Energy Communities: Getting started with digitalisation.

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Key features of digitalised energy communities:

Citizen participation:

Everyone can get involved - from individuals investing small amounts to co-owning renewable infrastructure, to communities managing collective energy use.

Crowdlending opportunities:

Citizens can fund energy projects through crowdlending (a form of peer-to-peer lending). It enables individuals to support renewable projects while earning a return.

Use of digital tools for decision-making and management:

These tools empower communities to assess profitability, demand, and sustainability outcomes.

What are the benefits of digital tools for energy communities?

Energy communities work together to produce, consume, and manage energy locally and sustainably. Digital tools - such as dashboards, forecasting apps and remote monitoring - can help energy communities plan, invest, operate, and grow more effectively.

Did you know?

Through crowdlending, people can co-fund renewable projects, earn returns, and keep profits in their communities - even with small individual investments.

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Getting started with digitalisation.

Success story #1: From crowdlending to community power: The BUNDLE UP project in Portugal

The BUNDLE UP project in Portugal showed how digitalisation can transform community energy efforts into large-scale, investable projects. By combining a digital platform with crowdlending and blended financing, the project mobilised over €44 million, launching 64 initiatives in public lighting, social housing renovation, and solar PV.

How digital tools helped communities reach their goals in the project:

- **Ponto Energia platform** – acted as a one-stop shop linking project promoters, installers, and investors.
- **Crowdlending (GoParity)** – enabled citizens to co-fund projects and share financial returns.
- **Blended financing online** – combined crowdlending with EU funds to increase project viability.
- **Transparency and visibility** – online tools showcased results, building trust and attracting further investment.

Success story #2: Smart Solar-Powered EV Charging at the Hungaria Building, Belgium

The ECoOB energy cooperative, together with residents, Syncura, and student cooperative CORE, installed a smart charging system for up to 190 electric vehicles in Leuven's Hungaria Building. Powered by a 50 kWp rooftop solar array and managed through digital smart control, the project combines renewable energy, cooperative ownership, and innovation to optimise energy use and avoid costly grid upgrades.

How digital tools helped communities reach their goals:

- **Smart energy management** – charging stations are linked to a shared meter and controlled digitally to maximise the use of solar power.
- **Peak load control** – digital system control limits the building's peak load (11 kWp), reducing pressure on the grid and avoiding costly infrastructure investments.
- **Computer simulation models** – CORE student cooperative developed simulations to visualise charging profiles, solar production, tariffs, and user behaviours.