

Energize Co2mmunity

Project title: Real-life implementation of renewable community energy projects

Funding Programme: INTERREG VB Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020 Program priority 2 “Efficient management of natural resources”; specific objective 2.2 “To increase production and use of sustainable renewable energy based on the enhanced capacity of public and private organizations involved in energy planning and supply”.

Aim of the project: To support citizens co-finance, co-develop, and co-operate sustainable energy projects.

Project description

Energize Co2mmunity is the real-life implementation of renewable community energy projects in the Baltic Sea Region and continues on the successes achieved by the regular project *Co2mmunity* (#R059). The main objective is to increase the production of renewable energy in the BSR by piloting community energy projects. *Energize Co2mmunity* is the extension stage of the regular project.

Community energy projects offer enhanced production of renewable energy from local sources (wind, solar, biomass, hydropower, geothermal) through active participation of local communities. Together, citizens co-finance, co-develop, and co-operate renewable energy plants, and foster sustainable energy distribution, like local heating networks or biogas filling stations. Through active communication, transparent decision-making, and local benefit sharing CE projects have a high degree of social acceptance. Consequently, fostering community energy projects is highly promising for increasing the share of renewable energy in the Baltic Sea Region.

Energize Co2mmunity partner Riga Planning Region, in cooperation with its associated partner – the municipality of Mārupe will facilitate the implementation of renewable community energy pilot project at Mārupe. The partners are already equipped with competencies and know-how from establishing and running a successful RENCOP (renewable energy cooperation). We have mobilized the local and regional renewable energy stakeholders and developed certain ideas for community energy projects that can be implemented in practice to demonstrate the benefits that the RENCOP approach and the use of renewable energy may bring to local communities.

These ideas will be put into a real-life situation with the extension stage project to allow fostering the energy transition, contribute to climate change mitigation, and have higher social acceptance levels through citizens’ involvement in the co-development, co-financing, and/or co-operating process. The project is directly associated with the new development program of Riga Planning Region 2021-2027 and contributes to the implementation of certain support activities to energy communities that are listed in the new National Energy and Climate Plan 2030.

The project team has already established two-tier cooperation that allows us to take local RENCOP experiences to the national energy policymakers who elaborate and introduce various support mechanisms.

Riga Planning Region will build upon the small-scale community energy pilot project in Mārupe (rooftop solar collectors and batteries for a 5-story residential building and a row house) and attempt to further sophisticate these pilot projects by elaborating new monitoring solutions and transferring the results to other local municipalities located in the region.

At present, there is no clear regulatory framework for renewable energy communities in Latvia. To overcome this barrier, RPR will cooperate with the national energy policy-maker – the Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia. This will be done by developing a viable operational model for renewable energy communities in Latvia. The purpose of these activities is to demonstrate how bottom-up initiatives, facilitated innovatively by the extension stage partner organizations with their improved capacity, help to increase the production of sustainable renewable energy in Latvia.

Secondly, the partners will draw on the existing transnational partner agreement and deepen the identified cooperation possibilities among the partner regions. They will apply a transnational pairing approach in which frontrunner and follower partners cooperate. Riga Planning Region will be directly involved in the transnational pairing of RENCOPs and community energy pilots through study visits and exchange of experiences with German partners from Rendsburg-Eckernförde. Both partners will bring in their specific knowledge and experiences of CE implementation into the pairing process.

Project Partnership

The project partnership consists of 9 partners from 6 countries around the Baltic Sea.

1.	Kiel University (Germany) – the Lead partner	
2.	Green City Energy (Germany)	
3.	Heinrich-Böll Foundation Schleswig-Holstein (Germany)	
4.	Municipality of Middelfart (Denmark)	
5.	Tartu Regional Energy Agency (Estonia)	
6.	Green Net Finland (Finland)	
7.	Riga Planning Region (Latvia)	
8.	Kaunas Regional Energy Agency (Lithuania)	
9.	Alto University (Finland)	

In addition to full project partner Riga Planning Region, Latvia is also represented by two Associated organizations – the Ministry of Economics of Latvia and **the municipality of Mārupe**.

Duration of the project: 1 October 2020 – 30 September 2021 (12 months, including prolongation phase)

Project budget: 666,657.00 EUR, including partner budget for Riga Planning Region – 72,550.00 EUR (of which 85% co-financing from ERDF)

Project web page: <https://co2mmunity.eu>

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