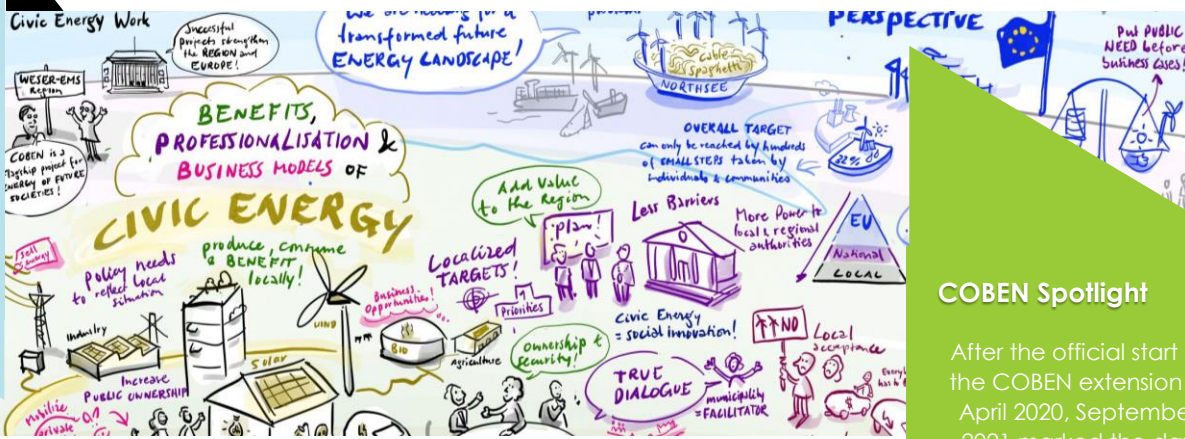


COBEN Summer 2021



Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen (BE)

In June POVL celebrated the realization of the Spatial Plan Eeklo – Maldegem. After years of consultation with municipalities, local residents and wind turbine operators, a supported wind landscape has been created with 32 wind turbines. A fund to create benefits for the local environment is also in formation.

On 12 and 13 June 2021 more than 200 visitors passed the Huysmanhoeve and enjoyed a bike ride between the wind turbines, a refreshing ice cream, smoothies and more. The beautiful weather and drone images of the wind landscape in our open-air cinema made the experience complete (watch the video here).



Foto: COBEN meets Flemish Minister of Energy Zuhair Demir (N-VA) in Eeklo

Uppsala Kommun (SE)

During the summer, the COBEN partners in Uppsala have started to write an energy community guide in Swedish for the public, to reach out to our target group and make the most out of their matchmaking platform.

They also held a workshop in September with local authorities, universities and STUNS about future energy communities in Uppsala and different market aggregation strategies, as well as how to develop the concept of energy communities with the proposed Swedish legislation.

Gemeente Emmen (NL)

In May 2021, the Regional Energy Strategy Drenthe was formally adopted by all local governments in the province. In the Regional Energy Strategy, the municipality of Emmen is cited as an example for developing 'local ownership'. The goal of 50% local ownership in renewable energy projects is part of the National Climate Agreement and must be given practical effect in Regional Energy Strategies. The business models developed in COBEN and the policy instruments for local ownership developed in Emmen play an important role in the Regional Energy Strategy for Drenthe and have also been adopted in the Regional Energy Strategies of other provinces.

Lokaal Opgewekt Emmen (the COBEN partner project in Emmen) has contributed to the formal establishment of a local energy cooperative in the community of Westenesch in June 2021. Lokaal Opgewekt Emmen will now assist the cooperative in developing a solar energy project on the roof of a community building.

As part of the national pilot project 'Renewable Energy on State Grounds', the Solar route A37 is being developed in the province of Drenthe, involving the municipalities of Coevorden, Hoogeveen and Emmen, the province and five government departments. Lokaal Opgewekt Emmen has been asked to take the initiative to draw up a participation plan for the A37 Solar Route pilot project, based on the municipality's forerunner position thanks to COBEN.

In the months July and August the concept of a 'civic tender' was worked out for this purpose. The state-owned grounds are put out to tender, with the main weighting criterion being local ownership. This means that the developer who wins the tender will have to transfer at least 20% of the project to the surrounding communities. The social tender is based on the business models elaborated in COBEN.

COBEN Spotlight

After the official start of the COBEN extension in April 2020, September 2021 marked the day when (most of) the consortium has finally been able to meet again – and this time not solely through the screen! Together with the Flemish Minister of Energy Zuhair Demir (N-VA), Veolia and the COBEN team celebrated the official inauguration of the first heat cluster of the district heating network in Eeklo on September 8.

We made most of this special event and prolonged our stay in Belgium with a project meeting in Knokke-Heist, where we were introduced to the desalination pilot plans. Although in a hybrid format, the consortium successfully discussed the development of the "Civic Energy Informer" and the partner the University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück led a debate about the role of the 'Active Customer' for civic energy and its meaning for COBEN.

Hopefully, the next 'real life' project meeting is just around the corner... next time in Uppsala for their climate week at the end of March 2022.