

Som Energia Energy Cooperative, Spain

Som Energia is an energy cooperative, governed and financed by its members. Although it began in Catalonia, it has since expanded to almost all of Spain. The cooperative is involved in the marketing and consumption of sustainable energies and provides its members with energy from 100% renewable sources.



Motivation:

The primary goal of the cooperative is to both invest in and provide reliable and fairly priced sustainable energy. In doing so, Som Energia seeks to promote the social acceptance of consumption and production of wind energy in Spain.

Challenges:

Before the creation of the cooperative, there were very few methods to engage local citizens in the investment and the promotion of the energy transition in Spain, and consequently, a lack of participation. There was also no transparency or choice of energy sources.

Impacts and results:

Som Energia is a non-profit entity, whose key target group are consumers and producers of energy, rather than policy makers. Through its democratic processes, members are able to get involved in the decision making and strategies of the energy cooperative. It guarantees its paying members that the energy they purchase exclusively comes from renewable sources.

This participatory approach not only encourages people to use wind and other renewable energies, but also mobilizes people to actively participate in the planning and political processes for other wind energy installations.

By providing citizens with an opportunity to both consume and invest, it creates a connection between citizens and the means of energy production.

Lessons learned:

Social acceptance: Enabling citizens to financially participate and invest in wind energy has created a positive attitude towards it. The positive perception of this group has fueled many other groups to also contribute to the cause.

Transferability: The initiative has plenty of replicability potential. Next to the challenge of raising the funds to establish the cooperative, it is crucial that energy cooperatives share a similar set of values and priorities. In areas where social acceptance of sustainable energies is low, this can be much harder to achieve. However, a concise communication and local engagement strategy can still lead to substantial results.

