



European
Commission

Energy Communities Repository

Ötzi Strom

Bozen, Italy



Ötzi Strom

Energy community data

State: 14/01/2024

Overall information

Country:	Italy
City:	Bozen
Energy community type:	Citizen energy community
Founding date:	2019-07-13
Types of membership:	Natural persons / citizens, SMEs
Number of members:	3000
Citizens/Individual:	2700
SMEs:	300
Municipalities:	N/A
Associations:	N/A
Other:	N/A
Website:	https://www.oetzi-sev.it/
Status:	Legal structure with multiple ongoing activities / projects

Activities

Activities:	Supply, E-mobility
Services:	N/A
Challenges in establishing the energy community:	N/A
Challenges in the last year:	N/A

Governance

Ownership structure:	N/A
Share of female members:	N/A
Share of vulnerable members:	N/A
Share of members under 35:	N/A
How do you engage your members in decision-making?:	General assembly
Board members:	Natural persons / citizens
Voting system:	One vote per member
Participation in last year's General Assembly:	N/A

Energy

Technologies:	N/A
Capacity electricity in MW:	N/A
Capacity heat in MW:	N/A
Capacity cold in MW:	N/A
Capacity gas in MW:	N/A
Output electricity in MWh:	N/A
Output heat in MWh:	N/A
Output cold in MWh:	N/A
Output gas in MWh:	N/A
Price for Electricity (EUR/kWh):	N/A
Price for Heating (EUR/kWh):	N/A
Price for cooling (EUR/kWh):	N/A
Price for gas (EUR/kWh):	N/A
Energy storage: Value in MW:	N/A

Energy charging: Value in MWh: N/A

Economy

Business model: Supply

Staff: Number of employees/consultants (in FTEs): N/A

Staff: Number of volunteers (in FTEs): N/A

Approximate amount of volunteer hours last year: N/A

Turnover in last year: N/A

Financial support since foundation: N/A

Financial support in last year: N/A

Origin of financial support: N/A

Total funding since starting the energy community in €: N/A

Total funding in last year in €: N/A

What was the (average) dividend allocated to your members in the last year?: N/A

Total investment in last year in €: N/A

Total investments since starting the energy community in €: N/A

Social impact

Environmental benefits: N/A

Environmental impact: N/A

Social benefits: N/A

Support or inclusion of vulnerable households or minority groups in your energy community's activities in the last year: N/A

Number of social or educational activities:	N/A
People reached by these activities:	N/A
Social Impact:	N/A
To what extent are renewable energy sources accepted in the broader community:	N/A
Surplus investments into projects beyond your immediate membership:	N/A
Local investments:	N/A

Meet the community

How did it all start?

South Tyrol is a region in the North of Italy with a long history of cooperative culture. The first energy cooperatives and communities in South Tyrol started 100 years ago to bring electricity to rural areas, mostly from hydropower. Another wave happened in the 1990's, when cooperatives set up district heating projects fueled by biomass. Their governance model is in line with the EU definitions for energy communities.

In South Tyrol's energy cooperatives, each member co-owns the production facilities, and consumes the energy produced by it. The excess electricity is sold to the grid.

One specificity gave rise to Ötzi Strom: the local energy cooperative focuses on members located in the vicinity of the legal entity and the projects. Ötzi Strom wants to make the excess electricity available to people all across the region, with a focus on community ownership. In 2019, they decided to set up a regional energy supplier in line with the cooperative principles.

In addition to the practical objective of supplying citizen-owned energy to the region, Ötzi Strom's main objective is to get people actively engaged in the energy transition.

The project

Ötzi Strom was set up by the [Südtiroler Energieverband](#) (SEV), a federation representing energy cooperatives & district heating plants. SEV supports them with administrative services (e.g. invoice management) and technical support, and facilitates conversation among different market actors.

Ötzi Strom does not have its own production capacities, but has been involved in supporting the set-up of two energy communities in the region:

- The mayor in the small town of Lana wanted to set up an energy community, and asked SEV & Ötzi Strom for support in carrying out a solar potential study and in engaging the citizens in the project. The study showed that the town could install 1MW of solar panels on the roofs owned by the municipality, and could serve 900 citizens. The municipality is willing to make the investment for installing the solar panels (approx. €1.5-2mio.). To make citizens aware of the project and get them excited about it, SEV & Ötzi Strom organized an event to explain how energy communities work and how citizens can benefit by participating. The event attracted a lot of interest and engagement. At the time of writing this case study (November 2023), the community was waiting for the national decree on energy communities to be published so they could proceed with the project. You can find information about economic considerations for this project in the following sections.
- Another community in the making supported by SEV & Ötzi Strom is located in Hochpustertal, which combines three municipalities. They are keen to set up an energy community. Hochpustertal has less inhabitants, but could set up a larger installation.

Business model

Ötzi Strom is a supplier of citizen-owned energy, who sells the electricity provided by around 160 producers via SEV. The organization is not-for-profit. At the time of creation, this allowed them to be the third cheapest energy provider in Italy as they did not aim for profit margins. The energy crisis changed this; as Ötzi Strom does not have its own production capacities, the cooperative is tied to the market price. The local cooperatives who have their own production capacity were much less affected by the energy crisis in this sense. They also generate profits, which they can distribute to their members. In 2023, the Guarantees of Origin were provided by E-Werk Prad and E-Werk Oberland.

Members of Ötzi Strom pay a one-off membership fee of €25. If a member decides to leave, this fee is returned to them. Ötzi Strom does not yet have any employees; the activities of the supplier are supported by the SEV.

Ötzi's business model is value-based rather than focused on economic benefits. The added value of being a member of Ötzi Strom and receiving their electricity is participation in the decision-making processes, supporting citizen ownership, and a high level of flexibility – members can leave after one month if they so wish. At the time of writing, Ötzi Strom had 3000 members, who are either citizens or businesses.

In the near future, Ötzi wants to start producing their own energy as well, for instance by offering members participation in solar PV projects. While this does not yet offer an economic advantage due to the current legal framework, it would allow citizens who do not own property to invest in and own solar panels.



(c) Ötzi Strom

Business model of the energy community in Lana supported by Ötzi Energie

In Italy, participants of energy communities are supposed to receive a compensation of €12ct per kWh produced and consumed. When making the calculations for the energy community in Lana, Ötzi realized that the energy community could receive around €80-120 for every person who consumes the electricity produced by the joint solar PV installation while it is being produced. This takes into consideration that €4-5ct per kWh would be put aside for running the energy community. The community will decide together how to manage the remaining money. Ötzi estimates that the installation would produce approx. €141 000 in the first year. With a 3MW installation, the community could generate as much as €424 000 per year. This money could be distributed to members, or reinvested, for instance into building a playground, a park, or other projects benefitting the wider community.

Internal governance

Ötzi regularly organizes events for its members to include them in the decision-making. It further holds Annual General Meetings, where key decisions are being taken, as well as “Ötzi Cafés” to inform their members and facilitate discussion. Every member has one vote. They further recently launched a survey on what they should offer

in the context of energy communities; members asked for information sessions to understand how energy communities work, and to receive advice on how to set up energy communities. Ötzi offers this service to their members for free.

For members who purchase electricity from Ötzi Strom, their business share corresponds to the amount according to the following table, depending on the total contractual output:

- up to 6 kW connected load - one-off payment of 25 euros
- over 6 and up to 30 kW connected load - one-off payment of 50 euros
- over 30 and up to 55 kW connected load - one-off payment of 100 euros
- over 55 kW connected load - one-off 500 euros

If the member purchases electricity for several connection points, the sum of the contractual services is taken into account when determining the business share. If the next higher performance level is reached due to an increase in the contractual output (e.g. from 6 to 10 kW), the share is increased until the corresponding amount from the table above is reached (e.g. from €25 to €50).

The cooperative pays particular attention to ensuring transparent invoicing, to help their members understand how the money is being used by Ötzi.

For the daily management and internal decision-making processes, Ötzi Strom works with the abovementioned employees, a board of directors, a Director and the President.



(c) Ötzi Strom

Collaboration with other stakeholders

Ötzi Strom is a member of consumer association SEV, which brings together various market actors, including grid operators, district heating and hydropower cooperatives, as well as energy suppliers. The diversity of members helps facilitate a constructive conversation to advance a community-driven energy transition. SEV regularly interacts with the regional and national government, to share insights from their various market actors and inform policy-makers.

Ötzi further has regular interactions with municipalities, and is supporting the set-up of two energy communities driven by local authorities.

Last but not least, Ötzi facilitates regular exchanges with citizens through the channels mentioned in earlier sections of this case study.

Overcoming challenges

The fact that the legal framework in Italy was still under development at the time of writing was flagged as a challenge by Ötzi Strom, both for the set-up of energy communities and their project, and for informing and engaging citizens about the subject.

Furthermore, the larger size of some projects under planning with the two new energy communities requires a high level of expertise and knowledge on how to create such communities.

A further challenge faced by Ötzi Strom is the competition by large companies looking to set up energy communities. The cooperative is working on overcoming this by improving their marketing strategy, and by looking at how they can create better conditions and services for members.

Gender balance & inclusion of vulnerable households

Gender balance is a topic Ötzi Strom actively working on. The cooperative landscape in South Tirol is dominated by men. To kick-start a change from this situation, the cooperative recently organized an internal training on diversity and inclusion. A female colleague from SEV recently joined an initiative for women in hydropower; Ötzi Strom hopes to be able to implement insights and learnings she will bring back from this initiative.

Energy poverty is an important topic for Ötzi Strom. Their aim in the medium term is to provide members with the possibility to donate part of their energy bill to people who struggle to pay their own bills. At the time of writing, the cooperative was working on how the decision would be taken as to who could benefit from this initiative.



(c) Ötzi Strom

What makes you different?

South Tirol has a long and strong history of cooperative culture – in energy, farming, and other areas. People are used to buying electricity from their local cooperative, and being engaged in the decision-making processes. Ötzi Strom is looking to bring this to the next level by providing this access to citizens across the region.

A piece of advice...

“The challenges we face due to climate change will require active citizens who are willing and able to contribute to solving the problems we will face, and providing solutions. Energy communities are a powerful way to do this.”

Documents/Useful links

- [Website](#)