

# Empowering Energy Communities: Raising Awareness Toolkit

**O.2.3 Energy Communities awareness  
raising toolkit, including a jointly  
developed motivational method**

Developed by Energy Cities Romania/ OER  
August 2025

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# About the activity

The NRGCOM project aims to achieve a straightforward yet impactful goal: to help more individuals connect with the concepts of renewable energy and energy efficiency, inspiring them to engage in meaningful change. To support this mission, the project partners have designed a practical awareness-raising toolkit, shaped by real experiences and the valuable insights gained along the way.

The toolkit is not just a collection of materials; it represents how individuals respond when they are informed, encouraged and empowered. It incorporates a motivational approach that has been tested during pilot activities and is designed to meet people at their current level of engagement, whether they are just starting to think about energy issues or are already taking steps toward sustainable living.

This toolkit features a variety of useful and easy-to-understand resources and engaging educational materials, including a brochure with practical information for setting up an Energy Community, a colourful infographic, short videos, inspirational case studies and useful ready-to-use templates. The video materials contain interviews with real people who share their experiences about switching to renewable energy, saving energy and participating in Renewable Energy Communities (RECs).

Throughout the development of the toolkit, the team listened, learned and adapted. We gathered insights, lessons and tips, identifying what worked, what didn't and what made a difference. The toolkit is openly shared with local, regional and national stakeholders and is available online for anyone to use. This approach helps spread knowledge, enables the tools to reach more people and allows more communities to benefit.

Additional support for partners in promoting and disseminating the toolkit includes a set of materials designed to help share the information more effectively. These materials consist of a posting calendar and an explanatory document that helps one plan and organize their dissemination activities more easily and consistently.

This is an ongoing journey. As the project evolves, the partners continually revisit the motivational strategy to keep it relevant and connected to real-life experiences and educational materials. Change emerges not only from powerful ideas but also from the connections between people and the shared sense of possibility we create together.



A 2.5. Joint development of an awareness-raising toolkit compiled on the basis of the pilot action results

**Purpose:** Joint development of an awareness-raising toolkit

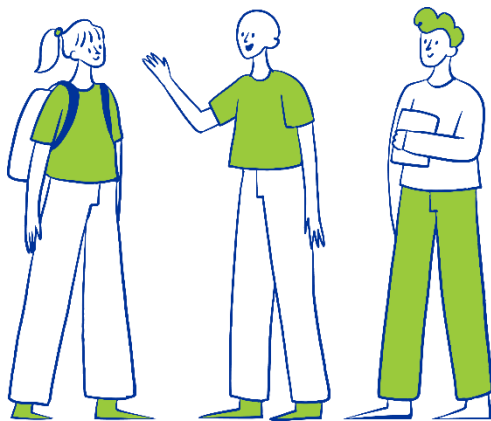
**Lead:** Energy Cities Romania/ [OER](#)

**Input:** STRIA, IMRO, JAIP, FORSCHUNG, IRENA, KSENA, PRA, REDASP, OER, FORS Montenegro, DIT, NEK, AEER

**Outcome:** Increase public and stakeholder awareness on renewable energy, RECs and energy efficiency

# Purpose of the document

The awareness-raising toolkit developed within the NRGCOM project is a comprehensive resource meticulously designed to inspire, **empower and mobilize individuals, communities, organizations and public institutions** to take decisive action toward a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future. Central to the mission of the NRGCOM project is the goal of fostering a positive perception of Renewable Energy Communities. By breaking down complex concepts related to renewable energy and energy efficiency into relatable, easily understandable ideas, **the toolkit empowers users to engage with these topics in a meaningful way**. It emphasizes the importance of local action and collaboration in driving real-world change, helping **communities and authorities** alike recognize their potential impact.



The toolkit is available in English and is made freely accessible online, which ensures that a wide audience, including local and national authorities, NGOs and citizens can utilize its resources for public awareness-raising. This open access allows people from diverse backgrounds and expertise levels to engage in sustainability initiatives and to support the formation of Renewable Energy Communities. Functioning as both a practical guide and a source of inspiration, **the toolkit offers resources, including practical tools for implementation, proven techniques for effective communication and motivating success stories from**

**existing Energy Communities**. These elements are designed to support energy transition efforts at every level, from grassroots activism to institutional policy-making, enabling a collective impact towards a cleaner, more sustainable future. **The Toolkit consists of several communication and educational materials** that were developed to raise awareness and support the creation of Energy Communities: a visual summary with key facts and figures showcasing the importance of Energy Communities in the form of an **infographic**; 5 Steps to Your Energy Community, a practical, easy-to-follow **brochure** outlining the main steps for setting up an Energy Community; a collection of 13 inspiring examples, showcasing how communities are actively shaping their energy future by combining technology with citizen engagement, presented in a **Catalogue of Case Studies**. An engaging introduction to Energy Communities is also included, featuring real-life stories where everyday people are getting involved and making a difference, delivered through a 9-minute **educational video** accompanied by a 2-minute trailer. **A series of templates** designed for use across various platforms supports the dissemination of information about Energy Communities. To complement these materials, an **engagement strategy** has been developed, targeting two different groups: the general public and potential REC founders, including municipalities, regional authorities and other relevant actors. This resource package supports public institutions in effectively involving citizens and stakeholders in the energy transition, helping them communicate the benefits of Renewable Energy Communities and encouraging active participation.

# Toolkit content

## Infographic

This material highlights key facts and figures to support the case for expanding Energy Communities in the Danube Region.

Energy Communities are about more than just energy; they stand for autonomy, solidarity and sustainable local development. They demonstrate that the green transition can be democratic, inclusive and beneficial for all.



Across Europe and beyond, Energy Communities are rapidly gaining momentum. From just 5 initiatives in 2021 to over 3.700 in **Austria** by 2025, this model of local renewable energy production and consumption is becoming a key driver of the energy transition. In **Bulgaria**, a RES rooftop program for public buildings is creating new Energy Communities that bring together the government, municipalities, business and the energy system operators. Whether in pilot projects in **Moldova** or on 100% sustainable islands in **Denmark**,

communities are showing what's possible when people take energy into their own hands.

Through these initiatives, citizens, municipalities and businesses are coming together to produce, share and use clean energy, cutting costs and reducing reliance on external sources.

In **Romania**, the Energy Cooperative has grown from just 15 founding members to nearly 1.000, becoming the country's first local Energy Community. In **Hungary**, 10 registered Energy Communities are aiming to establish at least one in every district by 2030, totaling 175.

In **Germany**, women from the Windfang cooperative are leading the way by building and operating their wind turbines.

In **Greece**, pharmacies and households are teaming up to generate and share solar energy within their communities.

And in the **Czech Republic**, more than 5,700 groups are now sharing renewable energy among citizens and public institutions, helping to decentralize and democratize energy access.

Together, these stories highlight a growing movement that **not only empowers citizens but also provides local and national authorities** with a unique opportunity to foster cleaner, fairer, and more resilient energy systems through collaboration and community-driven solutions.

The infographic is accessible here: <https://interreg-danube.eu/projects/nrgcom/news/new-awareness-toolkit-on-energy-communities-now-available>.

# Brochure: 5 steps to your Energy Community

This material outlines the essential steps and guiding principles for developing Energy Communities, emphasizing their potential to empower communities, foster partnerships with local authorities, and accelerate the shift toward a more democratic and sustainable energy future in the Danube Region.



**The future of energy lies in collaboration.** As the world moves toward greener, fairer and more resilient systems, Energy Communities are becoming a powerful driver of local transformation.

Building an Energy Community starts with establishing the **right legal foundation**. Choosing an appropriate legal form and ensuring it aligns with national regulations creates the basis for transparency, accountability and long-term stability.

Equally essential is a **participatory governance model**. Clearly defined roles, voting rights and decision-making processes ensure the community operates democratically and inclusively. Trust and shared ownership grow from transparency and engagement, making it easier to overcome challenges and achieve common goals.

Early on, it is important to define the **type of Energy Community** to be created. Whether a Renewable Energy Community or a Citizen Energy Community, each model offers distinct advantages.

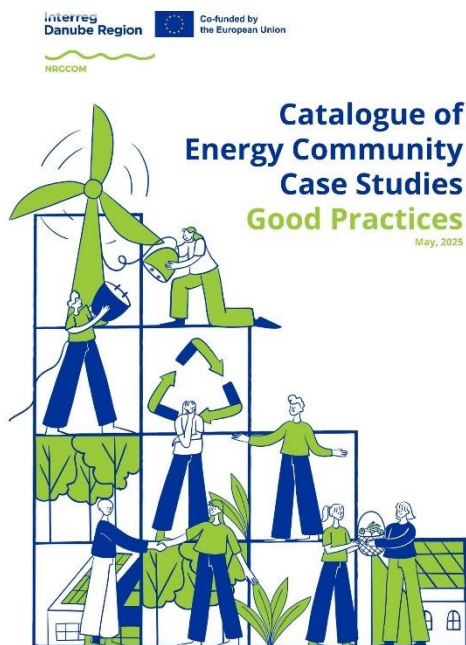
**Translating vision into action** requires solid planning, reliable partners and clearly defined responsibilities. Infrastructure must be aligned with long-term objectives and funding must be secured to ensure sustainability.

Strong **community engagement** brings it all together. Involving citizens, public institutions, NGOs, energy providers and other local actors creates a dynamic ecosystem of knowledge and resources. Energy Communities are not just technical innovations; they are a social movement driving the transition toward a more inclusive and sustainable energy future. Their success depends on collaboration, commitment and a shared vision.

The Brochure is accessible here: <https://interreg-danube.eu/projects/nrgcom/news/new-awareness-toolkit-on-energy-communities-now-available>.

# Catalogue of Energy Community Case Studies

This material presents inspiring examples from the Danube Region, illustrating how Energy Communities are driving the energy transition through local action, innovation and collaboration.



The energy transition is no longer a distant goal; it is already unfolding across Europe. At the heart of this transformation are people: citizens, local authorities, entrepreneurs and organizations coming together around a shared purpose, the responsible production and use of energy. The Catalogue showcases **real stories of communities** taking charge of their energy future. Compiled in May 2025, the catalogue features 13 case studies from 8 countries in the Danube Region. Each one demonstrates that change is not only possible, but also sustainable, replicable and deeply rooted in community engagement. From the small town of Neudörfl in Austria, where residents share solar energy through a clear and transparent model, to the Romanian initiative Între Vecini, which transforms apartment buildings into prosumer communities, these examples demonstrate the diversity

and adaptability of Energy Communities. In Germany, villages like Wildpoldsried and Fuchstal are achieving energy self-sufficiency through mixed renewable systems and participatory models. In Bulgaria, the Gabrovo REC brings together citizens, businesses and local authorities under one energy vision. And in Slovenia, schools and villages are becoming energy hubs, blending education, solar power, and innovation. The catalogue also highlights rural communities in the Czech Republic and Hungary, urban projects in Slovakia and Romania and cooperative efforts in Slovenia, all proving that technology alone is not enough. The real driver of success is collaboration: transparent governance, accessible financing, inclusive communication and a shared sense of ownership. These stories remind us that **energy transformation begins at the local level**. Whether in a remote village or a city block, any community can play a leading role in shaping a fair and sustainable energy future. The true power of these initiatives lies not only in their results, but in the shared conviction across citizens, communities and public institutions that collective effort drives lasting, transformative change.

The Catalogue is accessible here: <https://interreg-danube.eu/projects/nrgcom/news/new-awareness-toolkit-on-energy-communities-now-available>.

# Educational Videos about Energy Communities in the Danube Region

This collection of materials presents a series of documentary and educational videos produced within the NRGCOM project, offering a human-centred perspective on the rise of Energy Communities across the Danube Region and their role in the broader energy transition.

As part of the NRGCOM initiative, several video materials have been developed to explore the concept of Energy Communities from multiple angles.

- **The NRGCOM field study after-movie (developed by JAIP)**, filmed in Budweis:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ussaa\\_zRH4c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ussaa_zRH4c)

This after-movie presents highlights from the **NRGCOM field study in Budweis**, developed by JAIP, showcasing insights from ambassadors and participants on the benefits and future of Energy Communities in the Danube Region. The video explores how municipalities, businesses and citizens can gain from joining Energy Communities - from cost savings, energy independence and sustainability, to stronger community engagement and a greener future through local renewable energy production.

- **Energy Community good practices I (developed by STRIA)**:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ox7lwEzma80>

The first part of this video, developed by STRIA, showcases inspiring best practices of Energy Communities across Central and Eastern Europe. Featuring examples from **Romania, Hungary and Austria**, it highlights how local actors, from municipalities to citizens, are shaping resilient, participatory and sustainable energy systems. Each case illustrates unique approaches, challenges, and successes in fostering collaboration, renewable energy use, and community empowerment.

- **Energy Community good practices II (developed by STRIA)**:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wi0oFS-xHSo>

The second part of the video presents inspiring examples of Energy Communities initiatives from **Germany, Czech Republic and Bulgaria**. It highlights how local actors are building and empowering Energy Communities through innovative models, supportive policies and citizen engagement. From Germany's established cooperatives to emerging solar initiatives in Bulgaria and pilot projects in the Czech Republic, the video illustrates diverse paths toward a more sustainable and participatory energy future in Europe.

- **Educational Video about Energy Communities in Romania (developed by OER):**

**Trailer video:** [https://youtu.be/Ekequ2vneQ0?si=FdiYVDH6miza\\_sJo](https://youtu.be/Ekequ2vneQ0?si=FdiYVDH6miza_sJo)

**Full video:** <https://youtu.be/KMOwKZIKumg?si=0Lq7OD1x81gJWtnp>

The romanian documentary, filmed in Balotești, Brașov and Bucharest, follows the journey of individuals and local groups as they take concrete steps toward becoming active participants in the energy system.

Rather than focusing solely on technology, the video brings forward the personal stories and motivations behind the energy transition. Through interviews with citizens, Energy Community members and Energy Community ambassadors, **it captures the subtle yet powerful efforts of people choosing to do things differently**, those who invest their time, energy and resources into building more sustainable and resilient communities.

The documentary emphasizes that renewable energy is not just a technical solution; it is a social and civic movement. **It is about solidarity, cooperation and the belief that meaningful change can begin at the local level.** From rooftop solar installations to community meetings and grassroots education, the film illustrates how energy communities blend innovation with inclusion, creating a shared sense of purpose.

By giving voice to the people behind these initiatives, the film sheds light on the practical and emotional dimensions of the energy transition. It shows how even small actions, when multiplied and shared, can lead to significant collective impact.

Together, these videos serve as an awareness and inspiration toolkit, highlighting the essential role of Energy Communities not only in the empowering citizens but also in supporting public authorities to deliver on climate goals, strengthen local resilience and foster inclusive development across the Danube Region.



# Social Media Templates

## Instagram/Facebook Story:



**Seek guidance from legal advisors, energy regulators & local authorities to navigate the landscape & ensure compliance.**

**Your dream of a sustainable, locally-driven Energy Community is within reach!**

**LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN!**



These **editable templates** provide a set of ready-to-use visual examples for raising awareness about Energy Communities in the Danube Region across various digital platforms.

The templates were designed to ensure that communication is simple, engaging and consistent, while also adaptable to different channels such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram. They highlight key visual messages about Renewable Energy Communities, their benefits and the role they play in the green transition.

By using the real information from each partner and country, the templates are built to connect with diverse audiences: citizens, municipalities, SMEs and local stakeholders. They emphasize the values of cooperation, solidarity and empowerment, using concise language and visuals that can easily be adjusted to local contexts.

By providing these materials, the project supports partners and stakeholders in disseminating information coherently and professionally. This helps ensure that messages about Energy Communities are not only visible, but also inspiring and credible, encouraging more people to get involved.

## Facebook:



### Energy Community

Are you ready to turn this dream into reality?



## LinkedIn:



### Legal status?

Energy Communities forms:  
Your community can be a cooperative, non-profit entity, limited liability company or even a public-private partnership.  
Each form has unique benefits & requirements.

The templates are available here:

**Facebook Templates:**

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAG3RNZDE5w/xaa\\_yfxQYd4s3yFwB0pxLw/edit?utm\\_content=DAG3RNZDE5w&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAG3RNZDE5w/xaa_yfxQYd4s3yFwB0pxLw/edit?utm_content=DAG3RNZDE5w&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

**Story Templates:**

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAG3RUHKMVs/A4vWjcJBFXebkm8gP4g7UA/edit?utm\\_content=DAG3RUHKMVs&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAG3RUHKMVs/A4vWjcJBFXebkm8gP4g7UA/edit?utm_content=DAG3RUHKMVs&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

**Instagram Templates:**

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAGdBZDvv8A/Ms5nEwkxpggQ7WVl1jl2lw/edit?utm\\_content=DAGdBZDvv8A&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGdBZDvv8A/Ms5nEwkxpggQ7WVl1jl2lw/edit?utm_content=DAGdBZDvv8A&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

**LinkedIn Templates:**

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAG3RffSbaw/Hkz8wITgfUD-kQSY5LtEDw/edit?utm\\_content=DAG3RffSbaw&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAG3RffSbaw/Hkz8wITgfUD-kQSY5LtEDw/edit?utm_content=DAG3RffSbaw&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

## Other materials

### Infographics in A3 poster format

These materials were developed as a visual communication tool, designed to present key facts and figures about Energy Communities in an accessible and attractive format. For STRIA, the infographic was adapted into an A3 poster version, making it suitable for both digital and offline dissemination.

The content is based on information collected from project partners and highlights some of the most compelling stories and curiosities about Renewable Energy Communities across the Danube Region. The posters illustrate the diversity and impact of local action.

### The purpose of the A3 posters:

**Awareness-raising:** showing the broader public that Energy Communities are not abstract concepts but real, functioning initiatives.

**Inspiration:** motivating local actors to replicate these experiences and understand the potential of collective energy solutions.

By combining visuals with concise facts, the posters serve as an easy entry point for citizens and stakeholders who may be less familiar with the aspects of renewable energy, but are open to learning about its social, economic and environmental benefits.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

### Austria...

was one of the first countries in the European Union to create a **legal framework for Energy Communities**, making it a pioneer in this field?

### In Czech Republic...

recent legislation allows individuals to **share surplus solar energy across the country**, using it in multiple locations, like from a cottage to a city apartment?

### In Hungary...

all Energy Communities established so far, took the legal form of **Nonprofit Ltd?**



This paper was supported as part of NRGCOM, an Interreg Danube Region Programme project co-funded by the European Union. The content of this paper reflects the opinion of their authors and does not in any way represent opinions of the European Union. May, 2025.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

...at least **20%** of energy used by industrial facilities near settlements is **potentially available as heat** for Energy Community use?



...the total energy consumption of Energy Community members can be reduced by **5-10%** through **attitude change**, thus directly contributing to **increased energy independence?**

...since **2001** authorities in the whole EU must permit the creation of **Renewable Energy Communities** aimed at self-sufficiency?



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## DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

**Czech Energy Communities...** are actively integrating battery storage solutions? These allow **better energy balancing** and **increased flexibility** in consumption.



### In Bulgaria...

for the past 4-5 years, the Pazardzhik region has led the country in investor interest for **photovoltaic installations** on agricultural land?



### Romania's Ministry of Energy...

formed a Working Group to establish **Energy Communities** and launched an **open call** for organizations to participate?



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# Engagement strategy

## O2.1 Engagement strategy to increase interest in Energy Communities

The engagement strategy is based on the work of project partners who are promoting Renewable Energy Communities. It focuses on encouraging different groups, like individuals, local authorities, businesses and community organizations, to come together and create or join Energy Communities. The strategy offers clear, practical advice that is being tested through awareness-raising pilot actions to make sure it really works. To reach as many people as possible, the strategy will be translated into the languages of all the project partners, helping communities across the region get involved and take action.



The spread of Renewable Energy Communities is no longer just an ambition, it is a necessity for achieving a resilient, sustainable and socially inclusive energy transition. The NRGCOM Motivational Programme supports this effort by encouraging individuals, institutions and local authorities to take an **active role in shaping their energy future**. It promotes not only the transition to renewables but also a culture of collective action, civic



# Annexes

1. Infographic
2. Brochure 5 steps to your Energy Community
3. Catalogue of Energy Community Case Studies
4. Educational Video about Energy Communities in the Danube Region
5. Social Media Templates
6. Infographic in A3 poster format
7. Engagement strategy to increase interest in Energy Communities

# Disclaimer

This toolkit is a practical resource designed to support anyone interested in starting, joining, or strengthening an Energy Community. It provides step-by-step guidance on legal setup, governance and community engagement, along with real-world examples, communication materials and motivational strategies.

Local authorities can use it to engage citizens and design inclusive policies. Community leaders and organisations can apply the toolkit to plan and manage their initiatives more effectively.

Individuals and small businesses can find clear information on how to get involved and benefit from collective energy solutions.

Whether used as a starting point or as ongoing support, the toolkit helps lower barriers, build confidence and turn ideas into action. By offering ready-to-use content and proven strategies, it empowers users to create local energy solutions that are sustainable, cost-effective and community-driven.

*This document reflects the views of the NRGCOM project. The Interreg Danube Region Programme authorities are not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.*

