

The first year of COBEN

The first year of the COBEN workplan has focussed on systemizing its strategic approach and on consolidating selected community consortiums that act as hosts to the project's pilot initiatives. Highlights were generated at two levels:

Project level

- Welding of a highly committed and cooperative working partnership and installation of effective project management structures
- Development and adoption of a uniform TQM-based project methodology that implements project strategy and promotes effective cooperation between the pilot projects.
- Cooperation to promote civic energy initiated with the European Economic and Social Committee
- Strategy exchanges with two North Sea Commission Working Groups

Pilot project level

Osnabrück:

- Consolidation of a powerful regional consortium to promote community climate protection
- Release of the PINA online-tool to match waste heat resources and heat demand
- Selection of five hotspots for the development of civic energy blueprints

Emmen:

- Set-up of a Collective Development Team to provide all needed expertise for the implementation of renewable energy projects
- Start-up support to three solar energy cooperatives provided by the newly established service desk Locally Generated Emmen
- Adoption of a spatial plan for large-scale solar energy by Emmen City Council

Ringkøbing-Skjern:

- Development of a hybrid energy solution at village scale
- Cooperation with University of Aarhus to provide a heat-on-demand optimization model for households not connected to district heating network
- Build-up of a consultancy framework for home energy

East Flanders:

- Successful workshop planning to empower municipalities to take the lead in re-designing heat supply
- Mobilisation of resources and support for a Heating Congress in Eeklo in 2018
- Enrolment of business and community support for the launch of the Eeklo Heating Network in April 2018

Østfold:

- Successful enrolment of the farming community
- Market Conference to promote solar energy and extensive social media coverage
- Development of an agricultural procurement partnership to enable alternative energy investments

Highlands & Islands:

- Enrolment of Scottish Government, Highland & Islands Enterprise, Planning Aid for Scotland and Local Energy Scotland to promote the COBEN objectives
- Four local areas with representative local energy challenges (Oban, Drumnadrochit, Brae/Shetland, Isle of Barra, Isle of Vatersay) selected as COBEN focus areas out of 22 Expressions of Interest; Local Steering Groups launched in each location
- Development of three tenders for methodology and modelling, community stakeholder engagement and implementation support and expertise