



Citizen participation models to increase local value creation for wind and other renewable energies

FOLLOW-UP NOTE

Online matchmaking, 10. November 9:30 – 11:00

Language: German

Participants

- Dipl.- Ing. Lars Rotzsche, Head of Wind Energy, Renewable Energy Project Development and Operation, Städtische Werke Aktiengesellschaft Kassel (FIRESPOL project; DE)
- Dr. Wilhelm Benfer, Head of Office, Structural Development and Building Regulations Office, Kreisverwaltung Barnim (DE)
- Mareike Haas, Head of Structural Development, Office for Sustainable Development, Cadastre and Surveying, Structural Development, Landkreis Barnim
- Tilman Dombrowski, Barnimer Energiebeteiligungsgesellschaft mbH
- Achim Langer, Courant d’Air KGmbH Energiekooperative, Ostbelgien (BE)
- Anke Krüger, Head of Department Environmental Protection and Nature Conservation, Stadtbauamt, Stadtverwaltung Greifswald (DE)
- Dr. Juliane Brust-Möbius, Master Plan Management/Climate Protection, City Planning Office, Department of Environmental Protection and Nature Conservation, Stadtverwaltung Greifswald
- Nils Patzenhauer, Manager for Climate Emergency and Future Energies, Stadtwerke Greifswald
- Ronny Förste, Head of the Real Estate and Forestry Department, Stadtverwaltung Greifswald
- Christoph Schüler, responsible for property transactions in the Real Estate and Forestry Department, Stadtverwaltung Greifswald
- Yana Efremova, City Planning Office, Department of Urban Development, Stadtverwaltung Greifswald
- Stephan Braun, City Planning Office, Department of Environmental Protection and Nature Conservation, Stadtverwaltung Greifswald
- Katrin Teetz, Investment Management Officer, Stadtverwaltung Greifswald
- Annie Wojatschke, Abteilung Liegenschaften und Forsten, Stadtverwaltung Greifswald (Moorflächenmanagement)
- Katharina Krell, Thematic Expert Low Carbon Economy, Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform
- Soroush Brandenburg, Thematic Assistant, Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform
- Verena Priem, Policy Officer Low Carbon Economy, Interreg Europe Joint Secretariat

SUMMARY

The district administration of Barnim, Brandenburg, asked the Policy Learning Platform for support in addressing their regional policy challenge: The region has a large number of wind turbines, the majority of which are in the hands of non-regional investors. There is no regional value creation, which leads to rejection and a bad image of wind energy.

Barnimer Kreiswerke was founded, and a citizen participation company exists, but so far it focuses mainly on PV and smaller projects. Citizen cooperatives and communal participation models are conducive to the acceptance



of wind energy, so the district administration would like to learn how other regions promote such models. The city of Greifswald is also interested in citizen cooperatives in the field of renewable energy in order to finance the energy transition locally and at the same time generate local added value. Citizen participation as a topic is organised very horizontally in the city administration, so many offices participated in the matchmaking. The participation models are still in their infancy.

Two peers from East Belgium and North Hesse presented their own approaches.

Achim Langer from the German-speaking region of East Belgium is the managing director of a mature renewable energy cooperative called Courant d'Air. The citizens' energy cooperative came into being when wind turbines were built locally, and citizens wanted to participate in the value creation. Motto: energy transition, but in citizens' hands. The cooperative informs and raises awareness in order to increase the acceptance of renewable energies. The cooperative has implemented a first project on e-mobility and wants to develop further in this field. Courant d'Air has also established its own electricity provider to market electricity to members. More information is available in the presentation.

Lars Rotzsche is Head of Wind Energy, Renewable Energy Project Development and Operations at Städtische Werke Aktiengesellschaft in Kassel.

The North Hessian group of utility companies has developed and implemented a very successful model for regional value creation through cooperation. The model has resulted in a high level of local ownership by municipalities, utilities, and citizens' cooperatives.

The region started with a potential analysis of renewable energies with the result that mainly wind but also some PV can be used locally. The policy requirement was: regional value creation through own power generation! No purchasing from outside, self-use. In the land use plan, areas for wind were also designated in the forest, for example on areas with low biodiversity (spruce monoculture, calamity damage). Through close cooperation with environmental associations, for example BUND, and in cooperation with Bundesverband Windenergie (BWE), projects were discussed, and species support measures jointly planned. In this way, greater acceptance was also achieved by environmental associations and lawsuits against wind projects were largely avoided.

To create regional value, citizens' energy cooperatives are involved in all wind energy projects, as are the municipalities and the local public utilities. **Motto: Participation generates acceptance.** The North Hesse SUN concept was initiated by the largest municipal utility, which founded the limited liability company (GmbH) and limited partnership (Co. KG) with the template for setting up the subsequent corporate structure.

For each new project, a project company is founded in which SUN holds 100% of the shares. As soon as the project is implemented, shares are given to municipalities and citizens' cooperatives. Proximity principle: first the nearest municipalities are asked how many shares they want. Luxury problem: there is much more interest from citizens in shares than there are projects available. There is no DIRECT citizen participation, only participation through the citizen cooperatives. This is easier than direct participation by individual citizens.

Very broad participation allows regional value creation. The challenge is to secure a project location. Principle: whoever has the location makes the deal. How can one ensure that not the highest bidder gets the area, but the bidder with the best participation concept? SUN commissioned a study on the actual regional value creation, to compare the value creation through lease income and business tax with external investors, and the SUN participation model. Result: 58 million for SUN vs. 7 million for external investment!

Currently, in Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, the BWG only allocates land to the highest bidders. However, there is the possibility to design allocation guidelines in such a way that the land goes to local developers. Argument: 8 x more regional added value.

If 2.4% of the area is already occupied by existing plants, as is the case in Barnim and the Uckermark, repowering is an option for building up participation concepts. Here, too, the principle applies: whoever has the site wins the race. The owners of the sites could be approached, and the options discussed.

New options are also opening up in positive area planning for municipalities and districts. (go-to-areas at EU level). Mayors could join forces with counties to position themselves for future land use by local and regional owners to create local added value. SUN is happy to advise on this. SUN also helps other municipalities and counties with contract concepts (concepts for landlords so that they also see their interests protected), GIS services and model contracts.

SOME KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Regional citizen participation models are far superior to foreign investors in terms of regional value creation in renewable energy projects. Experience in Northern Hesse has shown that the SUN model for wind farms



in municipal ownership with the participation of citizens' energy cooperatives has a factor of 8 in regional value creation compared to foreign ownership.

- The project developer who gets the site does the business. It is crucial to work with landowners of potential (wind or PV) sites to develop contract models that incentivise the landowner to favour local project development groups with local shareholders over the highest bidder for the land lease.

FOLLOW-UP

- All participants exchanged contact details for possible follow-up on a bilateral basis.
- The presentations are exchanged in PDF format.
- Stakeholders in Barnim are keen to explore the possibilities of replicating this locally.

KEY GOOD PRACTICES IDENTIFIED

- SUN Nordhessen: https://www.interregeurope.eu/good-practices/sun-nordhessen-local-financing-and-involvement-of-private-capital?check_logged_in=1
- Wind energy and peatland rewetting: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/good-practices/wind-energy-and-peatland-rewetting>

Note circulation: All attendees

| Programm | |
|------------------|--|
| <i>09:30 MEZ</i> | Introduction, concept, presentation of all participants |
| <i>05 min.</i> | Moderator: Katharina Krell, Thematic Expert Low-Carbon Economy |
| <i>05 min.</i> | Status quo of citizen participation in the districts of Uckermark - Barnim and open questions, future plans Dr. Wilhelm Benfer, Head of Office, Structural Development and Building Regulations Office, Kreisverwaltung Barnim |
| <i>05 min.</i> | Status quo of citizen participation in the University and Hanseatic City of Greifswald and open questions, future plans Anke Krüger, Stadtverwaltung Greifswald |
| <i>05 min.</i> | Status quo of citizen participation in East Belgium Achim Langer, Verwalter, Courant d'Air KGmbH Energiekooperative |
| <i>20 min.</i> | Regional value creation, municipal and citizen participation in renewable energy plants through <u>Stadtwerke Union Nordhessen</u> - The SUN model of municipal utility cooperation at regional level in North Hesse - Citizen participation after completion of the projects - Influence on regional value creation (comparison of external project developers and regional actors) - Study IdE Dipl.- Ing. Lars Rotzsche, Head of Wind Energy, Renewable Energy Project Development and Operation,, Städtische Werke Aktiengesellschaft Kassel |
| <i>45 min.</i> | Questions and discussion |
| <i>5 min.</i> | Summary, follow-up points |
| | |