



Solution package 2:

Energy Communities Prosumers & Citizen-centric solutions

Citizen Engagement strategies for energy communities

Session Summary

The fourth joint session of ASCEND's SP2 and SP5 Community of Practice focused on developing effective citizen engagement strategies for renewable energy communities through a hands-on workshop. The session explored key drivers of citizen participation, barriers to engagement, and practical solutions for building trust and inclusivity in local energy sharing initiatives across European cities.

Common Challenges

- **Trust and engagement barriers limit community participation.** Citizens often distrust public institutions and private companies equally, creating initial skepticism toward energy community projects. Administrative burdens including complex contracts, additional invoices, and mandatory assemblies deter potential participants, particularly affecting vulnerable communities with low energy literacy.
- **Outreach and inclusivity gaps prevent broad participation.** Traditional information channels fail to reach diverse community segments, especially young people, immigrants, and socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Energy poverty and lack of technical knowledge about renewable energy sources create additional barriers to meaningful engagement.

Main Takeaways

- **Building trust requires sustained community presence and listening.** Successful engagement strategies include door-to-door approaches and energy cafés. Regular meetings and celebrating successes together strengthen community bonds.
- **Inclusive communication strategies are essential for broad participation.** Low-threshold communication using flyers, posters, simple visualizations, and linking information events to existing community gatherings increases accessibility.
- **One-Stop Shops serve as crucial engagement hubs.** These central support centers provide administrative, technical, and financial guidance, offering step-by-step schemes for setting up energy communities and feedback on recurring problems at city and national levels.

Quote

“The Energy Community topic is extremely relevant in the context of higher energy prices at European level and in the context of reducing energy poverty and grid dependency at cities' level. We are very happy to have discussed and shared knowledge with the other partners especially with the aim to (hopefully) seeing legislation changes at national level in the following year which could support the establishment of the first formalized energy communities.” - Tudor Drambarean, Alba Iulia Municipality

