

Clean energy together

Policy recommendations for the Baltic Sea region

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What policy paper?

Clean energy together – Policy recommendations to seize the potential of community energy in the Baltic Sea region

Community energy – people coming together to build clean energy projects – can energise communities and enable the energy transition. However, many barriers keep holding the development back. A set of policy recommendations at different levels can accelerate progress – and unleash the potential of community energy.

What is community energy?

Community energy (CE) refers to energy projects in which local people play an active role together. CE covers the production, distribution and storage of electricity, heat and fuels from renewable sources. The role of local citizens can include initiating, owning, running and controlling the projects through various models, including cooperatives and SMEs.¹

Benefits of community energy

Community energy has three primary advantages. First, CE provides economic opportunities to the local community, including investment, jobs and tax revenue. Second, projects strongly rooted in the local community are more likely to gain acceptance, reducing resistance holding back energy projects. Third, CE can strengthen social ties, local identities and autonomy – especially important in communities that may feel marginalised and left behind. The transition to a climate-neutral energy system requires significant investments in renewable energy. CE can enable the transition by ensuring the support of local people.²

Community energy in the Baltic Sea region

The status of community energy varies widely within the Baltic Sea region (BSR). Traditionally Germany and Denmark have been considered to lead, with Sweden and Finland coming behind. In Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland the situation has been more challenging.³ Every second household in the EU – around 113 million – may have the potential to produce energy. The numbers are even bigger if they include demand flexibility with electric vehicles, smart boilers or stationary batteries.⁴ The untapped potential is likely to be very large also in BSR countries.

Barriers to community energy

Community energy is held back by various barriers. These include policy, regulatory, financial and even cultural barriers. Despite the strong role of CE in the EU Renewable Energy Directive, many countries and regions lack a CE vision or targets. The potential of CE is not reflected in energy strategies and programmes, often designed more with large incumbents in mind.

¹ Co2mmunity working paper 2.3
² Co2mmunity working paper 2.3
³ Co2mmunity working paper 2.3
⁴ CE Delft 2016

- a summary of the most relevant findings and recommendations of the Co2mmunity project
- how to facilitate community energy at different levels of policy-making in the Baltic Sea region
- length: 3 pages

Why policy paper?

- Community energy has a large potential in the Baltic Sea region
- Development is held back by policy, regulatory, financial and cultural barriers
- Barriers can be removed with determined action at all political levels
- Many policy recommendations already available, but not necessarily specifically
 - on community energy
 - in the Baltic Sea region
 - in a concise and accessible form

Draft policy proposals

1. Set targets and plans
2. Create a stable policy framework
3. Eliminate regulatory barriers
4. Involve local people
5. Provide early-stage funding
6. Ensure access to affordable financing
7. Provide targeted support
8. Ensure access to information and training
9. Track progress
10. Establish favourable conditions for support organisations

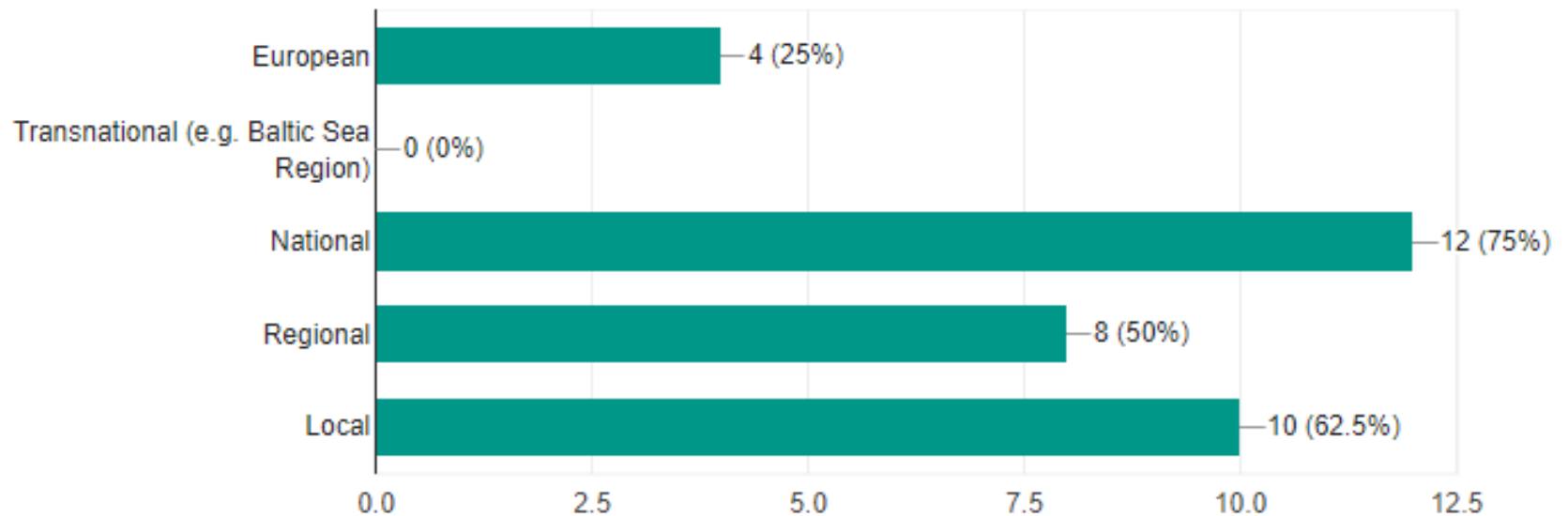
Online survey

- An online survey was shared with experts, policy makers and stakeholders in the Baltic Sea region
- We received a total of 18 responses
- Countries: Finland 7, Poland 6, Estonia 2, Sweden 1
- Organisation: NGO 6, local authority 3, research 2, company 2, regional authority 1, housing company 1, other 1

Most relevant policy levels

What are the two most relevant levels of policy-making for promoting community energy in your context?

16 responses



Mix of 3 best policies

- Set targets and plans (8)
- Create a stable policy framework (8)
- Eliminate regulatory barriers (8)
- Ensure access to affordable funding (8)

Draft policy proposals

1. Set targets and plans 4.1
2. Create a stable policy framework 4.3
3. Eliminate regulatory barriers 4.6
4. Involve local people 4.2
5. Provide early-stage funding 4.5
6. Ensure access to affordable financing 4.4
7. Provide targeted support 4.2
8. Ensure access to information and training 4.4
9. Track progress 4.0
10. Establish favourable conditions for support organisations 4.1

Open comments

- Concreteness missing
- I would like to add to the proposals developing supporting/creating models for CE cooperatives
- The Nordic countries should cooperate regarding community power
- If this succeeds in a larger scale, some opposition will be faced from the energy sector. Grid fees may be increased for the remaining consumers because there will be less consumers to bear them.

Next steps

- Incorporating
 - feedback from today's discussion
 - input from the survey
 - additional material produced in the project
- Based on this a new draft will be produced
- Project partners will get again a chance to review the improved draft and propose edits

Groups

1. Estonia
2. Latvia + Lithuania
3. Poland + Germany
4. Nordic countries
5. Others? You are free to choose!

Practical instructions

- We have about 40 minutes in total
- Write down your comments and ideas on the papers provided
- Prepare to present your outcomes briefly for the whole group
- Ask if you need help!

Questions

1. Discuss what you think of the policy proposals in general from the point of view of your country specifically.
 2. Share your thoughts on each of the 10 policy proposals. Would the policy be relevant in your country? Why – or why not?
 3. Which set of three policies would make the most powerful policy mix in your country?
- + The mutiny option: something completely different!

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