FITTER-EU

May 2026

Newsletter #3

Communication and collaboration with different stakeholder groups are central to the FITTER-EU project and are been pursued along two main directions in FITTER-EU. By the end of the second year, the Horizon Europe project organized a series of stakeholder workshops and established a scenario-building process that resulted in exploratory future scenarios in key sectors: agriculture and food, energy, transport and mobility, and housing and the built environment.

Stakeholders Driving and Benefiting from FITTER-EU

Trade unions and civil society organizations

- **How they contribute:** Support the identification of inequalities, engage vulnerable communities, and strengthen social dialogue around the twin transition.
- **How they benefit:** Gain access to evidence, policy insights, and practical tools to better advocate for fairer digital and green policies for workers and communities.

Public authorities and policymakers

- **How they contribute:** Shape policies based on scientific analysis and feedback from civil society (including disadvantaged groups), contribute to training actions and assess the FITTER digital ecosystem to support inclusive transition strategies.
- **How they benefit:** Gain access to the FITTER digital ecosystem, which helps identify social risks early and supports more effective and socially just policymaking.

Research organizations and academia

- **How they contribute:** Develop methodologies, analyze inequalities, and support future scenario modelling and impact assessment.
- **How they benefit:** Collaborate in an innovative European research ecosystem focused on climate justice, inclusion, and the twin transition.

Domain experts

- **How they contribute:** Provide expertise through workshops, interviews, and consultations to refine scenarios and identify emerging socio-economic risks.
- **How they benefit:** Contribute directly to shaping policy recommendations and future-oriented solutions for Europe's green and digital transformation.

Disadvantaged and vulnerable groups

- **How they contribute:** Share lived experiences and participate in co-creation activities to ensure real societal challenges are reflected in FITTER-EU outcomes.
- **How they benefit:** Help shape policies and mitigation measures designed to reduce inequalities and avoid exclusion during the twin transition.

Private sector actors and business angels

- **How they contribute:** Share perspectives on innovation, investment, and sustainable business development through stakeholder consultations and workshops.
- **How they benefit:** Gain access to foresight scenarios, policy intelligence, and opportunities to develop more resilient and socially responsible business models.

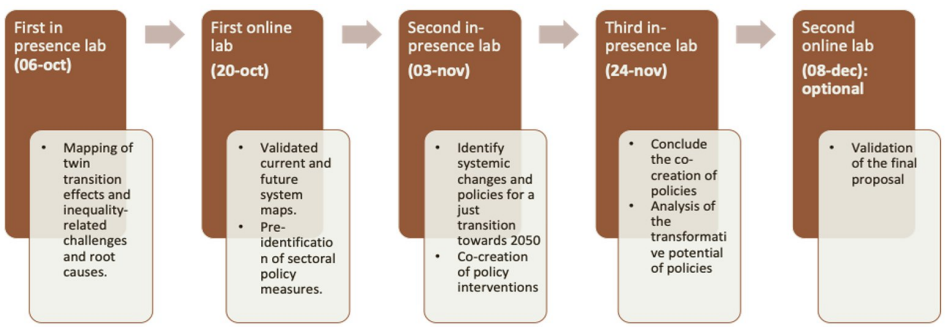
FITTER-EU DIGITAL PLATFORM

Co-Creation Process

The FITTER-EU co-creation process was conducted in six countries – Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Spain, focusing on energy, housing, transport, and agriculture with each country addressing two sectors. The process took place through a series of five 'lab' meetings per country, combining in-person and online formats, with 15-20 representatives of disadvantaged groups and policymakers in each lab.

Two validation sessions were held as part of the methodology: the first validated system maps after the initial in-person lab, and the second validated the final lab proposals and overall project outcomes.

These sessions primarily involved policymakers and policy experts who had not participated in the co-creation process, though lab participants could also attend. Each session included presentations, group discussions, and plenary sessions guided by structured questions to collect feedback.



Twin Transition Challenges Identified

Energy Sector

Across all countries, affordability constraints, energy poverty, and limited access to subsidies were identified as central barriers, disproportionately affecting low-income, vulnerable, and digitally excluded households. Structural issues in housing, including the landlord-tenant divide and market-driven policies, limit tenants' ability to participate in energy modernization or join energy communities. Policy and governance gaps, including institutional fragmentation, regulatory inconsistencies, and weak alignment with socio-economic realities, were highlighted as major obstacles to equitable energy transitions. Additional challenges include market distortions, insufficient infrastructure, limited technical capacity, environmental pressures and geopolitical influences on energy policy.

Housing Sector

Across involved countries unequal access to housing and homeownership was identified as a key barrier, disproportionately affecting low-income, precariously employed, and vulnerable groups. Tenants face limited access to modernization and sustainability incentives, while high rents and housing costs drive spatial displacement, longer commutes, and increased car dependency. Policy and governance gaps, including frequent regulatory changes, underfunding, restrictive funding eligibility criteria for disadvantaged groups, and weak coordination, undermine housing security, affordability, and access to climate-friendly infrastructure. Moreover, unequal access to technologies, inefficient housing stock, and environmental pressures further exacerbate inequities and limit progress toward sustainable and inclusive housing outcomes.

Transport Sector

Across involved countries, a structural tension between public and private transport underpins transport inequalities, with underinvestment in public transport reinforcing car dependency and limiting access for those without private vehicles. Public transport gaps, particularly in rural and peripheral areas, constrain access to employment, education, healthcare, and social services, exacerbating territorial and social inequalities. Governance and infrastructural shortcomings, including fragmented planning and insufficient attention to accessibility and inclusion, further undermine equitable mobility. Electrification strategies and EV incentives tend to benefit higher-income households limiting the effectiveness of a fair and sustainable transition.

Agriculture Sector

A structural tension between decarbonization, regulatory compliance, and technological modernization is reshaping the sector in the involved countries, with rising investment and administrative burdens disproportionately affecting smaller farms and accelerating their risk of exclusion from value chains. At the same time, increasing environmental and cost pressures drive producers to reduce labour costs, often reinforcing reliance on precarious and low-paid work, particularly among migrant workers who face limited social protection and barriers to reporting exploitation. Limited access to finance, skills gaps, and overlapping certification demands further constrain smaller producers' competitiveness, while the benefits of innovation and sustainability transitions remain unevenly distributed.

Identified Disadvantaged Groups (DGs)

DGs Housing and Built Environment	DGs Agriculture and Food	DGs Energy	DGs Transportation
Low-income and housing-insecure households	Small- and medium-scale farmers with limited resources	Low-income and energy-poor households	Low-income and transport-poor households
Older adults and digitally excluded individuals	Older farmers and farmers with limited digital skills	Workers affected by the energy transition	Rural and infrastructure-constrained populations
Rural and geographically vulnerable populations	Farmers in environmentally or structurally vulnerable areas	Older adults and individuals with limited energy or digital literacy	Workers affected by the mobility transition
Construction sector workers, particularly low-skilled workers	Agricultural workers in precarious conditions	Socially vulnerable groups	Communities exposed to environmental impacts of mobility supply chains
	Young and new entrants to farming	Small and local energy actors	

Results of Co-creation Process

The co-creation process produced two types of policy approaches. (i) Adaptations of existing policies mainly involve regulatory and economic instruments, while (ii) new policy proposals often combining multiple instruments in integrated packages to enable systemic or structural change. Overall, the lab outputs reflect a dual logic: incremental adjustments within established frameworks and transformative, multi-instrument approaches designed to address complex sectoral challenges.

Across the six national labs, the co-created policy portfolios frame the twin green and digital transition primarily as a social, distributive, and institutional transformation, rather than a purely technological one. Despite differences in political and administrative contexts, participants consistently raised concerns that existing transition policies, such as subsidy schemes, market incentives, and regulatory frameworks, risk reinforcing social inequalities by disproportionately benefiting higher-income households, property owners, or established market actors. Consequently, many proposals emphasize greater social differentiation, progressive cost allocation, and targeted support for vulnerable groups.

Sectors	DE	ES	HU	IE	IT	PT	Total
Energy	5	8	1	2	12	4	31
Housing	7	0	0	1	0	2	10
Transport	0	10	1	0	9	0	20
Energy & Housing	0	0	1	6	1	2	10
Transport & Energy	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Energy & Housing & Transport	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Others	0	0	8	0	0	0	8
Total (Policy Proposals)	12	18	12	10	22	8	81

A further priority is to integrate inclusive and accessible design principles proactively into policymaking. Rather than expecting households and communities to navigate complex systems, proposals frequently call for simplified procedures and enrolment mechanisms, local support structures, and measures to reduce financial and administrative barriers. At the same time, national Labs' approaches show distinct emphases: Germany focuses on redistribution within established liberalised market systems; Ireland and Portugal prioritise expanding accessibility within existing schemes; Italy addresses structural inefficiencies in market design and implementation capacity; Hungary explores broader institutional reforms embedding sustainability across governance structures; and Spain combines redistributive tariff design with fiscal stabilisation measures.

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