Interreg North Sea Region COBEN
European Regional Development Fund
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COBEN Highlights

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While 2020 has finally come to an end, COBEN has not!
The consortium is continuously putting its efforts into the success of civic energy.
However, success rarely comes without some setbacks…

Hochschule Osnabrück, Germany (HSOS)
During the last months of the year, HSOS continued to work on the analysis of the interviews they held with energy cooperatives in Lower Saxony on success factors of citizen energy. They have now tried to view the statements with through a different lense and have identified possibly new factors to integrate into their analysis. Their work is planned to be concluded in a publication on the topic "Success factors of citizen energy" in the beginning of 2021.

Uppsala Kommun, Sweden
In Uppsala a possible community energy case has been recruited to the matchmaking platform. This involves a building, which contains a mobility house with 60 charging points for electrical vehicles, apartments for students and a grocery store. The mobility house is equipped with solar panels and a battery storage. The idea is to connect the mobility house, the apartments and the grocery store to share and use the energy more efficiently between the three organisations when the demand is high.
On top of this, a lecture and a workshop was held with students at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences about the capacity constrains in Uppsala municipality and civic energy as a solution. The students were divided into groups of five and were asked to solve a case to decrease the power demand in Uppsala and create solutions for the capacity constrains in the distribution grid. Uppsala municipality is also engaged in ongoing discussions and plans for cooperation with Uppsala University regarding a research project about energy segregation and community energy.

Emmen, Netherlands
A communication strategy has been set up and agreed upon with the developer of Solar Park Emmer Compacuum. Involving the community in the development of cooperative solar park Emmer Compacuum (1 MWp) will start January 2021. In December the pilot for a virtual grid on community buildings fell apart. The virtual grid proposal was based on experimental regulation in the Netherlands which was thrown out by the high court in November. The regulation was then revoked. Instead we successfully negotiated grid capacity with the DSO. We worked on a text proposal for a 'local ownership' policy in the regional energy strategy Drenthe.

Unfortunately, Emmen's most important pilot, the development of the 7 hectare Cooperative solar park Pottendijk, fell apart at the end of 2020. The DSO refusual of grid connection due to grid congestion problems brought the project to a standstill. Now Shell bought the entire project Energypark Pottendijk (30 MW windpower and 35 MWp solar) for hydrogen production, where no grid connection is needed. The proposal to use the redemption fee for the dissolvement entails the development of a cooperative solar park on city grounds elsewhere in Emmen. However, concrete community benefits won't be delivered until 2026.

Ringkøbing-Skjern Kommune, Denmark (RKSK)

In November the electric vehicle share scheme put into service in Skjern in and existing electric vehicle schemes were updated to incorporate the lessons learned from the previous pilot put into service in No i Vestrum.

RKSK also held a presentation about civic energy at Ringkøbing-Skjern Energy Council, including new provisions in EU-law, which are presently being transposed into Danish law.

There have been a lot of successful outreach and communication efforts in the past months:

National media coverage has been achieved on Nordic exchange on Farming, as well as coverage in printed national paper "Avisen Danmark" on Nordic exchange on Farming (published 4 January 2021). There has also been coverage on regional radio (DR Midt/Vest) on Nordic exchange (6 January 2021).

In the coming month RKSK will work on establishing the documentation needed for transporting, storing and fueling a green fuel called M85. If successful this might have the potential to turn locally produced biogas into mobility for the community.