

RegEnergy Midterm Conference

# Renewable Energy Regions

Creating Partnerships for Renewable Energy

20 May 2021



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## The Conference in a Nutshell

On 20 May 2021 the Midterm Conference of the „RegEnergy“ project was successfully hosted by Climate Alliance as an online event.

Project partners, municipalities, non-profit organisations, regional authorities, energy agencies and cooperatives, renewable energy providers, consultancies, policy and science joined the conference. Participants got an insight of the challenges faced by European stakeholders involved in the building of renewable energy partnerships, discovered inspiring ideas and had the opportunity to network with European ac-

tors working for the energy transition. A fruitful exchange of ideas and perspectives on partnerships for renewable energy within urban and rural areas was fostered during a roundtable session, a workshop on three different topics, the project partners' poster slams and additional networking sessions in groups

The main focus of the conference was set on solutions and problems regarding urban rural partnerships for production, distribution and organisation of renewable energies.

## Welcome by Tarek Al-Wazir, Ministry of Economics, Energy, Transport and Housing



The Hessian Minister of Economics, Energy, Transport and Housing Tarek Al-Wazir presented an overview on the importance of sustainable energy supply. In a video clip, he linked the approaches taken in Hesse to the main aspects of the RegEnergy project.

## Welcome by Thomas Brose, Climate Alliance



Thomas Brose, as Executive Director of the Climate Alliance, thanked Minister Tarek al Wazir for his introduction words and the support of Hesse to the conference, as well as all project partners who contributed to the organization of the event.

The expansion of renewable energies is a central building block for the necessary transformation from fossil dependence to sustainable energy production. However, the challenge is not only a technical one. Mr. Brose reiterated the importance of cooperation at all levels for the success of the needed transformations. Cities and rural communities need to strengthen their existing cooperation and should understand that they need each other. The RegEnergy project

is an important platform to identify good examples of existing cooperation and to exchange views on success factors but also existing challenges like legal obstacles at the national and European levels. He expressed his hope that the participants will learn more about good examples from Cities and regions but also discuss the lessons learned from the failures. He wished a fruitful and successful discussion.

## RegEnergy – What is it about?

Hélène Rizzotti from the Lead Partner Climate Alliance and Birgit Haupter (INFRASTRUKTUR & UMWELT, RegEnergy support) summarized the main topics and challenges of the RegEnergy project as an introduction to the conference. The overall goal is to achieve an effective and sustainable partnership between urban and rural areas for renewable energies. Three strategic

fields of actions are pursued. RegEnergy tackles questions on the organisation of urban-rural partnerships for renewable energy, connects producers and consumers within the field of renewable energy and develops smart solutions for the growth of the sector in seven different countries among the nine participating project partners.



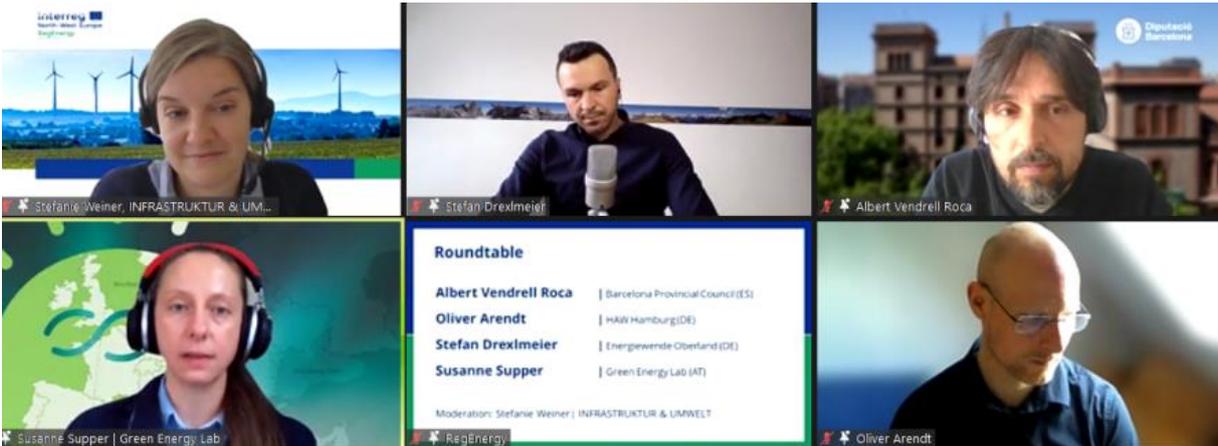
## Roundtable: Insights into the challenges of renewable energy partnerships

In the Roundtable discussion, Albert Vendrell Roca, member of the Barcelona Pro-

vincial Council, Oliver Arendt from the HAW Hamburg, Stefan Drexelmeier, Head of

the Energiewende Oberland in Bavaria and Susanne Supper, Cluster Manager of the Green Energy Lab in Vienna, shared their experiences on the field of work of renewable energy partnerships. Led by the moderator Stefanie Weiner (INFRASTRUKTUR & UMWELT) they discussed questions such as how to make urban-rural partnerships cooperate, how to solve institutional obstacles and what are the dos and don'ts when it comes to urban-rural partnerships in renewable energy supply. Whilst Barcelona and the region of Bavaria are facing land use conflicts between energy supply in the rural areas and other sectors such as agri-

culture and tourism, North Germany profits of an acceptance for renewable energy. The main use of wind energy in this region is yet facing problems in the coverage of bottlenecks in the energy production. The Austrian Green Energy Lab is providing a platform for direct exchange between consumers and producers to secure the supply-demand-chain and create functional partnerships. Susanne Supper as well as Albert Vendrell Roca underlined the importance of real-life project besides pilot activities to actually make a change in the habits of the energy sector.



The experts stressed the value of a humble and trustful collaboration on eve-level between small and big energy suppliers in order to combine knowledge, manpower and money with the actual energy potential. They emphasized the necessity to make the energy market accessible for small companies for a better distribution and to create a stakeholder involvement respecting the diversity of challenges in rural areas, such as climate change and land use. A real transformation towards renewable and sustainable energy supply

takes more than just following the market rules but needs the creation of ownership and a sense of community. The energy production should be as close as only possible to the city, creating a respectful connection between urban and rural areas. According to the experts, communication, exchange of information, experiences and ideas, financial support as well as a general integration of the consumer are key aspects for successful urban-rural partnerships.

# Workshop: Overcoming the barriers preventing cooperation for renewable energy

In the workshop good-practice examples from Germany, France and Belgium offered deeper insight into main aspects of renewable energy partnerships. Regional transformation processes and their poten-

tial to support renewable energy partnerships, developing contracts between urban and rural administrative units and energy communities as drivers for generating regionalised renewable energy.

## a. Understanding and supporting regional transformation processes in Germany

Jenny-Claire Keilmann and Marcus Andreas from the Climate Alliance presented the project Transform-R to the audience. Transform-R aims to foster the energy transition in Germany and emerges from the 100 % renewable regions project's network. The project offers support in the energy transition on regional level and identifies needs and potentials. The survey conducted for this purpose shows that a

higher ambition for transition should be constituted in a top-down manner to give orientation while strategies should be developed on a bottom-up principle. Experience for successful networks in this context shows that it is helpful to clarify the target group such as districts, choose a mission and use a clear network approach to create a proper platform.

## b. Innovative contract between city and countryside

Sylvie Mingant from Brest Métropole and Alexandre Guirinec from the French local energy agency of Center West Brittany (ALECOB) showcased the urban rural partnership between Brest metropole and Pays COB. Different actions on renewable energies and heating were developed due to an effective communication and the exchange of technical know-how. The

partnership realised a territorial climate and energy plan, is supporting the wood industry to reduce the use of fossil fuels, raises public awareness for renewable energy sources with a solar cadastre and is currently developing additional wind farms. The energy capacity is supposed to double on behalf of the projects the partnership undertakes.

## c. Energy communities as drivers for regional renewable energy

Tom Schaecken from the Innovation Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development in Belgium presented the INTERREG VB-project ECCO (energy community coopera-

tive). Oberrosophe, a small municipality in Hessa was one of the participating communities. The cooperative installed a pipe net of 7 km, a heating plant and a storage

hall by financial support of citizens and the city. The municipality which was lacking in infrastructure is now motivated to launch further investments in biogas and solar power to improve the networks functions. The energy transition was beneficial for the infrastructure, economy and social aspects of the community. ECCO's success

in plenty of municipalities is based on impactful communication and the involvement of citizens as stakeholders in the transition process. The project developed the game "a powerful village" as an effective tool to bring all parties of the process together for inclusive planning.

## Poster Slam and Networking

During the Poster Slam the RegEnergy partners presented their organisational and technological challenges and solu-

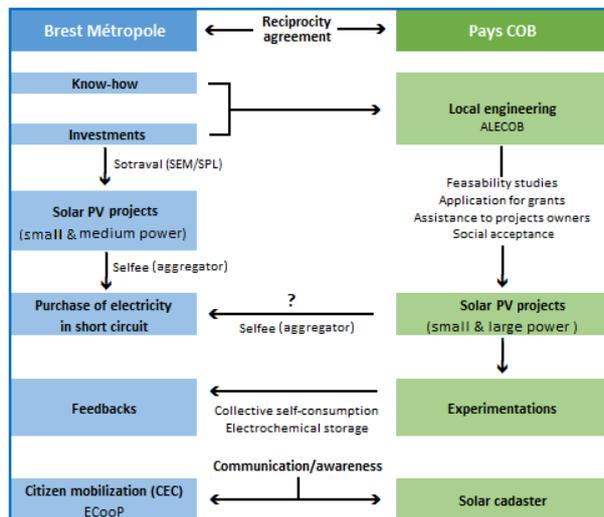
tions. The presentations were followed by four networking sessions on individual topics.

Edgar Bazing | Climate Alliance (DE)  
 Alexandre Guirinec | ALECOB (FR)

Edgar Bazing presented the Region-N project which provides an exchange platform and campaigns for best practice as well as implementation aids targeting municipalities, districts and public oriented service providers to address energy transition topics. The project follows the approach that energy and heat transition should be connected and synergies used for decentralized, citizen-oriented, renewable energy.

issues as well as the economic interest are addressed to the authorities and companies. It was pointed out that the success of the partnership still depends on the will of the implementor in each case.

Alexandre Guirinec gave an overview on how know-how and financing are shared between the urbanised and rural areas in the project between Brest Métropole and the Pays COB, in order to develop locally adapted technical solutions. Local authorities can be advised and the environmental



Dan Turner | Plymouth City Council (UK)  
 Paddy Phelan | 3 counties energy agency - 3cea (IE)

Dan Turner presented the Ernesettle Private Wire, which aims to supply the South West Water treatment works with 4.1MW

from a solar PV array. One major problem of the project are grid constraints. A private wire would contribute to a big in-

volvement of the community and is beneficial for consumers and the supplier. Yet the planned extension of the grid hasn't been undertaken so far because of legal barriers and safety concerns. Business, regulatory and technical solutions need to be developed.

Paddy Phelan explained that 3cea is using similar methods in energy generation and distribution as the project partners from Flanders and Plymouth for a sustainable energy supply. It was pointed out, that locally produced as well as used energy, for

instance from biomethane can contribute to the decarbonisation of the energy sector. Transportation of energy should be as short as possible to save energy and to increase the energy efficiency.

In the break-out session participants discussed the existing and planned support schemes of Germany and Ireland especially concerning feed-in tariffs and conditions.

Yorick Schigt | Waterstromen (NL)  
Micheal Murphy | Ormonde Upgrading Limited (IE)

Yorick Schigt gave insights in Waterstromen's project to create a biogas network between a waste water treatment plant and a paper factory. The renewable energy produced can be partially fed into the paper factory and the existing gas grid. The 4.5 km long pipeline is mostly completed and the distribution plan is ready, so that the implementation is now depending on the admission. It might be necessary for the pipeline to be upscaled since there will be a hospital build close to it soon. The connection and enlargement are easily to adapt.

Michael Murphy constituted that biomethane can substitute natural fossil gas. The cost to connect to the Irish national gas grid is very high for the biogas producers yet the contribution to a decarbonisation would be great though. Biomethane has big potentials to supply the citizens in need of gas. An upgrading facility is currently at an advanced stage of construc-

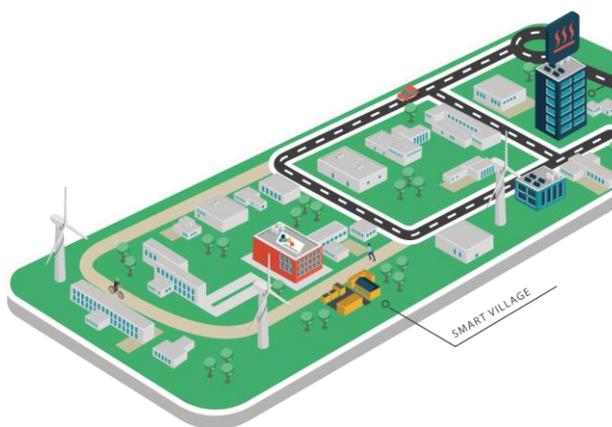
tion so that the commission can be given in a few weeks and the region will be supplied with decarbonised energy.

During the breakout session Ormonde Upgrading and Waterstromen Etten discussed the progress of the green-gas projects in Ireland and the Netherlands. The two partners are using the same technique but handling it differently: While Ormonde is converting their gas into bottled CNG, Waterstromen injects it directly into the gas-grid.



Marc Vermeeren		Flux50 (BE)
Geoffrey Orlando		Planair (CH)
Sean Lyons		Waterford Institute of Technology (IE)

Marc Vermeeren developer of the Green Energy Park close to Brussels area shared that Flux50 is approaching two activities which are the engagement, collection and modelling of production profiles as well as the building of a heating data centre with waste heat. To make sure the energy can be supplied at any time two batteries will be installed. Specific challenges with the battery arrangements were contractual agreements with ground owners, the application of specific grid codes.



project that simulates the synergies between electric mobility and photovoltaic lately. Solar panels were applied on roofs and facades. Different scenarios such as the adaption of batteries to the grid and their impacts on the grids were checked. Electric vehicles can be used to valorise the grid services and peak shaving with the Vehicle to Grid (V2G) option.

Sean Lyons gave an overview on the self-sustainable communities which Waterford was focussing on recently. Technical and regulatory progresses were made in the project. A model to predict the energy use was developed. The right equilibrium of demand and supply was tried to be balanced out based on the collected data and the actual market pricing was integrated in the project.

Geoffrey Orlando explained that Planair worked on a feasibility study and a pilot

## Additional Information

On the renewable energy partnerships can be found [here](#):



On the Midterm Conference can be found [here](#):





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