Benefits of Energy Communities and Collective Actions at a glance

A DECIDE factsheet on the values of collective renewable energy actions for individuals & communities

CONTEXT

Renewable Energy Communities and Collective Energy Actions have a great potential to trigger substantial positive impacts for individuals as well as their communities. This Factsheet aims to present the many possible benefits of these joint activities, organizing them in social, environmental, financial and political benefits.

Note that this clustering should not be considered neither a comprehensive list, nor a rigid division. The values that such community-driven initiatives can bring are in reality very much interlinked with each other, supporting a set of principles that relates with community empowerment and energy transition.

BENEFITS

Social

Energy Communities and Collective Actions have at its core the active participation and interaction between people that are part of the community. Therefore, they can strengthen local social cohesion and community spirit, in fact, collective actions help to create shared visions and values thus may lead to a shared common identity. This can also increase the availability of shared knowledge and information between community members. In this way, Energy Communities and Collective Actions will form a basis for raising awareness, interpersonal learning and establishing new social norms for environmentally friendly behavior. In addition, community members can feel strengthened in their self-efficacy through embracing the power of collective behavior beyond individual behavior.
Environmental

Energy communities can boost the widespread of renewable energy technologies with great benefit in terms of CO2 emission reduction which, at local level, translates in a significant improvement of the quality of the air and of the environment overall.

Participating in a Renewable Energy Community or a Collective Energy Action is an active step in becoming part of the renewable energy transition in Europe: the engagement in such local initiatives not only offers the possibility to reduce one's individual environmental impact, but also strengthens the widespread of more sustainable behaviors and actively contributing to the energy and ecological transition with cumulative power.

Economic

Renewable energy allows reducing variable costs of energy, leading to lower energy bills, which can support low-income households in fighting energy poverty. Energy justice can happen not only through lower energy rates, but also with the help of benefits associated with Energy Communities through dividends and other services. In some cases, members can invest in their energy community projects and by payback afterwards with fixed interests. Moreover, local communities can receive economic benefits through local tax rebates and reinvestments from Energy Communities, which often enable a shared owner principle.

Furthermore, Renewable Energy Communities and Energy Collective Actions facilitate autonomy and autarky from big energy suppliers, which can lead to a cleaner and more transparent access to energy for households.

Finally, Energy Communities can empower citizens and boost community development and economic revitalisation, while they themselves develop new skills and create local job opportunities.
Active citizen participation and community actions enable procedural justice and transparency in political decision-making, fostering support from citizens for the decisions taken in the local community. Joining together members of a community or a Collective Action gain a different weight and can raise instances to their local governments. Being part of an Energy Community enhances the opportunities for members to a better understanding of the energy system, improving their energy literacy, which among others, allows individuals to protect themselves from potential abuses from market actors as well as taking up an active role in influencing and shaping public policies.

Beyond that, Renewable Energy Communities and Collective Energy Actions can also fulfil a social purpose and generate energy justice: Through Energy Communities, a more affordable access to renewable energy can be created for all and energy poverty can be counteracted.

Finally, the following graphic summarizes the benefits and positive impacts of energy communities and illustrates the positive effects an energy community can have for your related community.
DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE?

... What is an energy community or an energy collective action?
... Which steps should be taken to set up one?
... What are examples and best practices?

To answer this and other related questions, check out the DECIDE Knowledge Hub or contact the DECIDE Team: contact@decide4energy.eu

Note:
The information included in this document are extracted from DECIDE Deliverable 1.1 “Guidelines for characterization, segmentation, and group dynamics of collective energy actions” where also the full list of references is included.

The most relevant references for the current work are:

DECIDE PARTNERS

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