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Empowering
Renewable and
Citizen Energy
Communities



Dear Reader,

It is a great honor and pleasure to welcome you to our final project newsletter. As coordinator of POWER-E-COM, my journey through the energy community world in Europe has been full of variety. I met enthusiastic citizens who can benefit from one of Europe's best ideas: enabling energy sharing among citizens, so that energy produced locally stays in citizens' hands. This can also help municipalities facing financial pressure and support vulnerable groups through well-targeted energy sharing.

But I learned that a brilliant concept alone is not enough. Political decision-makers must do their homework and develop workable schemes that truly serve interested civilians. For more energy communities, the requirements are clear: (1) smart meters in all homes that want to participate (a prerequisite); (2) supportive Distribution System Operators (DSOs) with suitable data management systems, so shared energy can be calculated and allocated to members; and (3) energy-community-friendly regulation that rewards local communities for keeping generation peaks within the community and reducing stress on the grid.

During the project, Austria provided a best-practice example and Spain showed promising progress. In Bulgaria, Ireland, Germany, and Slovenia, partners delivered tremendous work, and colleagues will continue building better conditions for their citizens.

POWER-E-COM contributed to supporting more energy communities. You are invited to explore the results and take the best from them for your own energy community journey.

Good luck and enjoy the journey.

Ingo Ball, WIP Renewable Energies



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Final Conference in Brussels

Three Years of Cooperation – One Shared Energy Transition

On 8 June 2026, the LIFE projects DISCOVER and ISLET joined POWER-E-COM for the joint **Final Conference** in Brussels, bringing together project partners, policymakers, regional authorities, energy agencies and community representatives from across Europe.

Partners shared experiences from six countries, presented project results and discussed what is still needed to accelerate citizen-led energy across Europe.

One lesson stood out: there is no single model for a successful energy community. Regulations, markets and local circumstances differ, but strong local cooperation, practical support and solutions adapted to local needs make the difference.

The conference marked the end of the project – and the beginning of the wider use of its results.



► [Watch the POWER-E-COM Final Conference](#)

Explore Project Results and Achievements

Seven Energy Community Transformation Offices established!

POWER-E-COM partners have established and are successfully operating **7 Energy Community Transformation Offices (ECTOs)**. These are located in **Upper Austria (Linz)**, **Bulgaria (Gabrovo)**, **Germany (Penzberg)**, **Ireland (Nenagh)**, **Slovenia (Maribor)** and **Spain (Madrid/Rivas)**.

The ECTOs provide information and advice to citizens and municipalities and support the implementation of energy sharing. The focus of ECTO activities varies across countries but they all build trust, provide guidance, and connect initiatives with municipalities, grid operators, and other stakeholders.

Highlights are for example the establishment of a visible national support point for energy communities in Bulgaria supporting the development and operation of two energy communities in Gabrovo.

In Slovenia, this year the ECTO moved from awareness raising to practical implementation and it is currently supporting the development and implementation of energy community initiatives in 6 municipalities.

Across all six countries, the offices provide an important foundation for continuing this work beyond the lifetime of POWER-E-COM.



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Knowledge That Helps Communities Take the Next Step

Establishing an energy community is about much more than installing solar panels. Communities need to understand legal requirements, financing, organisation, technology and how to bring citizens and other stakeholders together.

POWER-E-COM therefore combined practical local support with training, mentoring and capacity building for municipalities, regional authorities, citizen groups and energy agencies.

These resources help stakeholders move from the first question – “*Could an energy community work here?*” – towards planning and implementation.

Ready to take the next step? [Explore the POWER-E-COM Energy Community Training Pack](#)

30 Business Models for Energy Communities

What does a viable energy community actually look like?

POWER-E-COM developed **30 practical business models across six countries**, demonstrating that energy communities can take many different forms depending on local needs and conditions.

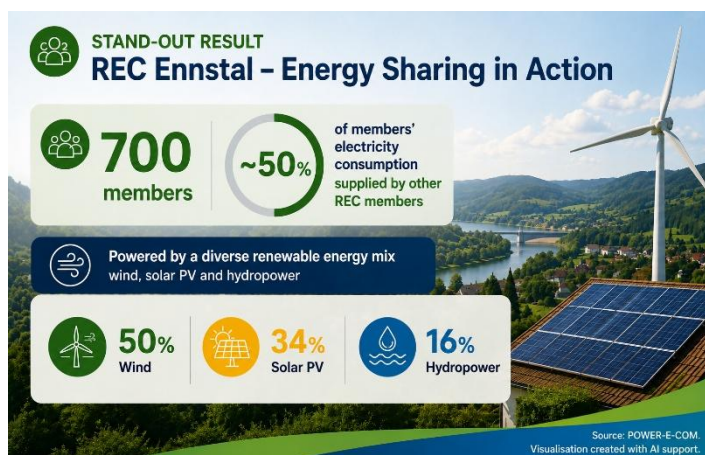
Here are two examples showing just how different – and adaptable – these solutions can be.

Austria: REC Ennstal – From Local Initiative to Regional Energy Sharing

REC Ennstal is one of the strongest Austrian examples because it is already operating at regional scale. It began as a local energy community in Großraming in 2022, moved to a regional REC named “EEG Ennstal” in June 2022, and by 2025 had reached 700 members across an area covering nine municipalities and around 16,000 inhabitants. Around 400 members also feed electricity into the REC, showing that it is not only a consumer-based initiative but a genuinely active local energy market.

The key result is the high level of internal renewable electricity exchange.

In 2025, around 50% of the electricity consumed by members was generated by other REC members. This is especially notable because the model uses a diversified renewable mix rather than relying only on rooftop PV: from August 2024 to July 2025, 50% of shared electricity came from wind power, 34% from PV and 16% from hydropower. The presence of the Laussa wind farm and hydropower in the mix makes the community more robust across seasons and production profiles.



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This example stands out because it is mature, balanced and replicable. By the end of 2025, the REC could already point to more than two years of successful operation, with its setup completed and initial operation successfully underway. Members benefit from locally produced renewable electricity, reduced dependence on large-scale energy suppliers, reduced grid fees and exemptions from the renewable electricity levy and electricity tax. The model also shows strong community value: members know each other and communicate in ways that would not have emerged without the REC.

► **VIDEO:** [See community energy in action in Upper Austria](#)

Spain: Rivas Vaciamadrid – Community Energy with Social Impact

REC Rivas Vaciamadrid is a strong case because it represents a metropolitan municipal model with a clear pathway from local initiatives to a broader umbrella energy community. The model is planned in Rivas Vaciamadrid, a municipality of more than 100,000 inhabitants in Central Spain. The local RECs are expected to use an association form, while the umbrella REC remains under study and could be led by the municipality. Investment is expected to come partly from the municipality and partly from neighbors, which gives the model both public legitimacy and citizen ownership.

The expected impact is substantial and structured around phased growth. The model targets around 1,000 homes by 2030, starting with 100 pioneer homes during the project lifetime. It is mainly based on rooftop PV projects, complemented by EV chargers designed to be used during solar production hours. Overall, the community is expected to reach 1,000 kWp of installed capacity and produce about 1,500 MWh per year. The estimated gross benefit is EUR 160,000 per year, with an expected payback period of 7-8 years.



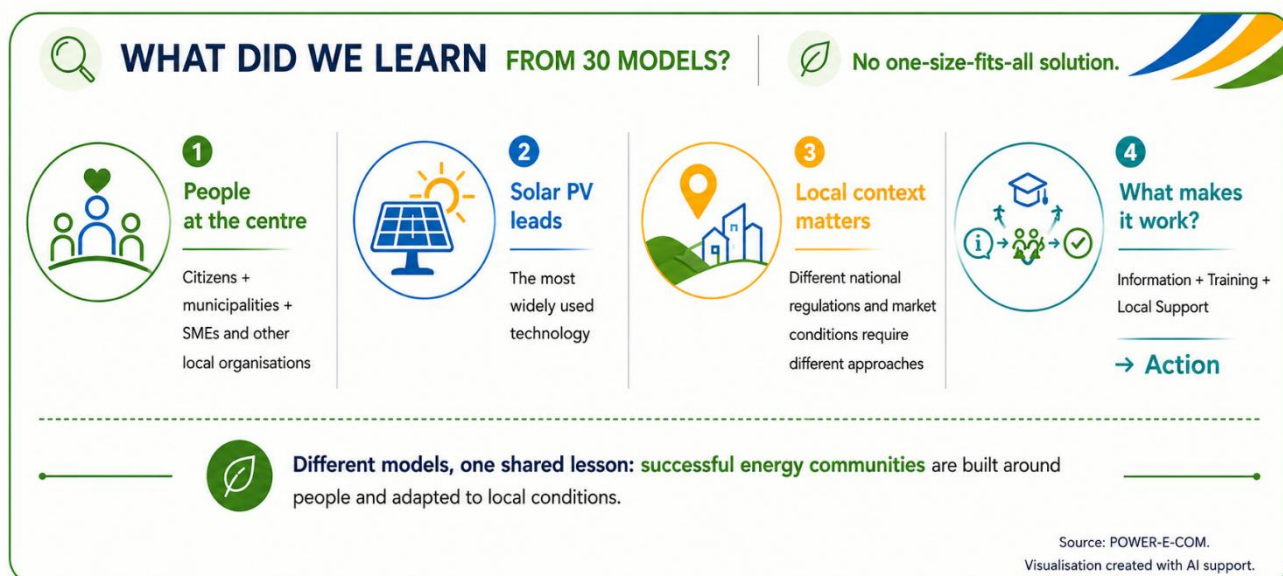
Rivas stands out because it combines technical, social and governance innovation in a way that is highly replicable for medium and large municipalities. The model explicitly includes a social allocation, with 5% of the energy to be delivered free to vulnerable families, and it also considers the exchange of kWh produced by existing PV installations within the umbrella energy community. The municipality's plan to create a global umbrella community for energy self-sufficiency, while supporting specific local communities, makes Rivas a valuable example of how local authorities can scale citizen energy projects without losing neighborhood-level participation.

► **VIDEO:** [Discover community energy in Spain](#)



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From Lessons Learned to a Roadmap for Action

What does it really take to turn an energy community from an idea into a lasting local initiative?

Drawing on implementation experiences from **Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Slovenia and Spain**, POWER-E-COM identified a clear lesson: **successful energy communities are built on much more than technology.**

People and partnerships, transparent governance, supportive regulation, sound financing, integrated technical planning and continuous learning all need to work together. Based on these experiences, the project developed a **practical implementation roadmap** to help future communities navigate the journey from the first idea and stakeholder engagement to implementation, operation and future growth.

The key message? Start with people, adapt to local conditions – and build for the long term.

Better Conditions for Community Energy

Practical projects alone are not enough. Energy communities also need supportive regulatory and market conditions.

Throughout POWER-E-COM, partners analysed national frameworks and identified barriers that can slow down or prevent the development of Renewable and Citizen Energy Communities.

Based on experiences from six countries, the project developed **recommendations for policymakers** to help create more favorable conditions for citizen participation in the energy transition.

These recommendations complement the project's practical work and ensure that lessons learned locally can also contribute to change at national and European level.



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Want to Explore More?

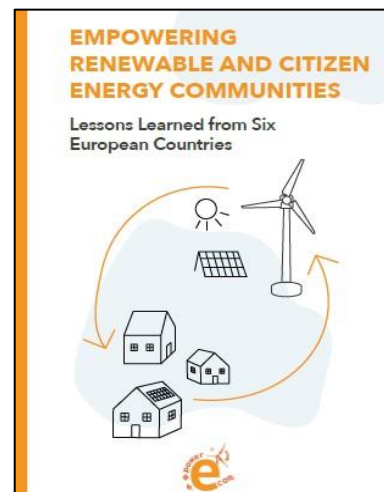
Three years of experiences, tools and lessons are available for anyone interested in taking community energy further.

POWER-E-COM Project Handbook

Looking for the project's key results and practical experience in one place?

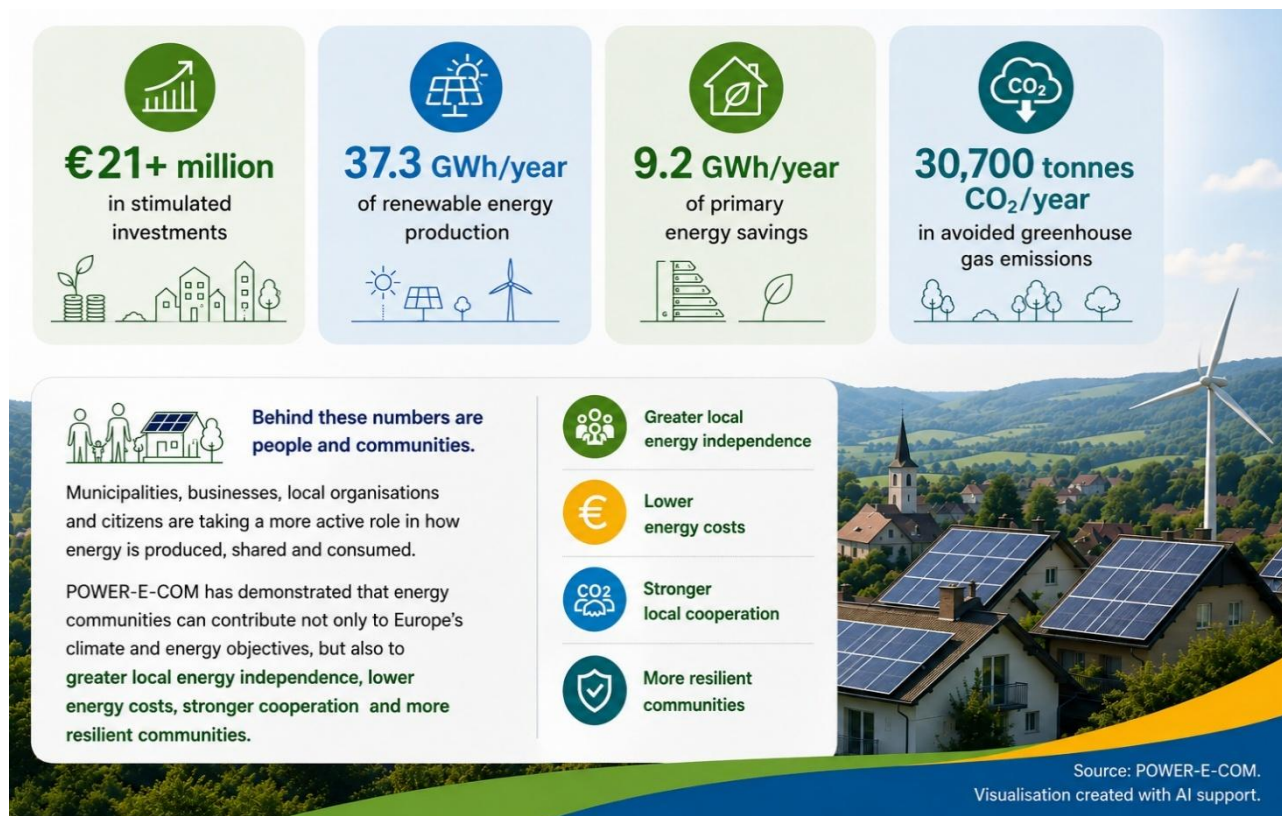
The **POWER-E-COM Project Handbook** brings together knowledge and lessons from the six participating countries and provides a useful starting point for municipalities, energy agencies, citizen groups and other organisations interested in developing energy communities.

→ Explore the [POWER-E-COM Project Handbook](#)



POWER-E-COM Impact in Numbers

From investment and renewable energy to lower emissions and stronger communities – the numbers tell the POWER-E-COM story.



The figures presented reflect the project's committed targets.



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Looking Ahead

POWER-E-COM may be coming to an end, but its impact continues.

Seven Energy Community Transformation Offices, 30 business models, practical tools, knowledge and partnerships provide a strong foundation for future energy communities across Europe.

Above all, the project has shown that community energy is about people working together to produce, share and manage energy locally.

The project ends. The energy, knowledge and cooperation continue.

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