# ENERGY CITIZENSHIP
EMPOWERMENT KIT

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EC²

INSTRUCTIONS

The **Energy Citizenship Empowerment Kit** is a gamified tool to trigger and guide the discussion about participation barriers to the energy system. The tool supports the investigation and identification of potential opportunities and solutions tailored to your context during workshops, brainstorming sessions, energy planning sessions, conferences, and webinars.

WHY? (GOAL)
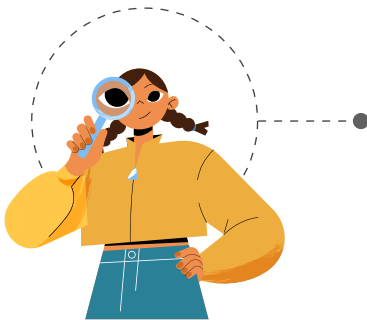
- To identify structural and contextual barriers to the participation of marginalized communities in the energy system.

- To explore opportunities and identify possible solutions based on specific and local conditions and resources.

- To advocate for everyone's right and responsibility to participate and contribute to the energy system and transition.

- To raise awareness about structural barriers hindering individuals´ participation in the energy system.

WHAT?

Four decks of colour-coded cards representing four different socio-demographic factors which are recognized as critical in the production and re-production of dynamics of exclusion: <u>gender, socio-economic background, ethnic minority and housing.</u>
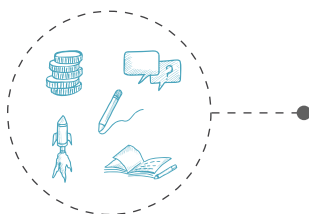
The four deck of cards are used as a lens to explore 5 different conditions which play an important role in creating and fostering individuals´ opportunities to take part and engage in the energy system: knowledge and skills, legal, finance/economic, empowerment/psychology, and participation.

One deck of **good practices, from the energy sector and beyond,** that may serve as inspiration and/or encourage the discussion and the collection of solutions.

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Additional cards, with general questions that can help the group understand the context

Blank cards where users can write down questions and good practices coming up during the exercise.

WHO?

- Policymakers, energy planners
- Energy practitioners, community energy initiative representatives and leaders
- Groups of citizens
- Representatives from marginalized socio-demographic groups
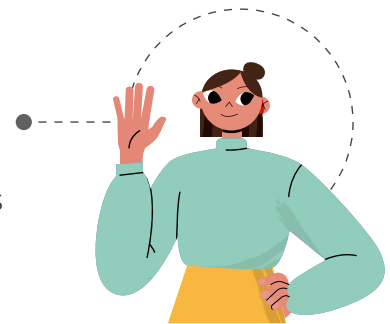
HOW?

1 Establish your working group and decide whether to hold the session online or in person. If more than 10 people are participating, consider dividing into smaller groups (5-8 people per group).

2 Identify a facilitator and a note-taker for the/each group. The role of the facilitator is to: explain the exercise and the glossary, guide the discussion, and read the questions out loud. The note-taker writes down the inputs coming from the participants.

3 Go through the general questions (white cards) and allow a first round of discussion.

4 Based on the result of the first discussion, choose one deck of cards or take all decks of cards.

5 Go through the cards of your chosen deck(s) and answer the questions to spark the discussion in the group.

6 Collect the input from participants using color-coded post-its on a board or an online tool (e.g. Miro). If new questions or good practices are coming up, use the blank cards to write them down.

7 Reflect and discuss with the participants how to integrate the inputs/ideas into actions or policy making. If you are divided into groups, consider having a plenary session.

8 Identify three key actions for the group.

N.B BEFORE USING THE KIT:

- **Participants should be familiar with the economic, social and legal frameworks they are operating in, which are relevant for individuals' participation in the energy system.**

  If the group doesn't have relevant knowledge, consider having a first round of discussion with the support of the general questions (white cards), to make sure that all the participants are familiar with the context and can acquire enough information for further discussions.

- **Involving representatives of marginalized communities is essential to include and integrate the perspectives, feelings, and goals of the different groups.**

  In addition to that, it fosters in-group identification, enhancing people's motivation to join energy initiatives. You can start doing that by identifying members from those socio-demographic groups that are already active in your context.

- **Each deck of cards can be used independently.**

  This means that participants can choose one socio-demographic factor to focus on (Gender, Socio-economic background, Housing, or Ethnic Minority) and use the related questions as a lens to get an integrated picture of the context they are acting on. Alternatively, they can choose one specific dimension to explore among Finance, Empowerment/Psychology, Legal, Knowledge and Skills, or Participation, and get an intersectional perspective on the conditions individuals from different socio-demographic groups are acting on. However, the use of all four decks of cards will provide a more integrated and complex picture of the specific context the KIT is being used.

GLOSSARY

This glossary contains specific terminology necessary to understand for using the Kit.
References to terms in the glossary on the cards are marked with *.

- **Community Energy Initiative:** initiatives where communities and individuals take democratic control over the energy system with the primary aim to provide social, economic or environmental benefits to its participants.

- **Dynamic Contract:** agreements that allow for the pricing of energy or utilities to fluctuate in response to market conditions. These contracts are designed to provide a more flexible and responsive pricing mechanism, as compared to traditional fixed-price contracts or variable contracts, offering the same price for energy or utilities regardless of market conditions.

- **Ethnic minority:** individuals with different language, traditions and cultures from the main group in a region.

- **Funds from CO2 emissions rights:** The EU Emissions Trading System works on the 'cap and trade' principle. A cap is set on the total amount of certain greenhouse gases that can be emitted by the operators. Within the cap, operators buy or receive emissions allowances. Revenues from the sale of allowances feed into Member States' budgets or supply the funds supporting innovation in low-carbon technologies and the energy transition (e.g. Innovation Fund, Modernisation Fund).

- **Gender:** individuals that might encounter more barriers and difficulties in participating in the energy system, due to their gender identity. While the kit recognizes the spectrum of gender identity, the resources consulted lead to a focus on women. However, the questions can be adapted on the basis of the context of the users, and therefore include other genders.

- **Housing Conditions:** the physical state and quality of the dwelling individuals live in, together with the kind of tenure they are involved in.

- **Peer-to-peer trading:** prosumers directly engaged in energy exchange with one another, using a digital platform to construct a marketplace on a local level or virtually. Consumers and prosumers can exchange energy without the need for an intermediary. [D3.3]

- **Prosumer:** is an individual who both consumes and produces energy.

- **Self-consumer:** is a type of prosumer that produces energy for their own exclusive use.

- **Smart meters:** A smart meter is an electronic device that records information—such as consumption of electric energy, voltage levels, current, and power factor—and communicates the information to the consumer and electricity suppliers. Such an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) differs from automatic meter reading (AMR) in that it enables two-way communication between the meter and the supplier. [Wikipedia]

- **Socio-economic background:** the individual's position in society considering level of income, education and living conditions.

- **Virtual Prosumer/ism - Virtual Communities:** the end customer produces renewable electricity for his or her own need with an installation located away from the location of consumption. [D2.1]

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What is the economic context of the town/area you are working in? (e.g. general economic status of the area, specific financial structures or regulations or resources related to the energy sector and the energy communities etc.)

Who has the most access to financial resources in your community? Are these individuals/groups of different genders/nationalities/socio-economic backgrounds etc?

What is the legal framework of your context, related to energy communities (e.g. regulations, requirements, administrative steps etc.)?

What is the social context of the town/area you are working in? (e.g. different groups of citizens with different needs, dynamics and relations between different groups etc.)

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

In your context, what are the different socio-economic backgrounds that you can identify?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

In your context, can you identify specific gender groups that might experience difficulties in participating in the energy sector?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

In your context, can you identify different ethnic groups and/or minorities that might experience difficulties in participating in the energy sector?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Try to reflect on the different energy needs of your context. Do they differ based on specific groups of citizens (e.g. for different genders/ethnic minorities/socio-economic groups)?

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

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GENDER

Empowerment/Psychology: - - - - - -

Which specific measures have been adopted by the EC to support different genders´ participation?

💡 **Read good practice 1**

GENDER

Empowerment/Psychology: - - - - - -

What might stop women from joining your community energy initiative*? What actions could you take to overcome this?

GENDER

Empowerment/Psychology: - - - - - -

Are there already people in the community energy initiatives you know, who are committed to gender justice?

GENDER

Finance/economic: - - - - - -

In your experience or context, do you notice differences between genders in accessing the financial resources or the support they need to become energy community members or start a new initiative?

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GENDER

Finance/economic: - - - - - -

Who takes care of your community energy initiative management and accounting? Are responsibilities shared equally among different genders?

GENDER

Legal: - - - - - -

In your experience, do people of different genders have different energy needs? If yes in your context, do they have access to different types of contracts (e.g.dynamic contracts*) and/or legal forms that better fit their needs when joining/creating a community energy initiative?

Read good practice 2

GENDER

Legal: - - - - - -

In your context, are energy community members and self-consumers* allowed to trade energy directly with peers, without the need for an intermediary, to neutralise costs?

GENDER

Knowledge and skills: - - - - - -

In your community, have you noticed any knowledge and/or skills gaps related to gender when it comes to taking part or establishing a community energy initiative? Are there any specific aspects for which more support is needed?

GENDER

Knowledge and skills: - - - - - -

What kind of training or learning material/opportunities are available, inclusive and accessible to reduce the perceived gender knowledge and skills gap?

GENDER

Participation: - - - - - -

What is the share of different genders currently participating in the community energy initiatives you know? Are the leadership positions and the board composition gender balanced?

GENDER

Participation: - - - - - -

How can gender representation help individuals of your community to participate more actively in community energy initiatives?

Read good practice 3

GENDER

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ETHNIC MINORITY

Empowerment (Psychology): - - - - - -

In your context, have you noticed if people coming from different ethnic backgrounds have different environmental concerns or perceptions about the energy transition? If yes, how can that knowledge be used to engage more people in your community?

ETHNIC MINORITY

Empowerment (Psychology): - - - - - -

How do you advertise and increase the visibility of your community energy initiative and its membership? Is it tailored to the different ethnic backgrounds of your context? Are the objectives relatable?

ETHNIC MINORITY

Empowerment (Psychology): - - - - - -

How can trusted actors in the community help in building connections and involving ethnic minorities? How can social networking foster participation?

Read good practice 4

ETHNIC MINORITY

Empowerment (Psychology): - - - - - -

Which ethnic backgrounds are represented in your community energy initiative? Is this diversity representative of the wider society in your context?

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ETHNIC MINORITY

Finance/economic: - - - - - -

Does the state provide smart meters* to citizens and clear enough information/training about their use, to monitor financial benefits?

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ETHNIC MINORITY

Legal: - - - - - -

Can different user profiles benefit from joining your community energy initiative? Are dynamic contracts* or peer trading* available for different users' needs?

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ETHNIC MINORITY

Legal: - - - - - -

What does the legal and administrative procedure look like in your town/city, to establish community energy initiatives or become a member? Is official guidance or support available, especially if multiple steps are required?

Read good practice 5

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ETHNIC MINORITY

Knowledge and skills: - - - - - -

How can you increase the visibility and information regarding your community energy initiative, especially among ethnic minorities? Can you think of mediators / multipliers that could be engaged in your context?

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ETHNIC MINORITY

Knowledge and skills: - - - - - -

In your local context, how easy is it to access all the information and skills needed to become community energy initiative members (or founders)? Is information and training provided in different formats and in inclusive language (or even multiple languages)?

Read good practice 6

ETHNIC MINORITY

Participation: - - - - - -

What structures in your community energy initiatives help to ensure that all members, especially those belonging to marginalised groups or ethnic minorities, are encouraged to voice their opinions and ideas?

ETHNIC MINORITY

Participation: - - - - - -

Do the members of ethnic minorities also belong to other social groups/communities (e.g. parents)? How can these factors/communities be taken into account, to make participation in the community energy initiative more attractive?

Read good practice 7

ETHNIC MINORITY

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HOUSING

Empowerment (Psychology): - - - - - -

In your context, is it possible to notice an increase in homeowners turning (or willing to turn) to green energy alternatives? Is your community/town/city supporting this? How? (e.g. by increasing support and resources available, by changing regulations, by providing incentives)

HOUSING

Empowerment (Psychology): - - - - - -

Which different housing settings (e.g. urban, rural etc.) and types (e.g. single-family house, multi-family house etc.) can be found in your community energy initiative? Are they representative of the wider energy initiative context?

HOUSING

Finance/economic: - - - - - -

In your context, are small installations and individual citizens eligible for incentives, interest-free loans and VAT deductions?

HOUSING

Finance/economic: - - - - - -

Are members of your community energy initiative treated the same way in terms of taxation and incentives/deductions, regardless of whether they live in single or multi-family houses?

HOUSING

Legal: - - - - - -

Is the right to choose the energy supplier legally enshrined and respected in your context? Are there clear rules that regulate the tenant-owner relationship on energy matters? Are redress or complaint mechanisms in place in case of non-compliance?

HOUSING

Legal: - - - - - -

In your town/city, is it required to obtain permission/consent from owners/co-owners for installing a generation plant? Is there a clear and easy procedure to follow?

Read good practice 8

HOUSING

Legal: - - - - - -

When a generation plant is installed, who is the owner and who benefits from its production? Is there clear enough information about ownership and its transfer?

HOUSING

Legal: - - - - - -

In your community, are there different energy production systems and member contracts available to meet the needs of different resident types?

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HOUSING

Knowledge and skills: ------

Do tenants and owners have access to clear information regarding renewable energy production and its benefits? Is there a comprehensive platform for information and knowledge, such as one-stop-shop?

Read good practice 9

HOUSING

Knowledge and skills: ------

Who takes care of the management and accounting in your community energy initiative? In your context, could you imagine assigning this responsibility to housing co-operative boards or other existing systems/groups in charge of building management/?

Read good practice 10

HOUSING

Participation: ------

Is it possible for tenants to participate in the community energy initiatives you know without owning a suitable building or piece of land (e.g. virtual prosumer, crowdfunding, rental)?

HOUSING

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Empowerment (Psychology): - - - - - -

In your context, have you noticed if people with different socio-economic backgrounds have different environmental concerns or perceptions about the energy transition? If yes, how can that knowledge be used to engage more people in your community?

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Empowerment (Psychology): - - - - - -

Can you think of examples of socio-economic backgrounds that can be found in your community? What might stop individuals from specific groups from joining your community energy initiative? What actions can be taken to overcome this?

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Empowerment (Psychology): - - - - - -

Who represents your community energy initiative to the outside world? Are these people representative of the socio-economic diversity of your community? Are they trusted actors that can help in building connections and foster participation?

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Finance/economic: - - - - - -

In your context, are there electricity price regulations in place? Are these prices encouraging citizens in investing in Renewable Energy and taking part in community energy initiatives?

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Finance/economic:

In your context, are there financial schemes and incentives available to support individuals´ engagement and investment in community energy initiatives or renewable energy? How can they be improved? (e.g. Public virtual communities*, virtual prosumerism*, low-interest loans funded with CO2 emissions rights*, zero VAT or VAT deduction, public organisations to support ECs creation)

Read good practice 11 & 12

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Finance/economic:

Does the state provide smart meters to citizens and enough/clear information/training about their use to monitor financial benefits?

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Legal:

In your community, are there different energy production systems and member contracts available to meet the needs of different income statuses?

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Legal:

In your country, are laws for founding/joining a community energy initiative consistent, or can you observe different regulations based on the region or province? Are these laws taking into account and overcoming the socio-economic differences that might exist between these areas?

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Knowledge and skills: - - - - - -

In your local context, is it simple to access all the information, knowledge and skills needed to become members or founders of a community energy initiative? Is information and training provided in different formats? Is the language used easy to understand and accessible?

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Knowledge and skills: - - - - - -

How do you advertise and increase the visibility of your community energy initiative and its membership? Is it tailored to the different socio-economic backgrounds of your context? Are the objectives relatable?

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Participation: - - - - - -

What is the organisational structure of your community energy initiative in terms of decision-making? How much can individual members with different financial backgrounds participate?

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Participation: - - - - - -

Is an initial economic investment required for participating in your community energy initiative? Which are the benefits of joining?

Read good practice 13 & 14

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

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Good practice (related to the energy sector):

RESCOOP gender Working Group:

The REScoop.eu team launched a Gender power working group, with the aim of mainstreaming gender-just energy communities. The role of the working group is to map the needs and challenges that energy cooperatives face and to provide space for discussion and for the exchange of good practices. It represents a platform where tools and instruments are shared, to help energy communities diversify their boards and membership base, therefore reflecting the principle of gender justice. One of the achievements of the working group is the Ambition Statement, open for signature by all REScoop.eu members.

1

Good practice (related to the energy sector):

Special legal forms:

WEnCoop is the first Energy Female Social Cooperative for women entrepreneurs and their businesses in Greece. It is a "broad-based" energy cooperative created by women from diverse backgrounds and cultures - from crafts to services, commerce and hotels. This is an initiative of the Greek Association of Women Entrepreneurs – S.E.G.E. which aims to develop and promote women's entrepreneurship, through which its members will be able to operate in the energy sector, utilising clean energy sources.

2

Good practice (not related to the energy sector):

European Network of Ambassadeurs for #DiversityinTransport!

Everyone can become an Ambassador, reaching out to people at all levels, increasing societal awareness and taking a role in community building.

3

Good practice (not related to the energy sector):

UK government: Interventions to enhance employability for "stay at home" Ethnic Minority women:

Commitment to participation is gained by providing a social situation and engaging participants in social activities, such as sewing and tai chi classes or lunch/dinner outings. These activities are designed to aid integration in wider society and build confidence outside the household environment: those attending are encouraged to build relationships with the others, to speak English and build commitment towards the activities and the group. Basic employment related topics (such as specific skills or job market facts) , as well as administrative information, are gradually introduced so that participants do not lose interest and drop out.

4

Good practice (related to the energy sector):

Legal forms and administrative steps

In Austria it is possible to establish an energy community in the form of an association. The necessary information is prescribed by law and the founding members or representatives must notify the competent association authority. Within a period of four weeks the authority must evaluate the request, and if no notice is issued by this timeframe, the association comes into existence with no further legal act required by the authority. The fees amount to approx €25. This legal form is a very simple and inexpensive model for founding an energy community. Other benefits of this legal form include: very easy to join and leave the association; the members can determine the organisational matters themselves; the personal liability of the members is limited.

5

Good practice (related to the energy sector):

Central point/website for information:

In Austria, the Federal Ministry for Climate Protection has set up the so-called "Coordination Office for Energy Communities". The aim of this office is to optimise the framework conditions for the energy community model and to provide assistance with the establishment of community energy initiatives. One website provides information necessary for the establishment and operation of an energy community in a concise and easily comprehensible language (and also in short videos). There is even a step-by-step guide and a comprehensive Q&A section that answers a variety of questions on many aspects (organisation, grid operation, subsidies, legal matters).

6

Good practice (related to the energy sector):

In-group identification:

By first activating the common group as parents, for example, the norms or the shared goal of creating a future worth living for one's own children can be targeted. This can serve as an additional motivation to participate in an EC.

7

Good practice (related to the energy sector):

Consent of the other condominium owners for installation:

In Italy, an individual condominium owner may also install a photovoltaic plant on the roof of the building. The Italian Civil Code provides that the installations for individual housing units are permitted on suitable common areas. The co-operative board cannot deny a condominium owner installation on the common roof. It may only prescribe reasonable alternatives for carrying out the installation or impose precautions for stability, safety or architectural decorum if it involves a change to the common parts of the building. This applies, provided the rights of the other housing units owners to use the same area for the same purposes are not affected.

8

Good practice (related to the energy sector):

Energy Community Platform:

The Energy Community Platform is a one-stop solution for everything about community energy. REScoop.eu, the European federation of citizen energy cooperatives, teamed up with several EU projects to make things easier and compile the resources available and scattered on the internet into one single place. The platform offers tools and resources, experts network and energy communities mapping, to support citizens developing a community energy project along all the phases.

9

Good practice (related to the energy sector):

Allocation of responsibilities and management activities:

In Poland, many housing co-operative boards take on the role of an organiser and manage the energy community within individual apartment blocks. As a result, additional effort and time commitment of the residents are limited to the necessary minimum. Some examples can be found in Wrocław: SM Wrocław Południe (739MWp on 35 buildings), Spółdzielnia Mieszkaniowa Energetyk (870MWp), Spółdzielnia Skarbowiec (46 MWp), Wrocławski Dom Housing Cooperative (40MWp), SM Śródmieście Prasa (32MW), SM Kopernik in Toruń (272MWp on 21 buildings).

10

Good practice (related to the energy sector):

1) Virtual prosumerism:

In Spain, the idea of a virtual prosumer is offered by Solar Pack (a multinational company specialised in solar PV projects) as part of the Click and Go offer. Inhabitants with no technical capabilities for PV micro installations and tenants of apartments have the opportunity to participate in photovoltaic farms by renting several PV modules appropriately to the energy consumption. Users of this solution can utilise the energy produced in several locations, and they can also change the locations of energy consumption over time. According to the offer, it is possible to reduce electricity bills by 35%. Participants also could sell surplus energy.

11

Good practice (related to the energy sector):

2) Virtual prosumerism:

The virtual prosumer solution was introduced in Lithuania in 2019. Lithuanian citizens can either invest in an individual PV installation in a location other than their own or buy shares in a photovoltaic installation built by another entity. As a result, every citizen, regardless of whether s/he has the technical ability to generate energy in their place of residence, can be an active energy citizen.

12

Good practice (related to the energy sector):

1) Reducing the complexity of community energy initiatives:

A private Polish organisation Coop Tech Hub, specialising in social initiatives, established the Energy Community Incubator (financed by a grant from the Foundation Open Society Institute). As part of the support package for future communities, there is a guide on how to conduct the process of creating a community, a 48-hours cycle of workshops, optimisation tools for energy management, and calculation tools for accounting for revenues and costs.

13

Good practice (related to the energy sector):

2) Reducing the complexity of community energy initiatives:

An alternative to typical energy communities established on the initiative of grassroots residents is hybrid solutions, in which the grassroots initiative of a group of residents is supported by a specialised organisation. An example is the Spanish Aldea Energy, that after acquiring a group of residents with access to a suitable roof, deals with the entire organisation of the project for residents located in the proximity of the energy source. Depending on the financial capacity of the residents, Aldea offers low cost subscription options and investments variants.

14

Good practice

15

Good practice

16

Good practice

17

Good practice

18

Good practice

19

Good practice

20