



Tandems Quarterly

September 2023

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TRUSTING THE DRIVERS OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION

Michael Anranter

Who do we actually trust with the energy transition? As we walked through the parks and to the pilot projects at the Partner Meeting on the Black Sea coast in Varna, trust and mistrust were recurring themes. Trust in the big energy companies and political decision-makers. Trust in the local administration. Trust in one's neighbors, who all had to come together to agree to insulate a multi-unit apartment building in the city. Trust in non-profit initiatives whose drive had to be different, ideological, not economic. Trust in the partnership and the individuals' quality of knowing how and being capable of pressing the right buttons at the right time.

For the sake of simplicity, in TANDEMS we decided to distinguish between three major groups of stakeholders who are all in trust relationships. We speak of technical experts, local communities, and policymakers. Technical experts ensure that energy cooperatives are technically sound. They also focus on the business models and the management of members in energy cooperatives. On the other hand, there are local communities that need to be mobilized, as there is no cooperative without citizen participation. And then there are the policymakers who need to create a supportive regulatory environment for energy cooperatives to thrive. Because they are evaluated on the basis of how well they function and ensure security of supply, the focus is often on improving existing energy systems. Energy cooperatives are seen as a supplement to, not a replacement for, the large electricity producers—a seemingly safe haven but undermining the aspect of democratized access to energy.

If democratization of access to energy—and I mean renewable energy—is the most salient goal that energy cooperatives pursue, this means that cooperatives must be accessible to everyone, regardless of their social or economic status. Let me come back to the TANDEMS partnership. In TANDEMS, we communicate in an appreciative way; we talk and we listen. We recognize local conditions and the agendas of individual actors, and on that basis we try to look together for ways to advance the democratization of renewable energies and their distribution. As we stand in front of the renovated apartment building in Varna, it becomes clear that the infrastructure here is different, already communally conceived in its beginnings. A difference to the single-family housing estates in Belgium and the Netherlands. Unlike in our more northwestern partner regions, here only the production, but not the network, needs to be communalized.



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Our mission is clear: The energy market in the hands of the citizens.

OurPower is an emerging energy cooperative in Austria operating a peer-to-peer marketplace for RES electricity generated by its members. OurPower handles the online matching services as well as the whole process of electricity supply and billing. We sat down with [Hemma Beiser](#), a managing director and co-founder of OurPower for an interview.

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What is a 'just energy transition'?

Change, especially in already economically and socially uncertain times, can make us feel fearful of the future. This is why TANDEMS, along with other energy community focused projects, encourages a just energy transition, which ensures fairness and inclusivity.

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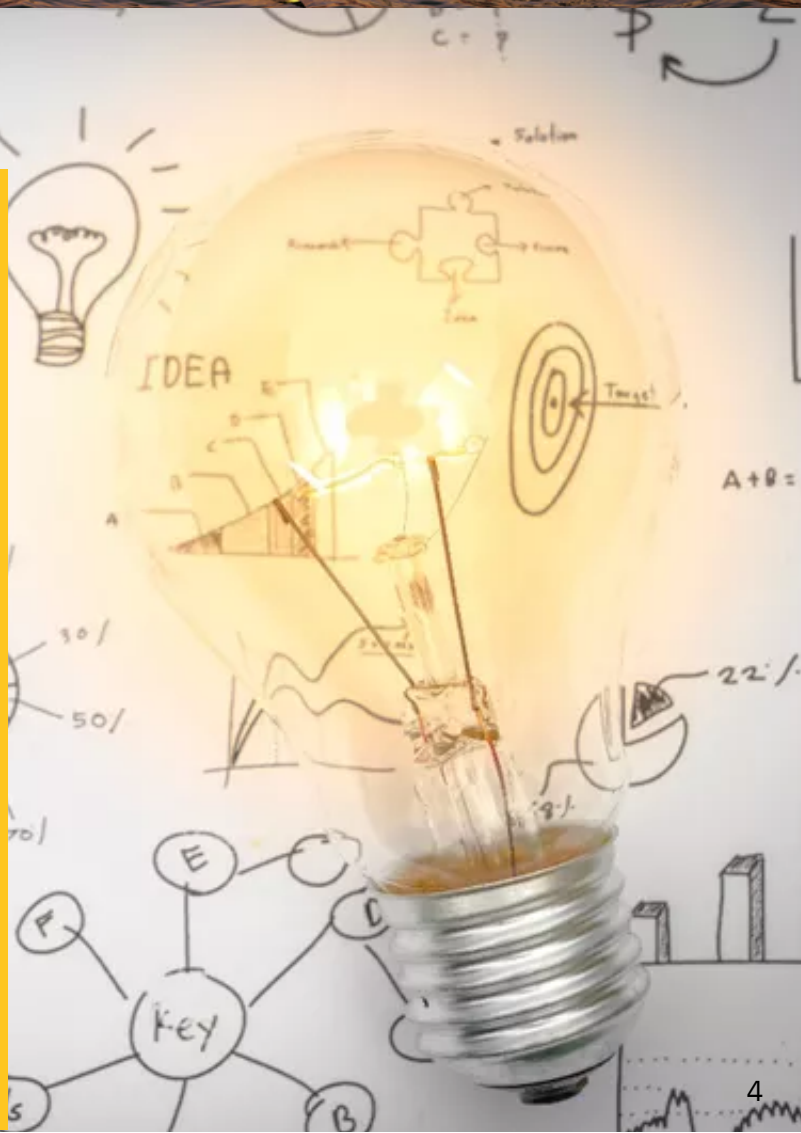
A blueprint for communally owned wind energy.

There are a few examples where cooperative onshore wind power is in existence. However, the normalization of this practice, socially, financially and legislatively, is developing too slowly. This article looks into this issue. It analyses current barricades and opportunities as well as looks into good practices, which can act as blueprints for communally owned wind energy. [To find out more click here...](#)

Energy Communities reorganising the current energy market.

The reorganisation of the energy market involves legislative changes and the disruption of the current energy flow. The restructuring of this system is strategic in providing citizens with stable energy prices. It also supports sustainable and renewable energy transition. What do energy communities need to become vehicles of this reorganisation? This article explores this concept by focusing on infrastructure, business models and energy flow.

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NEWS/EVENTS/HIGHLIGHTS

May/ June 2023

Klimaan and 6 other energy cooperatives join a project under the coordination of Zuidtrant.

The Federal Energy Transition Fund supports 7 Belgian energy cooperatives, the KU Leuven and battery producer Octave Energy to develop R-E-FLEX project. The various partners want to create a scalable and modular charging plaza concept that offers network flexibility that can be deployed immediately in the event of local or supralocal electricity shortages.

June 2023

Klimaan and ZuidtrAnt officially the largest heat network in the Rivierenland: OMWARM Warmtenet Averegten. The project is supposed to be operational in Summer of 2026.



July 2023



ZuidtrAnt becomes a partner for KlimaatLINK, an organisation, which connects science and youth in informing students about climate education and climate science.

July 2023

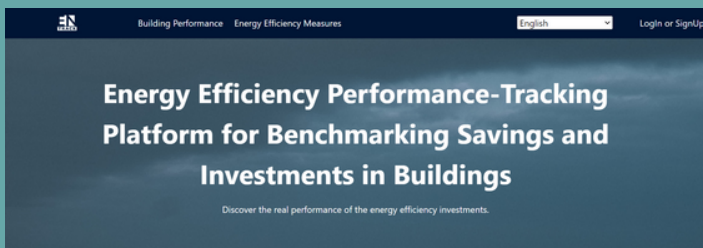
Duneworks publishes their research into 'Energy Platforms and the Future of Energy Citizenship'. 'Platform developers will need to design explicitly for people to know that they are doing 'their bit' – that quintessential scope of everyday material participation in energy issues, so far.'

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July/ August 2023

EnEffect together with other Bulgarian partners release an online platform, ENtrack, which tracks the energy performance of buildings, energy saving measures and energy efficiency investments.



UPCOMING: NOVEMBER 2023

Third TANDEM Consortium meeting hosted by AGEM in Achterhoek, Gelderland, Netherlands



September 2023

Mechelen joins the energy community Otterbeek and decides to investigate the possibility of a heat network in the Grand Beguinage. Mechelen stepped into a cooperation between Woonland, the city of Mechelen, Klimaan vzw & cvso and Fluvius.



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