

Organization of stakeholder meetings to explore bioenergy potential

Time period: 2014- ongoing

Theme of collaboration: Modelling, planning and monitoring tools for decision makers

Application: Renewable Energy Sources, reduction of CO₂ emissions

Topic: Network of Local and Regional Authorities and involvement of citizens

Context /Background

The potential of bioenergy in the Rhine Neckar Metropolitan Region is not fully harnessed. A specific Local Working Group (LWG) has been established in order to exploit this potential and to promote the use of bioenergy. The LWG's main aim is to highlight different options and methods for using organic waste. Overcoming prejudices, by explaining energy production methods forms the foundation for future success. Therefore, the participation of citizens in energy projects plays a central role in this activity.

Description

The LWG consists of representatives of the regional district administrations, representatives of the Metropolitan Region Rhine-Neckar GmbH and voluntary Energy Ambassadors. The group meets half-yearly for joint strategic planning and in order to analyse need for support from our voluntary Energy Ambassadors. The Energy Ambassadors are mainly retired mayors and have longstanding, personal and trustworthy contacts to the local governments and their citizens. In the projects' promotion, they are a good interface between region, administrative districts, local governments and citizens.

Partners involved – Governance

District administrations of Rhein-Neckar-Kreis, Kreis Germersheim, Kreis Bergstraße, Rhein-Pfalz-Kreis and Neckar-Odenwald-Kreis, local administrations, technical experts from the Bioenergie-Hohenlohe-Odenwald-Tauber GmbH, voluntary Energy Ambassadors.



The District Administrators of MRN sign a cooperation contract to drive the use of bioenergy

Key results

- Creation of a network of local and regional authorities that will continue after the end of the project delivered
- Awareness for the potential of bioenergy could be raised, prejudices could be reduced
- At least four local heating projects based on bioenergy will be realized within the next two years



Results achieved

In order to promote bioenergy in the region the following activities have been organized:

- Study visits of the working group to a bioenergy village and to a biomass plant on a pig farm in order to school all group members for promoting bioenergy.
- A travelling exhibition on bioenergy took place in 3 communities, showing the clear advantages of bioenergy over fossil fuels and how a biogas plant works.
- An information day for teachers offered the support of the Energy Ambassadors in lessons on bioenergy (study trips, school visits). Further information days for teachers are planned for the beginning of each school year.
- The use of bioenergy and local heating go hand in hand. Therefore it has been planned to execute several congresses on local heating distributed over the entire Metropolitan Region Rhine-Neckar. 2 of them have already taken place.

In order to make citizens to participate in the energy turnaround the competition Citizens' EnergyIdeas has been organized and the requirements have been set up: the energy ideas had to be related to the public grid and had to be operated with renewable energies. The heat should come from cogeneration plants. As prices feasibility studies were awarded (10 prizes, value of each study 4000€) and could give a basic statement as to whether the project is economically and ecologically reasonable. Among 10 awarded ideas 4 will be realized within the next 2 years. 2 ideas have a good potential, need however some basic reworking to become economically reasonable.

Barriers and proposed solutions

- Bioenergy is frequently subject to prejudices and doubts among citizens.
- Citizens are open to overcome these reservations when they are participated in the planning process.

Lessons learned & Success factors

Participation of citizens in the energy turnaround helps to overcome prejudices.

Similar Initiatives- Transferability

We recommend to establish the honorary post of the "Energy Ambassador". Our Energy Ambassadors are mainly retired mayors and have longstanding, personal and trustworthy contacts. They serve as a connection link between region, administrative districts, local governments and citizens.

Financing & costs

Budget range

< € 100,000
€ 100,000 – € 1,000,000
€ 1,000,000 – € 10,000,000
€ 10,000,000 – € 100,000,000
> € 100,000,000
N/A

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