

SHAREs
empowering communities



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In a two-speed world, with early adopters who have the knowledge, access and opportunity to become prosumers on the one hand, and citizens who may not yet do so on the other, **SHAREs acted to bridge the gap**. The project enabled the concept of energy communities to grow from a niche product to a mainstream application.

The SHAREs project

The SHAREs project aimed to make energy communities fly in six partner countries by supporting so-called local heroes set up or expand their energy community. Supporting local heroes is particularly important for countries where energy communities are yet to be established. However, even in countries where energy communities already exist, there was still great potential to expand and develop their framework conditions.

SHAREs supported local heroes by creating six national gateways that:

- **Inspire** by presenting best practice examples, webinars, videos and news.
- **Inform** on legal, financial and technical matters and provide a glossary and FAQ catalogue.
- **Equip** visitors with a collection of tools, guidelines and a picture database.
- **Enable** local heroes to get members through a communication package including white-label communication materials (e.g. flyers or fact sheets), target profile descriptions and respectfully assigned key messages, guidelines for communication activities etc.
- **Activate** through step-by-step guides on how to get started, define a project, get support and connect with others.



Knowledge transfer and capacity building are central elements of SHAREs:

Austrian stakeholders shared their experiences on an international level, as energy communities are quite advanced in their country compared to others. Capacity building and knowledge transfer were organised at various levels, from exchanges between high-level policy makers to interaction between local heroes on the ground. Additionally, study tours enabled exchanges between pilots and pioneers at international level and in a larger group.

In a nutshell:

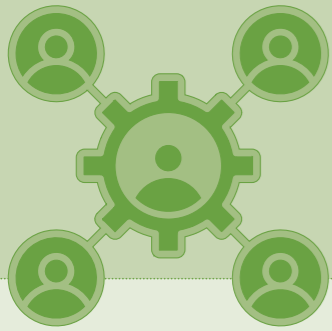
- **Why**
To engage all citizens in energy communities and collective actions, including those who lack the time, resources, information or digital skills to be early adopters.
- **Who**
Local heroes: citizens interested in setting-up or expanding an energy community
- **What**
6 national gateways (one-stop shops) in partner countries
1 WordPress blueprint (in English) for creating a gateway
- **How**
More than 20 pilots in 6 countries
In close cooperation with pioneers, national stakeholders and policy makers
- **Where**
Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Hungary
- **When**
September 2021 – August 2024

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SHAREs achievements

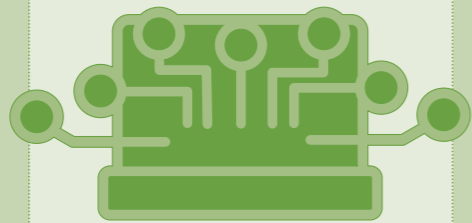


21,323,877

Consumers reached

175,173

People using the gateway



72,512

Stakeholders reached



190

Publications in media

180,212

Newsletter recipients

10,731

Podcast listeners

701

Social media posts

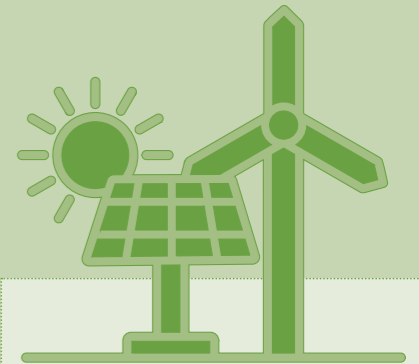
38

SHAREs Pilots



386

Energy communities founded and collective actions triggered



146,964

Primary energy savings triggered [GWh/year]

99,165,932

Investments in sustainable energy triggered [€]



51,666

Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions [tCO₂eq/year]





SHARes blueprint

sharernewables.eu

The blueprint for national information hubs (gateways) is a template created in WordPress that provides the structure and ideas on how to initiate and design national one-stop shops for energy communities. You can view it for free and without registration.



Get inspired

Learn about **best practice examples** from all over Europe and get the latest news.



Get informed

All you need to know to make your energy community a success: **basic concepts, financial and funding tips, legal aspects and FAQs.**



Get equipped

Find a collection of **calculation tools, images and guidelines** that support you in setting up your project.



Get members

Learn about **people who could join your energy project** and find out how to reach them. Use our **communication activity guides** and **white-label materials.**



Get active

We can help you **get started with your energy community, define your specific project** and get in touch with **other players** in the field.

The blueprint has already been used successfully to establish the following national gateways, which demonstrate how the structure can be changed and how different the variations can look like:

- Austria: energie-teilen.at
- Bulgaria: sharernewables.bg
- Croatia: energetske-zajednice.hr
- Georgia: energy4all.ge
- Germany: erneuerbare-energie-gemeinschaften.de
- Hungary: tudaster.kozenergia.hu

Stakeholders interested in setting up a national gateway in their country using our blueprint are welcome to contact the Austrian Energy Agency.

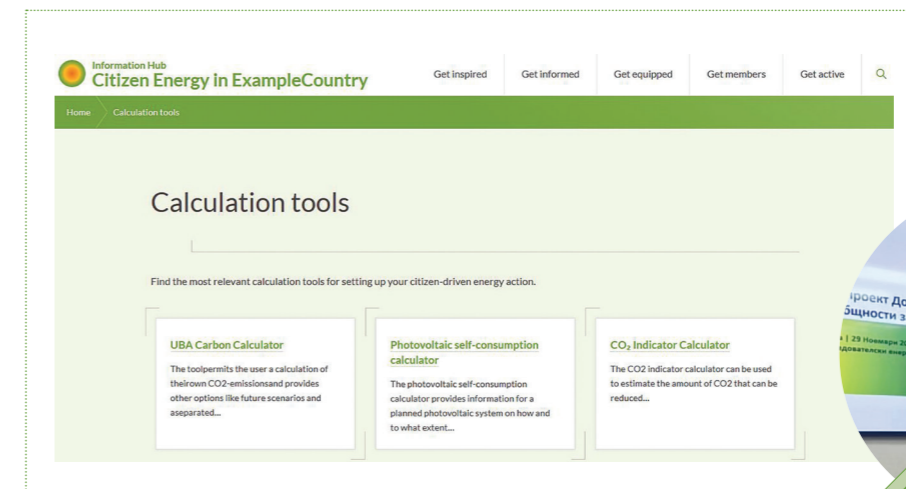
The website is fully transferrable to new stakeholders. You can choose your own URL and are in charge of maintaining and hosting the website.

SHARes tools

The blueprint provides an exemplary inventory of the most effective international and national tools, guides, platforms etc. available for supporting energy communities.¹ This collection serves as an inspiration for countries to set up their own national information platforms. The national gateways display tools relevant for the respective country. The Austrian and German versions also offer a filter function to help the user find the most appropriate tool more quickly.²

In order to create the inventory, a first version was created in 2022 in the framework of D4.1 “Overview of existing tools and platforms for supporting collective energy actions”. Upon finalising the inventory, missing tools and knowledge gaps were identified within the deliverable D4.2 “Report on defined gaps in the inventory on relevant tools and platforms”. Based on the gaps, new tools were sought and added. Some tools were even created within SHARes, such as the decision matrix.

Inspired by the REPLACE³ heating matrix, the Austrian partners created a **decision matrix**. Simple and clear, it provides an initial orientation as to which energy community model is suitable for which initial situation. Furthermore, it helps find out if a combination is legally viable or not, explains why and describes the specific technical prerequisites. The **decision matrix template is accessible to all national duplicates of the gateway**. The blueprint also highlights the function.⁴



The “get equipped” section of the SHARes blueprint provides an overview of calculation tools and guides.
© SHARes

¹ <https://sharernewables.eu/calculation-tool> and <https://sharernewables.eu/guidelines>
² <https://energie-teilen.at/tools> and <https://erneuerbare-energie-gemeinschaften.de/tools>
³ <https://replace-project.eu>
⁴ <https://sharernewables.eu/decision-matrix>



Using Energy Together – The Right Model for Your Project

- highly recommended
- recommended
- less recommended
- not possible

	GEA [Community generation plant]	EEG local [Local renewable energy community]	EEG regional [Regional renewable energy community]	BEG [Citizen energy community]
In my small town Households, municipality, associations, SMEs, small farmers, ...	–	●●●	●●	●
In my region Households, municipalities, associations, SMEs, small farmers, ...	–	–	●●●	●●
Across Austria Households, municipalities, associations, SMEs, small farmers, ...	–	–	–	●●●
In my multi-family house	●●●	●●	●	●
In my neighbourhood in my city	–	●●●	●●	●
In my large city	–	–	–	●●●
Single municipal building with tenants	●●●	●●	●	●
Several municipal buildings in my small town	–	●●●	●●	●
Association of neighbouring municipalities	–	–	●●●	●●
Business park SMEs	●●●	●●	●	●
Business park Large companies	●●●	–	–	●●
Economic region incl. large companies	–	–	–	●●●
Multi-family house with a commercial unit on the ground floor Large company	●●●	–	–	●●
Companies with main activity in the energy sector	●●●	–	–	●●
For a private or legal entity with multiple locations	–	–	–	–

The decision matrices as implemented in the blueprint and the Austrian gateway
<https://share Renewables.eu/decision-matrix>

Communication campaign

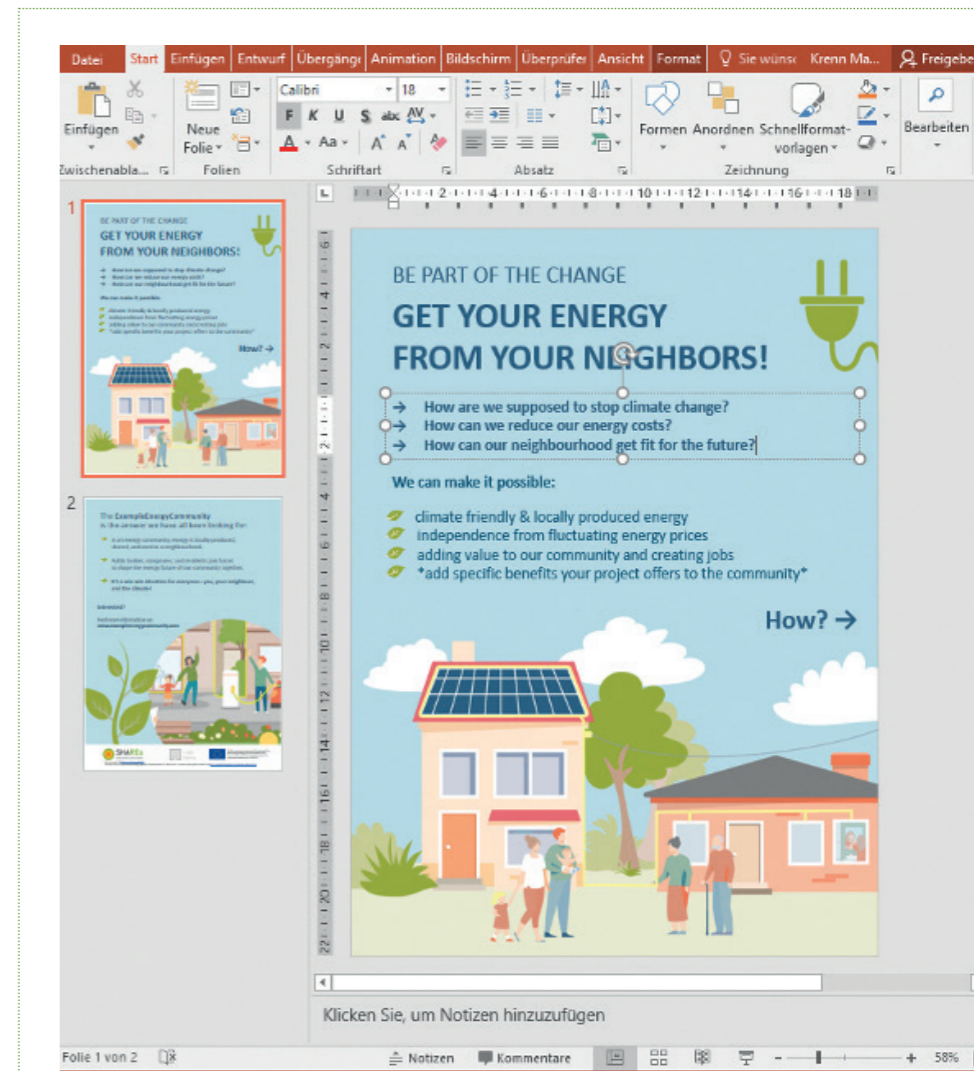
Not everyone is a communications expert or graphic designer. Thanks to the SHAREs communication campaign, they do not have to be. Founders of energy communities can quickly use many materials to reach potential members, such as white-label materials, key messages, a guide to communication activities, target group profiles and descriptions of member types.

White-label materials

The white-label materials are templates for flyers, fact sheets, slides and more, with structured exemplary information. This material is ready to use and editable in common programs such as PowerPoint and Word.



Free templates are available for those who want to reach out to potential members.
Flyer illustrations by © Klima- und Energiefonds



Target group profiles

The 14 elaborated target group profiles of potential members help founders take a deep dive into the mind-set and motives to join an energy community. They consist of profile-specific key messages, points of contact and motive descriptions.

- Prosumer
- Consumer
- Multiplier
- Investor

● ● **Silver investors**
have money left to invest in new projects



● **Working poor**
very little income and difficult working conditions; little time and money

● ● **SMEs**
are focused on economic aspects and in some cases on their "green" image



● **Grandparents**
concerned about their grandchildren's environmental and financial future

● **Households with spare time**
time available, community-spirited, no kids, limited budget

● ● **Farmers**
have a pro-green attitude & an appreciation for their local community to which they want to contribute; are aware of the consequences of climate change

● **Young families**
busy with everyday life, little time and money to invest in energy projects




● ● **Young generation – students**
environmental awareness is high; spare time, but very little budget available

● ● **Municipalities**
aim to run a good budget, strengthen the region and act as pioneers; can access funding and enable citizen participation

● ● **Established families**
are ready for new, exciting projects; have time resources and some extra budget available


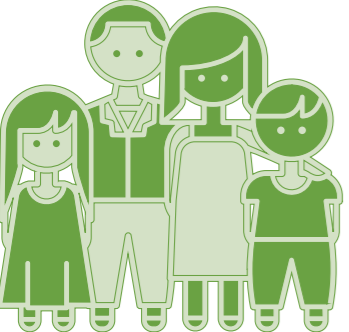
● **Young generation – pupils**
can approach their parents and convince them to take action; have spare time



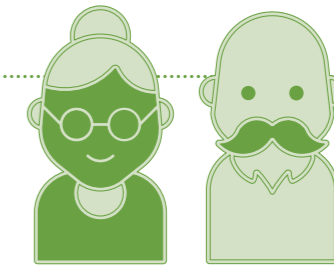
● **Politicians**
can ensure the participation of many people; powerful stakeholders in their community

● ● **DINKs**
(double income, no kids) have time and budget available for new projects

● ● **Associations and NGOs**
are trustworthy and well connected in the community; have very strong community spirit and unused resources (e.g. roof)

About Silver Investors



Financial payback versus environmental concerns

Silver investors want to make smart financial investments in order to secure a steady payback and participate in an attractive form of cost sharing. Their main motivation to invest are stable assets and preferably financial gain. Ecological issues on the other hand play a secondary role for them. Reliability and, in the best case, a good return should therefore be at the centre of communication measures on investments.

Attitude towards green energy

Silver investors' motivation to invest is not necessarily the funding of green energy or energy efficiency measures. These do not need to be explained in detail in information materials.

Open versus apprehensive towards new technology

The group is not homogeneous in terms of technical interest: some are afraid of new technologies and others want to know every detail about them. As a result, when participating in energy communities, it should be possible for them to deal with the technical aspect or not have to deal with it at all. In any case, it should be emphasised that the process to join is simple and does not require any expertise.

Community spirit

Silver investors' motivation to invest is not necessarily driven by their place in a particular community. However, pointing out the (financial) benefits for the region and the community at large could be a deciding factor for them to invest. Furthermore, the social recognition they would receive by investing in a green future project may be another important reward for this target group.

Key messages to reach silver investors

While many key messages apply to all target groups, there are also some special key messages that may help you get through to silver investors:

- Your investment pays off; you can expect a secure return on your investment.
- Place a safe and green investment.
- Increase the value of your own property by investing in green energy.

How do I reach silver investors?

To see how to engage your audience, view our **communication activities** and **white label materials**.

To inform silver investors specifically, these actions may help:

- Personal outreach
- Coverage in newspapers
- Flyers

Where do I reach silver investors?

- Local/regional events
- Organic and farmers' markets
- Sports activities for elderly participants
- Seniors' associations
- Seniors' clubs
- Active retirement groups
- Regulars' tables
- Coffee parties
- Cultural activities (theatre, opera, museums)

Key messages

SHAREs has developed to-the-point key messages and explanations behind them to help founders motivate people to join their energy community. This is an overview of the messages:

● Regional value creation

Commit to the future of your region by strengthening your local economy!

Having more renewables installed and/or energy efficiency measures implemented in your region, or taking part in an energy community/collective action means that ...

- ... you create jobs and help local businesses grow, leading to local value creation
- ... you let financial resources circulate in your home region instead of the money being used elsewhere, resulting in even greater local value creation
- ... you make your region more independent of fossil fuel imports
- ... you protect each other from price fluctuations
- ... you strengthen community spirit and regional cohesion

● Financial incentives

Make a smart and sustainable choice!

Investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency measures and taking part in an energy community/collective actions means that ...

- ... you become more independent of energy price fluctuations
- ... you reduce your energy costs – it pays off to join an energy community!
- ... you take advantage of the financial support now available – seize the moment!
- ... you increase the value of your own property by investing in green energy
- ... you can be sure of the value of your (sustainable) investment and expect a secure return

Participation:

It is not complicated and it costs little time to participate.

● Clear conscience

Take an active role in the green energy transition!

Investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency measures and participating in an energy community/collective actions means that ...

- ... you reduce your CO₂ emissions
- ... you are actively involved in driving the green energy transition
- ... you become independent of autocratic systems
- ... you shape the (energy) future of your children and grandchildren
- ... you protect our climate and quality of life
- ... you support the green transformation in Europe – the best time to act is now!

● Community spirit

Strengthen community spirit and regional cohesion!

Taking an active part in an energy community/collective action means that ...

- ... you get actively involved in your community
- ... you become an important part of the change
- ... you participate in an energy community without having to contribute financially
- ... you support your local community

Communication activities

SHAREs has developed detailed instructions on different ways energy community founders can find and reach out to new members or investors.



Personal outreach

Your personal outreach is useful for target groups that value getting to know the person behind the project.

<https://sharer Renewables.eu/communication-activities/personal-outreach>



Distribution of flyers

Create a flyer with all relevant information about your energy community.

<https://sharer Renewables.eu/communication-activities/distribution-of-flyers>



Presentations at local events

Prepare your project's presentation and choose the appropriate event.

<https://sharer Renewables.eu/communication-activities/presentations-at-local-events>



Organising your own event

Find out how you can plan your own event.

<https://sharer Renewables.eu/communication-activities/organising-your-own-event>



Social media

Set up your project's social media presence.

<https://sharer Renewables.eu/communication-activities/social-media>



Coverage in newspapers

Reach a wider audience by getting your project covered by newspapers.

<https://sharer Renewables.eu/communication-activities/coverage-in-newspapers>

Austria



In Austria, reality has moved faster than the SHAREs project. It was clear from the start that Austria, with its ambitious energy policy, would become a leading example for energy communities across Europe. This proved to be a major advantage for the project, as other countries were able to learn directly from Austria's experience in terms of cross-border knowledge transfer and capacity building. In addition, after a thorough analysis of existing barriers, several new services for local heroes were developed to complement the Austrian services.

Closing the gaps with a targeted and complementary approach

Austria already has a centralised resource hub for energy communities. As part of **SHAREs**, we have closed existing gaps in coordination with all relevant stakeholders. This included the development of a comprehensive communication campaign specifically designed for energy community founders to attract new members. We also developed a decision-making tool – a simple and clear matrix – to help founders choose the most suitable energy-sharing model based on their starting point. Furthermore, we provide them with a collection of free tools and planning resources.

Within the short time span of a year and a half, the Austrian gateway reached 150,000 views, which underlines the success and importance of energie-teilen.at.



Pilots become pioneers

Due to the rapid development of energy communities in Austria, several projects originally planned as pilots have evolved into pioneers.

This process has enhanced both national collaboration and international knowledge exchange (see mentoring scheme). In total, five pilot projects have been successfully supported in Austria, ranging from the most basic types of energy communities to more advanced and innovative models.

Future challenges

Austrian energy communities focus primarily on the electricity sector, as the model is currently less attractive for the inclusion of heating. To meet the challenges of a fully renewable energy system in the future, energy communities need to become more system friendly. This includes, for example, integrating storage facilities, supporting vulnerable groups, offering flexibility to the electricity market and using power-to-heat technologies.



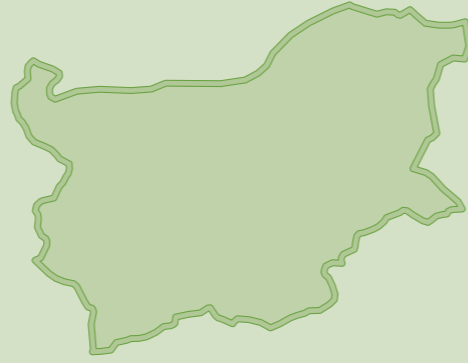
SHAREs teamed up with ENPOR for the national event in Austria to discuss how energy communities can support energy poor households. © SHAREs/AEA

Three important achievements that would not have been possible without **SHAREs**

- **Energie-teilen.at** provides services that address key barriers identified by **SHAREs** stakeholders.
- International capacity building and knowledge transfer took place at all possible levels and even went beyond the partner countries (see dissemination activities)
- **SHAREs** facilitated targeted knowledge building on a national level for different audiences, including a crash course designed for journalists, podcasts for both experts and the general public and an event on energy communities and energy poverty. These activities aimed to bring together relevant stakeholders and foster a comprehensive understanding of the topics.

energie-teilen.at

Austrian Gateway



Bulgaria

The **SHAREs** project has improved the situation of energy communities in Bulgaria and laid the groundwork for a broader movement towards a sustainable, community-driven energy transition for the country. By aligning its efforts with legislative changes and using the energy crisis as a catalyst, **SHAREs** successfully introduced the EC model into mainstream policy and public discourse and – for the first time in Bulgaria – provided a comprehensive information platform.

The results of the project not only describe the path the country has taken, but also shape it. This journey began with a few collective action initiatives in Varna. They were mainly implemented by enthusiastic property owners who used equity funds or grant schemes to realise solar heating and electricity-generating measures in private apartment buildings. It has since progressed to the establishment of the first energy community in Gabrovo and the formation of several new citizens' energy initiatives.

Legal framework in place, but no practice yet and regulatory bottlenecks persist

RECs and CECs gained regulatory recognition and legal status in Bulgaria through the transposition of the RED II directive into the Bulgarian Renewable Energy Source Act on October 13th, 2023. The project's legal advisors facilitated this process by highlighting good practices and experiences from the partner countries. Various stakeholders frequently participated in constructive discussions in the policy development working groups facilitated by the project.

However, both the legal and regulatory frameworks and the support schemes for collective action require further development to support the implementation of community energy on a large scale. This is particularly true for areas such as energy sharing, smart meter integration, creating the right incentives for participants and avoiding corporate capture of citizens' energy models.

Collective action booms when tailored and backed by major local players

The **SHAREs** project in Bulgaria spotted local heroes and facilitated the replication of successful models with detailed step-by-step guides and essential tools. It also supported the establishment of new energy communities through mentoring. Facing uncertainty and regulatory gaps, new initiatives often required support from larger players or local governance to grow and shine. The first pilot project identified by **SHAREs** focused on energy efficiency measures co-implemented and co-financed by the inhabitants of an apartment building. These projects were made possible with guidance and financial backing from the local utility.

The national gateway presents the process of model implementation and offers options for reducing uncertainty. Although **SHAREs** worked with several energy community initiatives, the one that advanced and ultimately became operational was run by the local municipality.

Future challenges and need for action

- **Normalising energy community models**
Energy communities are still considered exotic in Bulgarian society. Citizens are more willing to participate if a state actor or larger player guarantees a successful implementation and financial stability.
- **Introducing targeted support schemes**
There is a need for specific support schemes for energy communities, including technical assistance, simplified registration and administration processes, (virtual) net metering, and access to low or no-interest funding sources.
- **Enabling direct energy sharing**
It is essential to facilitate energy sharing without intermediaries and to provide opportunities to save on transmission, distribution and administration taxes.
- **Eliminating legal gaps**
Legal gaps that allow corporate capture of energy community models must be closed to ensure that these initiatives remain community-focused and citizen-driven.



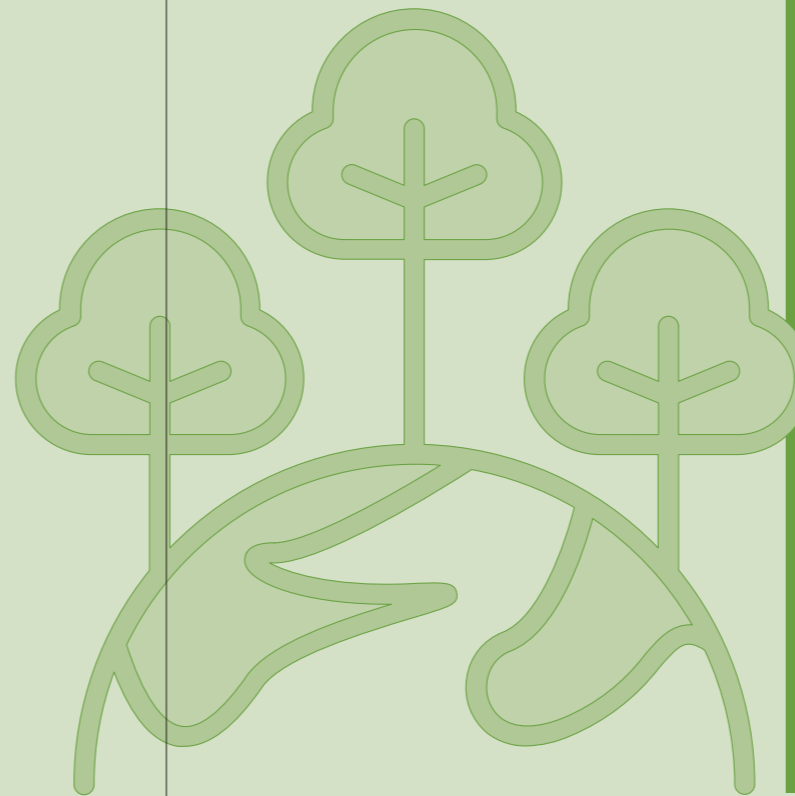
Podcast of the Solar Academy Bulgaria featuring Dr. Maria Trifonova on energy communities, success stories and the challenges of developing these initiatives both abroad and in Bulgaria.
© solaracademy.bg

share Renewables.bg

Bulgarian Gateway

Three important achievements that would not have been possible without **SHAREs**

- The creation of a centralised place for comprehensive information, the national portal share Renewables.bg, has significantly improved access to knowledge and tools regarding energy communities in Bulgaria.
- **SHAREs** has fostered a strong, unified position among the various stakeholders striving to make citizens' energy initiatives work in Bulgaria. Their collective voice has gained influence in policy development working groups and ensures that the interests of energy communities are heard.
- **SHAREs** has orchestrated a rich and diverse media and training campaign to educate the public and stakeholders about the benefits and possibilities of citizens' energy. This campaign was instrumental in raising awareness and fostering engagement in energy community initiatives across the country.





Croatia

The RED II and IEMD requirements for energy communities were formally transposed into Croatian law in 2021. However, there are still significant challenges. The procedure of establishing CEC is complex, costly and not fully clear in all segments (i.e. contractual relations are not fully defined and there are no templates). The legislation also allows for a joint active customers model, but it is still unclear how this will be put into practice. Additionally, the bylaw regulating some relevant segments is not yet fully aligned with the corresponding law.

First CEC/REC pilots in Croatia

Two pilot projects for energy communities in Karlovac and Zabok/VFD Špičkovina, led by REGEA as part of the **SHAREs** project, have prepared their energy sharing models, and another one is to be developed soon in Samobor.

In Karlovac, a pilot project is underway to install a solar power plant on a multi-apartment building, allowing the residents to share energy as joint active customers. This energy sharing model, the so-called community of consumers acting collectively (REC), was made possible by law amendments in July 2023 and there is no such example in Croatia yet. Therefore, this project will serve to test the existing legal framework. The finalisation depends on an agreement on contractual relations between all stakeholders, as no templates exist and these need to be developed jointly (as of May 2024).

The Špičkovina Volunteer Fire Department is paving the way to establish citizens' energy communities in Croatia, installing a solar power plant with a capacity of 64 kWp on the roof of their headquarters and allowing all interested citizens to become its co-owners. Formal registration is still subject to regulatory approval as required by law (May 2024).

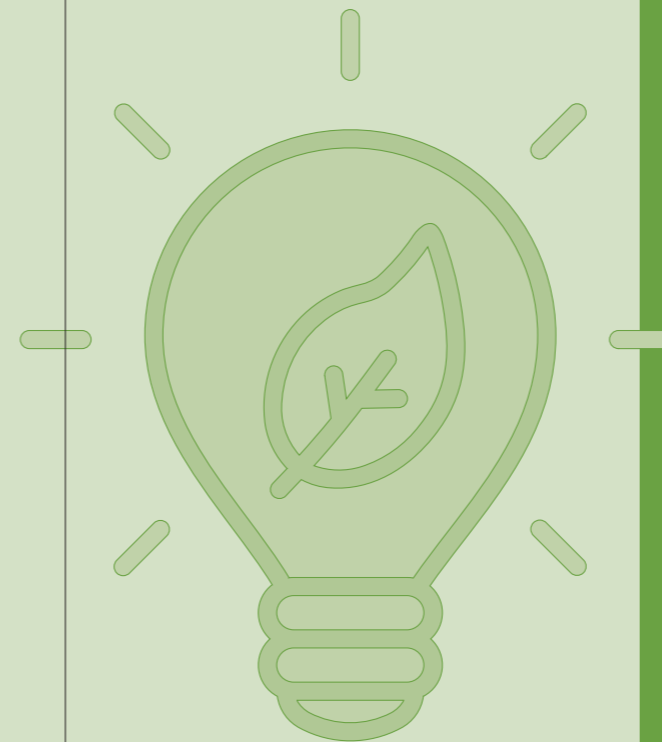
The two pilot energy communities in Croatia serve as models and an inspiration for other cities and communities to adopt a similar approach to sustainable energy development.

Future challenges and barriers

- The first and only citizens' energy community in Croatia, My Energy Community, was formally registered in April 2024, with a PV power of only 4 kWp and the primary aim of testing real time energy sharing software and hardware.
- Although a legal framework for energy communities has been formally established in Croatia, representatives of local initiatives still face significant obstacles when they want to establish their own energy community projects. The process is currently hindered by administrative and financial barriers. The necessary permits require proof of professional, technical and financial capacity, including the requirement that each community has a full-time staff member.
- Moreover, there are no standardised templates for contracts or guidelines for defining relationships within the community. This lack of clarity and accessibility limits the ability of local communities to launch small-scale projects, which are essential for the growth of the energy community sector.



Austrian delegation in Croatia – exchange of practical experience
© SHAREs



energetske-zajednice.hr

Croatian Gateway

Three important achievements that would not have been possible without **SHAREs**

- A **national gateway** has been implemented and already serves as the central hub providing all necessary information and tools to establish an energy community in Croatia.
- **Practical experience exchange** through the **SHAREs** mentoring scheme:
 - Study tour to Austrian and German energy communities, which empowered Croatian pilot community members to foster and establish their own energy communities, overcoming potential challenges and maximising the benefits for their local context;
 - Representatives of key institutions for energy communities from Austria, recognised as a forerunner in this field, visited the Croatian Energy Regulatory Agency (HERA). The study visit enabled an exchange of practical experiences from Austria and Croatia and a fruitful discussion on potential improvements to the Croatian legal and regulatory framework.
- **SHAREs** has ignited a spark in local governments and communities, inspiring them to start their own energy communities. By bringing together various stakeholders in meetings, workshops and events, but also through a large number of publications in the national media about the project's pilot CEC/REC, **SHAREs** has helped to **pave the way** for its pilot energy communities and all future **citizen-driven energy initiatives in Croatia**. Moreover, in order to accelerate the development of energy communities, a national **SHAREs** event was organised, with the participation of all key stakeholders, as well as the Austrian representatives who provided practical knowledge and experience.

Georgia



The EMD and RED II regulations have not yet been transposed in Georgia. At the same time, the existing legal and regulatory framework is not solid and still represents a significant barrier to the establishment of energy communities and collective actions in Georgia. There is still a lack of appropriate tools and information platforms to support local heroes, as well as financial and technical support schemes that can help energy communities and collective actions develop on a large scale. The SHAREs project has enabled Georgia to have its own centralised resource hub for energy communities. The Georgian gateway takes into account the national barriers identified within SHAREs and provides the necessary information, tools and materials for the establishment of collective actions that are ready to transform into energy communities once the legal foundation is laid.

Closing the gaps with a targeted and complementary approach

Regarding the barriers identified within the **SHAREs** project, it was decided to present tools, guidelines and necessary information in the Georgian gateway.

The gateway has great potential to serve as an important one-stop shop for either those wishing to gain information and develop energy communities and collective energy actions, or those who are already successfully running such actions and wish to expand them and keep up to date with the latest information available on them in Georgia.

energy4all.ge

Georgian Gateway

Pilots become pioneers

In Georgia, **SHAREs** has increased interest in transforming net metering projects into energy communities or collective actions. Even though there is no legal framework for energy communities in Georgia, **SHAREs** has established a solid basis for Georgian pilots to transform and move towards the energy community concept. In the future, these pilots will serve as a guide for local heroes who will use practical examples to establish energy communities in Georgia.

Future challenges

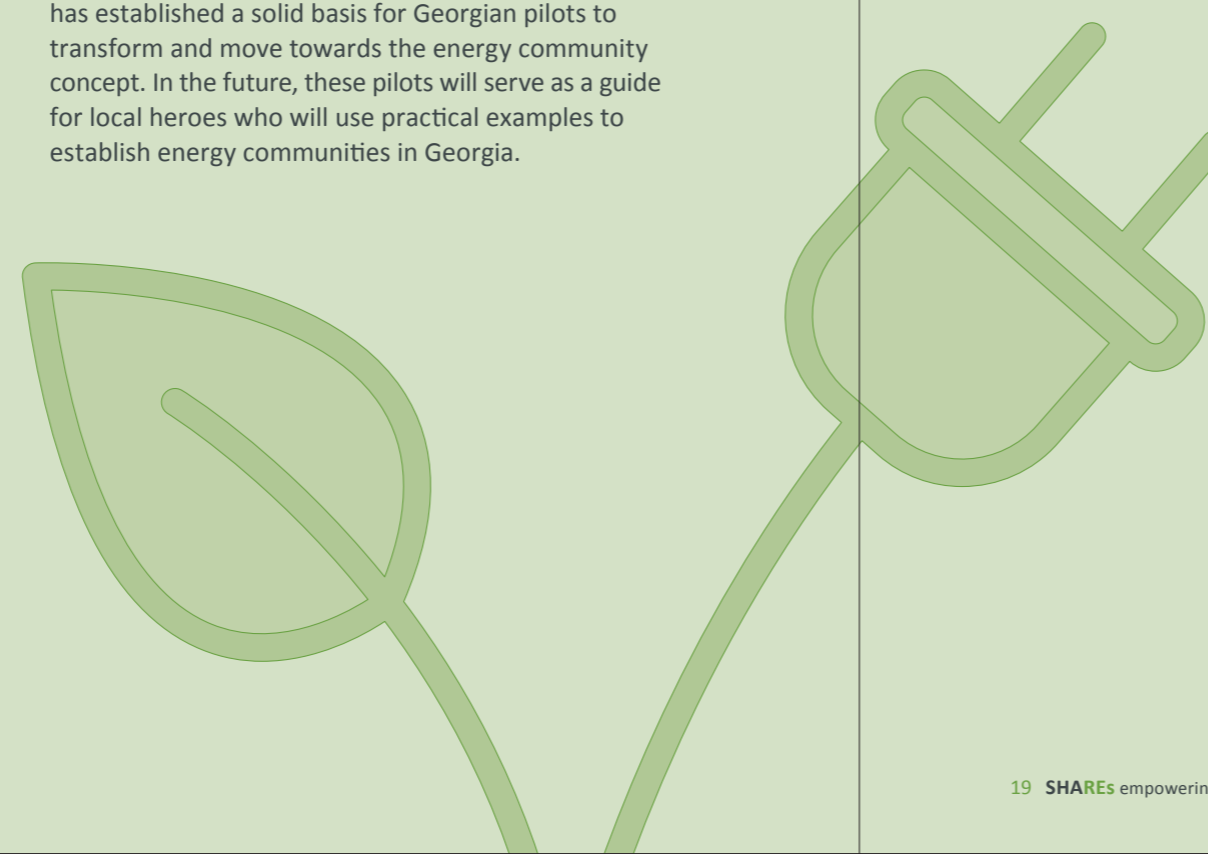
- **Legal barriers**
currently, the net metering regulation is the only scheme in Georgia and it is not possible to carry out collective actions in the energy sector. To overcome legal and regulatory barriers, Georgia has to transpose EU legislation related to energy communities.
- **Access to finance**
currently, there is a lack of finance because energy projects have long payback periods and financial institutions are not interested in them. At the same time, financial institutions require collateral that is significantly higher than the value of the asset to be created. As a result, most net metering projects are supported by the donor organisation. Hence, various measures need to be taken to reduce the barriers. Possible measures include raising awareness among financial institutions, government policies and promoting the financing of energy communities and the provision of collateral.
- **Economic challenges**
Georgia is on the way to market liberalisation. However, there is still a price regulation mechanism with preferential pricing for household customers. Low prices make renewable energy projects financially less attractive. There is still no legal and regulatory framework in Georgia and the country also lacks a support scheme to promote energy communities. There are no consulting services, financial benefits, pricing or other mechanisms to facilitate their establishment. Therefore, policy makers have to rethink the price regulation mechanism and define adequate support schemes to make renewable energy projects financially viable.



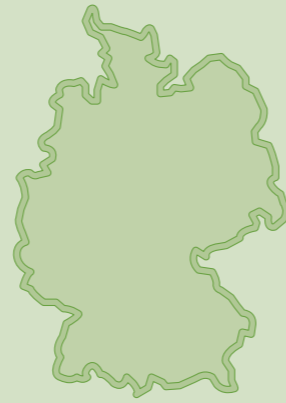
The third Georgian policy developers working group meeting took place in April 2024.
© SHAREs

Three important achievements that would not have been possible without **SHAREs**

- The implementation of the national gateway (www.energy4all.ge) is the first step to incentivise Georgian citizens to put energy community concepts into practice. As the only portal in Georgia, the national gateway serves as a central hub providing all necessary information and tools for the establishment of energy communities and collective actions.
- The study tour gave Georgian pilots the possibility to become acquainted with practical examples of energy communities from Austria and Germany, ask questions and find potential solutions to overcome practical barriers and challenges they face in Georgia.
- The mentoring scheme and policy developers working group allowed an easy way to communicate, exchange experiences with challenges pilot communities face in Georgia and try to find solutions for policy makers to overcome legal and regulatory barriers.



Germany



No energy sharing for German energy communities

The German government has only fulfilled a small part of the definitions for renewable energy communities and citizens' energy communities set out in RED II.

Since 2023, energy projects from local communities in Germany have been given a special role with special regulations under the term "Bürgerenergiegesellschaft" (citizens' energy community). However, it is still not possible for members to share self-generated electricity via the public grid.

The essence of the underlying idea is therefore missing. In addition, many of the long-established energy cooperatives often do not fall under this definition, although they represent the energy transition in the hands of citizens like no other player. The **SHAREs** partners have constantly pointed out these problems and advocated for an improvement in this area.

Pilot energy communities and municipalities

In the frame of the **SHAREs** project, two new energy communities were founded, while five were able to expand – in terms of both the number of members and the installed kWh capacity. Additionally, two more pilot municipalities joined the project at the end of 2023.

They have since been included in **SHAREs** mentoring events and provided with information and support to further assist and enable energy communities in their regions.

The **SHAREs** effect

Some of the pilot municipalities were able to use the momentum created by **SHAREs** and established ongoing support for renewable energy-related activities and civic participation – beyond the project duration. For example, Göttingen initiated a biannual roundtable for energy communities.

These cities and districts had already been interested in promoting and expanding renewable energies with civic participation. The **SHAREs** project gave them the final impulse to establish long-term structures that bring together energy communities and other stakeholders to collaborate and share their knowledge.

Special features of the gateways

The German gateway covers a wide range of topics that are important for the establishment and specialisation of energy communities.

Particular focus is placed on demonstrating business models that work, such as the tenant electricity model and photovoltaic systems on the roofs of public buildings.

Finally, there is a section specifically dedicated to attracting new members with various ready-made flyers and posters that are freely available for use to energy cooperatives.



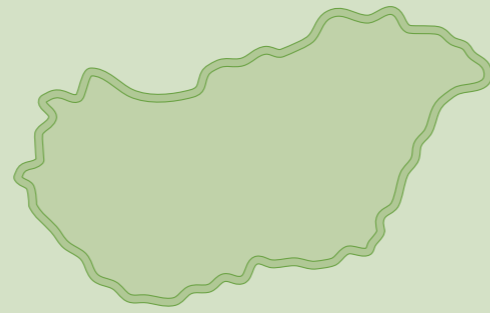
Participants of the study tour visited energy cooperatives in Germany and an energy community in Austria.
© SHAREs

erneuerbare-energie-gemeinschaften.de
German Gateway

Key takeaways

- Although the legal framework for renewable energy communities has now been transposed into German law, the local heroes are less interested in the special opportunities for action that arise from the definition than in the positive ideas of implementing projects together. The bureaucratic requirements and the highly regulated electricity market are often a deterrent.
- As a result, projects are mostly based on simple business models that already existed within the framework of the previous implementation options. For existing energy cooperatives, the framework set out in the definition for renewable energy communities is often too narrow, so they also rely on tried and tested models. Therefore, the European regulations have provided new impetus mainly through discussion, rather than through actual implementation.
- This could change if renewable energy communities also had the opportunity to economically realise projects for supplying members via the public electricity grid. Mandatory heat planning could also encourage new projects. The need for information on establishing and implementing community projects will therefore continue beyond the project's lifetime.





Hungary

Review

Hungary has long been one of the leading countries regarding the transposition of the EU's RED and Clean Energy Package. The Electricity Act enabled the establishment of energy communities in 2021, but in retrospect, the wording was too general work out taking into account the strict regulations of other market participants. In the wake of the pandemic and the global economic and political changes of the last three years, the country's leading position has slowly evaporated despite the findings and the ambitious goals of the **SHAREs** project.

In addition, many of our initiatives have failed or reached a dead end due to the lack of a more favourable environment. Our local partners and pioneers have applauded the results of the project – the white-label materials, the great messages and the useful tools for membership recruitment –, but we believe there is still a lot of work to be done. This includes community development, advocacy and capacity building in all participating sectors to help, support and facilitate the first, truly functioning energy communities in Hungary.



One-stop shop for local heroes

As the relevant Hungarian NGOs are very active in international projects funded by the EU, there are several useful studies, tools and recommendations for all levels of political decision-making in the country – unfortunately without any major effect or result. These findings are slowly being forgotten, although they would be of great use long after a project has ended.

In Hungary, people are sceptical about centralised resource hubs for a single topic because of the credibility of the organisations in charge. Based on the international consortium of the **SHAREs** project and the professional work of the leading partner AEA, we decided to build the Hungarian gateway as a one-stop shop website for local heroes who want to act within or through an energy community. We collected the findings of former international projects of relevant NGOs and linked their pages with our professional partners. We also translated and adapted the useful materials from the blueprint and presented them at public informational events and conferences. There is huge interest in the website, but the only four registered energy communities combined with the 10,261 views in February this year show us that long-term guidance and support of the **SHAREs** partner organisations are needed in Hungary.

tudaster.kozenergia.hu
Hungarian Gateway



Stakeholders from municipalities and civil society of six countries took part in the **SHAREs** study tour.
© SHAREs

Three important achievements that would not have been possible without **SHAREs**

- Thanks to the good examples provided by Austrian energy communities and the **SHAREs** study tours, several pilots and potential stakeholders are now deeply engaged in the idea of creating a local energy community. It was an important experience to see that the learning by doing approach in Austria is an effective way to create and run energy communities.
- An important insight is that each community is unique and needs a tailor-made energy community form and solution. The blueprint explicitly provides a lot of support material for this.
- The national and international professional contacts established through **SHAREs** – especially with the AEA and REGEA – have increased our knowledge of policy advocacy. It has also provided us with new recommendations and good practices to pass on to national policy makers.

Key takeaways

- Austria's learning by doing approach is much more future-oriented than Hungary's current approach.
- Bottom-up initiatives are also feasible in the current legal environment if the local heroes are motivated to find a model tailored to their issue and circumstances and if they have the capacity and the commitment to take the process all the way to the finish line.
- We developed strong professional bonding and partnerships with the consortium members for future collaborations in other projects.

Replicating the success within the SHAREs mentoring scheme

The aim of the mentoring scheme was for pioneers to pass on their first-hand experiences to aspiring energy communities. This exchange was established at national and international level. The scheme was highly successful because of its flexibility. Not only were pioneers and pilots matched, pilots could also network amongst each other and policy makers could share experiences and learn from each other. Communication tools were adapted to the needs and capacities of the pilots and pioneers, and meetings were held both online and offline. Online meetings provided an effortless way to communicate and share, while face-to-face meetings allowed people to open up more easily in a more confidential setting. In total, over 15 meetings took place in the framework of the mentoring scheme.

Pioneers met pilots

One-to-one meetings were organised with the support of SHAREs partners. In Austria, for example, very experienced pioneers were matched with pilots just starting out, and pilots from Hungary visited Austrian pioneers twice. These meetings provided an opportunity for confidential one-to-one exchanges, which were much appreciated by both pioneers and pilots.

Study tour

At the request of SHAREs pilots and pioneers, a study tour was organised for pilots from all partner countries (including political stakeholders such as mayors) to visit energy community projects in Austria and Germany. In October, the Austrian Energy Agency (AEA) and the German Cooperative and Raiffeisen Confederation (DGRV) invited 34 participants from municipalities and civil society from other SHAREs countries to Germany and Austria. The aim of the study tour was to provide the participants with practical knowledge about the financial, legal and technical background of an energy community and to give them suitable tools to implement their own renewable energy projects. During three exciting and content-packed project days, the participants visited three energy cooperatives in Freising, Altötting and Bruck an der Leitha.



The project team adapted their plans on how to shape the mentoring scheme to meet the pilots' needs.
© SHAREs

The effort paid off: the Georgian pilots will return to Germany for further exchange with the cooperatives, and the Hungarian pilots have already visited Austria for a second time to see Tulln Energie.



The pilot Energiepark Bruck was a popular destination of the SHAREs study tour.
© SHAREs



An Austrian delegation visited the Croatian Energy Regulatory Agency (HERA) to help improve the regulatory framework.
© SHAREs

Mentoring at political level

An Austrian delegation visited Zagreb (Croatia): Participants were representatives of key institutions in the field of energy communities in Austria, such as the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK), the regulatory authority E-Control, the Austrian Energy Agency and a pilot recognised as a forerunner in this area (Energiepark Bruck/Leitha). They visited the Croatian Energy Regulatory Agency (HERA), which enabled the exchange of practical experiences from Austria and Croatia and a fruitful discussion on exploring potential improvements to Croatia's legal and regulatory framework.

Creating an enabling framework within the SHAREs policy working groups

SHAREs established six national working groups for policy makers and one transnational pioneer circle to increase the information flow between theory, practice and legislation. These working groups gathered input and feedback for the project's activities and increased its outreach. In this way, the consortium could actively involve the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders in the development of energy communities.



Meeting of the Bulgarian policy working group in May 2022
© SHAREs

In particular, policy makers provided valuable input on the legal and regulatory framework, gave feedback on the available platforms or tools, and finally on the **SHAREs** gateway. In some countries, the meetings with policy makers sometimes proved more effective in smaller groups or bilaterally, especially with ministries on legal and regulatory frameworks.

The most appropriate meeting format – i.e. a working group versus bilateral meetings – was chosen depending on the partner country.

Success stories in times of energy crisis



SHAREs directly supported emerging pilot projects in the six partner countries in setting up their energy community or collective action. On one hand, we aimed to foster their development through the gateways, and on the other hand, we used their feedback to test and improve the national gateways developed in the project. The pilots covered various forms of energy communities in a broader sense.

In the course of the project, the initial set of pilot communities has changed due to evolving frame conditions. This adaptability led to the inclusion of new pilot communities, ultimately increasing the number of pilots to 38, almost doubling the original target of 20.

How it started – getting to know each other

The roll-out phase started with kick-off meetings in all six participating partner countries. At these meetings, the project partners presented the objectives and approach of the project and gathered feedback for further work. The meetings were an important step in arousing interest and motivation for the project among stakeholders in the municipalities and at the same time in gaining a more comprehensive insight into the needs and requirements of the municipalities.

Different countries, regulations and approaches

Due to the different conditions and experiences in the partner countries and the participating pilots, the implementation varied in terms of the chosen approach, content and scope of the measures.

While in Austria and Germany community-based approaches to renewable energy production (e.g. energy communities, energy cooperatives etc.) are quite common, in other countries the **SHAREs** pilots are pioneers and pave the way for a new development. Due to these different preconditions, the approaches of pilots also differ. The pilots addressed and supported range from larger municipalities and energy communities to smaller municipalities, initiatives at local level and cooperatives.

How it's going – staying in touch and growing

The success of the project depended to a large extent on continuous communication and cooperation between the project partners and the pilot municipalities. This ongoing dialogue was crucial in gathering valuable input and feedback from the ground, which was instrumental in shaping the project outcomes. The pilot communities benefited greatly from the materials developed during the project and from the exchange of knowledge and experience with other energy community projects.

picture:

SHAREs supported its pilots with a comprehensive communication campaign including white label materials.
© SHAREs

Pioneer exchange through thick and thin

The aim of the pioneer circle was to create an environment of continuous exchange with a group of experts in the field of citizens' energy, to gather feedback for the creation and improvement of the gateways and to spread the news on the gateways within their communities. Three main pioneer circle meetings, bilateral meetings took place to exchange knowledge with existing energy communities. Finally, the energy symposium "Energiebezirk Freistadt" with an audience of 140 people was organized.

The main pioneer meetings

1. March 2022:
Pioneers focused on enablers, barriers and solutions for the realisation of collective actions and energy communities.
2. May 2022:
Pioneers discussed tools, platforms and information needed to found energy communities.
3. November 2023:
OurPower presented the finalised gateway blueprint and gathered feedback from the pioneers.



The energy symposium in Freistadt was a great opportunity for the pioneer circle to gather in person.
© Jonas Schmidt

Facing challenges together

The start of the pioneer circle was challenging. The year 2022 was difficult for all actors in the energy sector across Europe. The pioneers had to deal with extremely high energy prices, new uncertainty regarding the future of the energy market and challenges they had never faced before. The first two pioneer circle meetings in particular were characterised by uncertainty, but also served as a valuable opportunity to share experiences in dealing with these challenges. Over the past three years, valuable relationships have been built that will last beyond the SHAREs project.

Highlights of dissemination activities

Dissemination activities amounted to ...

- 175,173 people using the gateways
- 701 social media posts
- 190 publications in media (press, radio, TV)
- 106 events
- 86 web-pages mentioning SHAREs
- 45 newsletters
- 8 podcast episodes

... and so, SHAREs reached **21.3 million** consumers.

The gateways and SHAREs activities were presented at national events

Austria: "Innovative Solutions to Alleviate Energy Poverty in Austria – The Potential Role of Energy Communities" in Vienna (27.09.2023, AEA)

Bulgaria: in Sofia (18.06.2024, BSERC)

Croatia: in Zagreb (08.05.2024, REGEA)

Georgia: national conference on energy communities in Georgia and presentation of Georgian gateway in Tbilisi (02.12.2023)

Germany: Energy Days conference, online (16.04.2024, DGRV/WIP/BSU)

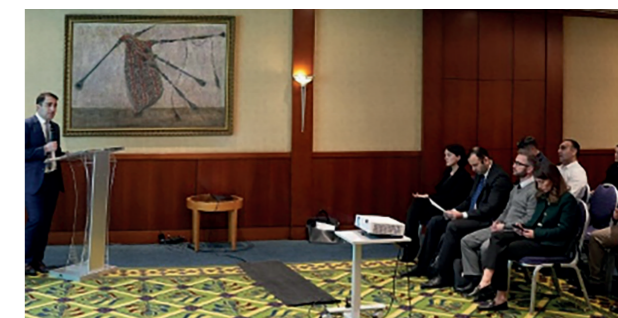
Hungary: national conference in Budapest (07.12.2023, MTSVZ)



The Austrian SHAREs event
© SHAREs



The Hungarian SHAREs conference
© SHAREs



The Georgian SHAREs conference
© SHAREs



SHAREs meets the European Parliament.
© European Union 2023 – Source EP

International conferences

SHAREs partners contributed to many international conferences, such as the 18th symposium for energy innovation 2024 (Austria), the BEHAVE conference (Maastricht 2023), the EU PVSEC 2023, the 7th Central European Biomass Conference CEBC in Graz 2023, the SAPI Energy Conference 2022 in Slovakia, the 13th International Energy Economic Conference at the Vienna University of Technology in 2022, the 8th World Conference on Photovoltaic Energy Conversion in 2022, the European Biomass Conference in 2022 and many more.

International dissemination at policy level

The outreach of SHAREs partners at the international policy level was quite impressive: The project was presented in the **European Energy Network's** event on energy communities (November 2022). SHAREs activities, including the blueprint, were presented at two events of the **Concerted Action for Renewables** (session 12 in May 2023, joint session in October 2023). Via the framework of the **Energy Partnerships**, the project results were brought to **Romania, Bulgaria and Czechia**. A delegation from **Bosnia-Herzegovina** visited Austria to learn from experiences from SHAREs partners. Finally, AEA experts visited **Cyprus** in the frame of the **Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform** to share their experience on energy communities and the project results.

The AEA presented the SHAREs project focusing on the blueprint at the regional workshop of **EU4Energy** on “Bringing self-consumption Regulation of EaP Countries in Line with European Union and Energy Community Requirements”. Representatives from **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine** were in Vienna to discuss the latest developments.

A highlight was an invitation to the **European parliament** in May 2023: hosted by MEP Romana Jerković and supported by REGEA and FEDARENE, AEA and REGEA experts talked about the challenges for energy communities and showed how SHAREs supports capacity building and knowledge transfer.



European Energy Network event on energy communities
© EnR



SHAREs presentation in an event of the Concerted Action for Renewables
© CA-RES



SHAREs presentation in a regional workshop on self-consumption regulation in EaP-Countries
© CEER

Knowledge transfer from Austria to partner countries

The SHAREs consortium met with the Austrian Coordination Office for Energy Communities to learn how they manage their information platform <http://energiegemeinschaften.gv.at>, just before they launched their national gateways in March 2023. EDA, the platform for energy data exchange in Austria, gave an insight into its role in the exchange of energy data between Austrian market participants (electricity, gas, distribution, transmission) at a meeting of the SHAREs consortium. SHAREs partners took the opportunity to learn how to set up data exchange for energy communities.



SHAREs at the klimaaktiv yearly conference (Austria)
© AEA

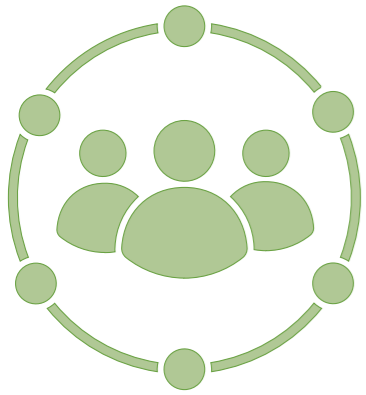


Presentation by the AEA on mitigating energy poverty at the Austrian SHAREs event
© SHAREs



Presentation of SHAREs target group profiles at the Austrian project conference
© SHAREs

SHAREs partners



AUSTRIAN ENERGY AGENCY

The **Austrian Energy Agency** (AEA), coordinator of **SHAREs**, is a non-profit scientific association based in Austria.
www.energyagency.at



The **Black Sea Energy Research Centre** (BSERC) is an association based in Bulgaria.



The **German Cooperative and Raiffeisen Confederation** (DGRV) is based in Germany.
www.dgrv.de



AYPEG is a non-governmental organisation based in Georgia.
<https://aypeg.ge>



The **National Society of Conservationists – Friends of the Earth Hungary** (MTVSZ) is an umbrella organisation based in Hungary.
<https://mtvsz.hu>



OurPower (OUR) is an energy cooperative based in Austria.
www.ourpower.coop



The **Beratungs- und Service-Gesellschaft Umwelt mbH** (B&SU) is a consulting company based in Germany.
www.bsu-berlin.de



WIP Renewable Energies is a private company based in Germany.
www.wip-munich.de



The **North-West Croatia Regional Energy Agency** (REGEA) is based in Croatia.
<https://regea.org>



The **Reflex Environmental Association** is based in Hungary.
www.reflexegyesulet.hu

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