

Case Study S3C

eueco – Facilitating citizen participation



S3C related keywords:

- Residential end users
- Citizen Participation Models
- Regional Integration

“A platform for sustainable participation of citizens”

Project Summary

The two main ideas behind eueco are firstly that people have to become active partners within energy projects through financial participation in order to form acceptance for the energy transition. And secondly that communication and the integration of regional stakeholders and multipliers are crucial for energy projects.

The financial participation can be the main incentive for citizens to change their role from a mere consumer of energy to an active citizen, who supports the “Energiewende” (energy transition) on a local level. Due to the IT system developed by eueco, all steps of citizens’ participation are standardized and, therefore, costs can be reduced. The developed system enables a swift adaption of the same system to different contexts and regions.

Furthermore, eueco renders advice relating to administrative and financial consulting, IT-solutions (websites, blogs, social media, etc.), the organization of local events for future members of the cooperatives. Eueco, thereby, facilitates the whole process of citizens’ participation in a bottom-up process.

In the district of Ebersberg in Bavaria (Germany) different cooperatives have been founded to be free from combusting fossil energy sources until 2030. Two of the cooperatives were founded in 2013 with the support of the company eueco. The role of eueco within the district of Ebersberg is to facilitate and support the foundation and work progress of different bottom-up approaches to fulfil the local energy transition. Thereby, two main fields of work can be defined. On the one hand, eueco supports and organizes the whole administrative and financial aspects of the energy cooperatives. On the other, communication and PR strategies have been developed to activate and engage with the citizens.



What sets this project apart from other Smart Grid projects?

The project in Ebersberg is not a clearly specified Smart Grid project. At the moment, Smart Grid components are not part of the project, but due to the orientation on a 100% supply with renewable energy, this will become necessary at a certain stage of the progress.

Additionally, the citizens will continuously be informed about energy related topics and thereby sensitized for Smart Grids and the related technologies and approaches. The project deals with the topic of citizen engagement in a very elaborated, yet standardized way – based on the concepts of eueco – and sheds light on the main factors for success or failure of citizen participation.

The key differentiator to other Smart Grid projects is the strong focus on communication and regional integration.

The web platform and the social media integration enable communication between different types of stakeholders. These can include citizens, organized cooperatives, enterprises from the energy management sector or, for example, politicians. The project is actually based on the idea to bring all these non-energy stakeholders together to invest in energy projects. The idea behind this regional energy turnaround is that especially traditionally non-energy stakeholders will be involved into energy projects through their investments and their participation. Every regional stakeholder who is seeking an investment is urged to participate. Furthermore, the communication strategy and the regional basis of the projects are crucial factors to bring those different actors together. The aim of the eueco consultants and the regional politicians is to further increase the acceptance of renewable energies and to continue developing the communication strategies.



What happened?

The main service of **eueco** is a systematic facilitation of citizen participation in energy projects (cooperatives). For this purpose, the financial participation is fully organized through a website. To avoid costs, all information will be sent electronically. Due to the standardization of the whole process, the financial administration can occur at low operational costs. The whole system can be transferred and implemented for different kinds of participation projects, depending on the actual need.

In Ebersberg, citizens who are willing to invest in an energy project can either invest in a pool of all projects of the cooperative or only in a single project in form of a loan.

The website for the project in Ebersberg serves as the central portal for information and communication. It is interconnected with a blog, with electronic newsletters and Social Media. Eueco aims to organize the media flow as structured as possible. Topic plans, organisational plans and editorial plans help to improve the interlinkage between topics and communication channels. The information given via these channels are offerings of advanced training about the progress within the different projects and basic information about energy topics. The newsletter informs the recipients about energy related topics, progresses on the local level and interesting facts about energy topics. A blog offers more detailed in-depth articles. The social media campaign connects these different channels, but they are also interconnected with each other. The aim of these measures besides information brokerage is to raise awareness for RES, transfer skills and knowledge, raise engagement, enlarge the outreach of the projects, create a feeling of togetherness and enable the interaction of citizens.

Further information / Contact

Contact: Philipp Reiß (B.A.U.M. Consult GmbH), E-Mail: p.reiss@baumgroup.de

References:

Interviews

Web ressources (German)

- www.eueco.de
- www.energiewende-ebersberg.de
- www.buergerenergie-ebersberg.de
- Presentation at an informational event in Ebersberg (30.09.2013)
 - <http://energiewende-ebersberg.de/Down.asp?Name={BQRRCBJZL-102201310722-HIBLXBNI0G}.pdf>
- statutes of the citizens cooperative Ebersberg
- <http://energiewende-ebersberg.de/Down.asp?Name={QEIAIEMHKK-1022013102639-PRGCDQAATW}.pdf>
- Statutes of the umbrella cooperative Ebersberg
 - <http://energiewende-ebersberg.de/Down.asp?Name={LPKTAFZCFH-1022013105328-URUDCNDOLX}.pdf>
- Article on www.unendlich-viel-energie.de about Josef Baur (director of eueco)
 - <http://www.unendlich-viel-energie.de/de/panorama/koepfe-der-branche/josef-baur.html>