



Towards a comparable carbon footprint for local initiatives: The FP7 project TESS

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TESS (Towards European Societal Sustainability – www.tess-transition.eu) is a three-year, European-wide research project. It aims to reach an understanding of the potential for community-led initiatives to help deliver a truly sustainable, low-carbon future. Transitions to low-carbon societies take place at multiple and complementary scales. Transition processes are highly dependent on the innovative potential of community-based initiatives and their articulation with appropriate institutional architecture. Community-based initiatives are potentially more adaptable and less constrained by current structural circumstances than top-down policies and can give impetus to large-scale and technology driven changes.

TESS will provide an understanding on the upscaling possibilities of such high-potential community-based initiatives by addressing two main questions: What is the impact of community-based initiatives in terms of carbon reduction potential and economic effect? What institutional structures (values, policies and mechanisms) support these initiatives in persisting beyond the initial phase and moving into an acceleration phase, spreading desired impacts? Answers will be provided through (1) a novel measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) framework for benchmarking community-based initiatives. This will enable quantifiable, comparable and standardised evaluation, and (2) the identification of success factors for the emergence, persistence and diffusion of promising initiatives, including online initiatives. We will identify these initiatives through case studies across regions and sectors and produce a systemic understanding of their impact on societal transitions towards sustainability. Our research will be integrated and transdisciplinary, with the unique opportunity to bring together social and natural scientists to foster a transition towards European societal sustainability. Our work will feed into and extend the Climate Adapt database to facilitate reconciliation of mitigation and adaptation and connect to Europe wide evaluation approaches such as the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) of the Rural Development Programmes.

The poster will show the current state of the initiative selection process and of the method development.