



Advancing Renewable
Energy Communities

REPORT ON THE 1st THEMATIC WORKSHOP OF THE POLISH COUNTRY DESK

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INTRODUCTION

The thematic workshop presented in this report was conducted within the range of activities planned under Work Package 3 (Country Desks and stakeholder dialogues) of the COME RES project. The workshops aim to provide non-biased information to stakeholders and market actors, critically assess good/best practice community energy solutions, identify options to improve legal and policy frameworks in the target regions, assess best practice transfer opportunities/restrictions. The workshops highlight actual country specific issues related to the rights, duties, legal and enabling frameworks for renewable energy communities, taking into consideration experiences from other partner countries or other relevant experiences.

The thematic workshop was organised by The Polish National Energy Conservation Agency (KAPE) in cooperation with The Regional Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Olsztyn (provider of the LoS and located in the target region). The event was held on the 21st of October 2021 as a physical meeting in Olsztyn. The workshop was targeted to all the regional energy advisors working for The Regional Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in the Warmian-Masurian Province and gathered 13 energy advisors.

COURSE OF THE EVENT

The workshop entitled “PV installations – a key element of energy communities in Poland” began with an introduction given by Dr. Ryszard Wnuk, Senior Expert for Renewable Energy Sources (RES) and Energy Efficiency (EE) at KAPE, who introduced the participants to the issues of RES utilisation through different technologies. He presented a variety of RES technologies that could be utilised in order to create self-sustainable energy community. Furthermore he presented the synergies resulting from combination of selected technologies. Then, Ryszard Wnuk described the European PV market in terms of total capacities installed, new capacities and energy produced in selected countries.

As the next agenda item, Piotr Nowakowski, Expert for RES at KAPE, described the origin of COME RES project, underlying the importance of the activities and outcomes that resulted from the previous initiative (WinWind) conducted by the consortium. He presented an overview of the COME RES project, its objectives, and methodology, explaining the links between different activities. Piotr Nowakowski also presented the results of the analysis on potential assessment of RECs in target regions. Afterwards, Piotr Nowakowski gave a speech on the topic: “Economic profitability of PV installations – investments being realised by individuals, public entities, small and medium enterprises”. He put an emphasis on the key aspects having impact on the economic performance of an investment, as follows:

- Annual electricity demand;
- Profile of energy consumption;
- Electricity cost;
- Escalation of electricity prices.

He also presented and described business models that are utilised by different entities. These business models include:

- Net-metering scheme;
- Energy auctions;
- Full self-consumption;
- Self-consumption combined with electricity selling.

Then, he presented a model PV installation – prosumer PV installation integrated with the passive building. The results of technical – economic analysis carried out with the use of a number of technical indicators, calculated on the basis of measurement data from the on-site monitoring system were also presented. Economic profitability of the investment was discussed based on static (Simple Payback Time) and dynamic economic indicators (Net Present Value, Internal Rate of Return).

The remaining part of the workshop was devoted to a broad discussion on the topic of a future of energy communities in Poland.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The first topic discussed with the energy advisers were provisions for energy cooperatives and energy clusters stipulated by the RES Act. It was pointed out that at the beginning of this year, the Ministry of Development was responsible for rolling-out the enabling framework for energy cooperatives, virtual and collective prosumers. The head of the department at the Ministry of Development, responsible for this task was actively involved in the Polish national desk activities. However, in the meantime this responsibility was hand over to the Ministry of Climate and Environment. The new ministry has started working on rather new approach, namely further development of energy clusters and the previous and quite advanced solutions, were paused or postponed.

During the discussion with the energy advisers, the following topics were extensively talked through:

- Energy clusters and community-driven initiatives in the region;
- RES technologies that are often utilised within energy communities;
- Key drivers for creation of energy community;
- Key actors involved in energy communities;
- Business models available;
- Impact of grants and other incentives on market and prices of RES technologies.

The energy advisors also gave details of several biogas installations, which evoked cooperation of many entities at local level and became a starting point for creation of energy clusters. These examples were based on the model where electricity is produced jointly with heat in CHP unit (fuelled with biogas).

In such a model, electricity produced is fed to the grid (sold for the fixed price – Feed in Tariff scheme) and heat is utilised in many cases for heating purposes of public buildings or individuals. Such utilisation of heat from biogas installation decreased public opposition, and moreover created favourable conditions for further cooperation.

Further, the discussion focused on the Investment Programme within the framework of National Recovery Plan dedicated for RES investments being realised by energy communities. The programme was recently revealed and presented by the Ministry of Development and Technology.

The programme foresees:

- Pre-investment support;
- Horizontal support;
- Investment support.

Estimated number of energy communities benefiting from pre-investment stage is 139 and investment stage is 10. The first call is foreseen for the first half of 2022.

During the discussion, the assumptions of the programme were also discussed:

- Type of beneficiaries;
- Time horizon;
- Scope of support (eligible activities).

Undoubtedly, the above-mentioned support programme can be considered as a strong driver for development of energy communities. One of the final conclusions was that energy communities need “live” legal provisions, respective executive regulations along with financial support for at least pre-investment stage in order to assess the potential benefits and viability of the investment.

SELECTED PHOTOS FROM THE WORKSHOP





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