

TANDEM QUARTELY

The Quarterly Newsletter
from the LIFE TANDEM
Project

Editorial 'Pushing Boundaries' | 2

How TANDEM IS Empowering Communities | 3

The TANDEM Open Collaboration Model | 7



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As we've moved deeper into our project's second half, Europe stands at a pivotal moment in its energy transition journey. The formation of the new European Commission promises renewed commitments to green energy and citizen empowerment. Among the most transformative shifts we are witnessing is the growing recognition of energy sharing as a central pillar in achieving a fair, inclusive, and rapid transition to renewable energy.

The European Union's energy policies, from the [Clean Energy for All Europeans package](#) (2019) to the more recent [REPowerEU Plan](#) (2022), have increasingly emphasized the role of citizens in shaping the future of our energy systems. Energy communities and cooperatives are no longer fringe concepts but key drivers in decentralizing energy generation and consumption.

At the heart of this transformation is the energy sharing model, which TANDEMS has been championing in its pilot projects across Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, and the Netherlands. Through the collaboration of municipalities, energy cooperatives, and citizens, energy sharing is turning theoretical frameworks into tangible benefits for communities. Various projects demonstrate how energy produced locally can be shared equitably, reducing costs for households and building resilience against volatile energy prices.

However, as we move forward, it is clear that this energy transition must go beyond just technological solutions. The new European Commission will need to navigate the delicate balance between policy reform and real-world application. Citizens must be supported not only in adopting renewable energy but also in co-owning and co-managing it. This is where TANDEMS has been a leading light, offering models of open collaboration that empower citizens and local governments alike.

As we anticipate the policy directions of the next European Commission, we are reminded that our work is far from over. But with every new energy community formed, every kilowatt-hour shared among neighbors, and every local partnership strengthened, we are pushing the boundaries of what is possible in Europe's clean energy future.



Michael Anranter
Oikoplus

Project Insights

Revolutionizing Energy from the Ground Up: How TANDEMS Is Empowering Communities

In a quiet corner of Belgium, on the rooftops of social housing in Otterbeek, a transformation is taking place. Solar panels glisten in the sun, while the local energy cooperative, Klimaan, collaborates with the city of Mechelen to provide affordable, renewable energy to residents. This project is not just about solar energy—it's about energy sharing, a concept that is reshaping the way we think about power, both literally and metaphorically.



The TANDEMS project is built on the idea that energy communities—local groups that produce and share renewable energy—are the key to accelerating Europe's energy transition. The aim is not just to replace fossil fuels but to democratize energy ownership, giving citizens control over where their power comes from and how it is used.



Belgium: The Solar Revolution in Otterbeek

In Otterbeek, the collaboration between the city and local energy cooperative Klimaan is an example of how bottom-up energy sharing can reduce costs for households while addressing environmental concerns. The solar panels installed here are part of a broader initiative to provide clean energy to over 70 homes.

This project is not just about reducing carbon emissions; it's about providing energy independence to communities. A local resident, Marie, reflects on the impact of the initiative: "It's not just about cheaper energy. It's about knowing that we are contributing to something bigger, something that will benefit our children and our community."



Netherlands: A Cost-Price Model for Energy

Meanwhile, in the Achterhoek region of the Netherlands, another energy revolution is quietly unfolding. Eight municipalities have formed their own energy company, Agem Gemeentelijke Energie, which allows them to bypass traditional energy suppliers and provide energy directly to citizens at cost price. This innovative approach has been particularly successful in projects like BioZon, where households can now purchase energy at a stable, low cost—5.5 cents per kilowatt-hour.

"We couldn't just wait for traditional energy suppliers to catch up," says Willem, a project manager involved in the BioZon project. "We had to take matters into our own hands."

This cost-price model has been a game-changer for local communities, allowing them to avoid market volatility and reinvest profits back into local energy initiatives.



Bulgaria: Burgas Pioneering Solar Energy

Over in Bulgaria, the coastal city of Burgas is becoming a hub for renewable energy, particularly solar power. With a combination of municipal support and citizen engagement, Burgas has been pioneering the development of solar energy communities, allowing local residents to harness the power of the sun for their daily energy needs.

One standout project is the installation of solar panels on Primary School Georgi Benkovski, where the rooftop system is providing clean energy to over 335 pupils. The local government has been pivotal in supporting these initiatives, emphasizing the importance of public trust in making the energy transition a success.

"The cooperation between citizens and authorities is what makes this possible," says Ivaylo Trendafilov, a representative from the Municipality of Burgas. "We are not just building solar panels; we are building trust."

Energy Sharing: The Future of Power

Across these regions, energy sharing is not just a buzzword—it's a reality. Whether it's through solar panels on social housing in Belgium, a cost-price energy model in the Netherlands, or community-led solar projects in Bulgaria, TANDEM is proving that local communities can lead the way in Europe's clean energy transition.

These projects are more than technical solutions—they represent a new kind of social contract between citizens, governments, and cooperatives. By giving people a stake in their energy systems, TANDEM is helping to ensure that the energy transition is not only green but fair and democratic.

And this is just the beginning. With plans to activate 67 community energy projects and support 23 citizen-led initiatives across Europe, the TANDEM project is lighting the way to a future where energy is truly shared by all.



Project Insights

The Four Phases of the TANDEMS Open Collaboration Model: A Blueprint for Energy Communities

As Europe moves towards a cleaner, more sustainable energy future, local communities are stepping up to play a pivotal role. The TANDEMS project is at the forefront of this transformation, developing and implementing an Open Collaboration Model (OCM) that empowers municipalities, cooperatives, and citizens to create and manage energy communities. At the heart of this model are four distinct phases: Discover, Dream, Design, and Deliver. These phases guide stakeholders through a structured but flexible process of building a successful energy community, ensuring that collaboration and shared value remain central.

1 Discover:

In this initial phase, the Just Energy Transition (JET) pioneer team analyzes the current value network, identifies the key actors, and understands the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) of the existing system. The focus is on mapping the local context to gain insights into the energy landscape and the community's needs .

2 Dream:

This phase involves envisioning the ideal future for the energy transition initiative. The team engages in creative and aspirational thinking, setting ambitious goals and articulating a shared vision. The emphasis here is on brainstorming shared values and forming a collective image of success .



3 Design:

In the Design phase, the team translates their vision into concrete plans and strategies. This includes defining roles, allocating resources, and establishing mechanisms for collaboration and coordination. The focus is on strategic planning and co-creating the new value network that will drive the energy transition .

4 Deliver:

This is the implementation phase where the plans and strategies are put into action. The team works together to mobilize resources, overcome challenges, and ensure the successful delivery of outcomes that contribute to the energy transition. Monitoring and continuous improvement are essential during this phase .

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