Cooperatives: organising citizens in the energy transition

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Energy cooperatives: a different way to do business

1. Voluntary & open membership
2. Economic participation
3. Democratic ownership
4. Autonomy and independence
5. Training & education
6. Cooperation amongst cooperatives
7. Concern for community
REScoops as generators
REScoops as suppliers
REScoops as energy efficiency service providers

Focus

- End user energy savings measures
- Building renovations
- Energy poverty

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REScoops as consumer-owned networks

The Old

The New
Technical innovation for social needs

- Solar PV cooperative projects on social housing estates throughout London
- Agreement with local Council to lease roofs
- Reduced investment requirement for residents of estates
- **Energy savings fund**: portion of profits go into EE/renovation initiatives, education
- **Brixton Energy**: block-chain powered peer-to-peer energy trading to allow cheap, clean electricity supply
- Now extending to schools, gardening initiatives
Joint investment by cooperatives and municipalities in Belgium

- 2 Municipalities: Amel & Büllingen
- 2 Energy Cooperatives: Ecopower & Courant d’Air
- Partnership result of a tender
- 6 wind turbines
- Municipalities able to own up to 60%
Exploring new business models

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A Green Energy District in Ghent

- Main demo site Flanders: Sint-Amandsberg, Ghent.
- Neighborhood with 2,500 residents.
- The WiseGRID demonstrator will join an initiative of the city of Ghent, DSO Eandis, Energy supplier Ecopower and REScoop Energent in ‘Buurzame stroom’.

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Current challenges for cooperative ownership of energy resources

Practical

- Governance, decision making efficiency
- Lack of information, reliance on volunteers
- Access to finance

Policy

- Unstable / changing national support schemes for renewables towards more market-based system
- No recognition of / plan for supporting renewable energy communities
- Overburdensome licensing requirements / barriers to competition
- Complex administrative and regulatory burdens / procedures (e.g. setting up a cooperative, local planning, grid connection)
The Clean Energy Package
a policy foundation for energy communities

Acknowledgment:
definitions of renewable and citizens energy communities

A set of basic rights to participate in the market based on non-discrimination

Enabling Framework to promote & facilitate development of energy communities

Equal footing in accessing renewables support schemes

Proportional regulatory treatment simplification of administration and procedures

Energy Union Governance:
monitoring & transparency of Member State action
Energy community definitions: an ‘organizational’ concept

- Legal entity
- Non-commercial purpose
- Open and voluntary membership
- Emphasis on participation by citizens, SMEs and public authorities
- Emphasis on ‘effective control’ by members not engaged in the energy sector
- For RECs: requirement for autonomy
CEP Transposition: recommendations to support energy cooperatives

1) The ‘Energy Community’ definitions:
   • Frame definitions are organizational principles and cooperative values – not a specific activity
   • Tailor to national legal context on cooperatives so they can be acknowledged as energy communities

2) Ensure energy communities can participate in different activities and across the market (e.g. renewables, distribution, energy efficiency, supply, etc.)

3) Ensure ‘bike lanes’ for renewable energy communities in national renewables support schemes

4) Simplify administrative burden for setting up energy cooperatives and specific activities such as collective self-consumption and energy sharing
If you want to know more, please contact us!

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