

TANDEMS QUARTELY

The Quarterly Newsletter
from the LIFE TANDEMS
Project

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TANDEMS

EDITORIAL: COLLABORATION AT THE HEART OF CHANGE

ERIK LAES

Now that the TANDEM project is slowly approaching its home stretch and the final nine months of the project lie ahead of us, it is time to draw conclusions from the project's progress to date and to process the project experience into results. And that is what we are doing in this issue of the project newsletter.

The success stories of the TANDEM pilots inspired the creation of an Open Collaboration Model (OCM). They show what is possible when local authorities and energy communities embrace collaboration. The model can help initiatives bridge gaps between a diverse set of actors, unlocking financial, social, as well as ecological value for the community. But the true power of the OCM lies in its flexibility. It is not a one-size-fits-all solution but a living guide that adapts to your unique challenges and opportunities.

The TANDEM Open Collaboration Model (OCM) is more than just a framework – it is a call to action for local communities ready to drive sustainable change through meaningful partnerships. By following its four steps – Discover, Dream, Design, and Deliver – local authorities working in tandem with a local energy community can turn ambitious energy transition visions into real, lasting impact.

The energy transition is one of the defining challenges of our time, but also one of its greatest opportunities. By using the TANDEM Open Collaboration Model, you can create an energy future where everyone benefits. The path is clear – so let us move forward together!



Erik Laesk
Expert, VITO

Project Updates

Consortium Meeting in Gabrovo, Bulgaria



The 5th TANDEM consortium meeting took place in Gabrovo, Bulgaria, where partners had the opportunity to learn more about and celebrate the implementation of the first 'real' energy cooperative in Bulgaria.

Known for its rich heritage and ambitious climate goals, Gabrovo plays a key role in the TANDEM project. One of the most pressing challenges Gabrovo faces, is the energy inefficiency of its multi-family residential buildings. [...]

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Empowering Local Leaders at Burenwerf Initiative

Local leadership can be the driving force behind meaningful change, especially in the journey toward sustainable energy. At Burenwerf, we see first-hand how empowering community leaders and embracing adaptability are key to achieving energy transition goals.

In energy communities, success is often measured by how well a project can mobilize local talent and adapt to the unexpected. [...]



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TANDEMS partners meet climate activist

Madeleine Alisa Wörner, a climate activist from Germany, recently visited Gabrovo. She brought a breath of fresh air and change to one of our Bulgarian partner cities, having just come from COP29 in Baku. Wörner, a leading figure in the climate protection movement, engaged in constructive dialogue with local stakeholders and left a lasting impression on the community.

Her visit and stopover followed one of the roughest stages of her trip so far. The day before, she called to say she would make it in time, despite the heavy snow. She was convinced she could make it – and she did. The day after, we met Madeleine at the Municipality of Gabrovo, Bulgaria. Vanya Lazarova and Todor Popov seized the chance to discuss the challenges and opportunities of a sustainable future, free from coal and pollution.

“The outcome of the climate conference is inadequate. All countries must now take responsibility and present effective national climate protection plans. The solutions have long been on the table. It is time to push ahead with the phase-out of coal, gas and oil and deliver real climate protection.”

Madeleine Alisa Wörner, Misereor

Bulgaria at COP29: A Mixed Bag of Progress and Setbacks

Bulgaria's participation in COP29 reflects a complex picture of progress and setbacks in its climate action journey. However, the country is determined to make progress on climate action. The delayed coal phase-out pushed back to 2038, is one of the most significant challenges hindering the country's ability to meet its climate targets and contribute to continued reliance on a polluting energy source. The expansion of renewable energy is hindered by legislation and regulatory frameworks that create obstacles, including issues like grid connection, permitting processes, and support mechanisms for renewable energy projects.

However, Bulgaria has also made significant progress in renewable energy development, particularly in solar and wind power. Efforts are also underway to improve energy efficiency in buildings and across various sectors - and Gabrovo is one of the cities in the region that has committed itself to making this transition towards renewable and green energies as soon as possible. TANDEMS and other EU-funded projects have proved to be important vehicles supporting the implementation of their ambitious ideas.

COP in a nutshell

The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the annual meeting of the nations that have signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This global conference brings together representatives from nearly 200 countries to address the urgent challenge of climate change.

COP negotiations have achieved successes like the Paris Agreement, but global emissions continue to rise. Many major emitters have failed to meet their commitments, undermining the agreement's goals. While adaptation strategies are being developed, funding remains inadequate, and developed countries have not fully delivered promised financial support to developing nations.

Discussing the role of energy communities in climate change

Wörner's visit to Gabrovo was more than just a chance for inspiration; it was also an opportunity to discuss the role of energy communities in engaging citizens in the mission of municipalities. In addition to reducing dependence on non-local energy sources, energy communities have a special role to play in making the energy transition fairer and more equitable. With the municipality itself joining and facilitating the energy community at the site of the local landfill, there are new opportunities to reduce the cost of running public buildings: a win-win situation.

By linking up with climate activist Madeleine Wörner, whose bike ride is both a physical and symbolic challenge, Gabrovo's energy initiative has gained international visibility. Together, Wörner and our local TANDEMS partners also managed to link local efforts to the global negotiations at COP29, proving that the fight against climate change is not something they do alone, but together with others and across borders. In this sense, their journey can be read as a cartography of hope. It is built one pedal stroke at a time.



Vanya Lazarova, Madeleine Alisa Wörner, and Todor Popov meeting at the Municipality of Gabrovo



Municipality-led Energy Cooperatives in Gabrovo, Bulgaria with Daniela Dimitrova & Todor Popov

Daniela Dimitrova and Todor Popov introduce the first energy community in Gabrovo, Bulgaria.

Empowering Local Initiatives: Open Collaboration Model



The TANDEMS Open Collaboration Model (OCM) is a practical guide designed by TANDEMS partner VITO to assist teams of pioneers in developing, designing, and implementing value networks for local energy initiatives. By focusing on the collaboration between local authorities and energy communities, the OCM aims to create shared, multiple, and collective value for the community.

The OCM guides teams through a four-step process:

1. Discover: Analyze the local context and identify existing strengths, resources, and opportunities.
2. Dream: Envision an ideal future for the energy initiative and define shared values and goals.
3. Design: Develop concrete plans and strategies, including defining roles, allocating resources, and establishing collaboration mechanisms.
4. Deliver: Implement the plans, mobilize resources, and work with partners to achieve tangible results.

By following these steps, teams can create sustainable and impactful energy initiatives that benefit the entire community. The OCM emphasizes the importance of collaboration, shared value creation, and community empowerment.



[Download the Open Collaboration Model Guidelines from the TANDEMS website](#)

TANDEMS on the Road

The TANDEMS Project is spreading the word on energy cooperation!

The TANDEMS project has been actively sharing its success stories and valuable knowledge about energy cooperation models across Europe, marking a significant step forward. This is in line with the TANDEMS Roadshow's core objective: to inform innovators and other interested stakeholders in neighbouring communities!

The Flemish energy cooperative ZuidtrAnt, partnering in TANDEMS, has emerged as a particularly engaged partner in this knowledge dissemination effort.

ZuidtrAnt recently hosted a highly successful information session on the Lint Neighbourhood Renovation Project, with nearly 90 attendees. This event demonstrated the clear and overwhelming community interest in a just and fair energy transition.

Furthermore, ZuidtrAnt, in collaboration with the City of Mortsels, organized a session on the exciting possibilities of solar energy for apartment buildings. Over 70 people attended this event.



Impressions from the Information Session on the Lint neighbourhood renovation session were more than 90 people showed up to learn more about why and how to become a member of energy cooperatives.



News / Events / Highlights

TANDEMS at ManagEnergy Masterclass

The TANDEMS project was featured at the upcoming ManagEnergy Masterclass, where Bart de Bruyne from Stad Mechelen presented the inspiring "Solar Panels for Social Renters of Otterbeek" case study. This model showcases how cities and energy cooperatives can collaborate for a fair and inclusive energy transition.



Just Transition Day in Turnhout

TANDEMS participated in the Just Transition Day in Turnhout. Bart de Bruyne again presented the Otterbeek pilot, highlighting its potential to make the energy transition both sustainable and socially equitable. Valuable discussions with colleagues from partner organizations further strengthened the project's commitment to this goal.



Bart de Bruyne presenting at the Just Transition Day in Turnhout

Presentation at the BAU Academy

BAU Academy Presentation: Ivaylo Trendafilov from the Municipality of Burgas shared his expertise at the BAU Academy, highlighting the pioneering work on the Burgas Energy Community within the TANDEMS project.

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