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Prepared by: Pedro Dias (SHE)

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ABBREVIATIONS

ETIP: European Technology and Innovation Platform

EU: European Union

H&C: Heating and Cooling

HWG: Horizontal Working Group

IWG: Implementation Working Group

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

R&I: Research & Innovation

RES-HC: Renewable heating and cooling

RHC ETIP: European Technology and Innovation Platform on Renewable Heating and Cooling

SET-Plan - Strategic Energy Technologies Plan

SSH - Social sciences and humanities

TP: technology Panel

WG: working group

PARTNERS

EUREC: the Association of European Renewable Energy Research Centre

Bioenergy Europe (formerly known as AEBIOM: Association Européenne pour la Biomasse)

EGEC: European Geothermal Energy Council

EHP: Euroheat & Power

Solar Heat Europe/ESTIF: Solar Heat Europe/European Solar Thermal Industry Federation

EHPA: European Heat Pump Association

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Author: Pedro Dias – Solar Heat Europe/ESTIF

Collaborators: Andrej Misech – EUREC, Alexandra Sutu – Solar Heat Europe/ESTIF, Philippe Dumas – EGEC, Jack Corscadden – EHP, Dan Stefanica – EHPA, Céline Suchet – EUREC, Irene di Padua – Bioenergy Europe

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1. Introduction

The heating and cooling sector is crucial to the decarbonization of the energy system. Approximately fifty percent of the final energy used annually in Europe is used to generate heat or cold for residential, commercial, or industrial reasons. The vast majority (about 80 percent) of this energy demand is satisfied by the combustion of fossil fuels such as oil, gas, and coal, with significant environmental consequences, including greenhouse gas emissions and supply security problems.

Today, the social, environmental, and economic implications of climate change emphasise the importance of transitioning to a new, more sustainable energy future. In light of the goals outlined in international agreements, as well as the European Union's own climate and energy goals, it is clear that the heating & cooling sector plays a key role in addressing the climate change challenge. Despite its evident significance, heating & cooling did not receive the appropriate consideration for an exceedingly long time; this has only recently begun to alter.

The European Union has designated this sector as a new priority with its Heating & Cooling Strategy (2015), which is also reflected in the current SET Plan framework. Also, all EU energy scenarios include a very substantial contribution from the heating and cooling sector to the achievement of the energy and climate protection targets set out in Directive 2018/2001/EU on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, which represents an unparalleled action in the recognition of the importance of the decarbonisation of the heating and cooling sector and the need to take stronger measures at the European and national level to achieve this.

Nevertheless, considerably more should be done to build the regulatory environment to successfully support the heat transition, to promote research and innovation, and even more so to speed the widespread deployment of renewable and energy-efficient heating and cooling technology.

The European Technology and Innovation Platform on Renewable Heating and Cooling (RHC-ETIP) is an essential player in this process. Today, the RHC-ETIP brings together over a thousand partners from more than sixty countries, representing all renewable energy solutions for heating and cooling, from industry, research, and the public sector in Europe. The RHC-ETIP assembles stakeholders from the biomass, geothermal, solar thermal, heat pump, district heating and cooling, thermal storage, and hybrid systems sectors.

Therefore, it is a unique ETIP that encompasses all renewable heating and cooling solutions. In the past, the RHC-ETIP has been instrumental in raising the profile of the renewable heating and cooling sector by publishing a set of common documents defining the sector's strategic research directions and project ideas to be implemented in order to increase the proportion of renewable energy in the heating and cooling sector.

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This work requires the engagement of a large array of stakeholders, and industrial sectors. This necessitates a specific effort from RHC-ETIP addressing the gradual incorporation of external players into the RHC-overall ETIP's activities¹.

Engagement with stakeholders is an inclusive approach undertaken in connection to RHC-ETIP. It promotes the formation of robust and constructive ties between platform participants, decision-makers, and experts from other related sectors. This effort fosters interaction to effectively manage and exploit the results of the platform's activity, allowing for the collection of feedback on the developed documents and assuring a transparent and thorough dissemination of results.

This Final Strategy for Engagement take into consideration the previous planning work expressed in the Draft Engagement strategy², building on the work done preparing the stakeholder's database³ and the feedbacks from coordinators of the Technology Panels (TPs) and Horizontal Working Groups (HWGs). The overall objective of this specific work is to devise a strategy on how to include relevant stakeholders and decision-makers and involve them in the platform's work in an effective way. This specific deliverable also defines a consistent approach for the validation and dissemination of all the documents produced within the platform.

The strategy is divided in two levels:

- one internal, involving the members of the platform and in particular its Technology Platforms (TPs) and Horizontal Working Groups (HWGs);
- and one external, to engage policymakers and other key actors at EU, national and local level in the work of the platform.

Therefore, the strategy addresses both experts that are already involved in the RHC-ETIP, and stakeholders from related sectors and national administrations that are not directly part of the platform.

The present document represents a guideline for the future work of the platform with regards to its engagement strategy. It assessed the State-of-Affairs, the work done in recent years and indicates actions to pursue in the future.

2. Engagement Objectives

The following draft stakeholder engagement strategy will ensure the involvement of key actors in the work of the RHC-ETIP, providing additional inputs and raising awareness on the challenges tackled by the platform. The specific goals of the engagement strategy are:

¹ SecRHC, H2020 grant agreement No 825998, Work Package 3: Members' and Stakeholders' engagement

² D3.3 Draft Strategy for Engagement

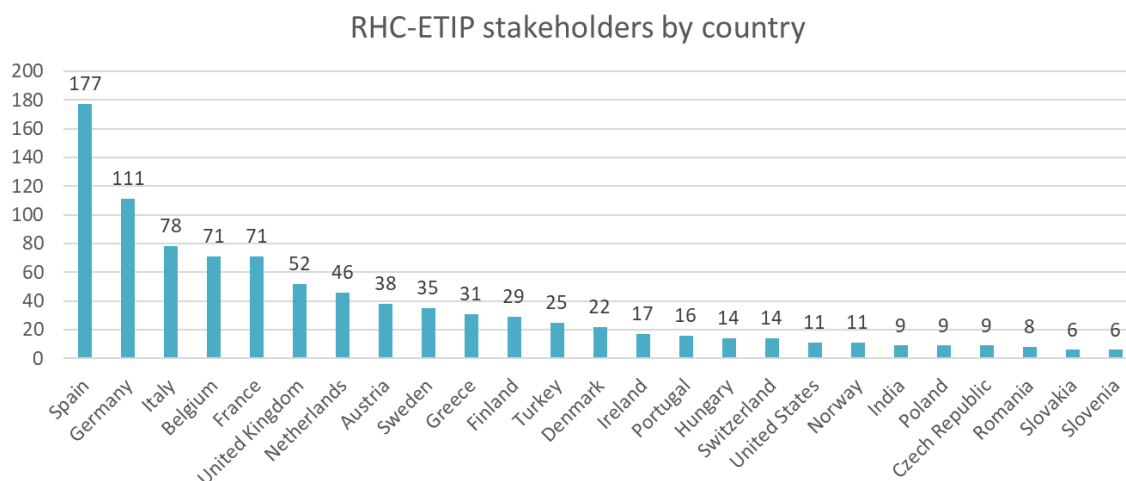
³ D3.2 Contact database of relevant stakeholders

- gathering inputs from the TPs and HWGs through internal consultations, in order to develop strategic documents (namely the Vision, the R&I priorities, the development agenda and all relevant outputs produced by the RHC-ETIP);
- facilitating open and regular dialogue between the RHC ETIP and various stakeholders' groups, including policymakers, industry and energy-related organisations and the general public;
- sharing project's results with a broader public and different targeted sector;
- Building a community of experts and relevant stakeholders to support the decarbonisation of the heating and cooling sector;
- supporting the communication and dissemination activities, by providing ongoing information on the platform activities to the targeted audience and disseminating project results in an open and transparent way.

3. State-of-Affairs

3.1 Current membership of RHC-ETIP

The total number of members of RHC-ETIP has been growing and, by June 2022, there were 1034 RHC-ETIP members from 65 countries (the graph below shows a breakdown of the most popular countries).



Most stakeholders come from industry (420), research and academia (361), followed by NGOs (74) and public authorities (57).

3.2 Key stakeholders

The first step in the definition of the engagement strategy was the identification of relevant actors. Stakeholders can be identified as individuals or organisations (public or private), who are concerned with project activities. Key stakeholders, both at national and international level, were previously

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identified through a consultation process internal to the platform, resulting in a stakeholder database (D3.2 Contact database of relevant stakeholders).

EHP and SHE/ESTIF coordinated this mapping exercise and selected relevant stakeholders. The objective of this task was to identify all relevant actors to disseminate the positions and proposals of the RHC-ETIP at national and international level.

With regards to the national and local levels, EHP gathered key actors within national and local administrations and energy agencies, along with other national technology platforms and heating and cooling stakeholders. This comprehensive analysis fed into a database of national stakeholders, which can be involved in the work of the platform.

In particular, the list of identified actors has been and will continue to be used as a basis for organising several national roundtables with representatives of EU Member States, and to foster their active participation and contribution in providing feedback to the platform outputs.

The database of national stakeholders includes, among others:

- technology-related national associations;
- national energy agencies;
- energy and climate ministries and other relevant local authorities;
- research institutes and universities;
- other national organisations relevant for the heating and cooling sector.

With regards to the international level, Solar Heat Europe/ESTIF coordinated the work of the other project partners to map and select international actors to be included in the database of European and international stakeholders. Among them:

- Other ETIPs such as the ones on deep geothermal and bioenergy;
- Heating and cooling *fora*, such as the Renewable Heating and Cooling Alliance;
- Stakeholders from “client” sectors, such as construction, heat networks, industrial, etc.;
- Local authorities’ international organisations;
- International consultancies;
- Environmental think tank (E3G, CEPS, EPC and Bruegel) and NGO networks.

3.3 Achieved results

To make a strategy effective, it is of key importance to monitor and report on the results. All consultation and dissemination activities have been documented and that shall continue in the future.

The monitoring and reporting of results of the engagement activities was conducted in several ways and in various occasions. For example, a quantitative approach was used to monitor the participation in key events, such as the annual conferences or national roundtables. Another example is to assess the number of openings on each newsletter and the overall number of annual new subscription for the biannual newsletter of the platform. Other two key indicators are related to the new RHC-ETIP website, and the RHC-ETIP twitter account. The number of visits to the

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website or, with regards to the twitter account of the RHC-ETIP, the annual increase of followers will be used as a performance indicator.

The overall results were extremely positive, with several items indicating an excellent performance. this was the case for the numbers of subscribers for the newsletter, new followers for the social media accounts, the visitors to the website, and participation in ad hoc webinars. with regard to the annual conference, the number of opens to the specific newsletter also had a satisfactory performance.

The main shortcoming what is the attendance two public events such as the annual conferences and the national roundtables. The average number of participants was ninety, which is below the target, and is therefore considered a poor result.

Opportunities for engagement	Monitoring & Tracking	Indicators	Results	Value
Public events	Annual conference, national roundtables, thematic workshops	Number of participants	<div>< 100 = poor</div> <div>100 - 150 = good</div> <div>> 150 = excellent</div>	90 (Aver.)
Regular contact	Newsletter	Number of annual subscribers	<div>< 50 = poor</div> <div>> 50 = good</div> <div>> 100 = excellent</div>	+173 (Aver. new)
Annual conference	Newsletter	Number of opens	<div>5% - 22% = poor</div> <div>23% - 50% = good</div> <div>> 50% = excellent</div>	29,33% (Aver.)
Communication campaigns	Twitter and social media report	Annual number of new followers	<div>< 50 = poor</div> <div>50-100 = good</div> <div>> 100 = excellent</div>	149 (Aver. New)
Regular communication	Website	Number of visits per month	<div>< 1000 = poor</div> <div>1000 - 2000 = good</div> <div>> 2000 + = excellent</div>	3148 (aver. unique.)
Ad hoc communication	Webinars	Number of participants	<div>< 20 = poor</div> <div>20-25 = good</div> <div>> 25 = excellent</div>	70 (aver.)

Table 3.1 List of opportunities for engagement, monitoring methods and results evaluation.

The successful engagement of stakeholders relies on a regular process of interaction from the different structures within the platform (Board, executive committee, horizontal working groups, technology panels). This included the active participation in meetings and events organised by the ETIP or its subgroups, or through the dissemination of results and strategic documents.

Another aspect to consider is the interaction with relevant players and the engagement with external processes. This is reflected in terms of processes launched by the RHC-ETIP, engaging members of the platform and/or external stakeholders. Below are listed (non-exhaustively) some examples of such processes.

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Internal Processes	Type	Timing
Monitoring of the RHC Technology Roadmaps	Consultation	Q1 2019
Vision to 2050: the vision for RHC in Europe	Consultation	Q2 2019
District's Vision	Consultation	Q3 2019
RHC ETIP Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda	Event	Q2 2020
Survey on RD&I trends and priorities	Survey	Q2 2021
SRIA DHC & TES	Consultation	Q2 2021
RHC ETIP's 100% RHC	Event	Q3 2021
Survey on EU-funding	Survey	Q1 2022
Position on Hydrogen	Consultation	Q2 2022

Table 3.2 Examples of internal engagement processes

In addition, RHC-ETIP and its structures (Board, HWGs, TPs) also engaged in different processes externally. Commonly this also includes an internal consultation with the members of the structures involved. For instance, the input paper on solar thermal for the Clean Energy Transition Partnership, involved a longer internal process, including consultation with the experts from the panel and final approval of the document in the panel. Below are listed (non-exhaustively) examples of such actions.

Third-Party Processes	Type	Timing
Built4People Partnership's SRIA	Consultation	Q2 2020
Public consultation on the Renovation Wave initiative	Consultation	Q2 2020
Stakeholder Consult. Renewed Sustainable Finance Strategy	Consultation	Q2 2020
Clean Energy Transition Partnership - Input paper	Consultation	Q4 2020
Positive Energy Districts	Consultation	Q1 2021
Energy Performance of Buildings Directive	Consultation	Q1 2021
Clean Energy Transition Partnership - Research Priorities	Consultation	Q1 2021
Competitiveness Progress Report 2021	Survey	Q2 2021
SET-plan IWG5 targets	Consultation	Q2 2021
SET-plan review	Consultation	Q2 2022

Table 3.3 Examples of third-party processes in which RHC-ETIP engaged

In addition, there were several external representations that were coordinated from the different RHC-ETIP internal structures (Board, HWGs, TPs). The most relevant and common out of these was the participation of members of the platform in SET-plan implementing working groups and on Horizon Europe partnerships., though these would involve also other *fora*. Below are listed (non-exhaustively) examples of such representations.

- SET-Plan IWG 1 and 2 - Deep Geothermal
- SET-Plan IWG - Solar Thermal Electricity
- SET-Plan IWG3.2 – Positive Energy Districts
- SET-Plan IWG 4 - Smart Energy Systems
- SET-Plan IWG5 - Buildings

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- SET-Plan IWG 6 - Energy Efficiency in Industry
- SET-Plan IWG 8 - Renewable fuels and bioenergy
- Horizon Europe Partnership - Clean Energy Transition
- Horizon Europe Partnership - Built 4 People (B4P)
- Horizon Europe Partnership - Driving urban transitions to a sustainable future (DUT)
- Study on Net Zero 2050 Buildings
- Programme Committee of RES-HC related events
- Advisory Bodies of EC co-funded projects or studies

Different representatives of the platform, from horizontal working groups or technology panels, would make the linkage with the IWGs or the partnerships. The contribution from the different structures of the platform included technology inputs papers, inputs to SRIAs, contribution to discussion on R&I priorities and proposals for Horizon Europe.

In terms of the cooperation with other entities, one of the main highlights was the development of a joint paper between RHC-ETIP and ETIP-SNET, with the involvement of different structures of the Platform. This work culminated in the “White paper on Coupling of Heating & Cooling and Electricity Sectors in a Renewable Energy Driven Europe.”

3.4 Points for improvement

The analysis of the state of affairs indicates some points that should be improved in terms of the development of the strategy for engagements for RHC-ETIP. There are two main elements that is required attention and specific action:

- the necessity of increasing the outreach and the interaction with the national level;
- The needs to adapt to a new research and innovation ecosystem in Europe.

- **Interaction at national level**

RHC-ETIP pioneered an innovative approach among ETIPs in the energy sector by supporting the cooperation of varied, market-competing technologies to operate on the same technology platform, therefore identifying synergies and common difficulties. This approach is not yet mirrored at the national level, where, in most countries, technology platforms are mainly covering one single technology. There are also other aspects to consider, namely that often national stakeholders do not feel engaged with processes and discussions at European level, not to mention the challenges arising from language skill issues. These and other aspects need to be taken into account, though it is clear that should be a priority for RHC-ETIP to increase the interaction with stakeholders at national level.

- **Interaction at European level**

The new research and innovation ecosystem at European level entails a new role for technology platforms such as RHC-ETIP. The engagement of experts from this platform in structures such as the Clean Energy Transition Partnership; Driving Urban Transitions Partnership; Built for People Partnership, SET-Plan IWG 5 on Buildings or SET-Plan IWG 3.2

on Positive Energy Districts demonstrate the need for improved communication and coordination. An effective cooperation as well as streamlining the coordination of the platforms representatives in external bodies will be essential for the effectiveness of the work performed by RHC-ETIP and its members.

4. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The development of the engagement strategy is an ongoing process. Therefore, the current strategy shall evolve over time, in order to integrate new developments and ideas that can better explore engagement opportunities and actions. It should take place regularly and review the main stakeholders, revisiting the mapping exercise in relation to stakeholders' groups, events, political processes and other relevant timings. The process to enhance their engagement will consider several factors, such as common interests and potential synergies.

4.1 Method of engagement and timing

The main processes for interaction with stakeholders include regular communication, *ad hoc* consultation activities or specific meetings. Depending on the type of information and work to be conducted, engagement actions can be addressed to a restricted audience or a more widespread targeted group. The engagement can be done at different levels of the platform and stakeholders' can be engaged:

- by the RHC-ETIP as a whole, for example during events like the annual conference or through regular contacts as the biannual newsletter and ad hoc webinars;
- on specific documents involving several TPs and HWGs. Examples of such documents include the 2050 Vision⁴, the R&I priorities or the RHC-ETIP SRIA⁵
- on technological roadmaps and sector specific documents developed by the TPs or the HWGs⁶.

Different stakeholders' groups must be engaged in diverse ways, considering their interests, political relevance, and the need for synergies and technological complementarities. The engagement can take place during the drafting process of strategic documents, or once they are already finalised.

Consultation during the drafting of documents

Representatives from the EU institutions or experts from targeted sectors shall be involved in the preparation of strategic documents: e.g., consulting the European Commission DG RTD for inputs on the 2050 Vision; conducting internal consultations with the experts in the HWGs; opening call

⁴ 2050 vision for 100% renewable heating and cooling in Europe, [RHC-ETIP 2019](#)

⁵ Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for Climate-neutral heating and cooling in Europe, [RHC-ETIP 2022](#)

⁶ SRIAs

for interests to obtain additional inputs from external experts. The organisation of *ad hoc* webinars is advised to discuss the draft documents with external stakeholders before they are finalised.

Consultation on finalised documents

The consultation process can also take place once the documents have already been drafted, and external stakeholders will be asked to provide comments and feedback, for instance through an open consultation on the document. Other ETIPs, such as “ETIP-DG” (deep geothermal) and “ETIP Bioenergy,” will also be consulted, given their technical expertise. After the finalisation of the strategic document, a broader audience, involving, among other, representatives of national administration, will be involved in the dissemination of results through different channels including social media, targeted emails campaign and press releases.

4.2 Type of interaction and engagement activities

The type of interactions and engagement activities differs substantially from the internal to the external process, given that different actors are involved at different timings and for different purposes.

Internal Engagement

Internal engagement processes shall target mostly experts from the TPs and HWGs, registered to the platform, and the interaction shall take the form of consultations during the drafting of key strategic documents. Table 2.1 lists reasons for the engagement, types of interaction and specific engagement activities which target experts within the RHC-ETIP.

Reason of the engagement	Type of interaction	Engagement activities
Research and Policy relevance	Consultation inputs before the draft	Call for interest Workshops
Potential synergies and/or technological complementarities	Consultation during and before the final draft	Webinars, publications, workshops
Complementary expertise/ multidisciplinary approach	Consultation on the final draft	Ad hoc meetings

Table 4.1 sample type of interaction and engagement activities of the internal process.

External engagement

The concept of external process includes both collecting feedback on the preliminary drafts of strategic documents (through public consultations) and disseminating results once strategic documents are finalised. This process shall apply to all relevant documents produced by the RHC-ETIP. In some cases, when additional expertise is needed (e.g., socio-economic experts), a specific

call for SSH experts can be launched to include them in strategic Horizontal Working Groups (e.g., HWG on Strategic Research and innovation Agenda). The long-term objective is to include this additional expertise in the membership of RHC-ETIP.

Table 4.2 includes the same categorisation used in table 4.1, considering the external dimension of the engagement process.

Reason of the engagement	Type of interaction	Engagement activities
Political relevance	Dissemination of results	Annual conference, social media, publications
Potential synergies and/or technological complementarities	Consultation once the document is finalised and dissemination	Webinars, publications, workshops
Cooperation among ETIPs	Consultation on the document drafting and dissemination of results	Newsletter, ad hoc emails, meetings

Table 4.2, continuation of table 4.1, sample type of interaction and engagement activities on external process.

Objectives and Channels of the engagement

One of the objectives of this strategy is to closely inform national experts on the ongoing work of the RHC-ETIP, to exchange knowledge, best practices, views and receive feedback on the RHC-ETIP expert documents. The overall aim is to ensure that the RHC-ETIP adopts a comprehensive approach and that all relevant actors participate in its work.

Once the strategic documents are finalised into a first draft, they shall be open for consultation, involving both experts from the RHC-ETIP and relevant external stakeholders (including, among others, energy ministries, representatives of the European institutions, and industrial actors). The consultation on the strategic documents will be promoted through different channels: ad hoc emails, social media, website and webinars to present the documents and publicise the open consultation.

The dissemination of results can happen through different channels:

- regular newsletter (every 6 months) including main news from the RHC-ETIP, and the work done within the TPs and HWGs;
- ad hoc communication for regular meetings and event, e.g., RHC-ETIP annual conference;
- national roundtables, be it in a physical meeting or in the form of webinar to present the main outcomes of the platform's work;
- publication and dissemination of the most important documents (Vision 2050; R&I Priorities, Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda);
- regular meetings with key stakeholders (e.g., officials from the EU institutions, national ministries, energy associations);
- calls for expression of interest;
- online and social media communication (website, twitter etc.).

5. Future Actions

In this section we shall address some of the aspects that result from the experience and lessons learned in recent years, defining the proposed approach to be followed in the future regarding the engagement of relevant stakeholders with the platform and vice versa.

5.1 Objectives

It must be borne in mind that one of the main purposes of RHC-ETIP is to increase the profile and the role of renewable heating and cooling technologies in decarbonising the energy system.

Given the complexity of the current challenges and the fact that numerous other actors are similarly concerned by them, RHC-ETIP needs to constitute a strong and sustainable network by establishing a dynamic interface with public authorities across the EU, as well as with EU-level partnerships and stakeholder groups. RHC-ETIP also needs to be enlarged to complementary sectors and new markets.

5.2 Target-groups

Specific outreach, engagement and enlargement tasks shall focus on:

- **Public authorities, policymakers and RHC stakeholders on national level**

RHC-ETIP initiated an innovative approach among ETIPs in the energy sector by promoting the cooperation of diverse technologies, competing in the market, to operate under the same technology platform, finding synergies and shared challenges. RHC-ETIP will function as a catalyst for such initiatives at the national level; it will not take the place of the national players, but rather promote their cooperation through engaging with national technology platforms, industry, academia, researchers in the heating and cooling sector, initially launching a debate about common priorities and later promoting cooperation initiatives. This will be intricately linked to regular national roundtables, which are a proven means to target and engage a variety of stakeholders in different countries. The aim is to encourage active participation of the national level in the work of the RHC-ETIP.

- **Partnerships, EU Missions, IEA TCPs and others**

The overall decarbonisation of the RHC sector requires the involvement of a multitude of different technologies, stakeholders, industrial sectors and partnerships. These must be included in the RHC-ETIP's work to enable a comprehensive approach where stakeholders can provide feedback and input on the holistic challenges tackled by the platform. Some of the involved initiatives could include the Clean Energy Transition Partnership; Driving Urban Transitions Partnership; Built for People Partnership, IWG 5.2 of SET Plan; IWG 3.2 Positive Energy Districts; Mission Innovation Challenge 7; Mission for 100 climate-neutral cities (Mission Board and Mission Assembly); Smart Cities Connect, and IEA Solar Heating & Cooling Programme (IEA-SHC).

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- **Complementary sectors and new markets**

The RHC community needs a broader interaction with new stakeholders (industry, researchers, R&I funding bodies...) and new demand-side markets for the H&C sector: chemical sector, agro-food industry and for the raw materials: cement industry, chemical industry etc. in order to better promote the RHC solutions. Specifically, the RHC-ETIP shall focus on the application of RHC technologies to industries that need low- to medium-temperature heat (< 200°C), and the tertiary sector. The primary focus will be on H&C demand side, on the 'food & drinks' and agriculture sectors, as well as on the industry facilities, the housing sector (i.e., private developers and social housing) and the sourcing and processing of raw materials. This will also help to attract new members to the RHC-ETIP.

- **Other ETIPs**

With the advance of the energy transition in Europe, energy sectors are linking up. The characteristics of RHC technology allow it to play a part in sector integration. It is therefore of high importance to collaborate with other ETIPs, such as ETIP Smart Networks for Energy Transition (SNET), ETIP Photovoltaic (ETIP PV), ETIP Deep Geothermal, ETIP Bioenergy. Some of these collaborations between the different energy-related platforms have already started.

- **Social sciences and humanities (SSH)**

Social sciences and humanities (SSH) play a significant role in increasing the share of renewable technologies for heating and cooling (H&C), as this can only be achieved, if the interconnections of society as a whole are considered. The importance of SSH was highlighted by the work in the horizontal working groups of the existing RHC-ETIP. To further this, a special SSH working group (SSH-WG) shall be established to address the challenges of holistic societal acceptance and use of renewable energy sources for heating and cooling, as well as to ensure effective contribution of SSH disciplines and enhancing societal impacts. RHC-ETIP will cooperate with cross-cutting platforms, such as the European Energy Social Innovation Platform (EESIP)

Bringing together all relevant stakeholders from industry, research organisations, SET Plan countries and beyond will enable the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders and experts in the work of RHC-ETIP, promoting a multidisciplinary approach when dealing with the identified challenges to increase the uptake of renewable technologies in the heating and cooling sector.

5.3 Implementation

The following points result from the assessment of the previous work done within RHC-ETIP, namely on the shortcomings, defining a number of actions to be put in place in order to better achieve the purpose of RHC-ETIP.

- **Act as an interface to national level & public authorities:**

One of the points for improvement identified was the need to have a stronger presence and interaction with the national level. RHC-ETIP shall create a dynamic interface to link itself to public authorities across the European Union. This can be achieved by enhancing the

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cooperation of relevant players at national level, by the interlink between the national and European level and the sharing of experience, views and proposals related to renewable heating and cooling. The aim is to encourage an active participation and contribution of the national level to the work of the RHC-ETIP, in terms of feedback to expert documents and attendance at future events. It shall include:

- Setting up working groups on 'mirror' national RHC fora & promoting interactions between national RHC stakeholders
- Organisation of National roundtables

• Act as an interface to missions and partnerships

The R&I panorama at EU level has altered significantly with the new Multi-year Financial Framework. Therefore, RHC-ETIP needs to adapt to this new reality and ensure a progressive and continuous inclusion of relevant stakeholders' fora, partnership and EU missions in its work. Approaching and holding meetings with relevant stakeholders and partnerships will enable reaching the final objective, which is to make sure that the RHC-ETIP adopts a comprehensive approach where everybody engages in its work. It is therefore essential to ensure the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the work of the Platform. Their expertise can provide additional feedback and input on the holistic challenges tackled by the sector. This involvement should serve both ways, feeding relevant RHC input towards the work of these stakeholders. Some of the initiatives to be involved include the Clean Energy Transition Partnership; Driving Urban Transitions Partnership; Built for People Partnership; Positive Energy Districts; Mission Innovation Challenge 7; Mission for 100 climate-neutral cities (Mission Board and Mission Assembly); Smart Cities Connect, and others.

• Engage new stakeholders in the RHC-ETIP & penetrating new markets

The goal is to develop a strategy, to engage with new stakeholders and new markets for the H&C demand side and to involve them in the ETIP. Specifically, the RHC-ETIP will focus on the application of RHC technologies to industries that are operating within the low to medium temperature heat processes (< 200°C), and tertiary sectors. The primary focus will be on H&C demand side, on the 'food & drinks' and agriculture sectors, as well as on the industry facilities, the housing sector (i.e., private developers and social housing) and the sourcing and processing of raw materials. This will be achieved by preparing all the necessary ETIP materials that would showcase the application of RHC technologies in these sectors (factsheets, reports from all relevant project tasks, etc.) and securing speaking slots at the industry conferences (e.g., CIEX). Moreover, the RHC Annual Conference shall also create an opportunity in this sense, by dedicating a session or a panel discussion on the penetration of RHC technologies in new markets and extend the invitation to the new stakeholders.

• Increase collaboration with other ETIPs

The dynamic of cooperation already established (*vide* cooperation with ETIP-SNET) shall be further pursued. Considering the substantial number of topics and stakeholders, the areas for action shall be prioritised. This has already been subject to internal discussion in RHC-

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ETIP, and the following areas have been identified for collaboration between RHC-ETIP and other ETIPs:

- Preparation of recommendations related to the R&I dimension of the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs);
- The role of RHC in the energy system integration and coming to a collective understanding of the potential for sector integration. A potential topic could be: 'Heating and power: optimising integration of decentralised generation and storage solutions in the energy system' (with ETIP SNET or other ETIPs);
- RHC meeting industrial heating needs (with ETIP Bioenergy, ETIP DG, ESTELA, and others);
- RHC contribution to decarbonisation of building stock. A potential collaboration activity could entail input to the "New European Bauhaus" or the Mission on 100 Climate-neutral cities by 2030 (with ETIP-PV, ECTP, and others)
- Skills and jobs in the RHC sector, for instance contributing with a 'RHC' chapter to a report written with chapters from ETIPs and edited jointly).

These are challenging proposals to be taken into account. While all of them might be difficult to execute, RHC-ETIP should commit to working on at least two joint activities. While today the topics listed above have the support and interest of other ETIPs (and are in line with the priorities identified by the RHC-ETIP Board), the areas may change over time or other topics for joint work might appear more relevant. The form of the collaboration will be a written contribution or a joint event.