



Join us and our ECCO  
Accelerator Network

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**Interreg**   
North-West Europe  
**ECCO**  
European Regional Development Fund



**Ecco creates new local  
energy community  
co-operatives**

014571 PHOTOS: SHUTTERS TOCK



## What is the ECCO project all about?

Policymakers want to unlock Renewable Energy (RE) to meet their greenhouse gas reduction targets. Currently, they often turn, almost implicitly, to the establishment of energy producers to realise their objectives. These traditional actors are indeed slowly becoming interested in RE but are very reticent to share socio-economic benefits with the local communities concerned. The result is a growing public resentment (NIMBY) and a failing market for RE. Without proper support from local communities and a fair distribution of burdens and benefits the energy transition could be bogged down before it has started out well and truly.

Characteristically, RE allows for the distributed production and supply of energy and for involving local com-

munities. Bio-Energie Dörfer in Germany are the best proof of this: actively involving local communities in their RE production is a feasible way to address the failing RE market and improve the local vibrancy at the same time. Especially rural areas and farmers offer the physical and social resources needed for a decentralised, community based approach to provide RE. However, emerging local initiatives in other European regions are often facing barriers at present. They lack adequate knowledge (of finances, technology, marketing, and management) as well as public support from local authorities. Becoming reliable RE providers still is an uphill battle for local communities. Numerous policymakers have indicated, therefore, that an effective exchange of knowledge and experiences is needed to speed up the RE transition.

We aim to accelerate the growth of local Energy Community Co-Operatives (ECCOs), both in effectiveness and in numbers. We will achieve this by bringing ECCOs together and linking them up with relevant sources of knowledge from around North West Europe to overcome the barriers they face at present. Additionally, we will inspire policymakers and community groups to initiate their own ECCOs and, subsequently, we will facilitate their initiation and development processes. By designing and establishing a transnationally connected Accelerator Network (AN), we build the organisational structure together to secure that these support activities will be continued after the project has ended. Working together, with the financial support of the Interreg Programme for North West Europe, we aim to adapt the present playing field for supplying energy to the benefits of local communities. The large number of policymakers and organisations that have already signed up as associated partners to this project are seen as a first testimony of commitment to the results we want to deliver together.

- We start off bottom-up with the combined experience and best practices of 9 existing ECCOs.
- The transnational work of these pilots will function as 'beacons' for us during the project
- We will work to inspire policymakers and prospective ECCOs.
- We will reach out and engage 50 new ECCOs during the project to join us,
- Each producing at least 600 MWh RE on average, reducing GHG emissions by 7.500 tons/year in total.
- We will build the Accelerator Network (AN), a transnational organisational structure that secures the continuity of the ECCO support activities after the project.
- We will cooperate with REScoop, the European Federation of Renewable Energy Co-Operatives, to host the AN after the project has ended.
- The AN will be equipped to continue to reach out to individual local energy communities. This results in 500 additional ECCOs in 10 years post project, bringing the GHG reduction total of the ECCO project up to 150.000 tons/year.

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