

# 27 STORIES OF *COMMUNITY ENERGY* FROM EUROPEAN COUNTRIES FOR A RENEWABLE ENERGY TRANSITION

Published in 2021, the Practical Handbook [Community Energy - a practical guide to reclaiming power](#) is based on the knowledge of 27 experiences ongoing around Europe. The Guide defines community energy as any project or initiative where people have ownership or a meaningful say in the running of renewable energy or energy related services.

The Guide has been produced and is being diffused in the framework of the [Community Power Coalition](#), that brings together about 40 associations across Europe, representing energy cooperatives, networks of cities and local authorities, the renewable energy industry, legal experts, environmental NGOs and other partners.

[The objective of the Guide](#) is to inspire all interested community actors, including as much information and practical items as possible useful to create their own community energy project. In particular, in the various chapters, indications are given of the key aspects of these projects as: different management forms of community energy projects (cooperatives, club, trusts or other forms), main activities of these projects (electricity generation, supply, energy savings, heat, transport and mobility), main technologies adopted (wind, solar, hydro, biomass), different ways of funding.

For each of these aspects a success story presents the main results achieved by 27 experiences of *Community energy* managed in cities and territories of United Kingdom, Belgium, Scotland, France, Germany, Ukraine, Austria, Croatia, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Czech Republic and The Netherlands. Even if they are framed in the specific contexts determined by the policies, laws, institutions and services of different countries, all these stories entirely highlight the great potential of the *Community energy* approach and can inspire other local communities in all countries to follow their example.

The Guide underlines that regional and municipal administrations are ideal partners of *Community energy* projects, an aspect that may be of interest in many countries, considering the global commitments for energy transition. Local administrations and authorities can adopt concrete long-term objectives related to energy production and the Guide presents various ways through which local government can either support or directly engage in the development of community energy. The Guide underlines that these projects help local governments to:



- Improve energy efficiency and reduce energy poverty, either through cheaper tariffs or dedicated schemes to actively involve and support vulnerable consumers (chapter 15).
- Enable a more active form of local citizenship, as these initiatives encourage inhabitants to feel more involved and concerned about their neighbourhoods, encouraging them to engage in other sustainable activities such as urban agriculture, recycling initiatives, repair cafés, shared mobility and so on.
- Boost local economic development, as projects owned by local community members can contribute up to 8 times more to create a local added value.

Another aspect of interest to many countries highlighted by the Guide in chapter 4, is the important role that cooperatives can play in the management of *Community energy* projects. In chapter 25, dedicated to the financing of *Community energy* projects, the Guide also informs on a very successful model used by many cooperatives to raise funds by offering shares. This way of raising money create members with a more decision-making power. Members of a cooperative combine ownership, investment and use and each of these roles is associated with specific responsibilities and decisions. By acquiring shares, members become owners of the project, participate in the control of the organization and they also become investors, expecting a return on their investment, be it financial, social or environmental. Through economic participation, they become users of the cooperative, and get the right to use its services. [REScoop.eu](https://rescoop.eu), one of the three organizations which produced the Guide, is the *European Federation of citizen energy cooperatives*, a growing network of 1.900 cooperatives operating across Europe which jointly represents over 1,25 million citizens on the whole. Many other experiences on community energy managed by coops can be found on its website.

The various chapters of the Guide provide information and links to the programs promoted by the European Commission and by many other organizations that work to promote this innovative approach for an energy transition that involves local communities as key actors.

### To know more

[Community-Energy-Guide.pdf](#)

[Practical Handbook - The European Community Power Coalition](#)

[Community Power Coalition website](#)

[Community power as part of the solution at COP26](#)

[REScoop.eu](https://rescoop.eu)

[Energy communities empowering our future - REScoop.eu conference 2022](#)

