

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

“Women’s energy community meets Women in Olive Oil”

(Em)Power up women farmers.





1. Implications for policy and farming support

1.1 Support framework – What is needed?

Access to funding: Energy Communities need funding to invest in renewable energy projects, develop the necessary skills and knowledge, and build partnerships with other stakeholders. But to ask for fund the whole range of benefits deriving from energy communities has to be communicated.

Legal and policy support: Governments need to provide a supportive legal and policy environment that enables the growth of energy communities, including access to energy markets, grid connection, and regulatory support. In addition, the consistency of the legal framework is very important.

Technical support: Energy Communities need technical support to develop and implement renewable energy projects, including access to expertise in engineering, project management, and financing and people – facilitators that really know how to work with groups-especially coming from farming communities. There is also the need to guarantee a stable grid.

Community engagement: Energy Communities need to engage with local communities, building trust and support for their projects and raising awareness of the benefits of renewable energy.

Gender balance: Rural women can and should be included in the energy sector either in mixed cooperatives or within Women's Energy Communities can help overcome the specific needs of rural areas by empowering women to take a leading role in the transition to clean energy, providing additional income streams for farming communities, and building social cohesion through community ownership of renewable energy projects.

The added value of Energy Communities with reference to the SROI outcomes includes improved access to energy, reduced energy costs, increased income for rural communities, and social benefits such as increased community cohesion and empowerment. The added value of Women's Energy Communities with reference to SROI outcomes includes the creation of social, economic, and environmental benefits for women and their communities.

Some quotes highlighting the positive outcomes of participating in Energy Communities include:

- # Both our economy and the environment benefit from a strong renewable energy industry!
- # Women belong in all places where decisions are made ... It shouldn't be that women are the exception.
- # Never underestimate the power of women, not only in the energy sector!





1.2 Recommendations – What needs to be done to realise the support needed?

Governments, NGOs, and private sector organizations should support the establishment and scaling up of Energy Communities and similar social innovations.

Financing mechanisms such as grants, loans, or crowdfunding can be used to support the development of these communities and enable women to invest in renewable energy technologies.

Policy instruments such as tax incentives, subsidies, and feed-in tariffs can be used to support the uptake of renewable energy and help reduce energy poverty.

Capacity-building and training programs can help increase the technical and entrepreneurial skills of women in energy and enhance their access to markets, finance, and networks. Especially for women farmers.

Partnerships between different stakeholders, such as women's organizations, energy providers, financial institutions, and government agencies, can help leverage resources, share knowledge and expertise, and create synergies.

Specialized support organizations such as women's groups, energy agencies, and impact investors can help provide technical assistance, funding, and networking opportunities to Women's Energy Communities and similar initiatives.

Policymakers can adopt enabling policies and regulatory frameworks that promote gender equality, renewable energy, and social innovation, and ensure that women's voices and needs are taken into account in energy decision-making.

Collaboration and advocacy efforts can help raise awareness about the benefits of Women's Energy Communities and catalyze support from a broad range of stakeholders.

Learning from successful cases of Women's Energy Communities in different contexts and sharing best practices and lessons learned can help replicate and scale up these initiatives.

1.3 Existing environments where this is already happening (and why)

One of the major “players” in the energy community ecosystem that helped this case study develop was Electra Energy part of the REScoop.eu, the European federation of energy cooperatives. REScoop team has developed a [toolbox](#) with policy papers on energy poverty and [Electra Energy](#) several publications within the Greek context.

WEnCoop are members in the REScoop ecosystem.

It is worth mentioning that the first gender session of the European Citizen Energy Academy (EUCENA) took place introducing us to the gender and energy nexus. In an interactive session organised by Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF), they looked into the energy transition from a gender perspective and discussed the potential of gender-just energy communities to accelerate the transition. Through the EUCENA project, REScoop.eu focuses on the topic of gender equality and community energy and engages her network to join this important discussion.





Farmer interview questions

Q (FARMWELL partner): In your opinion, what are the main needs of farmers in the context of social innovation that should be addressed through support?

A (Farmer): *Not all of us have the strength to voice ourselves where the stakeholders or the politics take place. Nowadays, energy is a very important issue. We all (the farmers) see that they are struggling and need a solution... Of course the stress is permanent*

B (Farmer): *sustainability of small farmers is difficult to achieve today. I always think when I see these areas what ecological footprint they have and how. It can become more sustainable and if all this is finally sustainable for the smaller producers, because by nature I'm interested in the small producers and not the big companies that can implement things easily.*

Q (FARMWELL partner): What do you think needs to happen to make similar support actions available to farmers and their social innovations a reality?

All the female farmers who participated in the program stated that the main and determining factor for the existence of such actions is information and research.

A (Farmer): *Researchers are doing their job and it is important that research is being done today, while for many years research funds were stopped, now they are coming back and this is something encouraging.*

B (Farmer): *We need to enhance gender equality in all levels of the economy the society then we will have progress then wellbeing will be achieved.*

C (Farmer): *when you talk about energy in Greece it's a very misunderstood term and we think that energy only means big solar farms or wind turbines that destroy the rural landscape and I think there will be an intermediate solution that we don't know about.*

