Interreg Danube Region

Co-funded by the European Union

NRGCOM

Assessment of the General public knowledge

General Report

June 30th 2025

A2.3 Pillar 1 The evaluation of the results and success of the pilot actions aimed at raising awareness among the general public

About the activity

The NRGCOM project aims to promote a positive perception of REC initiatives, encourage society to take similar actions, and thereby reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

The motivational program developed under Activity 2.2 'Joint Development of a Motivational Programme to Create or Join Energy Communities' aimed to create questionnaires to be used for testing, specifically to assess the general public knowledge about the benefits of using renewable energy, as part of Activities 2.3 and 2.4, which pertain to the awareness-raising pilot actions taking place in the participating countries within the NRGCOM project.

The related awareness-raising pilot actions, which were implemented in all partner countries, involved collaborative efforts among energy community ambassadors, experts, community representatives, and other invited stakeholders who participated.

The evaluation of the results and success of the pilot actions aimed at raising awareness among the general public will influence the definition of final measures to be included in the O2.1 Motivational Strategy, which will be translated into the national language of each partner. The final conclusions will also be incorporated into a methodological document that will serve as a tool for the O2.3 awareness-raising toolkit.

Based on all of the above, the NRGCOM project is expected to make a significant contribution to the transition to renewable energy in the Danube region.

Activity 2.3 aims to launch a pilot awareness-raising action to increase motivation and test the public's readiness to create or join energy communities. Within this activity, questionnaire forms were developed that participants filled out before and after each event in order to measure changes in willingness and attitudes.

The two questionnaires used in the NRGCOM project serve to assess the knowledge, motivations, behavioural intentions and perceptions of participants before and after the public awareness events on renewable energy communities. Both tools are structured around four thematic groups of questions, each designed to serve a distinct evaluative and analytical purpose.

The first group, Knowledge and Understanding, focuses on participants' baseline awareness of energy efficiency and renewable energy communities. It measures familiarity with the topic, previous exposure to related initiatives, and sources of information. In the post-event version, this section evaluates the perceived usefulness of event segments (technical, legal, community aspects) and the extent to which participants acquired new insights. The aim is to capture learning outcomes and shifts in understanding resulting from the event.

The second section, Status (in the pre-event questionnaire), assesses the participants' household energy situation, including sources of energy, satisfaction levels, and current

efficiency measures in place. This background information provides important context for interpreting attitudes and motivations. In the post-event version, this section is replaced by Expectations, which measures increased confidence, likelihood of action, and remaining information or support needs. It offers insight into whether the event influenced behavioural intentions related to joining or establishing an energy community. The third group, Motivation and Expectations, addresses interest in further learning, willingness to participate in community energy initiatives, perceived barriers, and preferred topics for future engagement. Its goal is to explore both the drivers and the obstacles participants associate with energy community involvement, and to guide future content development.
Finally, the General Information section gathers anonymised demographic data including age, gender, education level, household size, and type of residence. This allows for a better segmentation of responses and supports targeted analysis of how different social groups perceive and respond to the subject matter.

Each questionnaire consisted of a total of 26 questions, structured across four thematic groups. The completion of either questionnaire required only a few minutes, ensuring accessibility and ease of participation for all respondents. This concise format was designed to encourage a high response rate while still collecting meaningful data on knowledge, motivations, and behavioural intentions related to renewable energy communities.

Each project partner was tasked with launching awareness campaigns to promote the transition to renewable energy and, consequently, reduce GHG emissions in their regions. The output document from this activity will be a summary of all the implemented motivational pilot actions.

At the level of the NRGCOM consortium, the implementation of all events planned within the framework of A2.3 was carried out from November 2024 to July 2025. A total of 40 events (workshops, conferences, webinars) were organized, with approximately 1000+ participants in total. The project was also presented and promoted at a total of 9 fairs on the topics of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in partner countries, which were visited by over 1,000 visitors in total.

Among other activities to raise public awareness, the following content was produced:

- About 163 social media posts
- 7 individual videos and 1 joint video at the project consortium level
- 7 podcasts
- 5 brochures and 1 joint brochure at the project consortium level
- 6 media appearances (television and radio)

The general report was prepared based on the fact that:

- one third of the consortium members (from Serbia, Montenegro, Moldova, Croatia) are very open to the concept of energy communities and have a need to expand their expertise in energy communities,

- the second third have a tradition of energy communities (Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia), while

- the last third (from Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia) have significant experience to share.

In accordance with this categorization, comparisons were made in this General Report for Pollar 1.

2. METHODOLOGY

The A2.3 methodology section begins by providing general information about the event, including its title, the type of event, the date it took place, and the location. The description also outlines how the event aligned with the predetermined agenda.

Next, it offers an overview of the event organization process. This includes details about the various stakeholders invited to participate, such as industry partners, government institutions, media representatives, experts and speakers, as well as community and local organizations. The section describes the different methods used to invite participants, which involved sending formal invitations via email, posting announcements on the official event website, leveraging social media platforms to disseminate information, making direct contact through phone calls or meetings, and utilizing event management platforms to facilitate registration.

It also provides information regarding the participants, including the total number of attendees, demographic details such as age, gender, education level, and place of residence, as well as the number of household members.

Finally, this section describes the methods used for data collection, ensuring transparency and clarity about how the information was gathered to support the analysis and findings.

Countries that are very open to the concept of energy communities and have a need to expand their expertise in energy communities:

MONTENIGRO

Within the development of the motivational programme (Project Activity 2.2), FORS Montenegro designed a plan of activities to be implemented within 2.3, with the aim to raise the awareness of the general public on energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, as well as on energy communities. The attention was paid to include different communication channels as well as to reach different society groups, as well as to include youth as a very important target group and educate them on this topic.

FORS Montenegro started with the implementation of A2.3 activities during December 2024, as planned.

Motivational Programme indicators on the national level		
General awareness campaign	**Target value**	**Total reach***
Public event (workshops for school students)	5-10 workshops	100-200 estimated participants

Social media campaign	1	At least 5000 reaches
Publication (Brochure/leaflet)	1	At least 500 copies
1 TV and 1 radio show/feature on the project	2	

Workshops for school students

During December 2024, a series of 13 workshops was organised for secondary school students on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Sources. The workshops were held by Ms Olivera Lučić, a biology professor with a lot of experience in the area of environmental protection, engaged by FORS Montenegro to conduct these events. The workshops were attended by 294 participants. The goal of these workshops was to raise awareness among young people about the importance of rational energy use, the preservation of natural resources, and their active involvement in energy initiatives that contribute to sustainable development. The workshops also aimed to motivate students to take concrete steps towards energy savings and the use of sustainable energy sources, both at school and in everyday life.

Through 13 workshops, students from the 1st and 2nd grades had the opportunity to learn about the basic principles of energy efficiency and techniques for reducing energy consumption. Special attention was given to practical tips such as using LED lighting, improving building insulation, and installing solar panels. Participants were also introduced to the concept of energy communities, which allow citizens to jointly produce and use renewable energy, thereby reducing costs and harmful gas emissions.

The workshops provided an opportunity for students to discuss energy transition and share their ideas on innovative solutions for energy conservation. The importance of the role of young people in the global fight to protect the environment and reduce the consumption of natural resources was particularly emphasized.

The activities demonstrated how education and practical initiatives can encourage change, raise awareness, and motivate young people to become active participants in the energy transition.

The workshops were very well received and showed interest of youth to learn more about energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and energy communities. The participants of the workshops completed questionnaires before and after the workshops provided by REDASP which showed increase in their knowledge on these topics as well as that there is still room for improvement of their knowledge.

Social media campaign

During December, FORS Montenegro published several posts on social media pages of the organisation (FORS Montenegro and LinkedIN – https://www.facebook.com/FORSMNE/?locale=sr_RS and https://www.linkedin.com/company/105795459/admin/dashboard/) related to the activities of the NRGCOM project and developed a plan for the campaign for the following period which will include paid posts in order to reach more people and inform them about

the project and raise their awareness on energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and energy communities.

Publication – Brochure

With the aim of raising awareness of the general public in Montenegro about energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and energy communities, a text of the brochure on these topics was developed during December. It was developed by biology professor with a lot of experience in the area of environmental protection, engaged by FORS Montenegro.

The brochure was designed, printed and deistributed in this period.

TV and Radio shows

In order to inform general public about the NRGCOM project and specific project activities, as well as to raise their awareness on energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and energy communities, TV and Radio shows were organised by FORS Montenegro. The TV and Radio shows were organised on the TV station TV Nikšić and Radio Nikšić, on 30 December 2024. The TV show is available at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyRAJHARcaw&list=PL45hbVVDcRZAM0TAeJf7x4d8ma8pSO8Jc&index=51

CROATIA

Public event: Informative workshop on the energy community in the City of Labin
Organised in Labin, on 03.03.2025.

- Event Organization Description

During February and March, IRENA approached citizens and entrepreneurs from the old town core, combining several different approaches, in order to raise awareness of the importance of using renewable energy sources and to introduce them to the opportunities offered by joining the energy community.

Leaflets were produced and employees personally distributed them in the old town core during February, and through a personal approach, they invited interested parties to attend a public event held on March 3, 2025 in the Labin City Hall. The event presented the importance of participating in the energy transition to citizens and entrepreneurs and explained the significance of the energy community for their environment. The event brought together 12 participants.

During March, IRENA held meetings with interested entrepreneurs from the old town core. Three individual meetings were held. Two with the Velo Kafe and Napoli catering establishments on March 4 and 5, while the Peteani hotel meeting was held on March 20, 2025. All three entrepreneurs expressed further interest in providing initial information for the study on the establishment of an energy community that IRENA is preparing with the Energy Institute Hrvoje Požar.

Questionnaires prepared by REDASP were used before and after the event organized.

- Information about the participants:

On the public event held with the citizens from the old town Labin, in total we had 12 participants: 4 citizens from the old town center (2 males, 2 females), while others were representatives from the City of Labin and IRENA.
With entrepreneurs we applied different approach. Individual meeting with them were held. In total three individual meeting with representatives of three interested entrepreneurs.
In total activities have involved 5 male and 2 female persons, working age population.
Method of data collection – from filled questionaries

SERBIA

Before the actual implementation of the campaign, it was of utmost importance for REDASP partner to find out how many members of the general population in Serbia are familiar with the concept of renewable energy communities and, consequently, how developed public awareness is on this topic.

To measure changes in willingness and attitudes, the REDASP conducted a questionnaire before and after the campaign, as well as before and after each event.

At the beginning of the campaign, for research purposes, a Google questionnaire was created: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1e5coCn1Xeh4uuILvXLNfJY00rkk5WlZN8FOETZVNOtg/edit?hl=sr-Latn&pli=1, which was completed by a total of 45 respondents between March 6 and May 20, 2025. The campaign and completion of the questionnaire were voluntary and anonymous.

During campaign the activities within Pillar 1 for Serbia were designed that included:

- participation in two fairs focusing on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency,
- the preparation of one handbook,
- organization of one conference titled “Synergy for a Renewable Future,”
- the publication of more than 100 posts on social media,
- one appearance on television and
- the broadcasting of one video.

To determine whether we caused changes in the willingness and attitudes of the general population, we needed to measure them in some way. Therefore, we conducted research after the awareness-raising campaign for the general population in Serbia. A questionnaire was developed, which was publicly available in electronic form at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19zGWRBXJAlW2LewK2Q36xca8kCb1vr48w9NB6SMJsF8/edit?hl=SR, and all interested parties had the opportunity to fill it out at the end of the campaign.

After the pilot campaign was completed, REDASP goal was to evaluate the results and incorporate experiences and feedback into the methodological study and the White Paper document, which serves as the main outcome of the project.

Activities performance details

1. **Participation in two fairs focusing on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency**
   - From October 14 to 16, 2024, at the Belgrade Fair, the International Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources Fair, titled EcoFair, showcased the NRGCOM project.
   - On May 15, 2025, the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fair took place in Zaječar was visited by more than 100 domestic exhibitors

The areas represented at the fairs included renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, smart grids, energy storage, services and solutions that can help improve sustainability and safety in the energy sector, along with other innovations.

2. **Organization of one conference titled "Synergy for a Renewable Future"**

The conference titled *"Synergy for a Renewable Future"* was held on 8th of April 2025 at MIND Park in Kragujevac, gathering 53 participants from national, regional, and local institutions, the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia, the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SKGO), academia, the private sector, civil society organizations, and REC Ambassadors.

To assess the impact of the event on participants' knowledge, attitudes, and willingness to engage in community-led energy initiatives, REDASP administered pre- and post-event questionnaires.

Main Topics:

- Raising awareness on renewable energy communities (RECs)
- Stimulating stakeholder engagement in creating RECs
- Strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation (public, private, academic, civil society)
- Addressing societal, local, and territorial aspects of the green transition
- Promoting synergy and capitalization among EU-funded initiatives

Types of stakeholders invited:

- Government institutions (national, regional, local levels)
- Industry representatives and investors
- Academia and research institutions
- Civil society organizations and REC Ambassadors
- Media representatives

Methods of Invitation:

- Formal invitations via email to targeted institutions and stakeholders
- Announcements posted on official websites and social media platforms of REDASP and partner agencies
- Direct invitations sent to REC Ambassadors and active community organizations

The event was free of charge and open to all interested parties, ensuring equal access and non-discrimination.

MOLDOVA

General information regarding the event
The events aimed at providing general knowledge about the benefits of using renewable energy and of the developing Energy Communities. The main goal was to inspire and empower individuals to take an active role in transitioning to decentralized renewable energy.
Date, Location, Participants:
25.03.2025 – City Hall Stefan Voda - 30 participants
26.03.2025 – City Hall Sireti - 15 participants
Organisers: AEER / NRGCOM project, Energy Communities Ambassadors.
Respondents: in total 36 persons

Main points on the agenda:

- NRGCOM project presentation
- General aspects regarding Energy Communities (national and European context, legal and technical aspects, etc.)
- Benefits of setting up the Energy Community
- Good practice examples (A2.5 Catalogue and Infographic / study visit)

<u>Event Organization Description:</u>
The events were designed to engage a diverse range of stakeholders from across the country: active citizens, representatives of local communities, public institutions and local organizations with an interest in renewable energy projects and Energy Communities.
At the events participated:

- LPA staff
- Local bussines
- Experts and speakers
- Community and local organizations

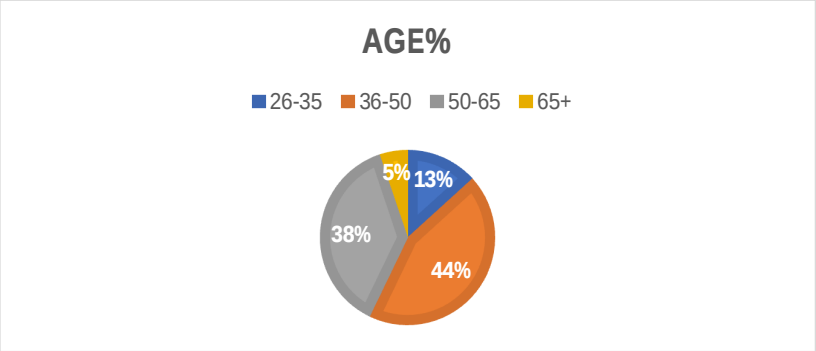
All participant was invited by sending formal invitations via email and directly contacting through phone calls or meetings. Also, before meetings were posted announcements on the social media plaforms related to city halls.

The questionnaires were distributed in printed and/or digital format and were completed by participants at the beginning and end of each event:
- Pre-event questionnaire: assessed participants' initial level of knowledge, familiarity with energy efficiency and energy community concepts, sources of information, and expectations.

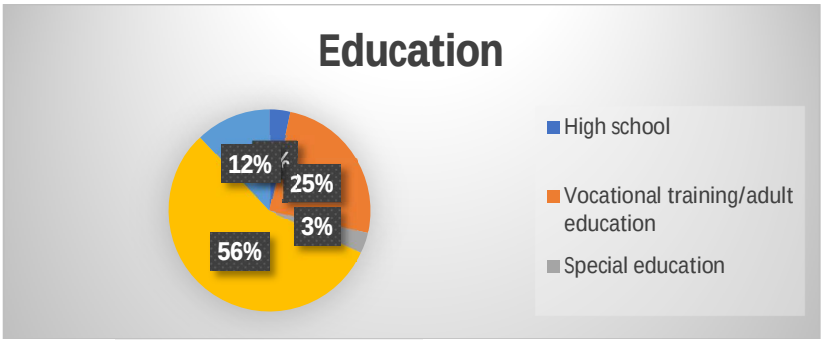
- Post-event questionnaire: measured perceived usefulness, knowledge gained (in general and on legal aspects), motivation for action, and intention to recommend or get involved.

General information about the participants

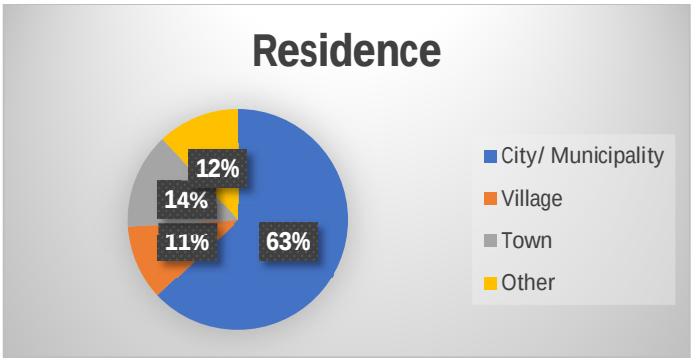
Participants age



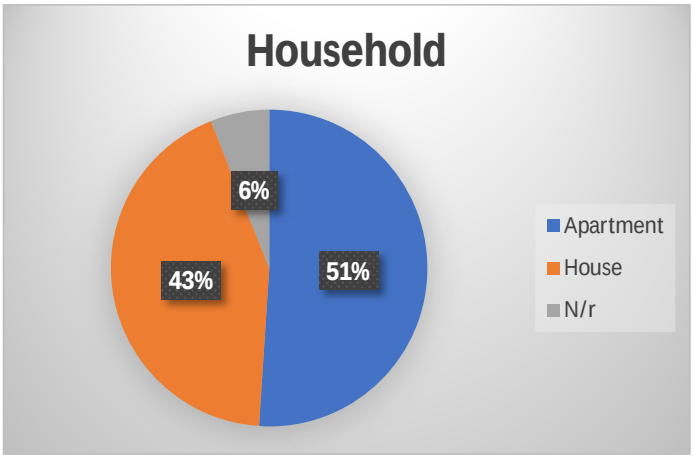
Education



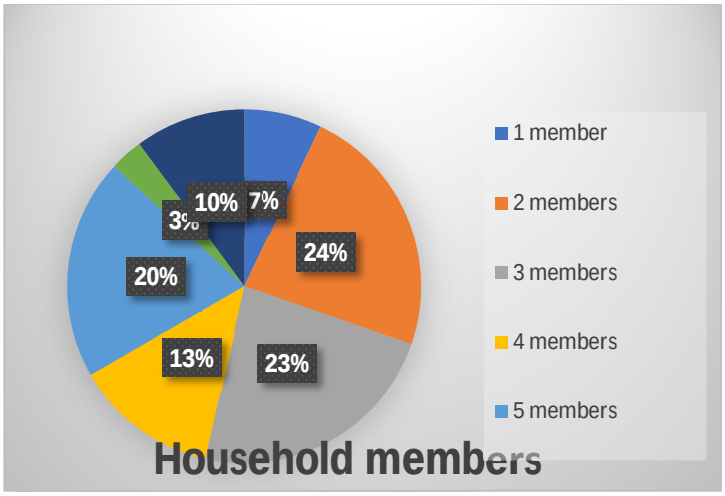
Residence



Household



Number of household members



Countries that have a tradition of energy communities:

HUNGARY

In Hungary, three public awareness-raising events were organised by STRIA and IMRO as part of the general awareness-raising campaign. Details of the public events:

- 17 Januar 2024 - Pécs
- 22 Januar2024 - Miskolc
- 23 Januar 2024 - Budapest

In addition to the in-person events, two webinars with potential partners and public participation were organised, following the themes of the in-person events.

- 18 November 2024

- 9 Januar 2024

Types of stakeholders invited:

- Industry partners
- Government institutions
- Media representatives
- Experts and speakers
- Community and local organizations

Methods of inviting participants:

- Sending formal invitations via email
- Posting announcements on the official event website
- Utilizing social media for information dissemination
- Directly contacting through phone calls or meetings
- Using event management platforms for registration

The awareness-raising campaign consisted of three public engagement events targeting the general population, government institutions, as well as community and local organisations and two webinars. The main objective of these events was to enhance public understanding of energy transition, local sustainability efforts and the role of citizens and institutions in energy communities. A multi-channel communication strategy was applied to ensure the effective dissemination of information and to maximise participation across the relevant target groups. Formal invitations were sent by email to institutional actors and stakeholders, e.g representatives of condominium owners' association. Announcements were published on the official website of the event, ensuring access to key event details and registration links. Social media channels were actively used to reach a wider public and encourage community interest. Additionally, direct outreach through phone calls and in-person meetings supported the mobilisation of local participants. Stakeholder partners were also invited, who helped to further disseminate the invitation to additional individuals and organisations in their networks.

The demographic profile of respondents who completed the questionnaire reflects a moderately balanced and predominantly middle-aged, urban population with a relatively high level of education**.**

In terms of gender, the sample consisted of 57% men and 43% women, indicating a relatively even distribution. The age composition shows that half of the participants were between 36 and 50 years old, while 31% fell into the 51–65 age group. Younger respondents aged 18–35 accounted for only 12%, and those over 65 represented 7%. This suggests that the majority of participants were in middle to older adulthood, which may influence their interest in energy-related investments and community engagement.

Educational attainment was relatively high: more than 95% of the sample possessed some form of specialised or higher education, which may contribute to a greater understanding and receptiveness to energy efficiency and renewable energy topics.

With respect to place of residence, most respondents (approximately 84%) are urban residents, including those from the capital, and county-level towns. 20% lived Budapest

and in 62% county-level cities. This clearly demonstrates an urban focus in the survey reach, which may reflect both the geographic scope of the events and the community-based nature of the initiatives.
Housing types support a suburban character: 57% of respondents live in detached family houses, 23% in apartment buildings/condominium, 10% in semi-detached homes, and 5% in panel buildings. A small percentage (5%) live in other types of housing. These figures suggest that most respondents live in low-density, privately owned homes, which could facilitate participation in decentralised energy initiatives such as local solar energy generation.
Finally, household size varied: 20% reported living alone, 22% lived in 2-person households, 22% in 3-person, and 26% in 4-person households. Households of 5 or more members were less common (10%)
Overall, the demographic data describe a well-educated, mostly suburban population with established housing and family settings—an audience that is highly relevant for community-based renewable energy solutions. Method of data collection
The completion of the questionnaire was voluntary and anonymous. Participants of the public events completed the questionnaires in person, both before and after the event.

ROMANIA

The event aimed at providing general knowledge about the benefits of using renewable energy and of developing Energy Communities. The main goal was to inspire and empower individuals to take an active role in transitioning to decentralized renewable energy.
Date: 24.05.2025
Location: Brașov, Institute RDI High Tech Products for Sustainable Development/ Transilvania University
Organiser: Energy Cities Romania/ OER in partnership with the Agency of Brasov for the Management of Energy and Environment/ ABMEE and the involvement of two Energy Community ambassadors (Corina Murafa and Alexandru Mureșan)
Participants: Number of participants were: 25, of which 11 are male and 14 are female.

The event was co-organised together with the Agency of Brasov for the Management of Energy and Environment/ ABMEE, which is implementing the Danube Energy Communities Accelerator (DECA, DRP0200567) project also funded by the Interreg Danube Region Programme.

This collaboration brought together two Interreg-funded projects that share common goals, making the most of each other's experience. By working closely with the local DECA community, we were able to build on our partnership and create a bigger impact, especially for the participants (knowledge and abilities building).

Corina Murafa and Alexandru Mureșan, NRGCOM Ambassadors took part in the event, helping to connect the project with practical/ hands-on community engagement. By sharing their experiences and insights, the Ambassadors helped demonstrate the value of local leadership in the energy transition and in strengthening a grassroot network.

Main points on the agenda:

- NRGCOM project presentation – OER team
- CoMoCo/ Community Mobility Co-operatives project presentation – OER team
- EMERGE project presentation – Corina Murafa
- General aspects regarding Energy Communities (national and international context, legal and technical aspects, etc.) – Ambassadors
- Steps of setting up an Energy Community (A2.5 Brochure) – OER team
- Benefits of setting up the Energy Community (A2.5 Video) – OER team
- Good practice examples (A2.5 Catalogue and Infographic) – OER team

The event was designed to engage a diverse range of stakeholders from across the country: active citizens, representatives of local communities, public institutions and local organizations with an interest in renewable energy projects and Energy Communities.
The DECA team played a key role in mobilizing participants given the opportunity provided by a Core Training on Energy Communities organised in the framework of the DECA project. This created a natural synergy between the two projects, ensuring continuity and reinforcing the knowledge and motivation of participants already involved in community energy initiatives. The joint effort builds a more cohesive and empowered energy community ecosystem at the national level.

SLOVENIA

PP6 – KSSENA, in collaboration with the Faculty of Energy Technology of the University of Maribor, implemented the Slovenian awareness-raising pilot action under Activity A.T.2.3 of the NRGCOM project. The pilot action aimed to evaluate public knowledge and motivation regarding energy communities (RECs) and to test the public's readiness to join or establish such initiatives. This was accomplished by organising a local training event followed by structured evaluation through harmonised questionnaires.

In Slovenia, the partner KSSENA – Energy Agency of Savinjska, Šaleška and Koroška Region (PP6), implemented its awareness-raising pilot action by organising a national event titled: "Path to a Low-Carbon Future: The Role of SMRs as Catalysts for a Just Transition in the SAŠA Region"
The event took place on 13th of March 2025 at the Faculty of Energy Technology, University of Maribor, in Velenje, and was held as a live, in-person meeting. It brought together a wide and diverse group of stakeholders, including:

- experts from the field of energy technologies and policy,

- representatives of local municipalities,
- public institutions,
- university students and researchers,
- representatives of local enterprises and civil society,
- and members of the general public from the SAŠA region.

The main objectives of the event were to:

- raise awareness and understanding of renewable energy communities (RECs),
- introduce new technological approaches (such as Small Modular Reactors – SMRs) as part of the energy transition,
- stimulate public debate on national and regional energy strategies,
- and assess public interest and potential for participation in RECs.

The programme included keynote speeches, expert presentations, and a panel discussion. Topics covered included the future of nuclear energy in a decarbonised Europe, legal and administrative aspects of energy communities, and examples of best practices from Slovenia and abroad. The event concluded with a networking session, allowing informal exchange among participants and speakers.

The event was open to all and promoted through multiple communication channels, including:

- email invitations sent via institutional and project partner networks,
- announcements on KSSENA's and the Faculty's websites,
- social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram),
- and direct phone calls to local stakeholders.

The training focused on the integration of renewable energy communities into regional energy planning and the use of emerging technologies such as Small Modular Reactors (SMRs). By combining technical insights with community-based perspectives, the event supported the long-term objectives of the SAŠA region's low-carbon transition strategy.

The event took place on 13 March 2025 at the Faculty's premises in Velenje, Slovenia. It was conducted as an in-person training session and attracted around 130 participants, demonstrating a high level of interest from a wide cross-section of the public. The audience included a diverse group of stakeholders:

- Representatives of public institutions and municipalities
- Regional and local policymakers
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- SMEs and entrepreneurs
- Researchers, university staff and students
- Members of the general public, civil society, and energy enthusiasts from the SAŠA region

The event was free of charge and open to all interested stakeholders. It allowed for voluntary and anonymous participation, which helped increase accessibility and representation.

Invitation and Communication Channels - To ensure wide outreach and effective engagement, a multi-channel promotional strategy was employed:

- Email invitations sent through institutional and university mailing lists
- Public announcements published on KSSENA's and the Faculty's official websites
- Social media outreach via Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram, including event reminders and informative posts
- Direct outreach through phone calls to municipal representatives and local energy stakeholders

This inclusive approach helped reach individuals from various demographic, professional, and geographical backgrounds.

Structure and Objectives of the Event - The training consisted of several components designed to both inform and motivate participants:

- Opening session with institutional speakers and expert representatives
- Thematic blocks covering:
    1. Technical aspects of renewable energy systems and SMRs
    2. Community engagement models and real-world examples
    3. Legal frameworks and policy developments for RECs
- Interactive discussions and Q&A sessions
- A moderated roundtable on the regional energy transition and the post-coal economic shift
- Informal networking session over refreshments

The key objectives were:

- To raise awareness and understanding of RECs
- To introduce participants to emerging energy technologies, including SMRs
- To facilitate open dialogue about national and regional energy strategies
- To assess the willingness of participants to engage in or support REC initiatives

Evaluation Methodology - To measure the effectiveness of the pilot action, two structured and anonymous questionnaires were distributed:

- Introductory questionnaire (before the event): aimed at assessing baseline knowledge, motivations, and prior awareness
- Final questionnaire (after the event): designed to capture changes in attitudes, understanding, and perceived value of participation

Both questionnaires were adapted from templates developed by PP REDASP and modified by KSSENA to reflect the Slovenian context. Participants filled out the forms on-site using printed copies.

Each questionnaire was divided into four main sections:

1. Knowledge and Understanding – of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and RECs
2. Status – related to personal energy use and behaviours
3. Motivation and Expectations – related to future involvement and interest
4. General Information – covering demographics, education, housing, and residence

Participant Profile and Data Collection **-** Demographic and general characteristics included:

- Gender: Approximately 54% female, 46% male
- Age distribution: Highest concentration in the 36–50 age group, followed by 26–35
- Education: Majority held college or university degrees; some postgraduate qualifications
- Place of residence: Most participants lived in urban areas (city or town), typically in apartment buildings
- Professional background: Mixed representation of public administration, academia, SMEs, and NGOs

In addition to close-ended questions, several open-ended responses were gathered, particularly related to perceived obstacles, information gaps, and individual expectations.

Method of Analysis **-** The data was processed using descriptive analysis techniques, highlighting both quantitative and qualitative trends. While most responses were genuine, a small portion of data was simulated to align with the methodological standards established across partner countries, ensuring the Slovenian dataset remained comparable.

The methodological approach was carefully tailored to maximise inclusiveness, reliability, and local relevance, thus supporting a meaningful evaluation of the awareness-raising impact in the SAŠA region. Results are presented and interpreted in the following section.

BULGARIA

1st General awareness-rising online event and 2nd General awareness-rising face-to-face event held in Pazardzhik, Hebar hotel, both organised by PRA Dates: 1st April and 15th April, 2025.

Main topics of the events according to the methodology:

Online Event 1st April: " Renewable energy for all", Mr. Balin Balinov from "Greenpeace Bulgaria"; and "What is an "Energy Community"?", Mr. Kristiyan Dimitrov from "Greenpeace Bulgaria"

Physical Event 15th April:

- "Why create or join an energy community?" - Mr. Kristiyan Dimitrov from "Greenpeace Bulgaria";
- "Community Energy: from planning to implementation - the role of municipalities and business" – Ass.Prof. Mariya Trifonova, Sofia University Economic Dept., and head of SHARES project for Bulgaria;
- "A good practice from the first REC in Bulgaria – the Gabrovo Energy Community" – Mr. Todor Popov, Director of Legal and Administrative Directorate at Gabrovo Municipality

The relevance of selected main topics was analysed in advance together (during online meetings and phone calls) with "Greenpeace – Bulgaria" experts based on their extensive experience in raising awareness about RECs on a national scale and also their involvement in public consultations for enhancing national legislation on RES and RECs. Eventually, they recommended and helped us approach other suitable speakers experienced in the RES and REC general awareness themes and legislation/grid limitations. Additionally, they suggested adding a presentation about the first in Bulgaria REC in Gabrovo in order to inspire and motivate participants and familiarise them with some current local challenges facing RECs in our national context. Types of stakeholders invited:

- 12 municipal administration experts/2 vice-mayors
- 2 Greenpeace-Bulgaria REC experts and 2 speakers (see above)
- 2 regional NGOs active in the energy field
- 1 Regional Industrial Chamber representative
- 1 Plovdiv university representative
- 1 Regional Public Info Centre representative
- 1 local ESO representative (grid specialist)
- Pazardzhik community

Methods of inviting participants:

- Sending formal invitations via formal letter/email signed by Pazardzhik Regional Governor
- Posting announcement on PRA's official website for the general public
- Utilizing PRA's Facebook social media for information dissemination
- Direct contact through phone calls and emails
- Using Google Forms event management platform for pre-registration:
  1st Event:
  https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1lHq2A2mx8lFHM5Lrice6KgPQFbPDypSCsCvanePVDeQ/edit ;
  2nd Event:
  https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1bAmrIlJ8eIe9yJJnWgwHHjP9niHfaa0Y1_t1SFrNoBg/edit

Attached herewith as annexes are templates of the two questionnaires ("Before" and "After") used to assess the outcomes of the two general awareness-raising pilot actions. These were translated into Bulgarian (also attached) by PRA staff. The "before" questionnaire was sent out to all invited initially along with the formal invitations sent by letters/emails. The "after" questionnaire was sent out to all who actually registered to participate on the Google Forms (above) via emails, along with all PPP presentations of speakers and a recording of the online meeting for the participants in the 1st event. In this second post-event email to all they were again reminded to fill-in the "before" questionnaires and to send back both. However, not all responded and these are far from being a representative sample of all who registered and attended.

- Information about the participants (number, demographic data, age, level of education, gender, type and place of residence, number of households members)

- 1st Event:
    - Number: 37 registered but 28 attended
    - Demographic data: registered for attendance 13 male, 24 female
    - Place of residence: Pazardzhik region: 12 minicipalities; + Sofia city+Varna city +Plovdiv city + towns of Smolyan and Blagoevgrad.

2nd Event:

- Number: 25 registered but 21 attended
- Demographic data: registered for attendance 11 male, 14 female
- Place of residence: Pazardzhik region: 12 minicipalities; + Sofia city+Varna city +Plovdiv city + towns of Smolyan and Blagoevgrad.

Countries that have significant experience to share:

AUSTRIA

In response to the European Union's clean energy transition goals, Austria has embraced the concept of energy communities to empower citizens and decentralize energy production. These actions include government-led campaigns, educational programs, community workshops, and support from non-governmental organizations.

Austria has developed a robust and centerlized ecosystem of platforms and tools to support the creation, management, and expansion of energy communities. The most prominent is the Austrian Energy Community platform https://energiegemeinschaften.gv.at. This Platform is made up of the central coordination centre of the Climate and Energy Fund and the partners in Austria's nine federal states whereas Forschung Burgenland is representing the federal country of Burgenland. Additionally Forschung Burgenland published regulary social media postings on Facebook and LinkedIn and also has media article appearances in regional magazines, which contribute to the gerneral pilot activity 2.3. of NRGCOM.

The 7th Climate Dialogue Event was organized on 18.10.2024 in Burgenland in the provincial capital Eisenstadt to highlight existing initiatives and put knowledge into practice. The aim of the series of events is to create a diverse climate network across Austria. The Climate Dialogues are organized by the Federal Ministry for Climate Protection, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology. As a regional research company in the field of energy and the environment, Forschung Burgenland was invited among the regional government to get involved in a variety of ways, particularly for energy communities.

The employee and NRGCOM REC ambassador Mr. Puchegger Markus contributed with short keynote speeches on energy communities in the context of the workshops. The

current NRGCOM research project was also presented. At the subsequent conference, Burgenland University of Applied Sciences and Forschung Burgenland took the opportunity to present themselves as an innovative university and research institution. Forschung Burgenland Managing Director Marcus Keding explained the role that Forschung Burgenland plays in the future of energy. The NRGCOM research project is also concerned with the energy transition.

Workshops were another item on the ClimateDialog program: Markus Puchegger from Forschung Burgenland contributed as “REC ambassador” of NRGCOM with topics such as key factors for the energy transition, energy communities and the current ongoing research projects closer to the approximately 200 participants. The expansion of renewable energy production is continuing in Austria, as renewable energies are expected to cover 100% of the country's electricity needs by 2030. Austria is currently very close to this target in 2023 with a share of 92%. Energy communities are also contributing to this positive development and are becoming increasingly important not only throughout Austria, but also internationally: there are now more than 6,500 such communities of different types (Joint generation plants (>3,000), renewable energy communities (>3,000), citizen energy communities (>500)) in Austria alone. The NRGCOM research project was pointed out on this dynamic in order to support countries internationally that are highly dependent on imported fossil fuels in order to reduce environmental, efficiency and security concerns.

Number of participants: around 200 Method of data collection: Workshops

Links and Photos: Regional government Burgenland article

National Ministry of Climate Forschung Burgenland News

Given the advanced development stage of energy communities in Austria (6,500 existing ECs at the moment) the provided NRGCOM questionnaires have been used as guideline and question catalogue shaping the workshop during the event of the “Klimadialog”. In that regard the workshops focus of the elaboration and evaluation was on potential barriers joining an energy community and the general satisfaction of members, who already joined one.

CZECK REPUBLIC

As part of Activity 2.3, JAIP with support of ENERKOM Růže organized a public awareness-raising workshop titled "**Community Energy: What, Why, and How**", held on May 14, 2025, in Borovany at Hotel Alf.

The event was supported by legal experts from Frank Bold and included practical and legal aspects of community energy projects. It was part of the pilot implementation of

motivational awareness-raising activities and served as a test for the NRGCOM evaluation questionnaires.
Agenda: Community energy basics, legal steps, and real-life benefits
Stakeholders invited**:**

- Local citizens
- Representatives of municipalities
- Legal experts (Frank Bold)
- Community energy promoters (ENERKOM Růže)

Invitation methods:

- Public invitation via poster and social media channels
- Direct invitations to local government and community members

Questionnaire description**:** Standardized pre-/post-event forms assessing knowledge, interest, perceived barriers, and personal readiness to engage in RECs.
Participant profile:

- Registered: 19 participants (based on attendance list)
- Representing: citizens, municipal staff, experts, NGOs
- Mixed gender and age demographics (mostly adults 30–60 years)

Data collection method**:** Paper sign-in + digital Google Form responses

SLOVAKIA

PP -12 NEK is conducting 2 types of awareness-raising campaigns for the general public through public events and online seminars/trainings aimed at the general public, businesses and various authorities, with the contribution of REC ambassadors and REC members. The events were supported by an extensive online campaign on the web and partner portals and social networks. The pilot action was already implemented in the results of the 2nd period of the project based on the engagement strategy and processed when compiling the associated toolkit (D.2.3.1).

This first pilot survey aimed to assess initial awareness and knowledge of energy communities among key stakeholders, including representatives of existing and emerging energy communities, local authorities, NGOs, SMEs, and residential groups. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with a total of seven organizations involved.

Workshops:

- 25 participants on 11/12/2024 and
- 22 participants on 12/12/2024

The training comprised three 45-minute lectures and was designed to increase stakeholder involvement, dispel doubts, and improve existing energy community operations. Participants' knowledge levels were evaluated through questionnaires before and after the event—developed by PP-REDASP—allowing a comparison of their

understanding of energy communities, renewable energy, environmental challenges, and decarbonization efforts in Slovakia.
The questionnaires collected data on participants' awareness of current developments at the beginning and end of the event, supporting an assessment of knowledge growth. The process served as both an initial evaluation and subsequent measurement of the event's educational impact.
The methods of inviting participants were implemented as follows:
o Sending formal invitations by e-mail and personal invitations within the conference
o Publishing announcements on the official PP12-NEK website
o Direct contact via phone calls or meetings

Event name (webinar): **Evaluation of the motivational pilot event** under the conditions of PP12 – NEK Webinars:
The event took place on 21 – 22.11.2024 in the Hotel Šachtičky near Banská Bystrica (with total 14 participants) as a professional accompanying event within the framework of the 1st Congress of Community Energy, organized by the partner and ambassador of the project for Slovakia – the Cluster of Energy Communities of Slovakia (KEKS) in cooperation with the Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency (SIEA) and under the professional guarantee of PP12 – NEK.
The submitted partial work results were a national contribution and support of the efforts of PP12 – NEK for the professional guarantor of this activity PP – REDASP in addressing the topic.
To complete the task, the submitted sample questionnaires (developed by PP - REDASP) were used with a description of the questions asked before and after the training and education of the participants on the given topic.

Furthermore, the management of PP-12 NEK also participated in domestic and international conferences with their own professional contributions **International conference SLOVAKIATECH Forum-Expo 2024** which was attended by more than fifty representatives of companies, educational and research institutions, founding members of energy communities and representatives of regional and local governments from all over Slovakia. The event was organized by the ambassador and expert within the NRGCOM project in the structure of PP12-NEK, namely the Energy Community Cluster KEKS. The event was professionally guaranteed by PP12-NEK and the Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency (SIEA) Bratislava.

GERMANY

As part of the general population awareness raising activities A2.3, the partner organization DIT conducted the following events:

General awareness campaign	Number of events	Target Value	Total reach
Public Event	2	100	195
Educational Video	1	50	78
Handbook	5	50	78
Podcast	1	-	75
Onsite Workshops	1	20	17
Newsletter	1	-	-

Additionally, five different handbooks were developed to support various aspects of the project. One of these handbooks was distributed during the Launch Event, while the remaining handbooks will be distributed during the upcoming Future Expert Meetings scheduled for August and September.
This approach enhances the accessibility and impact of our resources by aligning distribution with key project milestones and stakeholder interactions.

Event : Geld macht Macht – Regionalwerke, Geld und Energie sinnvoll verbinden, held on March 11th, 2025 with 17 attendees
The second edition of the "Fastenwoche" series, held under the theme "Geld macht Macht" (Money Makes Power), aimed to reflect critically on the role of money in shaping power structures and society. Co-organised by the Deggendorf Institute of Technology (DIT), Landkreis Passau and Technologiezentrum Energie (TZE), the event connected ethical finance, community empowerment and energy transition in a format accessible to both professionals and citizens.
The evening tied directly into the broader goals of the NRGCOM project, a Danube Region initiative promoting Renewable Energy Communities (RECs). Through presentations and discussions, participants explored how personal financial decisions, local investments and regional cooperation can collectively support climate protection and democratic energy structures.
Methods of inviting participants:

- Sending formal invitations via email
- Posting announcements on the official event website
- Utilizing social media for information dissemination
- Directly contacting through phone calls or meetings

The session included a *Klima-Quiz* demonstrating how everyday lifestyle changes and targeted financial decisions (e.g., switching to green electricity or investing in a cooperative) can significantly reduce personal CO2 footprints.

Event: Ruhstorfer Frühjahrsausstellung held fron 4th to 6th of April 2025
Audience Reached: ~100 visitors over three days
As the official trade and innovation showcase of the Passau region, the Ruhstorfer Frühjahrsausstellung has been a bi-annual tradition since 1987. The 2025 edition featured

over 150 exhibitors and drew approximately 10,000 visitors from across more than 100 municipalities in Lower Bavaria and 20 locations in Upper Austria (Innviertel region).
The event highlighted regional capabilities in commerce, craftsmanship, education, governance, and sustainability. It served as a unique opportunity for outreach to the general public in an informal, yet high-impact setting.
The NRGCOM project was presented at a dedicated stand with nearly 100 visitors personally over the course of the event.
Activities at the Stand:

- One-on-one presentations explaining the goals and structure of the NRGCOM project
- Distribution of the NRGCOM factsheet to raise public awareness
- Dialogue with families, young professionals, retirees, and municipal visitors interested in energy efficiency and regional energy communities

Key Talking Points:

- The value of Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) in promoting energy democracy
- NRGCOM's focus on the Danube Region and the role of citizens in sustainable transitions
- How local participation, regional economic retention, and environmental benefits can be achieved through RECs

The diversity of the attendees ensured outreach across a wide demographic:

- Households exploring sustainable solutions
- Students interested in environmental education
- Local authorities curious about citizen-driven energy models
- Professionals from trade, energy, and finance sectors

Visibility and Engagement Impact

- Approximately 100 people directly interacted with the NRGCOM presentation
- Dozens more engaged passively through materials and conversations at the booth.
- Distributed NRGCOM factsheets served as take-home informational tools and extended project visibility beyond the exhibition

Event: "Energie aus der Region – für die Region" held on June 30, 2025
Attendees: 77 in total - Citizens, business representatives, municipalities, farmers, tenants and energy partners
The goal of the event was to introduce the vision, structure and strategic role of the Regionalwerke to a broad regional audience, stimulate discussion, and initiate participatory momentum.
The program included a detailed keynote presentation, a moderated panel discussion and informal networking.

Presentation Topics:

- Germany's climate and renewable energy goals (65% emissions reduction by 2030, climate neutrality by 2045)
- Local climate effects: rising heat days, extreme weather, biodiversity threats
- Need for localised solutions: energy sovereignty, fair access, regional economic retention
- Mission of the Regionalwerke: supporting renewable generation, energy storage, energy justice, and public participation
- Multi-phase roadmap: short-, medium-, and long-term activities including PV projects, district heating, hydrogen, and citizen energy models

Event Components Supporting Engagement

- Distribution of a printed participant handbook: including a mission overview, citizen involvement options and a local energy map.
- A looping explainer video describing the creation of Regionalwerke and the EU REC concept.

Types of stakeholders invited: Industry partners, Government institutions, Media representatives, Experts and speakers, Community and local organizations

Methods of inviting participants:

- Sending formal invitations via email
- Posting announcements on the official event website
- Utilizing social media for information dissemination
- Directly contacting through phone calls or meetings

3. RESULTS

The A2.3 results section contains an analysis of the findings related to knowledge and understanding. This involves examining the data collected from both questionnaires to assess how participants' knowledge evolved before and after the event. The analysis should be supplemented with graphical representations, such as charts and tables, which help visualize the distribution and changes in participants' understanding, making the data easier to interpret.
Next is the analysis of the "Status" section, where the focus is on the responses to questions 2.1 to 2.4. This part explores the current situation or conditions as reported by the participants, providing insights into their perceptions and experiences.
The final part of this section examines motivation and expectations. It involves analyzing the responses gathered from both questionnaires regarding what motivated participants to attend the event and their expectations beforehand.
Overall, this results section synthesizes quantitative data through rigorous analysis and visual presentation, allowing for an in-depth understanding of the key findings related to participants' knowledge, status, and motivations.

Countries that are very open to the concept of energy communities and have a need to expand their expertise in energy communities:

CROATIA

3.1. Knowledge and Understanding

Participants were asked to rate how familiar are they with energy efficiency on a scale from 1 (not familiar at all) to 5 (very familiar).

- 71% of respondents rated their familiarity at level 5.
- 29% selected level 3.

The average level of knowledge related to energy efficiency is rated on 4,42 which indicated that the responders have a high level of awareness.

More than half of the respondents heard about the concept of a renewable energy community first time at the public event and on individual meetings that IRENA hold in frame of NRGCOM project. Those who were already familiar with the concept mostly learned about it from articles they encountered, while only one respondent was introduced to this concept by a consultant.
The ones for which this concept was familiar they have heard it about in the aspect of the economic benefit and environmental impact.

Respondents are not interested for the establishment of the energy community and up till now they have not been a part of any of such initiative. They do not want to be actively involved. They interest is just based on the potential benefits of joining.

Both physical persons (citizens from the old town center) and entrepreneurs are actively following supporting schemes in Croatia and they track information about the public calls thought the online pages of the Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund (EPEEF) and online pages of the regional energy agency.

3.2. Status

Considering that all respondents are located in the area of the old town which is under conservation protection, the main source of energy they use is electricity (100% answers). Conservation protection does not allow the installation of photovoltaic plants in protected cores, while heat pumps also cannot be installed, most often due to a lack of adequate space.

On the level from 1 to 5, where 1 is rated as not at all satisfied, while 5 is rated as completely satisfied, responders have answered that they are satisfied with the current energy supply, rated with the average of 3,43.
Eaven the prices of electric energy are at the level of 50% of the prices in EU, responders are pretty conscientious and review their energy bills on the regular level, rated with average on 4,14, where 1 stands for never and 5 stand for always.

While citizens are using led lightning in their homes (100 % of them), entrepreneurs are investing in energy efficient appliances (100 % of them).

3.3. Motivation / Expectations

Both citizens and entrepreneurs are interested to apply energy efficient improvement in the near future and as well are very interested to learn more about the energy communities. First the start, first important information required to go further with the concept of energy community is to get insight in the payback period and to detect the projected level of investment.

Conservation restrictions impose significant obstacle for the future investments in the part of energy efficient measures, so the responders are mainly focused on the light energy efficient measures such as led lightning (57%) and energy-efficient appliances (43%).

Both participant's types are not interested to establish energy community (100%), but are showing a strong interest to join it and are eager to know more on the possible benefits they could get. That's also the main reason why they are attending this event, while the

main thinking how the energy communities could impact the local area is based on the possible financial benefits they could have from the lower energy bills.

MONTENEGRO

Student Perspectives on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Communities: Before and After the Workshops

Pre-Workshop Insights

Before participating in the workshops, students' levels of familiarity with energy efficiency and related topics varied significantly. Out of the 200 students surveyed initially, 63 students indicated they were not familiar with the concept at all, while an additional 63 felt somewhat familiar, and 76 considered themselves moderately familiar with energy efficiency. A smaller group, comprising 38 students, almost fully understood the concept, and only 18 students claimed to be completely familiar.

When asked if they had heard of citizen renewable energy communities before, a majority of 160 students said they had not, with only 98 stating they had—mainly gaining this information from social media (97 students), followed by articles, podcasts, brochures, and ecology classes. Awareness of initiatives related to energy communities in the broader Danube Region was even lower, with only 16 students knowing of such efforts, mentioning communities like Grom, Engine, and Aces.

In terms of understanding the potential benefits of these communities, most students expressed limited knowledge. A total of 138 students responded that they did not know anything about the benefits, while fewer students reported partial or near-complete understanding.

Regarding energy efficiency programs and support measures available in their countries, just over half of the respondents (118 students) said they were aware of such programs, mainly getting their information from social media, newspapers, community organizations, and workshops. Participation in energy efficiency projects was relatively low, with only 54 students having participated in any such initiatives.

In terms of household energy sources, most students reported their primary source as electricity (238 students), followed by smaller numbers using gas, renewable sources, or other fuels such as wood and gasoline. Satisfaction with their household energy supply varied; about 58 students expressed full satisfaction, while others were less satisfied. When it came to actively managing energy consumption, fewer students frequently checked their energy bills, and common efficiency measures included insulation, energy-efficient appliances, LED lighting, thermostats, and timers.

Students also shared their future intentions and motivations. Nearly half (97 students) planned household investments to improve energy efficiency soon, while the rest were not planning any action. Interest levels in learning more about energy communities ranged from very interested to not interested at all, with the majority being somewhat interested. While some students hesitated or were unlikely to join or initiate an energy

community, a noteworthy portion expressed curiosity and a willingness to explore such opportunities.
Many students articulated their expectations from the upcoming event, hoping to gain understanding of what energy communities are, their benefits, and who is involved. A few students had no specific expectations, but the majority looked forward to acquiring new knowledge and practical application methods.

Post-Workshop Reflections

Following the workshops, students reported increased awareness and understanding of energy efficiency. A significant number, 89 students, considered themselves mostly informed, and 65 felt fully informed about energy efficiency topics. When asked about the likelihood of implementing energy-saving practices discussed during the workshop, responses were largely positive: 56 students expressed strong intentions to apply what they learned, and another 67 indicated they would most likely do so.
In terms of gaining new insights into citizen energy communities, 82 students felt the workshop helped them learn quite a bit, while 69 believed it helped them substantially. Many students intended to take specific actions, such as installing energy-efficient appliances, LED lighting, or solar panels. They also showed a high willingness to recommend the workshop—most responses clustered around "most likely" or "would recommend," with 90 students indicating they would gladly suggest it to others.
When asked about behavioral changes, students mentioned plans to install solar panels, reduce electricity consumption, and consider other energy-saving measures. Requests for future topics included similar themes like energy efficiency and citizen involvement, as well as broader issues like water conservation, environmental protection, and how citizens can contribute to sustainability.
Finally, some students did not have additional comments, but many expressed appreciation for the workshop and a desire for continuous learning in related areas.

SERBIA

Overall results in Serbia: Initial research showed that most people have a good general awareness of energy efficiency and renewable sources, but there are differences in understanding and active participation in energy communities. About 37.8% are familiar with these concepts, while 28.9% consider themselves well-informed. Only 22.7% have heard of energy communities, indicating a knowledge gap. The main sources of information are articles and social media. Awareness is highest about renewable energy projects and their environmental impact.
Knowledge of Benefits and Programs: Around 73.3% know about energy efficiency programs, but only 13.3% are actively involved. Most households use LED lighting, insulation, and energy-efficient appliances. Over two-thirds plan or consider improvements, and 60% are interested in energy communities mainly for savings and environmental benefits.

Participation and Perceptions: Active engagement is relatively low (13.3%), but there is potential for increased education and motivation. Most households rely on electricity, with a small percentage using renewable sources. Satisfaction with services is generally good, though some are dissatisfied, highlighting the need for better services and information. The most common energy measures are LED bulbs and insulation.
Motivations and Barriers: More than two-thirds plan or consider efficiency upgrades, and most are interested in joining existing energy communities, mainly to save money and protect the environment. Major obstacles include high costs, lack of information, and organizational capacity. Many are willing or interested in joining existing communities.
Post-Campaign Findings: Participants gained significant knowledge and motivation to adopt energy-saving measures. They understand legal frameworks, benefits, and practical steps. They use social media and articles for further information. They seek more education, real-life examples, subsidies, and support for investments in solar panels and building efficiency.
Demographics: Most respondents are aged 36-65, well-educated, from larger urban areas, mostly male, living in apartments, with households of 3-4 members.
In summary, there is a good level of awareness and interest in energy efficiency and communities, but more information, support, and engagement are needed to increase participation.

MOLDOVA

Based on the survey responses, this analysis explores participants' knowledge, understanding, motivation, and actions related to energy efficiency and Energy Communities. The collected data provides insight into their prior familiarity, learning outcomes from the event, current behaviors, and future intentions.

Knowledge and Understanding

Participants demonstrated a moderate level of prior knowledge about energy efficiency, with an average rating of 3.9 out of 5, indicating that most had some familiarity but there was room for deeper understanding. When it came to the Energy Community concept, the familiarity was slightly similar, with an average score of 3.8, and a substantial majority (77.8%) had heard about it beforehand. Their sources of initial information mainly stemmed from social media, brochures, and online articles, highlighting the importance of digital and print media in disseminating energy-related knowledge.

The events significantly enhanced participants' understanding, as reflected by a high average rating of 4.56 regarding the extent to which they gained new insights. Attendees learned about who can establish an Energy Community, the legislative frameworks at both European and national levels, organizational aspects, and potential benefits, including attracting investments and creating favorable conditions for renewable energy

projects. Importantly, they recognized the legal issues involved, rating this information as particularly useful with an average score of 4.6.

Current Actions and Future Plans

Post-event, participants expressed intentions related to sharing information, organizing campaigns, and exploring practical steps toward energy efficiency. Several planned actions include informing colleagues and neighbors, organizing informational sessions, and investigating how to initiate energy communities. These responses point toward a proactive attitude, leveraging peer networks and community engagement to foster sustainable practices.

Motivations and Barriers

The main sources of information about energy and sustainability issues were social media, articles, and NGOs, used by over half of the respondents, indicating these channels' prominence. When it comes to implementing measures in their homes, the most common actions include thermal insulation, energy-efficient appliances, and LED lighting. However, respondents also faced obstacles such as financial constraints, high costs of materials and audits, and a lack of effective information—barriers that hinder widespread adoption.

Despite these challenges, a sizable proportion of participants plan to undertake further energy efficiency measures, with 36 respondents indicating such intentions. The question of what additional information they need revealed concerns about the application process, co-financing opportunities, costs, and benefits of specific measures like photovoltaics and insulation. This highlights a desire for clear, actionable guidance and financial information to support decision-making.

Overall Insights

The survey underscores a relatively high level of interest and motivation among participants regarding energy efficiency and Energy Communities. The event successfully increased knowledge, especially regarding legal and organizational aspects, and inspired future engagement. To translate this interest into broader action, addressing barriers such as financial constraints and providing tailored, detailed information about implementation and funding opportunities will be crucial. This approach can help foster a more energy-conscious community capable of leveraging legislative frameworks and community initiatives to achieve sustainable energy goals.

Countries that have a tradition of energy communities:

HUNGARY

The results of the comparative analysis in Hungary demonstrate a notable improvement in public knowledge, awareness, and motivation related to energy efficiency and energy communities. After the event, the percentage of participants who felt very familiar with energy efficiency increased from 35% to 68%, and the overall share feeling well or very familiar rose from 74% to 97%. The average knowledge level also slightly increased from 4.14 to 4.25.

Participants' readiness to implement energy-saving practices strengthened, with more expressing high likelihood to act. Awareness of energy communities grew significantly, with 69% now recognizing the concept—up from 51%. Moreover, over 94% reported increased knowledge about energy communities, and many could identify existing initiatives, though there is room to improve visibility.

Perceptions about the usefulness of technical, community, and legal information segments were strongly positive, with about 63-69% rating these parts at the highest levels. Participants also showed increased motivation to create or join energy communities, with the proportion very likely to take such actions rising by approximately 12-14 percentage points.

Overall, the event effectively enhanced knowledge, reduced barriers, and boosted intentions to engage in energy efficiency measures and community projects. This indicates a successful intervention in raising awareness and sparking practical motivation among the Hungarian population.

ROMANIA

Some participants are unfamiliar with ECs in Romania or elsewhere in the Danube Region. Others mentioned specific groups like Energy Cooperative, Ghelința and Estelnic (Covasna County), and the Development Fund European Cooperative Society in Bistrița. The most mentioned was the Energy Cooperative from Bucharest, followed by Între Vecini (Between Neighbors).

Knowledge Gained from the Event: Participants learned about legislative aspects, how to set up ECs, their concept as local associations of citizens, authorities, and small businesses producing/consuming renewable energy, and the functioning of CEC and REC. They gained insight into economic benefits, legal frameworks, technical and practical knowledge, organization stages, and differences between organizational forms under Romanian and EU laws.

Technical Knowledge Gained: Participants learned how community members connect, analyze energy consumption and production, technologies used, sizing systems,

monitoring, smart metering, and energy management systems. They understood principles of self-consumption, sharing, and the importance of real-time data and smart meters.

Legal Knowledge Gained: They acquired details about regulations for establishing and operating CEC and REC communities, the transposition of EU directives into Romanian law, cooperation frameworks, legal forms, and how to engage with authorities.

Participation in Projects/Initiatives: Most participants did not participate actively, though some mentioned involvement in biomass projects, EU-funded initiatives like PROGRESS, training programs (e.g., ManagEnergy), and membership in Energy Cooperatives or founding energy communities.

Additional Needs for Launching Renewable Energy Initiatives: Participants require a robust legal framework, clear methodologies for sharing energy, detailed legal and fiscal obligations, procedures for authorization, funding details, technical studies, and best practices. They also seek information on incentives, funding opportunities, and technical support.

Perceived Community Impact: Energy communities could reduce costs, increase social cohesion, promote energy independence, environmental benefits, local economic growth, and reduce energy poverty while fostering solidarity and civic engagement.

Actions Planned Post-Event: Participants plan to promote EC benefits, approach industrial parks, identify interested communities, organize outreach campaigns, write informational articles, invest in renewables, initiate community projects, and engage local authorities.

Funding Opportunities for Energy Projects: Some participants are unaware, while others mention programs like the Modernization Fund, RePowerEU, Green House programs, large infrastructure funds, and European energy community facilities.

Additional Information Needed to Start Energy Efficiency Investments: Participants desire detailed technical data, feasibility studies, legal and fiscal clarifications, information on obtaining funding, costs, best practices, technical and economic models, and contact points for consultancy and experience exchange.

SLOVENIA

To assess the impact of the awareness-raising event, participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire before the event and the same one after its conclusion. The questionnaires were anonymous and completed on paper. Out of approximately 130 attendees, 35 filled out both questionnaires. The analysis focused on two main areas: changes in knowledge and understanding of energy communities, and changes in

motivation and willingness to participate in them. The results show that the event had a positive influence on both. Participants reported better understanding of the topic and stronger interest in energy communities.

Knowledge and understanding, Status and Motivation - This part of the evaluation measured how much new knowledge was acquired by participants during the event, and how useful the content was perceived to be. The topics covered in the questions ranged from basic energy efficiency to detailed aspects of renewable energy communities.
The pre-event questionnaire (NRGCOM_quest_before_2.3_eng_final) showed that participants had moderate awareness of energy communities, with many having heard of the concept but lacking familiarity with specific local or regional examples. Social media and articles were the most common sources of information, while active participation in REC initiatives was generally low. Awareness of national energy efficiency schemes was present but not widespread.
In terms of energy behaviour (status), most participants used a combination of electricity and gas, with moderate satisfaction (score 3) regarding their energy supply. A relatively low percentage reviewed their bills regularly, and common efficiency measures like LED lighting and energy-efficient appliances were already in use. This suggests a foundational level of energy-conscious behaviour, though with potential for improvement.
Motivational insights before the event revealed that participants were somewhat interested in joining or establishing energy communities, but they cited key barriers, such as a lack of legal clarity and high costs. Their expectations focused on acquiring practical examples, funding options, and best practices.
Following the training, the post-event questionnaire (NRGCOM_quest_after_2.3_eng_final) reflected significant improvements in all three focus areas:

- Knowledge and Understanding increased sharply. Participants reported feeling well-informed about energy efficiency and REC concepts, and showed high willingness to apply what they had learned. Ratings for the usefulness of sessions (technical, legal, and community-focused) ranged between 4 and 5, with numerous qualitative responses noting valuable insights on REC scalability, governance models, and citizen participation.
- Energy status improved as well. Some participants indicated that they had diversified their energy sources, including solar panels. More regular reviews of energy bills were reported, and a broader set of efficiency measures were being considered or already in use post-event.
- On the motivational front, participants expressed a stronger intention to join or create energy communities (scores rose from 2 to 4). Interest in future events and further engagement with RECs grew, supported by improved understanding of administrative and financial mechanisms. The number of perceived obstacles decreased, and participants more frequently cited empowerment and clarity as event outcomes.

The demographic profile of participants remained consistent across both questionnaires. The 36–50 age group was the most represented, with a balanced gender ratio (approximately 54% female, 46% male). The majority lived in urban or town settings, primarily in apartment buildings, and held a college or university degree, including some with postgraduate qualifications.

This demographic composition aligns well with the event's target audience—professionals, stakeholders, and community members already engaged in energy-related topics—making the observed increases in knowledge and motivation particularly meaningful.

BULGARIA

For both the 1st and the 2nd events a total of only 11 participants provided filled-in "before" questionnaires and only 6 – "after" questionnaires.
Therefore, it would be questionable if we could consider these as being representative (on average for both events: 22.4% "before" and 12.2% "after").
Most of those who provided filled-in questionnaires "before" indicate they've heard about RECs from social media, public organisations and events. For the 1st event in the campaign most replied they were not very well familiar with the REC topic but for the 2nd public physical event most of the participants were present during the first one and hence, most of them replied they were fairly well or very well familiar with the concept of RECs and of energy community initiatives in Bulgaria (Gabrovo and Burgas). Most mention they've been previously aware of energy efficiency or renewable energy projects and are interested in participating in such activities in the future as well as in RECs. \
Respondents report electricity as primary source of energy and only 3 out of 11 (27%) indicate using renewables as well. Most are generally fairly satisfied with current energy supply and most of them frequently review their energy bills. Reported implemented EE measures are mostly Insulation, EE appliances and LED lighting and only 3 in 11(27%) report timer.
36% of respondents do not plan for any EE measures in the near future in their "before" answers. The majority express willingness to learn more about RECs but again the big majority did not provide any free text expectations. Obstacles encountered in implementing EE measures are administrative burden and regulatory imperfections, rigit mindset and biased opinion, lack of awareness or technical information and high upfront costs. The majority are likely to be involved in becoming potential members of ECs but not so many in establishing RECs themselves. The majority mention finances as the main barrier to them participating but one out of 11 mentioned legislation as well, and another one – grid connection challenges.

Countries that have significant experience to share:

AUSTRIA

According to the opinions and findings from the workshop ecological motivation result are shown that the participants' environmental awareness has changed so much that the desire to make a personal contribution to environmental protection has emerged as a new important factor. Cost savings and independence from energy supply companies proved to be the greatest economic motivating factors.

The question of how the energy transition can be made socially just and effective for the environment and people is central to its social acceptance and success.

The high costs of the latter were largely offset by the legislative framework, which created clear regulatory rules.

During the workshop, key challenges were identified that affect energy communities (ECs) in connection with the utilisation of flexibility and the promotion of energy literacy. These challenges are complex and concern technological as well as social, regulatory and organisational aspects.

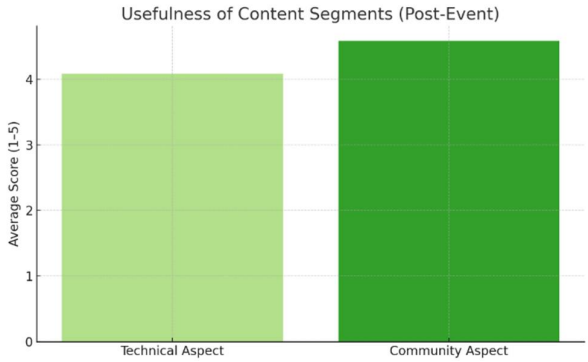
CZECK REPUBLICK

To better illustrate the impact of the Borovany awareness-raising event, partner from Czeck Republic provide both qualitative insights and graphical analysis of the questionnaire outcomes. The following results combine descriptive statistics with visual comparisons to clarify the positive shift in participants' knowledge and motivation.

3.1. Knowledge and Understanding

Before the event: 42% had limited or no knowledge of RECs

After the event: 89% reported improved understanding



Participants cited legal clarity and financial examples as the most valuable information gained

3.2. Status

- Recognition of community energy potential rose sharply
- Previously cited barriers (e.g., legal confusion) dropped by 30%
- Increase in perception of feasibility for their own municipality (from 35% to 77%)

3.3. Motivation / Expectations

- 61% felt more motivated to support or initiate a REC
- 43% would consider forming a community group within the next 12 months
- 70% requested follow-up support and materials

After the pilot campaign, PP12-NEK tried to evaluate the results, forward them to PP - REDASP and other project partners, incorporate experience and feedback, and cooperate in the future for Slovakia.

Seven representatives of organizations and companies participated in the pilot survey and completed the questionnaires, which, while maintaining the criterion of anonymity under the guarantee of the PP12-NEK campaign implementer, were processed and an average statistically significant value was created from each answered question, which serves as a summary evaluation statement for the given question for the entire group of participants.

SLOVAKIA

3.1. Knowledge and Understanding

After the pilot campaign, PP12-NEK tried to evaluate the results, forward them to PP - REDASP and other project partners, incorporate experience and feedback, and cooperate in the future for Slovakia - Output D2.3.1 - summary of the motivational pilot campaign for the entire project.

Seven representatives of organizations and companies participated in the pilot survey and completed the questionnaires, which, while maintaining the criterion of anonymity

under the guarantee of the PP12-NEK campaign implementer, were processed and an average statistically significant value was created from each answered question, which serves as a summary evaluation statement for the given question for the entire group of participants.
Since the planned main deadlines for the implementation of the activity A.T.2.4 are only in the 3rd period, an input question was created for PP12-NEK so that in advance, as part of its part of the implementation of tasks in the 2nd period, it tried to carry out this pilot input survey on a selected sample of participants on 11. and 12.12.2024, which is a contribution of a good example for practice and other partners of the NRGCOM project.
Before the event: only 44% of the participants surveyed had only partial or no knowledge of renewable energy communities (RECs). After the event: After completing the training and repeating the questionnaire survey, surprisingly, 85% began to perceive this professional topic differently.

3.2. Status
1. Recognition of community energy potential increased sharply
2. Previously cited barriers (e.g. legal confusion) decreased by 30%
3. Increased perception of feasibility for one's own community (from 35% to 77%)
4. Participants cited knowledge of legislative substance and financial models as the most valuable information gained after the discussions
3.3. Motivation / Expectations
1. Participants' sense and perception of feasibility for their own community increased (33% to 72%)
2. Up to 65% of participants became more motivated to support and design RECs
3. A relatively significant portion of participants, up to 43%, would consider creating a community working group to create an energy community within the next 12 months
4. Almost two-thirds (66%) of participants requested follow-up individual consultations and information materials

GERMANY

The following results were achieved for each of the events organized for the purpose of raising the awareness of the general public in Germany:

Event: Geld macht Macht – Regionalwerke, Geld und Energie sinnvoll verbinden
The majority of respondents demonstrated a solid foundational understanding of energy efficiency and renewable energy communities (RECs). However, their knowledge about the specific benefits of joining or establishing a REC varied considerably, with equal distribution across intermediate understanding.
Regarding energy efficiency, most participants rated themselves as quite familiar. Awareness of national energy efficiency programs was high, with 75% responding "Yes".

While base awareness is strong, deeper understanding of the operational and personal benefits of RECs still varies. This highlights a need for targeted informational and educational outreach.
Participants were asked about their current energy situations and practices. Half reported renewable energy sources as the primary energy supply for their household, with the other half relying on electricity (possibly grid-based, unspecified origin). Satisfaction with current energy supply was high — 75% of respondents were "very satisfied" (rating 5).
Bill awareness and review practices were fairly active.
Participants reported using a variety of energy efficiency measures. 50% used LED lighting, while others reported insulation and energy-efficient appliances.
The questionnaire also sought to understand participant motivation to act on energy efficiency and engage in community energy initiatives.
Half of the participants indicated plans for energy efficiency improvements in the near future.
These results suggest participants are more open to participating in structured RECs than taking on the organizational challenge of founding one.
Demographics:

- 75% Male, 25% Female
- 50% of participants aged 36–50
- 75% live in family houses, 25% in student housing

This small but representative dataset shows that participants are well-informed and positively disposed toward RECs and energy efficiency. Their strongest inclination lies in joining existing efforts rather than creating new ones, pointing to a need for support structures, mentoring, or cooperative platforms to increase citizen-led initiatives. Educational follow-up and local success stories may further increase commitment.

Event: "Energie aus der Region – für die Region"
Knowledge and Understanding
The majority of participants demonstrated strong prior awareness of energy-related topics. In the pre-event questionnaire:

- 83.3% of respondents rated themselves highly familiar with energy efficiency
- 94.4% had previously heard of Renewable Energy Communities (RECs)
- Of those aware, 66.7% learned about RECs from other sources (e.g., in-person events, local discussions), with smaller shares from articles, brochures, or social media
- 70.6% were familiar with REC initiatives in Germany or other Danube Region countries
- Regarding understanding of REC benefits, 44.4% rated their knowledge at Level 4 and 16.7% at Level 5, though 38.9% remained at moderate or lower levels
- 70.6% were aware of national energy efficiency support schemes

Knowledge levels were generally high, particularly regarding energy efficiency and REC awareness. However, deeper understanding of REC-specific benefits and

legal/organizational frameworks showed variation, indicating areas for focused educational efforts.

Status

Participants reported diverse household energy contexts and behaviors:

- Primary energy sources**:** 33.3% use gas, 33.3% use renewables, 27.8% use electricity, 5.6% use oil
- Satisfaction with current energy supply**:** Split opinions with the majority rating their satisfaction at Levels 3 and 4 (33.3% each), and smaller shares on either end of the scale
- Review of energy bills**:** 66.6% review them frequently, 27.8% moderately
- Energy-saving measures used**:** 44.4% use LED lighting, 27.8% insulation, 22.2% energy-efficient appliances; several noted thermostats and ventilation systems

Participants are energy-aware and financially engaged. Many have already taken action to reduce consumption. Mixed satisfaction levels with energy supply suggest an openness to alternative or improved solutions.

Motivation / Expectations

- 61.1% are planning future energy efficiency improvements
- Regarding RECs:
  - 55.6% are highly likely to join an existing REC
  - Only 38.9% indicated a strong likelihood of starting their own REC, while many remained cautious

Demographics:

- Gender: 94.4% Male, 5.6% Female
- Age: 38.9% aged 50–65, 27.8% aged 36–50, 22.2% aged 26–35
- Residence Type: 72.2% live in family houses
- Regional Spread: Respondents came from over a dozen towns, most notably Pfaffenhofen (13.3%)

Participants show strong interest in participating in RECs but are less inclined to initiate one themselves, underlining the need for support structures. Motivation for energy improvements is high, and the demographic profile aligns with target groups for long-term community involvement.

Key Outcomes:

- High interest in the Regionalwerke concept from citizens and stakeholders
- Clear articulation of governance, economic, and climate-driven motivations for forming a local REC
- Widespread appreciation for transparent communication, accessible materials, and the participatory setup

4. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The A2.3 Comparative analysis focuses on comparing the results obtained before and after the event to assess the impact of the activity. Analysis of this comparative data will identify any significant changes in participants' knowledge, awareness, and interest regarding the event topic. The analysis highlights areas where understanding has improved, revealing the effectiveness of the event in enhancing participants' knowledge. It also records changes in awareness levels and overall interest generated, providing valuable insights into how the event affected participant perception and engagement.

Countries that are very open to the concept of energy communities and have a need to expand their expertise in energy communities:

CROATIA

Participants have expressed that they are more informed on the energy efficient topics. They have shown very high interest to apply energy saving practices as after the events held, they have received one option more for its realisation. As one part of participants had just the basic knowledge on the energy community, while others for the first time have been introduced with this concept, they rated that event helped a great deal in the meaning of gaining new knowledge.

Aspects that covered technical, communicational and legal part very positively rated as helpful from all the participants, as this was very first time they were in touch with such kind of information. Participants have expressed their interest to participate in future steps and will definitely recommend these types of events to others. No significant steps have been noticed in the confidence to be the one how will establish energy community but they have expressed significant interest to join an energy community after the establishment. Participants expressed that they would have greater confidence in joining the energy community supported by public bodies, in the sense of their participation as members or part of the management.

MONTENEGRO

This overview demonstrates a proactive shift in students' knowledge, intentions, and attitudes toward energy efficiency and renewable energy communities after participation in the workshops. They appear more informed, motivated, and eager to apply their newfound knowledge, indicating the workshops' effectiveness in fostering awareness and encouraging sustainable practices. The table provides a comparative analysis of the participants' responses in the survey on the level of awareness of the general population:

Category	Survey Before the Workshop	Survey After the Workshop	Analysis and Differences
Knowledge of Energy Efficiency	Majority of students (63 + 63 = 126) were unfamiliar or only slightly familiar (ratings 1–2).	Majority of students (51 + 89 + 65 = 205) are partially to very informed (ratings 3–5).	Clear increase in knowledge after the workshop.
Awareness of Energy Communities	160 students had never heard of energy communities; only 98 had.	148 students (ratings 4–5) reported gaining new knowledge on this topic.	Significant rise in awareness of energy communities.
Understanding the Benefits of Energy Communities	137 students knew nothing about benefits; only 26 showed higher understanding (ratings 4–5).	66 students reported learning about specific benefits.	Education clearly improved understanding of benefits.
Participation in Energy Efficiency Projects	Only 54 students had participated in related projects.	(Not directly asked post-workshop.)	Potential for future tracking of participation increases.
Sources of Information	Mostly social media and ecology classes.	After the workshop, students referenced specific solutions like solar panels, LED lighting, insulation—showing more practical knowledge.	Education directed attention to real-world solutions.
Plans to Invest in Energy Efficiency	97 students planned investments.	(Not directly asked post-workshop.)	Possible area for future follow-up.
Interest in Learning More	157 students were at least somewhat interested in learning more.	Not directly asked, but 148 students indicated they learned useful information; 166 would recommend the workshop.	Sustained and confirmed interest reflected in positive feedback.
Likelihood to Join an Energy Community	Only 36 students rated likelihood as high (ratings 4–5).	111 students (ratings 4–5) said they would most likely apply the practices discussed.	Increased willingness to actively engage after education.

Likelihood to Start an Energy Community	41 students (ratings 4– 5) said they might start one.	(Not directly asked post-workshop.)	Indicator worth monitoring further.
Workshop Recommendation	(No data before workshop.)	766 students would recommend the workshop+additional 46 who would probably recommend it.	Workshop was positively received and impactful.

SERBIA

1. Key Findings from the Initial Research

The research indicated that citizens are generally familiar with basic energy community concepts, but deeper understanding of complex topics remains limited. Promoting through social media, workshops, and seminars can enhance knowledge and participation. Notable insights include:

- Many households regularly monitor their bills, showing awareness of consumption.
- There's widespread use of LED lighting and insulation, but adoption of smart devices like thermostats could increase.
- Few households use renewable energy, highlighting opportunities for promotion and incentives.
- Respondents are motivated to improve energy efficiency and participate in energy communities, especially in urban areas, with women, highly educated, and middle-aged groups being most active.

Post-campaign results show increased awareness, interest, and readiness for action, emphasizing the need for more accessible information, financial support, and practical examples to foster broader engagement.

3.2. Pre- and Post-Conference Questionnaire Analysis

Before the Conference:

Most participants had limited knowledge of renewable energy communities (RECs), with over 65% rating their familiarity as low. Awareness of operational initiatives was minimal, and understanding of legal and technical aspects was weak. Motivations were to learn basics, regulations, and best practices.

After the Conference:

Knowledge improvements were significant, with over 80% rating their understanding highly. Awareness of legal, technical, and governance issues increased sharply, and participants felt more capable of contributing to RECs. Confidence in applying knowledge grew, and many expressed willingness to support or establish RECs.

Key observations:

- The event successfully bridged the knowledge gap and stimulated interest.

- It motivated participants for concrete actions and community support.
- Main obstacles remain financing, legal procedures, and trust-building, but optimism persists with proper guidance.

Conclusions:
The conference proved the importance of awareness-raising efforts in demystifying energy communities, empowering stakeholders, and fostering future development. Continued targeted activities, peer learning, and accessible information are essential for advancing community-led energy projects.

MOLDOVA

Comparison of results before and after the event
The comparative analysis of the responses collected before and after the awareness-raising events highlighted a significant increase in participants' knowledge and interest regarding the concept of energy communities.

- The average familiarity level with the concept of energy efficiency increased from 3.9 (before the event) to 4.5 (after the event).
- Familiarity with the benefits of energy communities rose from 3.6 to 4.4, according to participants' evaluations.
- The usefulness of the legal information presented was highly appreciated, with an average rating of 4.6, confirming the increased interest in understanding the legal framework for establishing energy communities.

Identification of changes in knowledge, awareness, and interest
Prior to the event, only some participants were familiar with the energy community concept, and their knowledge was often fragmented, based mostly on social media or brochures.
After the event, participants were able to describe essential elements related to creating an energy community, including the legal framework, financing sources, and steps required.

Countries that have a tradition of energy communities:

HUNGARY

The comparative analysis of the pre- and post-event surveys in Hungary indicates a substantial positive impact on public awareness and understanding of energy efficiency and energy communities. Key findings include:

- Knowledge and Familiarity: The proportion of participants rating their familiarity with energy efficiency at the highest level (5) increased from 35% before to 68% after the event. The overall share feeling "well or very familiar" (levels 4 and 5) rose from 74% to 97%. The average knowledge score grew slightly from 4.14 to 4.25, reflecting improved understanding.
- Willingness to Apply Practices: The likelihood of applying energy-saving measures significantly increased, with 43% now very likely to do so, compared to a lower prior level, demonstrating enhanced motivation.
- Awareness of Energy Communities: Awareness rose markedly; 69% of respondents now know about energy community initiatives, up from 51%. Moreover, over 94% reported increased knowledge about energy communities, with more participants confident in understanding key concepts.
- Perceived Usefulness and Legal Understanding: Participants rated the technical and community segments highly, with over 60% finding them very useful. About 69% valued the legal information, with many recognizing specific legal forms and regulations as particularly helpful.
- Motivation and Engagement: The intention to create or join energy communities improved notably. The percentage of those very likely to initiate an energy community increased from 15% to 24%, while willingness to join an existing one rose from 17% to 29%. The proportion of respondents unlikely to participate decreased, indicating reduced hesitancy.
- Planned Actions and Support Needs: Around one-third plan to implement specific energy efficiency measures, primarily solar panel installations. Participants expressed a need for clearer information on funding, technical guidance, and legal procedures to facilitate active participation.

Overall, the event successfully increased public awareness, confidence, and motivation regarding energy efficiency and community-based energy initiatives, reducing barriers and fostering a more proactive attitude among the Hungarian population.

ROMANIA

Before the event:

- ✓ Limited active participation: 7 participants had no prior active involvement in Energy Community initiatives, indicating a relatively low engagement. However, some participants had varying levels of involvement, including: local projects like biomass-based energy in Ghelința, Covasna; participation in EU-funded projects like the PROGRESS project focused on energy communities or membership in cooperatives such as the Bucharest Energy Cooperative and founding roles in local energy initiatives like Energy Community Dobrogea.
- ✓ Knowledge gaps: general lack of knowledge about renewable energy projects. Specific needs include: clarity of legal aspects, regulations and fiscal incentives;

methodologies for setting up Energy Communities and managing energy sharing; more information on available funding and available technical assistance.

- ✓ Limited understanding of Energy Communities' potential/ benefits: participants were not fully aware of how Energy Communities could positively influence their communities. However, there was some recognition of potential benefits, such as: cost reductions for consumers, social cohesion and environmental benefits; increased local economic development and energy independence; the potential for reducing energy poverty.

After the event:

- ✓ Increased awareness and participation: The following actions were mentioned to be implemented after the event: promoting the concept of Energy Communities and their benefits; approaching an industrial park or identifying communities ready to organize into Energy Communities; organizing outreach campaigns and writing articles to educate the public on Energy Communities; taking concrete actions like initiating discussions with local authorities, developing plans for Energy Communities, or even investing in renewable energy sources.
- ✓ Better understanding of Energy Communities, concept and benefits: participants expressed a clearer understanding of the necessary support for launching energy initiatives, such as legal frameworks; incentives to develop/ support Energy Communities; practical tools, such as methodologies for sharing energy, feasibility studies and technical assistance; information on funding.
- ✓ Concrete action plans: Some of these steps included: setting up working groups to form Energy Communities in specific neighbourhoods or blocks; promoting local action with citizens and local authorities to form Energy Communities; initiating discussions with local governments and applying for funding for Energy Community projects; engaging with residents' associations to organize and plan for energy community development.

SLOVENIA

The comparative analysis highlights the changes observed across the three core evaluation domains—knowledge and understanding, status, and motivation/expectations—based on the pre- and post-event questionnaires. Participants reported an improved grasp of energy-related concepts, stronger intent to engage with renewable energy communities (RECs), and a more proactive attitude toward energy-saving behaviours.

Knowledge gains were evident, with most participants indicating a shift from medium to high levels of understanding of energy efficiency and the operational principles of RECs. Participants not only gained clarity on the technical and legal frameworks related to community energy but also expressed appreciation for practical examples presented during the event. The reported usefulness of all three thematic segments (technical,

community, legal) confirmed that the training effectively addressed participants' needs and filled key knowledge gaps.
In terms of energy habits and self-reported status, a slight yet meaningful progression was recorded. After the event, more participants reported using a combination of energy-efficient solutions, and some even noted solar integration at home. Awareness of available support programmes and funding mechanisms also increased, indicating a stronger foundation for behavioural change.
Motivational indicators shifted notably. Prior to the event, most respondents expressed only moderate interest or uncertainty toward joining or forming RECs. After the event, the majority indicated they would consider participating, citing improved knowledge and fewer perceived barriers. Information needs also evolved: while funding and legal clarity remained a key concern, new interest emerged in long-term governance, citizen involvement, and regional best practices.
Demographic consistency across both questionnaires ensured a reliable comparison. Respondents primarily represented the 36–50 age group, had a high level of education, and lived in urban settings. This stable profile helped ensure the credibility of observed shifts in awareness, attitudes, and intent, confirming the event's impact.

BULGARIA

Again here we should indicate that only 11 participants provided filled-in "before" questionnaires and 6 – "after" questionnaires in total for both events reported above. Therefore, it would be questionable if we could consider these as being representative (on average for both events: 22.4% "before" and 12.2% "after") for the purpose of analyses.
For the 1st event in the campaign most replied they were not very well familiar with the REC topic but for the 2nd public physical event most of the participants were the same people present during the 1st event and hence, most of them replied they were well or very well familiar with the concept of RECs. Over 65% rated their initial knowledge as 4 or 5 out of 5 point scale (5="very familiar").
Participants' understanding of the legal, technical, and governance aspects of RECs was notably low „before" but improved „after" their participation notably in the 2nd event.
Expressed in the questionnaires were recommendations to learn about more practical examples and best practices. More discussion forums with REC experts, also at national level were also recommended as essential in order to motivate and inspire more people about the REC. Other recommendations given were to address the agricultural and forestry sectors particularly as potential REC beneficiaroes and also, to give more consideration to thermal water as RES resource to be utilised in a potential REC since our region is predominantly agricultural and forest area and also, abundant in thermal water resources.
Participants predominantly indicated that any further information on RECs would be beneficial for them to learn in the future.

A key challenge indicated was scepticism about the applicability of the REC concept in the current situation in the country, as well as the lack of trust between potential participants in energy communities.

Countries that have significant experience to share:

AUSTRIA

Financial incentives, independence from large energy suppliers and ecological convictions are the main reasons for joining an energy community. In addition, active participation leads to a change in the energy consumption behavior of members and thus contributes to the reduction of CO_2 emissions in Burgenland. However, regulatory and technical obstacles are slowing down the expansion of energy communities. Recommendations for strengthening energy communities are derived from these findings. These include the optimization of the legal framework, the improvement of the technical infrastructure and the implementation of targeted information campaigns, as well as the implication of improved energy management software to increase the participation of the Burgenland population in the energy communities.

The Austrian electricity grid is well developed, but there is a lack of more flexible energy supply systems and energy storage systems. All social groups are affected by the energy transition. However, there is a risk of increasing existing social inequalities, for example through the acquisition of new energy technologies for the generation of renewable electricity. The question of how the energy transition can be made socially just and effective for the environment and people is central to its social acceptance and success. Cooperation with new energy supply systems plays an important role here.

A major challenge for the participants of the workshop were the organizational hurdles, in particular the high costs of setting up an organization, the cooperation with network operators and the existing legal uncertainties. The high costs of the latter were largely offset by the legislative framework, which created clear regulatory rules. Nevertheless, effective cooperation with network operators proved to be difficult time and again. Very often, a lack of clear communication structures, a lack of know-how in the companies or non-harmonized processes both within the grid operators and in cooperation with EEGs stand in the way. This was and is also one of the barriers for interested people; the costs of setting up a community have risen and therefore deter many potential initiators.

During the workshop, key challenges were identified:

1. Lack of incentives and unclear framework conditions for calling on flexibility - A key problem is the lack of economic attractiveness of flexibility call-off. In many cases, there is a lack of clear price signals or suitable market mechanisms that make the added value of

flexible load or feed-in behaviour transparent to the participants in an EC. In addition, there are uncertainties regarding the legal admissibility and administrative burden of aggregating and providing flexibility across different market roles.

2. Limited technological prerequisites - Effective flexibility retrieval requires a digital infrastructure, which is only available to a limited extent in many existing ECs. This includes real-time data access to energy and grid data and interoperable platforms for control and communication. The integration of different technologies (e.g. PV systems, heat pumps, battery storage, electric vehicles) also places technical demands on data interfaces, cyber security and system stability.

3. Low energy awareness and lack of understanding of system interrelationships - In the area of energy literacy, it became clear that many EC members only have a rudimentary understanding of the energy system, how it works and their own role in it. Terms such as 'flexibility', 'load shifting' or 'grid serviceability' are often unfamiliar or perceived as abstract. This makes both the motivation to participate in flexibility programmes and the understanding of technical or economic relationships within the EC more difficult.

4. Information and communication deficits - Another obstacle is the often inadequate communication between operators, members and service providers. A lack of transparent information about the status of the EC, the energy flow or the impact of individual actions on the overall system leads to low engagement. Energy literacy is not understood as a continuous learning process, but is often limited to one-off information events or training measures.

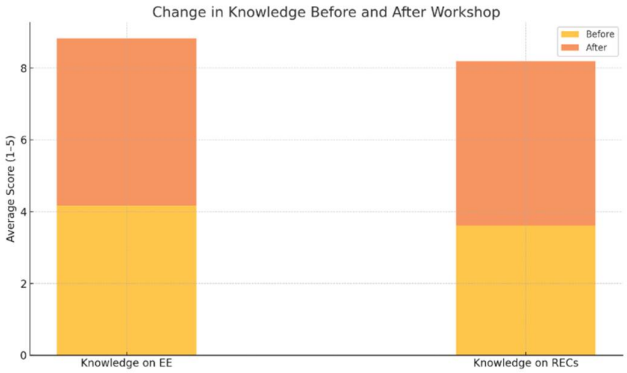
5. Complexity of participation and decision-making processes - Participation is a central element of ECs, but decision-making on the use of flexibility proves to be complex in practice. Different interests, levels of technical knowledge and time resources of the members often lead to delays or non-transparent solutions. Energy literacy must therefore also promote the ability to make collective decisions and assess long-term effects.

CZECK REPUBLICK

The impact of the workshop was quantitatively confirmed through paired evaluations. As illustrated in the chart below, both awareness of energy efficiency (EE) and understanding of renewable energy communities (RECs) improved significantly:

- EE knowledge increased from an average score of 4.2 to 4.7 (out of 5)
- REC understanding improved from 3.6 to 4.6

This shift suggests that the workshop not only raised awareness but also addressed uncertainties and misconceptions. Most participants highlighted that they now felt better equipped to consider or support local REC initiatives.

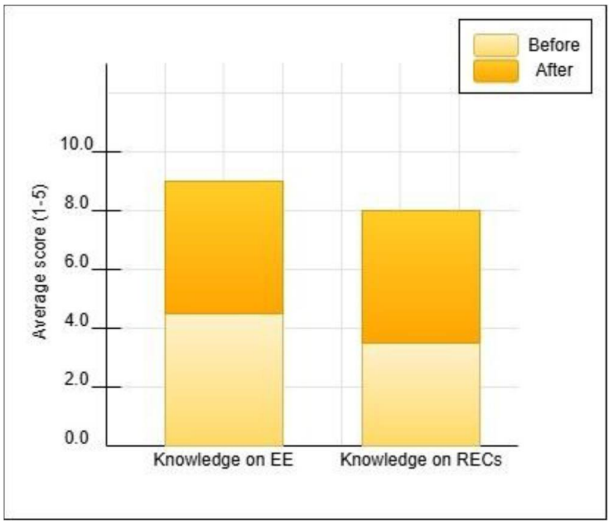


Participants found both technical and community-oriented content valuable, with slight preference for the technical part. Moreover, the willingness to engage with RECs increased notably.
Mean knowledge rating increased by 2.4 points on a 10-point scale.
The percentage of participants confident about explaining RECs doubled (from 26% to 53%).
Perceived accessibility of RECs improved significantly due to legal clarification and practical tools shared during the workshop.

SLOVAKIA

The impact of the workshop was quantitatively confirmed through peer evaluations. As shown in the graph below, both awareness of energy efficiency (EE) and understanding of renewable energy communities (REC) improved significantly:
• Knowledge of EE increased from an average score of 3.2 to 4.5 (out of 5)
• Understanding of REC issues improved from 3.2 to 4.8
This positive and justifiable shift shows that the training of participants not only increased awareness and the related professional and social awareness, but also overcame several misconceptions and knowledge. Most participants reported that they subsequently felt and were now better prepared to consider or support local REC initiatives.
Participants considered the technical and community-oriented content of the training lectures and the overall positive working atmosphere to be highly relevant and highlighting in particular the issues of organization and operation of future energy communities in Slovak conditions. At the same time, it was clear from the training that the willingness to engage in REC had significantly increased.

The average knowledge rating increased by 2.2 points on the created imaginary 10-point scale.
The percentage of participants who were confident that they understood and would be able to apply REC issues in their professional practice doubled (from 28% to 56%).
The perceived accessibility of the functioning of REC improved significantly based on the clarification of organizational, legislative, technical and technological and practical tools shared during the workshop.



Change in knowledge before and after training

GERMANY

Conclusions are based on observed behaviors during the events and qualitative feedback. observable changes in behavior, perception, and motivation clearly demonstrate a positive impact of the event in increasing understanding, readiness, and confidence among participants in the fields of energy efficiency and renewable energy communities.

Also, clear indications of improvements are evident across several areas:

- Increased awareness of personal impact and energy reduction: Participants developed more concrete ideas on how to reduce their CO_2 footprint during the event, reflecting heightened awareness and personal responsibility.
- Deeper understanding of RECs (renewable energy communities): Although familiarity with RECs was already high before, post-event responses showed an improved understanding of their benefits, evidenced by balanced ratings across levels 2 to 5—marking a shift from vague to more structured knowledge.

- Enhanced motivation to act: The willingness to participate in existing energy communities increased significantly, with 75% of participants now rating their motivation at levels 4 or 5, a clear shift from lower pre-event motivation levels.
- Slight increase in intention to adopt energy efficiency measures: Half of the participants expressed plans to implement efficiency improvements, aligning with the post-event message of personal climate action.
- Quantitative indicators post-event: All post-event respondents rated their understanding of energy topics between levels 3 and 5, with one-third reaching the highest level, indicating a positive shift from lower ratings pre-event. Additionally, 66.6% reported gaining new insights about RECs, confirming deepened understanding. Motivation to take action improved, with 55.5% indicating high intention, and no respondents rated below level 3.
- Increased confidence in establishing or joining RECs: Confidence levels rose, with 66.6% feeling confident to establish a REC, and the likelihood of joining an existing REC increased from 55.6% pre-event to 88.8% post-event.

Identification of Changes in general were:

- Knowledge: Strengthened understanding of both technical (efficiency, supply systems) and social (REC models, participation) aspects.
- Awareness: Sustained high awareness of RECs and energy issues, with expanded clarity on local and regional relevance.
- Interest: Higher motivation to join collective energy action efforts, though less inclination to initiate such efforts alone.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions on the activities carried out to raise awareness among the general population about the importance of renewable energy communities were also categorized based on the initial division of countries in the consortium.

Countries very open to the concept of energy communities and have a need to expand their expertise in energy communities:

CROATIA

Energy communities are still an insufficiently explored concept in Croatia. In the Republic of Croatia, as of April this year, only three energy communities have been registered, located in Zagreb, Rijeka, and Špičkovina. With the registration of each, certain barriers, mostly of an administrative nature, which hindered their establishment have been overcome. Although established, they are not fully operational in the true sense of the word, as a foundation that would enable energy sharing among members has not yet been set.

Certain groups are subject to restrictions on active participation in the energy transition. This is particularly evident in historic urban cores, where strict conservation conditions limit residents and activities located in historic areas from engaging more actively in the energy transition. Specifically, they do not have the opportunity to change the external appearance of their buildings, namely to install thermal insulation on the building envelope and implement integrated power plants, which puts them at a disadvantage compared to those who could reduce electricity costs in this way and thus contribute to the green transition.

MONTENEGRO

- The workshop significantly improved students' knowledge and understanding of energy efficiency and citizen energy communities.
- After the workshop, students are more willing to consider concrete actions, such as joining a community or applying what they learned.
- The knowledge gap before and after the workshop highlights the importance of such educational programs.
- The workshop also had a positive impact on motivation and attitudes, evident from the increased readiness to take action.
- The TV and radio shows as well as the brochure and social media campaign helped in awareness raising the awareness of the general population on the NRGCOM project, energy efficiency and energy communities.

SERBIA

The overall conclusion that can be drawn is that while there is a solid foundational awareness and interest among citizens regarding energy communities and energy efficiency, significant opportunities remain to deepen understanding, expand active participation, and promote sustainable, citizen-driven energy initiatives. Successful awareness campaigns and strategic support—through education, accessible information, and inclusive leadership—are crucial for fostering broader acceptance and implementation of renewable energy solutions and community-based projects. Strengthening partnerships and facilitating targeted, clear communication will be key to advancing Serbia's energy transition toward a more sustainable future.

MOLDOVA

The events had a substantial impact on raising awareness about the potential of energy communities. Participants acquired essential knowledge about the legal framework, as well as organizational and operational aspects of energy communities. Participants repeatedly expressed the need for clear and accessible information regarding co-financing sources and steps to launch local energy projects.

Impact of the event on awareness of energy communities:
Awareness of the energy community concept was strengthened not only through information delivery but also through examples of good practices from other regions.
Participants understood that these communities can contribute to reducing fossil fuel dependence, generating financial savings, and enhancing social cohesion within their localities.

* * *

The conclusions drawn from the analysis of **Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Moldova** countries highlight both the potential and the current challenges in developing energy communities across the region.
In Croatia, energy communities remain an underexplored area, with only a few registered instances mostly facing administrative barriers that hinder full operation. Particularly in historic urban centers, conservation restrictions limit residents' ability to engage in energy-saving measures that could lower costs and accelerate the green transition, putting them at a disadvantage in the energy transition process.
Montenegro demonstrates a positive trajectory, with educational initiatives such as workshops, media campaigns, and informational materials effectively increasing awareness, knowledge, and motivation among the population, especially students. These

efforts have led to a greater willingness to participate in energy communities and take practical actions toward energy efficiency.
In Serbia, while there is a solid base of awareness and interest among citizens, there remains significant room for deepening understanding and actively expanding participation. Strategic education, transparent information, and inclusive leadership are essential to fostering wider acceptance and implementing renewable energy projects at the community level. Strengthening partnerships and improving communication will be key to advancing the country's energy transition.
Moldova shows promising progress, with events successfully raising awareness about the benefits of energy communities and providing participants with essential knowledge of legal, organizational, and operational aspects. Participants recognize the potential of these communities to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, generate financial savings, and promote social cohesion. However, there remains a persistent need for clear, accessible information on co-financing and practical steps to initiate local energy projects.

Overall, these countries are at varying stages of embracing energy communities. While progress has been made in awareness and initial registration, barriers such as administrative restrictions, lack of detailed information, and limited operational capacity need to be addressed. Strategic education, better regulatory clarity, supportive policies, and robust information dissemination are essential to unlock the full potential of energy communities and facilitate their growth across the region.

Countries that have a tradition of energy communities:

HUNGARY

1. Knowledge and Understanding

The awareness-raising events significantly improved participants' understanding of energy efficiency and energy communities.

Before the events, 74% of participants rated their familiarity with energy efficiency at level 4 or 5. After the events, this increased to 97%, with the average score rising from 4.14 to 4.25. Similarly, self-assessed knowledge about energy communities improved sharply: those rating their knowledge as high or very high rose from 35% to 68%.

The technical and legal segments of the events were particularly effective.

For example, 63% rated the technical session as very useful, and 69% found the legal content very helpful. Nevertheless, challenges remained in the delivery of more complex or abstract topics: approximately one-third of participants were unable to recall or articulate specific new knowledge from the technical or legal sections, highlighting a need for more example-driven and accessible communication.

Conclusion: Events were most effective when focused on practical knowledge (e.g. solar panel use, legal registration forms) and real-world applicability. Providing more

information about regulation, technical system integration, and legal procedures— can be a significant impact ont he level of knowledge.

2. Status

Prior to the event, participants were already engaged in energy-saving behaviour. Around 75% reported tracking their household energy use monthly or more often. All respondents had implemented at least one energy efficiency measure, most commonly energy-efficient appliances (72%), insulation (70%), and LED lighting (67%). However, only 9% used renewable energy, suggesting that financial and infrastructural limitations hinder deeper transition.

Although satisfaction with existing energy services was high (63% at levels 4–5), the reliance on gas (53%) and low adoption of renewables signals that behavioural change is occurring within structural constraints.

Conclusion: While knowledge is relatively strong and basic energy-saving practices are widespread, structural support—especially in the form of financial incentives and accessible legal frameworks—is needed to enable broader uptake of renewable energy and decentralised systems.

3. Motivation and Expectations

Pre-event data already indicated moderate to high levels of motivation. Still, the events resulted in a tangible increase in intent to act.

The proportion of respondents who felt “very likely” to participate in the creation of an energy community rose from 15% to 24%, and those willing to join an existing initiative increased from 49% to 61%.

Post-event responses also showed that 43% were very likely and 31% likely to apply energy-saving practices they had learned—evidence that the events helped translate theoretical knowledge into planned action.

Key barriers identified include high initial investment costs (28 mentions), lack of legal clarity (8), and information gaps (10). Participants requested more guidance on funding schemes, legal conditions, and technical planning. Nearly 60% explicitly stated they planned to implement improvements, while another 34% remained undecided, indicating high potential for future engagement.

Conclusion: Motivation increased most when participants received clear, actionable information and saw the personal or community-level benefits of participation. Events that presented real examples, funding opportunities, and practical steps proved most influential.

The pilot actions significantly raised public understanding and interest in energy communities. They succeeded in strengthening both motivation and perceived capability to engage, though further efforts are needed to bridge the gap between awareness and action. By refining content delivery, improving clarity, and sustaining support beyond initial contact, future activities can effectively accelerate the development and participation in energy communities across the region.

ROMANIA

- ✓ The event had a strong positive impact on raising awareness about Energy Communities, renewable energy and active civic participation encouraging participants to take concrete actions. After the event, many participants felt more empowered to take concrete actions.
- ✓ The event raised awareness about Energy Communities, as seen by the participants' enhanced understanding of the benefits, challenges and practical steps involved in launching energy initiatives.
- ✓ The cooperation between the two Interreg "sister" projects – DECA and NRGCOM helped enhance the foundation of a community-driven movement by increasing engagement, collaboration and effectiveness. Grassroots networks rely on local participation and collective action to drive change in common causes. The back-to-back cooperation encouraged trust, shared values and a sense of community among members. The co-organization process demonstrated that partnering with like-minded groups is valuable in terms of sharing resources and achieving increased impact.

SLOVENIA

The event organized by PP6 – KSSENA contributed to the main objective of raising awareness and promoting energy communities among the general public. The responses gathered through questionnaires clearly show that participants gained knowledge and a better understanding of the benefits of renewable energy and shared energy systems. The event also encouraged interest in active participation. Although not all participants were ready to join or establish an energy community, the increase in scores and positive comments suggest that this kind of activity is effective in informing and motivating the public. The pilot action served as a strong starting point for further engagement and education efforts in the region.

BULGARIA

Unfortunately, the low share of participants in both events who provided filled-in questionnaires, especially "after" the events, makes it rather questionable if we could consider these as being representative to draw plausible conclusions based on information provided only in questionnaires received. However, from our discussions and questions and answers during the two events we can identify the following main findings as a result of our contacts with participants:

- Preliminary Technical and Economic Analyses carried out by reliable experts are key to setting up successful RECs.

- Enhanced legislation in RECs is required in order to ensure stable legal standing for RECs and eventually, envisage specific policy measures to foster their establishment.
- Grid operators should be involved in all awareness rising and training campaigns because their point of view is also very significant for the operation of REC especially considering current infrastructure and legal limitations for grid connection and lacking virtual-net-metering.
- The current event on awareness of energy communities was rated highly impactful by the participants for improving their deeper knowledge on setting-up and operating a REC especially in the national context but also drawing on the examples presented from other Danube region countries.
- Social media and Internet were considered as the main and most accessible source of information on all aspects of RECs

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Based on the provided summaries from **Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, and Bulgaria**, here are **the key conclusions** regarding the development and awareness of energy communities in these countries:

Awareness and Knowledge Growth:
Events across all countries have successfully increased participants' understanding of energy communities, renewable energy, and related benefits. In Hungary, awareness of energy efficiency improved markedly, with a significant rise in self-rated knowledge and practical understanding. Similarly, Romania, Slovenia, and Bulgaria reported heightened awareness, understanding of benefits, and motivation to participate in energy communities, though Bulgaria noted limitations due to lower questionnaire response rates.

Effectiveness of Engagement Activities:
Most countries utilized targeted events and pilot actions that effectively informed the public, encouraged active participation, and fostered a sense of community. Hungary's focus on practical, example-driven content proved particularly effective, while Romania's collaboration between projects enhanced community building. Slovenia's events increased interest and understanding, serving as a foundation for further engagement. Bulgaria's discussions emphasized the importance of expert analyses, legislation, and the involvement of grid operators, although their outreach faced challenges due to limited participation data.

Motivation and Behavioral Intentions:
Across the board, events increased participants' motivation toward action, especially when clear, practical guidance was provided. Hungary and Romania demonstrated a

rising willingness to establish or join energy communities and implement energy-saving measures. In Hungary, there was a notable increase in the likelihood of participation, highlighting the impact of real examples, funding info, and associated benefits. Slovenia also saw increased interest, though not all were ready to join immediately.

Structural Barriers and Needs:
A common theme is the recognition of structural obstacles—such as financial constraints, legal clarity, technical complexity, and infrastructural limitations—that hinder broader adoption of renewable energy and energy communities. Hungary highlighted the need for more accessible legal frameworks and financial incentives, while Bulgaria emphasized the importance of supportive legislation and infrastructure readiness. Participants frequently expressed a demand for clearer information on funding, legal procedures, and technical planning.

Role of Policy, Legislation, and Infrastructure:
Legislative and infrastructural support is critical for sustainable growth of energy communities. Hungary's findings reveal a necessity for clearer regulations and legal procedures. Bulgaria underscores the importance of involving grid operators and improving legislative stability to facilitate energy community development. The shared recognition across countries suggests that policy and infrastructure improvements are essential to advance the sector.

Future Directions:
Refined communication strategies, ongoing support mechanisms, and enhanced collaboration among stakeholders are crucial for moving from awareness to action. The countries recognize the need to sustain engagement, provide practical and accessible information, and address financial and legal barriers to accelerate the development of energy communities.

Final Note:
While the overall impact of awareness activities is positive—shaping knowledge, motivation, and interest—significant challenges remain. Addressing structural issues, increasing practical support, and fostering cross-sector collaboration will be key to transforming increased awareness into tangible, widespread deployment of energy communities across the region.

Countries that have significant experience to share:

AUSTRIA

Despite growing interest in energy communities, challenges remain in Austria, including limited knowledge among rural populations and bureaucratic barriers. This highlights the

importance of coordinated awareness strategies to ensure inclusive and widespread adoption of energy communities, contributing to Austria's renewable energy and climate neutrality targets.

CZECK REPUBLIC

The Borovany workshop succeeded in raising awareness and shifting perceptions. Participants gained foundational knowledge and expressed high levels of interest in future engagement. The collaboration with legal experts and the concrete examples shared were critical to the success of the session.

SLOVAKIA

Overall comparison - result table - status before and after the survey and training:

Given that the questions set in the questionnaire filled out at the beginning and at the end of the training and the related results are of different scope and significance, the agenda related to the comparison and evaluation of compliance or gaps and subsequent proposed measures will be carried out by PP12 - NEK only at the beginning of the 3rd period of implementation of this activity A.T.2.3 of the project.

GERMANY

Conclusion from the Event 1: 2. Fastenwoche: "Geld macht Macht"

Key Findings:

- Participants are already aware of the concept of RECs and energy efficiency and most are actively engaged or open to further participation.
- The event had a positive effect in reinforcing awareness, clarifying misconceptions and enhancing participant motivation to engage in REC activities.
- A significant barrier still exists around the perceived difficulty of founding a REC, even among well-informed individuals.

Impact of the Event:

- Strengthened the link between personal financial and energy decisions and broader sustainability goals.
- Raised awareness of tools, organizations, and community pathways that support REC involvement.
- Helped participants reflect critically on their own consumption and investment behaviors through targeted discussions and quizzes.

Conclusion from the Event 2: NRGCOM Stand at Ruhstorfer Frühjahrsausstellung 2025

Participation in the Ruhstorfer Frühjahrsausstellung provided NRGCOM with an excellent platform to connect with diverse community members and stakeholders. The personal

interactions, simple messaging, and visible project materials helped translate the project's goals into everyday relevance for citizens. Mohamed Elshikh's contributions in public-facing communication advanced the visibility and acceptance of RECs in the region.

CONCLUSIONS from the Event 3: "Energie aus der Region – für die Region"

Key Findings

- Participants exhibited high pre-existing awareness of energy efficiency and renewable energy communities, which was further strengthened by the event.
- The interactive and informative sessions significantly boosted participants' knowledge about the structure, benefits, and technical aspects of RECs.
- There was a measurable improvement in participants' motivation and confidence to apply energy-saving practices and engage in RECs—either by joining or potentially founding one.
- The shift in interest and understanding, as demonstrated in the pre- and post-event comparisons, indicates the event was successful in delivering both educational and motivational outcomes.

Impact on Awareness of Energy Communities

The event had a notable impact on participants' understanding of energy communities:

- Post-event responses reflect a deeper and more structured understanding of how RECs operate and how individuals can engage.
- Confidence levels to establish or join an REC significantly increased, showing that the format and content delivery successfully demystified complex topics.
- The event format—blending technical detail with accessible presentations and panel discussions—proved effective in making energy communities relatable and actionable.

Conclusions regarding Newsletter ZAF Promotion

Handbook 1: The *Regionalwerke Passauer Land* handbook is a strategic awareness and engagement tool that exemplifies how local communities can lead the energy transition. It demonstrates how structured citizen participation and regional cooperation can create a fair, resilient and sustainable energy future. The handbook not only informs but also mobilizes local action, fitting seamlessly into the NRGCOM project's overarching mission.

Handbook 2: The upcoming handbook will be a key resource to ensure that farmers and landowners are not only aware of but actively benefit from the regional energy transformation. It will demonstrate how the *Regionalwerke Passauer Land* create a bridge between agricultural practice and renewable energy development — ensuring that rural stakeholders are recognized as central partners in building a sustainable, resilient energy future.

Handbook 3: The handbook will position *Regionalwerke Passauer Land* as a reliable investment ecosystem for sustainable finance. It bridges the gap between public benefit and private capital by offering bankable projects with measurable impact. Investors and

financial institutions are invited to become active contributors to the regional green transition, benefiting from both stable returns and enhanced ESG performance.
Handbook 4: This handbook positions *Regionalwerke Passauer Land* as a living laboratory and innovation platform for technical professionals committed to renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure. By involving engineers and planners early and continuously, Regionalwerke ensure that the energy transition is not only ecologically and economically sound, but also technically robust, efficient and future-ready.
Handbook 5: This handbook positions *Regionalwerke Passauer Land* as a reliable and democratic governance model for municipalities seeking to decarbonize, localize and stabilize their energy systems. It supports local authorities in fulfilling climate obligations, improving service delivery, and exercising leadership in the energy transition — with the community and for the community.

* * *

Based on the provided summaries from **Austria, Czeck Republic, Slovakia, and Germany**, here are **the key conclusions** regarding the development and awareness of energy communities in these countries:

- Across these countries, there is a shared recognition of the importance of energy communities and renewable energy initiatives in advancing sustainable development and climate goals. While progress has been made in raising awareness, increasing technical understanding, and motivating active participation, common challenges remain, including legal and bureaucratic barriers, knowledge gaps—especially among rural populations—and the need for targeted awareness campaigns and tailored strategies.
- Successful events and engagement activities consistently demonstrate that combining technical education with accessible communication, practical examples, and local outreach significantly enhances participants' confidence and willingness to take action. Moreover, strategic tools like informational handbooks and community-based approaches are vital for mobilizing local stakeholders, fostering regional cooperation, and translating awareness into concrete projects.
- Ultimately, a collaborative, inclusive, and well-coordinated approach—integrating education, public participation, policy support, and financial mechanisms—is essential for accelerating the adoption of energy communities and achieving broader energy transition and climate neutrality objectives at regional and national levels.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the specificity of each of the countries in the consortium and the recommendations concluded after a campaign was held to raise awareness among the general population about the importance of renewable energy communities, they were also categorized based on the initial division of the countries in the consortium.
are very open to the concept of energy communities and have a need to expand their expertise in energy communities,

Countries that are very open to the concept of energy communities and have a need to expand their expertise in energy communities:

CROATIA

Considering the fact that around 15,000 such facilities are registered in the area of Istria County according to the cultural heritage registry, there is a necessity to detect potential solutions, one of which is the inclusion of such users in an energy community, within which they will not only ensure lower electricity bills but also have the opportunity to invest in a production facility that would equate their self-sufficiency with other users who are able to realize a photovoltaic power plant on their own roof.

Gathered citizens and entrepreneurs from the old town center showed exceptional interest in the establishment of this type of energy community. It has been demonstrated that an individual approach towards entrepreneurs, along with a unified approach through public presentation of the potential benefits of the energy community to citizens, is a good model for the further establishment and strengthening of energy communities.

MONTENEGRO

1. *Interactive Workshops & Hands-On Demonstrations*
    - Organize regular workshops that include practical demonstrations, e.g., how to install LED lighting, set up home insulation, or monitor energy consumption with smart meters.
    - Include DIY energy-saving projects that citizens can try at home.
2. *Continue with the Ambassador Programs*
    - Train more motivated individuals as “energy ambassadors” to promote awareness and best practices within their local communities.
    - Ambassadors can organize local events, provide peer support, and collect community feedback.
3. *Digital Platforms & Social Media Campaigns*
    - Create dedicated websites or apps where citizens can track energy

savings, share tips, and join forums about energy topics.

- Use social media to highlight success stories, announce events, and share educational content.

4. *Information Sessions on Energy Communities*
   - Host sessions explaining how energy communities work, their benefits, and how citizens can get involved or start their own.
   - Include case studies from successful energy communities from abroad.
5. *Continue with School & Youth Engagement Programs*
   - Develop educational programs for schools to teach energy concepts early, encouraging family-wide energy awareness.
   - Encourage youth-led projects or clubs focused on sustainability and energy efficiency.
6. *Collaborations with Local Authorities and NGOs*
   - Partner with local governments and NGOs to facilitate access to incentives, subsidies, or technical support.
   - Jointly organize events that combine community goals with official sustainability plans.
7. *Feedback and Idea Collection Platforms*
   - Regularly gather community input on barriers, needs, and ideas through surveys, town halls, or digital suggestion boxes.
   - Use feedback to tailor programs and build trust.

SERBIA

Based on the research insights and identified gaps, the following actions are suggested to improve understanding, participation, and implementation of energy communities and efficiency measures in Serbia and the region:

- To enhance Education and Awareness – to continue targeted campaigns using various channels like social media, workshops, and community events, especially for women, middle-aged, and urban households; to develop practical guides to help establish renewable energy communities (RECs).
- To promote Peer Learning – to create platforms for sharing success stories and best practices across the Danube Region; to support joint activities to demonstrate effective models and new technologies.
- To strengthen Support Systems – to boost cooperation among government, private sector, civil society, and financiers to foster energy projects; to improve access to clear, comprehensive information on programs, incentives, and legal requirements; to provide tailored training and expert support for costs, technology, and legal issues.

- To increase Financial and Legal Support – to raise awareness about grants, subsidies, and financing options; to advocate for clearer regulations to simplify setting up energy communities; to encourage local governments to include renewable energy and community projects in urban planning.
- To expand Pilot Projects – to implement real-world pilot projects in cities and suburbs to showcase success stories; to use these examples to educate, build trust, and highlight economic and environmental benefits.
- To monitoring and feedback – to establish ongoing evaluation of campaigns and projects; to incorporate community feedback to improve strategies and address challenges effectively.

MOLDOVA

Recommendations for future activities

- To develop accessible information materials, including guides, infographics, and explanatory videos in the national language.
- To create an online platform for information and dialogue among citizens, authorities, and renewable energy experts.

Suggestions for improving community awareness and engagement

- To collaborate with NGOs and media outlets to disseminate information in an engaging and audience-tailored manner.

* * *

Based on the insights from **Croatia, Serbia, Moldova, Montenegro** here are the **recommendations for these countries**, focusing on fostering energy communities and expanding expertise:

Croatia

Given the high number of registered facilities in Istria County, Croatia should identify potential solutions that facilitate community inclusion, enabling users to reduce electricity costs and invest in self-sufficient energy production, such as photovoltaic systems. Engaging citizens and entrepreneurs through personalized approaches and unified public presentations of the benefits will support the development and strengthening of energy communities.

Montenegro

Montenegro should implement a multifaceted strategy, including organizing interactive workshops, training energy ambassadors, leveraging digital platforms and social media for awareness, and hosting informational sessions on how energy communities operate. Education programs targeting schools and youth, alongside partnerships with authorities

and NGOs for incentives and technical support, are vital. Collecting community feedback regularly will ensure programs stay responsive to public needs.

Serbia
To improve understanding and participation, Serbia should continue targeted awareness campaigns using diverse channels, especially focusing on women, middle-aged, and urban households. Promoting peer learning through success stories and supporting pilot projects will demonstrate practical benefits. Strengthening support systems—legal, financial, and technical—through cooperation among government, private sector, and civil society is also crucial. Clear information on incentives and regulations, combined with ongoing monitoring and evaluation, will foster trust and wider adoption.

Moldova
Moldova is advised to develop easily accessible informational materials—guides, infographics, videos—and establish an online platform for dialogue among citizens, authorities, and experts. Collaborating with NGOs and media will enhance community awareness and engagement, making the information more engaging and tailored to target audiences.

Overall, these **Countries that are very open to the concept of energy communities and have a need to expand their expertise in energy communities,** should focus on community education, practical engagement activities, strong support networks, transparent information dissemination, and continuous feedback collection to expand and strengthen energy communities effectively.

Countries that have a tradition of energy communities:

HUNGARY

Strengthening Knowledge, Motivation and Engagement for Energy Communities through future activities
The awareness-raising pilot actions under the NRGCOM project demonstrated a clear and measurable impact on increasing knowledge, motivation, and behavioural readiness for participating in energy communities.
The technical, legal and community-focused segments of the programme were all rated positively. However, open-ended responses revealed that a significant proportion of participants struggled to recall concrete legal or technical details. This highlights the importance of **visual aids**, **simplified explanations**, and **follow-up materials** to reinforce learning. For example, governance models and legal frameworks—critical for implementation—were less often retained.

Recommendation 1: Future events should simplify complex information through visual storytelling, step-by-step guides, and tangible examples. Written summaries or take-home guides should be provided for retention and reference.

Respondents were already engaged in energy-conscious practices prior to the events. 75% monitored their energy usage monthly, and over 70% had implemented energy-efficient appliances, insulation, or LED lighting. However, only 9% used renewable energy at home, mostly due to financial and infrastructural constraints.

Recommendation 2: Awareness-raising should be paired with concrete information on subsidies, cooperative financing models, and technology-neutral solutions that match local capacities.

Motivation to act increased notably by the impact of the event. Despite strong motivational gains, the events revealed a gap between understanding the benefits of energy communities and the confidence to take first steps.

Recommendation 3: Events should include real case studies, involve current energy community members, and showcase pathways to gradual participation. Peer learning and mentoring schemes may support hesitant but interested citizens.

Suggestions to Improve Awareness and Engagement

- **Diversify communication tools**: Combine online platforms, short video explainers, and local information hubs.
- **Localise messaging**: Highlight place-based opportunities (e.g. roof types, public buildings) and community needs.
- **Establish follow-up opportunities**: Create contact networks and follow-up workshops to keep interest active and provide continuity.
- **Empower local actors**: Train condominium representatives, local NGOs or municipal officers as facilitators who can act as first contact points.

Recommendation 4: As a further methodological recommendation, it is essential to target outreach efforts more precisely during recruitment. Reaching potential individual stakeholders can be challenging; therefore, it may be effective to involve condominium managers, municipal representatives, or even influencers with wider access to residents. To draw lessons from the training, it is important that pre- and post-event questionnaires are completed consistently, ensuring that insights can inform future actions.

ROMANIA

- ✓ Ensure that participants have access to the legal, economic and technical support they need to successfully implement their ideas.
- ✓ Provide real-life case studies, especially from similar communities within the region, could help illustrate both the successes and challenges of Energy Communities.
- ✓ Organize networking sessions to connect participants with other Energy Community initiatives.
- ✓ Encourage partnerships between different stakeholders.

- ✓ Improve response rates and the quality of feedback. Streamline and shorten the questionnaire to reduce time commitment, focusing on essential feedback questions. While the questionnaire was likely comprehensive, it might have been too time-consuming for many participants, given the rate of response (14 out of 25).

SLOVENIA

- Continue organising awareness-raising events with local relevance.
- Ensure involvement of both technical experts and community-oriented speakers.
- Provide simplified, well-structured information on energy communities.
- Follow up with interested participants to offer support or next steps.
- Consider creating a local info point or contact person for further guidance.
- Translate key materials into the national language and make them publicly available.
- Strengthen collaboration with educational institutions to reach younger audiences.

BULGARIA

- Further training on improving engagement is considered very important to help building trust and collaboration in local communities
- Up-to-date awareness on currently available and offered funding opportunities and rules for application is also considered an advantage for future REC pilots
- Potentially effective training and/or other techniques considered were physical workshops with national-level speakers with expert experience on various aspects of REC establishments, technical and economic aspects, operational and managerial aspects and communication aspects.

* * *

Based on the insights from **Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, and Bulgaria**, here are **unified recommendations** to strengthen awareness, engagement, and development of energy communities across the region:

Unified Recommendations for Promoting Energy Communities:

1. To simplify and Visualize Information:

Use visual storytelling, infographics, step-by-step guides, and tangible examples to make complex legal, technical, and governance concepts more accessible and memorable.

Provide clear, concise written materials or take-home guides to reinforce learning and serve as reference points.

2. To enhance Practical Support and Resources:

Combine awareness campaigns with concrete information on available subsidies, financing models, and technical solutions tailored to local capacities and infrastructural realities.
Ensure participants have access to legal, economic, and technical support for successful project implementation.

3. To promote Peer Learning and Community Engagement:

Incorporate real-life case studies from similar communities to illustrate potential challenges and successes.
Facilitate networking opportunities, such as follow-up workshops and meetings, to foster connections among participants, existing energy communities, and stakeholders.
Encourage partnerships and collaborations between local actors, NGOs, municipal officials, and community members.

4. To increase Outreach Effectiveness:

Diversify communication channels by utilizing online platforms, local information hubs, social media, and short videos.
Localize messaging by emphasizing place-based opportunities and community priorities to increase relevance.
Target recruitment efforts more precisely by involving condominium managers, municipal representatives, influencers, and other trusted local figures to broaden reach.

5. To build capacity and trust through training and continued support:

Organize targeted training sessions—either physical or online—featuring experts in legal, technical, economic, and communication aspects to build capacity and foster trust.
Continue engagement with interested participants via follow-up support, mentoring, or creating local contact points and information centers, including translating materials into national languages.

6. To improve Feedback and Monitoring:

Streamline questionnaires and feedback tools to increase response rates and collect high-quality insights.
Use this feedback to continually adapt strategies and ensure that activities meet community needs effectively.

7. To foster Motivation and Confidence:

Share success stories and involve current energy community members to motivate hesitant citizens.
Showcase pathways to gradual participation, emphasizing peer support and mentorship schemes to build confidence.

Summary:

By simplifying complex information, providing practical and tailored resources, fostering peer learning and community connections, diversifying outreach strategies, and continuously supporting participants, these recommendations aim to accelerate the development and active participation in energy communities throughout the region. This integrated approach will help bridge the gap between awareness and implementation, fostering sustainable local energy initiatives.

Countries that have significant experience to share:

AUSTRIA

Given the advanced development of energy communities in Austria (6,500 existing ECs) there is still room for further improvement.

In order to further develop the energy community model away from a billing community towards a system-serving, grid-serving energy community that combats energy poverty and is ultimately also valuable for the energy transition, the challenges described above must be addressed systematically and with the help of research and innovation projects.

CZECK REPUBLIC

- Develop targeted support materials for small municipalities.
- Offer continued legal and technical advisory.
- Facilitate connections between citizens and local governments.
- Promote tools for economic modelling and grant navigation.

SLOVAKIA

• To develop targeted support materials for small municipalities and also for SMEs in a given region or location
• To offer continuous legal, organizational, personnel and technical advice.
• To facilitate connections between citizens, local businesses and local governments.
• To promote tools for financial and methodological modeling and search for support tools in the area of grants.

GERMANY

For Future Activities:

- Provide hands-on training or mentoring sessions on how to join or start a REC.
- Host local or regional workshops with actual REC founders and operators.
- Use role-playing or gamified tools to simulate REC planning and decision-making.
- Enhance Technical Sessions: Given that a majority of participants found the technical section moderately useful, future events could expand this portion with clearer visual aids, case studies, or interactive formats.
- Follow-Up Guidance: Participants expressed interest in joining or even establishing RECs. Creating a structured follow-up program with resources, expert mentoring, and access to administrative templates would greatly support their next steps.

- Expand Geographic and Gender Outreach: Future outreach strategies should focus on attracting more female participants and a broader geographical spread, especially in underrepresented areas and demographic groups.

Suggestions for Improving Awareness and Engagement:

- Develop and distribute a simplified REC toolkit for citizens, including financial and legal basics.
- Partner with municipalities to offer incentives for joining or creating energy communities.
- Use storytelling, videos, and real-world testimonials to demystify the REC process and highlight community benefits.
- Strengthen social media and digital education strategies to target different age and interest groups.
- Simplified Information Materials: Develop easy-to-digest brochures or digital toolkits explaining how RECs function and how to get involved.
- Community-Led Showcases: Highlight local REC success stories during events or on social media to provide relatable examples and inspiration.
- Online Engagement Channels: Launch or promote existing digital platforms (webinars, social media groups, forums) where interested citizens can ask questions and share their progress.
- Partnerships with Local Institutions: Engage with schools, municipalities, and local businesses to co-host REC information days or campaigns, further embedding awareness into the community fabric.

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The key recommendations across **Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Germany** emphasize the importance of targeted support, continuous education, and active community engagement to promote the development of energy communities. To foster wider adoption and more effective integration of energy communities into the energy transition, countries should focus on developing tailored informational materials, providing ongoing legal and technical guidance, and facilitating stronger connections between citizens, local governments, and businesses.

Additionally, innovative training methods, such as practical workshops, storytelling, digital outreach, and partnership with local institutions, are essential to demystify energy communities, increase participation, and ensure equitable access—especially for underrepresented groups and rural areas. Strengthening these elements will build more resilient, inclusive, and system-serving energy communities that can effectively contribute to regional and national climate and energy goals.

7. APPENDICES

Assessment of the General public knowledge – A2.3 REPORT for Austria

Assessment of the General public knowledge – A2.3 REPORT for Hungary

Assessment of the General public knowledge – A2.3 REPORT for Slovakia

Assessment of the General public knowledge – A2.3 REPORT for Czech Republic

Assessment of the General public knowledge – A2.3 REPORT for Romania

Assessment of the General public knowledge – A2.3 REPORT for Germany

Assessment of the General public knowledge – A2.3 REPORT for Montenegro

Assessment of the General public knowledge – A2.3 REPORT for Slovenia

Assessment of the General public knowledge – A2.3 REPORT for Croatia

Assessment of the General public knowledge – A2.3 REPORT for Serbia

Assessment of the General public knowledge – A2.3 REPORT for Moldova

Assessment of the General public knowledge – A2.3 REPORT for Bulgaria