region be maximised? While it will not be possible for all these changes to be financed through the Just Transition Mechanism and many should be funded through national-level projects, it is necessary for all of the above aspects to be included in the detailed strategy for the region so that this informs the selection of projects enabling the region to actually achieve a green transformation.

1.4 Are the environmental impacts of the proposed just transition projects adequately assessed?

In assessing the projects that are selected, attention should be paid to whether they do not cause any damage to the environment. While projects that can be realized within the scope of the Just Transition Fund have been listed in the [Just Transition Fund regulation](#) (see Art. 8), some of them can still potentially have negative environmental impacts; thus, their implementation should be preceded by a detailed environmental impact assessment and analysis of their compliance with the “Do No Significant Harm” principle. The assessment should in particular take into account the need to prevent environmental harm on any of the six long-term environmental objectives as established in Art. 17 of the [Taxonomy Regulation](#). The quality and strength of the ‘Do No Significant Harm’ principle will rely heavily on the level of transparency, control and scrutiny of the assessment and implementation of the investments.

Six Environmental Objectives as defined in Art. 17 of the Taxonomy Regulation:

- *climate change mitigation*
- *climate change adaptation*
- *sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources*
- *circular economy*
- *pollution prevention and control*
- *protection and restoration of biodiversity & ecosystems*

For more information, see the Bankwatch briefing [“Breaking down the 'do no significant harm' principle”](#).

1.5 Has an assessment been prepared of the environmental impacts of the industries being phased out?

As the various industries are phased out, attention should be paid as to whether the consequences of their past activities are adequately addressed as the just transition proceeds. The [Just Transition Fund regulation](#) (Art. 8.i.) states that it is possible to fund “investments in regeneration and decontamination of brownfield sites, land restoration and including, where necessary, green infrastructure and repurposing projects, taking into account the **polluter pays’ principle**.” This Principle should ensure that polluters bear the costs of their pollution and are incentivised to avoid environmental damage. However, in just transition processes across Europe, some attempts have been noted of trying to shift the responsibility for land restoration away from the companies that have profited from mining and fossil fuel-fired energy production and into the Just Transition

Fund (JTF) and other related funds, as discussed in a recent [publication on the Polluter Pays Principle](#). One of the huge issues in terms of post-mining activities is water regime restoration, which in many cases will involve specific comprehensive actions taken to enable the return to an acceptable water regime in the particular regions.

2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT

The aim of the just transition process is to conduct a transformation of the region while making sure that no one is left behind. During the implementation phase, steps must be taken to ensure that all the most pressing social matters of such regions are tackled, while transforming the economy.

2.1 Will employment opportunities be secured for people losing their jobs?

A recent report commissioned by WWF entitled [Boosting Employment, Environment, Economy through Just Transition](#) shows that while providing options for people directly employed in the sector, the transition plans should also think about the development of jobs for those indirectly linked to the fossil fuel industry. The expansion of renewable energy, construction, manufacturing, logistics, land remediation, IT and tourism sectors may successfully counteract the loss of employment caused by the closure of the mining sectors. The just transition implementation phase should focus on introducing measures tailored to the needs of the particular region that would support quality employment, such as job search assistance and promotion of job creation. To ensure successful economic redevelopment, it is also crucial that micro, small and medium-sized businesses have support from national and European Union public funds, which should stimulate proactive entrepreneurship, local economies and shorter supply chain.

CASE STUDY: *Modelling performed by the Polish think tank Instrat predicts that the increase in employment in the renewable energy sector in Eastern Wielkopolska will be enough to counteract the loss of employment from the closing down of the lignite sector. Even in the baseline scenario, more than 12,000 new jobs would be created by 2030 in the region from solar and wind development. In the best-case scenario, this rises to 22,000. According to Instrat, a major challenge is adapting the skills of outgoing lignite workers to the new positions in renewables. This would be needed to avoid unemployment resulting from workers from other parts of Wielkopolska taking up the new positions. Such a situation has already taken place in regard to the construction of the solar farm in Brudzew. Fewer than 10% of the people employed for this construction were former lignite mine or power plant employees.*

The plans should explicitly detail the number of jobs in each high-carbon industry in the region, but also project their expected evolution until 2030. This is necessary in order to plan in advance for the deployment of job-creating solutions and early retirement plans. Special attention must be paid to indirect jobs, or those that rely on the fossil fuel industry but are not directly a part of it, which the coal industry often overstates to justify state support. Coal has been declining for years across Europe, and many service providers for this industry have been diversifying their businesses in order to reduce their dependence on one client.

CASE STUDY: *A good example is the rubber conveyor belt producer Artego, which has historically been the second biggest employer in lignite-rich Gorj in Romania, after its main client Oltenia Energy Complex. In recent years, as mining faces economic difficulties, Artego has increased its exports, and currently these exports make up about 55% of the company's turnover. It must not be assumed that indirect jobs will disappear at the same time as the carbon-intensive industries they serve – instead, the introduced projects should provide possibilities for supporting these businesses in diversifying their offers.*

2.2 Are the issues of various vulnerable groups being addressed?

Solutions in the areas undergoing just transition should take into account the specific needs and issues affecting those that are economically vulnerable but also other groups that are usually more exposed to the effects of the energy transformation, such as women, persons with disabilities, single parents, persons with lower education levels, the elderly, the young, children, migrants, and persons with a minority racial or ethnic background. Many of the implemented projects should address the specific issues faced by such groups, including providing support for good energy and heating solutions to the energy poor.

The voice of the most vulnerable groups should be openly represented in the implementation process so that their needs are addressed, e.g., through non-governmental organisations, associations representing the interests of the most vulnerable groups or directly through their active participation in public hearings organised in some of the just transition regions. Just transition cannot just focus on creating jobs for people directly affected by the closure of the coal sector but also those indirectly affected by the transition, such as the wives of coal miners or the young facing a lack of employment opportunities. They cannot be treated as a side dimension of the transition, but should rather be placed at the core of the regional just transition strategy and implemented projects.

2.3 Do the projects address the issues faced by women?

While the Territorial Just Transition Plans frequently do not delve into the gender aspect of the just transition, the actual implementation must guarantee that the issues women face as a result of the transformation are addressed, through the implementation of specific projects.

The proposed solutions should include:

- Gender mainstreaming in all development programmes, strategies, plans and actions
- Women's participation in the decision-making process
- Raising awareness among decision makers on women's issues
- Providing support for sustainable local female entrepreneurship
- Ensuring employment opportunities for women
- Development of social and care service infrastructure (nurseries, kindergartens, after-school, centres for the elderly, domestic violence services, programmes for young mothers)

- Ensuring access to healthcare services
- Promoting Equal Opportunities and Empowerment of Women in the Nongovernmental Sector²

CASE STUDY: *The issues faced by women in transitioning regions are presented in the [recent report](#) on Jiu Valley prepared by Bankwatch Romania. It begins with an analysis of the general and local context of Romanian mining areas and the specifics of women’s activities to show how gender plays a key role in the functioning of realities and roles in single-industry communities.*

The analysis shows the quality of the lives of women in Jiu Valley following the transformation is marked by three worrying phenomena:

- *Low-paying jobs*
- *Precarious employment*
- *Migration*

In addition, for many women in Jiu Valley, the process of decarbonization and the closure of mines also meant that the pressure of employment was added to that of domestic and care work and/or social reproduction. The lack of access to public education services, such as day-care, extended day-care, after-school meant that the responsibility for raising and educating children fell to women, especially those in unstable socio-economic situations. The accompanying [short film](#) shows the situation following the decline of the coal industry from the perspective of the women in Jiu Valley.

2.4 Do the projects address the issues faced by the young?

The young generations will be highly affected by how the projects play out. Therefore, it is essential for the young to participate, their voices to be heard and for projects to be implemented that will address their needs. In the past, regions that have undergone such transformations away from heavy industry have frequently seen huge migrations from the area, especially of young people as they pursue better career opportunities elsewhere. Without a serious attempt to tackle their needs and expectations, transition regions will face the danger of depopulation, brain drain and ageing demographics.

CASE STUDY: *Some Slovakian students from a just transition region prepared a [questionnaire](#) for young people to find out about their future plans. As a result, a few factors were indicated that play an important role behind the decisions young people make on whether or not to settle down in their home regions:*

- *Job security – young people ideally want a relatively well-paid stable job that is interesting in terms of its content.*

² Cf. Musca, Trifan. “Participarea femeilor in procesul de tranzitie justa”. This report will be published in English in May on the Bankwatch websites.

- *Family – young people are prone to go back to their hometown so that they can live close to their families.*
- *Quality of the environment – the quality of the architecture and the availability of modern infrastructure, such as bike paths, but also parks and public green infrastructure.*
- *Availability of cultural and social activities for the young.*
- *Availability of housing (also rental options) and quality civic amenities.*

In addition, local, regional and national education facilities should provide programmes adapted to the planned redevelopment of the just transition regional economies and predicted future job opportunities in such areas. This would signify that young people are provided with the necessary skills and knowledge allowing them to find jobs in the regions in the future after they complete their education.

Finally, plans for young people cannot really address their needs if they are not included in the process. The youth should have been involved from the start in the planning process so that they could express their priorities and needs, proposing specific activities and areas of support they see as crucial for their successful futures in such regions. Unfortunately, analyses show that few such consultation processes actually took place, and it would be important to improve their participation during the project implementation phase, including through the development and streamlining of projects that answer young people's needs.

2.5 Has economic redevelopment actually been ensured?

The initial phase of the just transition process, including the drafting of the just transition plans, had to take into account the fact that the transformation would not only impact 'front-line' industries but that it would lead to a spill-over effect onto other sectors along the supply or value chain. The implementation phase should therefore strongly prioritise economic diversification, attractive conditions for public and private investors and the creation of new companies, small and medium enterprises and start-ups to ensure successful economic redevelopment. A recent [report](#) by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development underlines the need for innovation-led regional development policies that are adapted to local characteristics and could lead to breaking lock-ins to previous innovation and technology trajectories, allowing the region to move forward in a different direction based on new ideas and technologies.

CASE STUDY: *The MVM Mátra Power Plant in Hungary is an interesting example of a coal-fired power plant transitioning into an industrial cluster based both on sustainable and non-sustainable solutions. Thus, while the plan is to maintain some fossil firing, there are also attempts to attract new and retain old partner companies, and keep jobs in the region. The potential of decommissioned mine sites for energy supply has also been used for the installation of a 200 MW PV farm and renewable energy storage. On the other hand, biomass and the planned commissioning of 500 MW gas turbines are almost as problematic as the previous lignite firing. While the changes in the ownership of MVM Mátra Power Plant and the billions of state subsidies should be noted, the plans contain both truly forward-looking and outdated false solutions.*

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Getting people to participate in public consultations in our part of the world (central and eastern Europe (CEE)) is not easy and especially in the Just Transition regions. Needless to say, tackling the issue comprehensively requires a lot of background information. In the implementation phase, this is important in the context of participatory practices, in order for people to want to devote their time and energy to such meetings and developing projects, they need to believe that they actually have some influence over what is going to happen. If there is little trust in public institutions and politicians, this also means that it is harder for people to believe their voice matters within consultation processes and within the transition as a whole. This could signify that the aim of leaving no one behind will not be met.

3.1 Has an inclusive participatory process been ensured (so no one is left behind)?

The partnership principle has been introduced into the just transition process to ensure an inclusive and participatory process. The partnership should be developed in accordance with the code of conduct established by the European Commission. A wide variety of stakeholders, such as regional and local authorities, economic and social partners, civil societies, NGOs, research institutions and universities, should be involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the just transition process.

In a recent report [Just transition in 7 central and eastern European countries](#), we have identified that there is insufficient and difficult access to resources for energy transformative investments, a lack of capacity to develop good solutions and positive projects and the political will is not very abundant among local, regional and national authorities for introducing more systemic change. If we want to avoid investments in unsustainable solutions, it is essential to ensure the availability of funding from various financial instruments in the just transition regions, but also to develop the political will to introduce climate and environmental change among politicians and authorities coordinating the transition process on the local, regional and national level.

3.2 Have relevant stakeholders with a quieter voice been included in the process?

A large variety of local and regional actors should be included in shaping the future of the just transition regions. Special attention should be paid to active inclusion of stakeholders that have a quieter voice and whose needs have tended to be much less heard in previous phases of the process.

For example, gender-related strategies need to be introduced meaningfully into the just transition process. As a recommendation, more pressure should be put on including projects for dealing with gender-related social and economic issues, typical for most regions that have a history of an economy based on heavy industry. As most projects and discussions focus on providing alternative jobs for the men employed in the relevant sectors in just transition regions, more attention should be paid to the women, for example in administrative jobs linked to the mining and energy sector or who had previously depended on their husband's salary to support the family. Another already identified group would be the young, who have been shown to be an important

target group of just transition processes, but have nonetheless frequently been omitted from the consultation processes.

Women and the young are nevertheless only some examples of groups that may be in a disadvantaged position within the process. Many others require pro-active measures to ensure that they are included in the process and their needs are addressed. Depending on the specific circumstances in the region, this might include people suffering from energy poverty, representatives of rural communities or groups residing at a greater distance from the regional centres, ethnically and linguistically differing groups, people with lower education levels, the elderly, people with limited access to the internet, etc.

CASE STUDY: *The Ida-Viru County in Estonia is an example of the successful engagement of the young in the drafting of the Territorial Just Transition Plans. A citizen assembly organised by the local NGO Rohetiiger eventually led to 26 feedback proposals from the youth on the consolidated draft. What is more, as more than 70% of the County's population are native Russian speakers, the assembly has linguistic facilities for both Estonian and Russian speakers, which has ensured the full inclusion of all people living in the region regardless of the language they speak.*

3.3 Has local and regional capacity been developed to ensure a more inclusive process?

In the face of widespread lack of capacity in the just transition region to deal with the complexity of the process, one of the most important issues faced as we enter the project implementation phase involves ensuring that everyone has the same opportunity to have a project funded through the Just Transition Fund.

As shown in a recent report commissioned by Bankwatch [Just transition in 7 central and eastern European countries](#), some of the main challenges have been the lack of capacity among small stakeholders and the related unavailability of capacity-building activities targeting them. While the public participation process was meant to be open and inclusive, it seems that it was only able to mobilise a limited amounts of local stakeholders, NGOs, municipalities and citizens-interest groups. This might be caused by the fact that many local stakeholders do not have the necessary knowledge, information and expertise to meaningfully contribute to the process.

Some ideas for addressing this issue include the following:

- Tailor-made capacity-building activities provided for a wide range of smaller stakeholders.
- Local and regional information campaigns and centres organised to increase the involvement of smaller stakeholders (municipalities, local businesses, small and medium-sized enterprises, local NGOs, energy communities, etc.).
- Better targeted support and aid in preparing projects provided to smaller stakeholders.

3.4 Has a good project selection process been ensured?

The participatory process of preparing project proposal calls, the projects themselves and project selection can have similar features as the one for creating the Territorial Just Transition Plans. Good project selection

involves ensuring that the process is transparent and based on clear and well-informed criteria resulting from the various conducted analyses and diagnoses of the region. A wide representation of relevant stakeholders in the decision-making and appraisal bodies should be ensured.

The project selection criteria should be set out in the implementation documents, and they should be consistent with the relevant plans and analyses prepared for the region, indicating what priority projects will be supported to enable achieving the expected results. The assessment process should also be described in the implementation documents and designed in such a way that enables making well-informed and objective decisions on which projects meet the criteria and can receive funding. Appraisal criteria should be made publicly available and easily accessible to all interested applicants. Support should be provided to applicants so that interesting projects can be put forward even by stakeholders that have less experience with proposing projects in such a form.

CASE STUDY: *The START technical assistance provided by the European Commission's Platform for coal regions in transition developed [project selection criteria](#) for the Irish Midlands (a peat region that is eligible for funding from the Just Transition Mechanism).*

The selection criteria are to ensure that the following types of proposals are eligible for funding. Those that:

- *Best align with the aims of a just transition process (i.e., support economic development, social development, energy transition and environmental rehabilitation in relevant affected communities and groups).*
- *Have evident merit and applicability and which are realisable.*
- *Demonstrate the viability of the project and programme.*

Interestingly, the publication focuses on providing selection criteria for community-led projects or those that aim to assist affected communities and groups.

In addition, within the Just Transition Platform, which was created in the first place to support various stakeholders in accessing available support, the European Commission is planning to develop a database of projects and experts and to set up a network for the Member States, regions and stakeholders where they can share views and good practices and help to create a sustainable pipeline of projects.

3.5 Has good governance over the implementation phase been ensured?

In order to ensure good governance during the implementation phase, there has to be a clear, transparent and logical structure of the project implementation phase. While in point 3.4, there is a discussion of the initial project appraisal and selection stage, this has to be closely followed by on-going project monitoring and ex post evaluation of the progress of specific projects and of the entire process.

If we want to **ensure good monitoring of the projects**, it is important that the monitoring body be made up of a wide variety of representatives of different stakeholders, who will focus their attention on various aspects of the project implementation. In addition, stakeholders from outside this body should also be provided with

opportunities to voice their feedback on the project implementation process. Furthermore, easy access to all relevant information concerning project progress has to be ensured on a regular basis for all interested parties, fostering accountability. The monitoring body should have a clear scope of activities and responsibilities, and be run in a transparent and structured manner. It is also necessary that there be clear decision-making procedures, ensuring accountability.

Another important aspect of implementation governance is **ongoing evaluation of the entire process and its specific stages**, keeping in mind that the just transition of such regions will last years if not decades, with new funding options probably being made available along the way. It is necessary to set clear indicators that can show whether progress is being made in reaching the goals set in the Territorial Just Transition Plans. Project stream-lining should be adjusted to address ongoing analyses of the process, with attention being paid to what can be done to better answer the needs of the region as the situation changes and time passes.

Conclusions

As just transition for Europe moves forward, the opportunity to make the most of it should not be wasted. In recognising the importance of focusing on specific territories, the European Union has already committed to addressing the needs of those communities that will be most affected. Now, upon entering the project implementation phase, it is even more important to ensure that transitioning regions are heading toward climate neutrality in a socially just way. In many countries, it is also an opportunity for the ambition of the actual implementation phase to exceed the strategies foreseen in the Territorial Just Transition Plans. For many of us wanting to influence the process and ensure that its goals are reached, it is important to know what aspects of the process to follow, and we hope that this checklist will help in doing that.

Climate neutrality and maximum economic and social benefits for residents must be the priorities of the transition, and they must go hand in hand to ensure that the process is supported by society. This is also the only way that we can ensure a better future for us all. In focusing on regions, we must ensure that everything possible is done to align the plans with international climate and environmental goals, inclusive planning is fostered with all stakeholders, acceptable and relevant projects are defined and selected for implementation, and the impacts and progress of the process are monitored. This checklist can help to ensure that as we move into the implementation phase the right measures and commitments are included to ensure that the energy transition happens and leaves no one behind.

The checklist

1. CLIMATE NEUTRALITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT		
1.1	Will the carbon-intensive industries in the region be phased out on time?	
1.2	Do the plans and projects for the region synchronize with national-level decarbonization strategies?	
1.3	Have comprehensive decarbonization plans been prepared for the region?	
1.4	Are the environmental impacts of the proposed just transition projects adequately assessed?	
1.5	Has an assessment been prepared of the environmental impacts of the industries being phased out?	
2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT		
2.1	Will employment opportunities be secured for people losing their jobs?	
2.2	Are the issues of various vulnerable groups being addressed?	
2.3	Do the projects address the issues faced by women?	
2.4	Do the projects address the needs of the young?	
2.5	Has economic redevelopment actually been ensured?	
3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION		
3.1	Has an inclusive participatory process been ensured (so no one is left behind)?	
3.2	Have relevant stakeholders with a quieter voice been included in the process?	
3.3	Has local and regional capacity been developed to ensure a more inclusive process?	
3.4	Has a good project selection process been ensured?	
3.5	Has good governance over the implementation phase been ensured?	

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