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RURAL ENERGY COMMUNITIES LV

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Schleswig-Holstein

Latvijas Lauku Forums

Project 39264/01

Catalysing and building capacities for renewable energy communities in rural Latvia (Rural Energy Communities LV)

Final Report

Project lifetime: 1 January 2024 – 31 October 2025

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in cooperation with

Ilvija Ašmane (Latvian Rural Forum)

Kiel, 31 January 2026

1 Summary

The project *"Catalysing and Building Capacities for Renewable Energy Communities in Rural Latvia"* (January 2024–October 2025) strengthened the foundations for renewable energy communities (RECs) in Latvia at a time when such initiatives were still emerging. Building on Germany's long-standing experience—particularly in Schleswig-Holstein—the project addressed the lack of practical knowledge, regulatory clarity, and local capacity that had previously hindered REC development in Latvia. Through a structured, multi-level approach, it combined policy dialogue, regional capacity building, and hands-on support for local initiatives.

At the macro level, the project facilitated an intensive German–Latvian exchange on regulatory frameworks, energy sharing, and community energy financing. Two virtual policy dialogues, a study visit of energy community experts to Schleswig-Holstein, and continuous engagement with ministries and regulators helped inform national policy processes in both countries. Policy factsheets, comparative analyses, and an interregional task force further strengthened institutional cooperation and knowledge transfer.

At the meso level, the project significantly expanded REC-related capacities across Latvia's planning regions. Regional seminars, good practice fiches, targeted communication activities, and train-the-trainer workshops reached hundreds of stakeholders, creating a network of informed multipliers and 'REC ambassadors.' The Latvian Rural Forum emerged as a central national contact point, providing ongoing advice to municipalities, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), and citizens, and enhancing its international role through active participation in the European Federation of Energy Communities (REScoop.eu) and the European Energy Community Facility (ENERCOM).

At the micro level, the project supported the emergence of three potential pilot communities and ultimately enabled the establishment of Latvia's first rural energy community in *Kalniena*. Despite challenging regulatory and financial conditions, the initiative successfully registered as an energy community in October 2025, marking a major milestone for Latvia's energy transition. The project demonstrated that community-driven energy sharing is possible, but requires targeted support, enabling policies, and continued capacity building—elements that will be further advanced in the follow-up DBU-funded project.

2 Motivation and Objectives of the Project

Until 2023, energy communities, including renewable energy communities (RECs) as defined by the European Renewable Energy Directive, were virtually non-existent in Latvia or were still in their infancy. This was particularly true in rural areas outside the capital, Riga. On the other hand, there was and is growing interest among rural communities, NGOs, SMEs, policy makers and other stakeholders in establishing such communities. In Germany, energy cooperatives in particular, but also other forms of citizen energy, have a long tradition. The federal state of Schleswig-Holstein can be regarded as one of the pioneers in the field of citizen/community energy in Europe, especially in the field of wind energy, but also community heating (particularly based on biomass) and solar photovoltaic (PV) projects. There are numerous energy communities here that are active in various markets. In 2018, the Schleswig-Holstein

state government established a citizen energy fund that provides start-up financing for citizen energy initiatives and serves as a model for other federal states and the federal government. This innovative financing mechanism may also serve as a showcase for other countries, including Latvia. Policymakers in both countries faced the common challenge of fully transposing and implementing the provisions of the Renewable Energy Directive, the Internal Electricity Market Directive and the Electricity Market Design Directive and creating a supportive regulatory framework for RECs. Neither country had a legal framework for energy sharing in place, i.e. the possibility for members of a specific energy community to use and share the electricity generated within that community.

The project *"Catalysing and Building Capacities for Renewable Energy Communities in Rural Latvia"* aimed to promote the development of renewable energy communities (RECs), with a particular focus on rural regions in Latvia. Its objective was to facilitate structured dialogue, mutual knowledge exchange, and cooperation between political decision-makers and other relevant actors and stakeholders in Schleswig-Holstein and Latvia. In addition, the project sought to strengthen capacity development and foster network formation within rural regions of Latvia. The project followed an integrated, multi-level approach. At the macro level, it supported a German–Latvian policy dialogue on the regulatory framework and enabling conditions for renewable energy communities. At the meso level, it focused on capacity-building activities, particularly targeting the four rural Planning Regions in Latvia. At the micro level, the project aimed to facilitate the establishment of a renewable energy community in a pilot municipality, translating strategic and institutional insights into practical local implementation.

The project was able to build directly on the findings of two preparatory studies conducted by the project partners and funded by the *Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt* (DBU) in 2022 and 2023, thereby ensuring continuity, evidence-based design, and a strong analytical foundation for the project activities.

3 Description of the Work Steps and Methods Used

3.1 General Project Setup and Design

The project was launched on 1 January 2024 and successfully completed on 31 October 2025. It followed an integrated multi-level approach and promoted capacity building at three levels:

- At the **macro level** (i.e. at the transnational and national levels), policy dialogue and expert study visits took place, particularly in the context of policy development and implementation.
- At the **meso level** (i.e. at the level of the planning regions in Latvia), relevant showcases were developed, regional awareness-raising, networking and capacity-building measures implemented, and regional task forces, ambassadors for energy communities and train-the-trainer workshops.
- At the **micro level**, (i.e., the community level) the project facilitated the setup of a rural energy community in one pilot municipality.

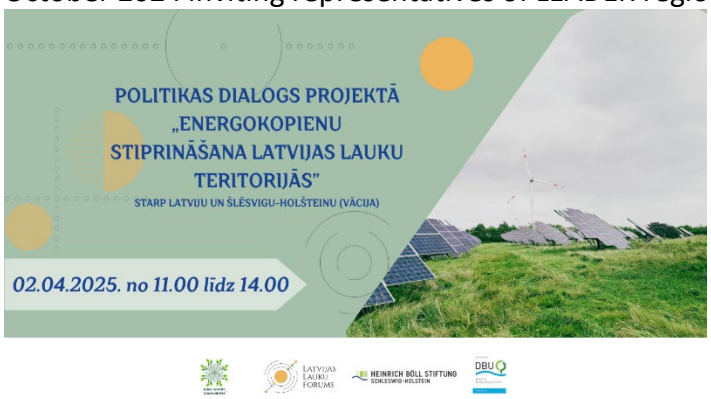
On 11 January 2024, the project partners carried out a kick-off meeting with participation of DBU. The project partners held regular online project meetings (at least twice a month). The partners agreed on a project acronym and created a project logo based on a proposal by LRF. The main activities encompassed a virtual German-Latvian policy dialogue focusing on the implementation of provisions for RECs laid down in EU legislation, the legal framework for energy sharing, and the role of the citizen energy fund in Schleswig-Holstein as a possible model for Latvia. Further activities included the compilation of policy factsheets, relevant good practice cases from Schleswig-Holstein, multiple regional awareness raising, networking and capacity development activities in the rural Planning Regions of Latvia including information and communication activities, the creation of a regional task force and 'ambassadors' for energy communities, as well as 'train the trainers' workshops. The project also facilitated the creation of rural pilot energy communities in cooperation with local stakeholders. Correspondingly, the project was **divided into three thematic Work Packages** reflecting the different action levels as described above. In line with the work and time schedule the project partners implemented the following activities:

3.2 Bilateral Policy Dialogue (Work Package 2)

Virtual Policy Dialogues

The Virtual Policy Dialogues aimed to facilitate the mutual exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices between policy makers and community energy experts from Germany, particularly Schleswig-Holstein, and Latvia. The dialogue comprised two online workshops addressing policy makers, public authorities, associations, citizen and community energy initiatives, as well as other interested market actors and stakeholders from both countries. The **first Virtual Policy Dialogue** was successfully held on 26 June 2024 with roughly 50 persons participating. The audience encompassed, inter alia, policy makers, ministerial officials, embassy representatives, energy agencies, associations, planning regions, municipalities, LEADER groups and coordination units, chambers of commerce, NGOs, and associations. The dialogue addressed the overall energy situation and state of energy policies in both countries as well as the implementation of European provisions for energy communities laid down in the recast Renewable Energy Directive (RED II) and the Internal Electricity Market Directive (IEMD). It also highlighted issues such as the digitalisation of the energy system and the potential of the Citizen Energy Fund in Schleswig-Holstein to act as a model for Latvia. The dialogue included an interactive session identifying key barriers for energy communities and opportunities of stakeholders in Schleswig-Holstein and Latvia 'to learn from each other'. Among the barriers for energy communities, participants highlighted the unfavourable legal and administrative framework and insufficient financing opportunities. In Latvia, the lack of information, the mobilisation of citizens and the lack of business models were critical challenges. Considering the feedback of the participants, Latvia may learn from Germany and Schleswig-Holstein in the following areas: funding and financing solutions such as the Citizen Energy Fund, community energy projects in the field of wind energy, mobilization of citizens, and consideration of energy communities under the LEADER programme. Germany and Schleswig-Holstein may learn from Latvia in the following areas: smart meter rollout, acceptance of smart meters by electricity customers, and digitisation

processes. The policy dialogue revealed good opportunities for a further exchange between Germany/Schleswig-Holstein and Latvia in the context of the LEADER programme, particularly on the question of the extent to which LEADER and LEADER regions can facilitate the development of energy communities. The German National Network for Rural Areas (*Deutsche Vernetzungsstelle Ländliche Räume*, *DVS*) signalled interest in a further dialogue on the 'train the trainers workshops' to be carried out by LRF. Heinrich Boell Foundation Schleswig-Holstein (HBS SH) and Latvian Rural Forum (LRF) took further steps to intensify the dialogue between Local Action Groups under LEADER and the corresponding coordination units. HBS SH organised a **dedicated workshop session** in the frame of the study visit in October 2024 inviting representatives of LEADER regions in Schleswig-Holstein and from DVS.

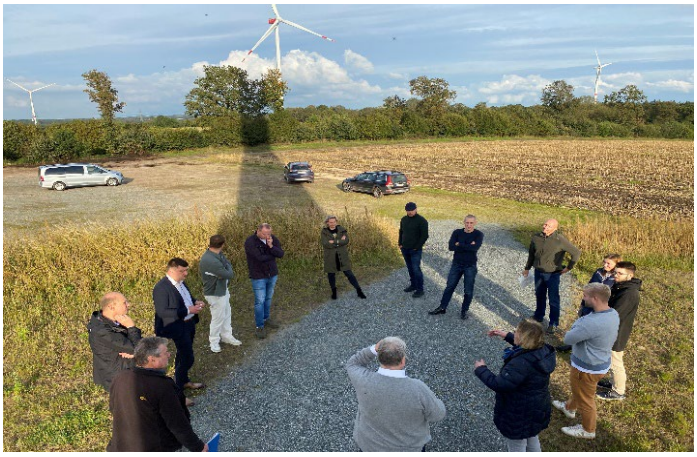


The **second Virtual Policy Dialogue** was held on 2 April 2025 and focused on the specific topic of energy sharing. The online event was joined by 45 persons including the State Secretary in the Ministry of Energy Transition of Schleswig-Holstein *Joschka Knuth*, the Honorary Consul of Latvia in Schleswig-Holstein *Prof. Mirko Schönfeldt*, and *Achille Hannoset* from the European Commission. Pursuant to the revised Electricity Market Design Directive (EU)2024/1711, energy sharing operationalises the collective consumption of self-generated or stored electricity injected into the public grid by more than one jointly acting active customer. Renewable energy communities and citizen energy communities were explicitly entitled to share electricity generated from facilities they have in full ownership with their members. In December 2024, the Latvian government adopted a regulation for the registration and operation of energy communities, including energy sharing, transposing the EU rules. In November 2024, the German government drafted amendments to the Energy Industry Act, which included a section on energy sharing. The Virtual Policy Dialogue addressed these legislative developments highlighting key opportunities and challenges of energy sharing, the extent to which policy makers, community energy initiatives, other market actors and stakeholders in Germany and Latvia could learn from each other and from the experience of pioneering countries in this field. The summaries, presentations, and results of both Virtual Policy Dialogue workshops were published on the project section of the HBS SH website.

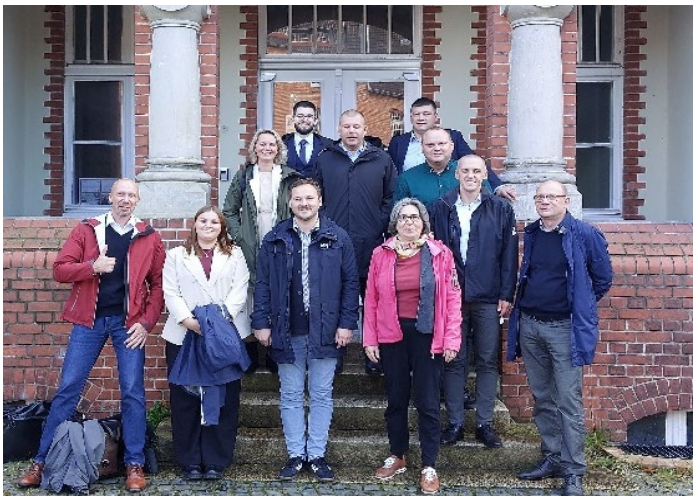
Study Visit of a Latvian expert delegation to Schleswig-Holstein

The policy dialogue included a **study visit** of a **Latvian expert delegation** to Schleswig-Holstein which took place from 8-11 October 2024. The study visit was organised by HBS SH in close collaboration with LRF, ministerial officials, community energy experts and other key stakeholders in Schleswig-Holstein. Eight experts representing different public and private organisations in Latvia and *Ilvija Ašmane*, the LRF project manager, were actively engaged in the study visit. The group consisted of policy makers, experts from the Public Utilities

Commission (regulator), public authorities, energy agencies, and SMEs. The study visit also encompassed an exchange with ministerial officials in the Ministry of Energy Transition of Schleswig-Holstein. A detailed description of the study visit, the project sites visited, workshops, outcomes and presentations can be found on the HBS SH website and LRF website.



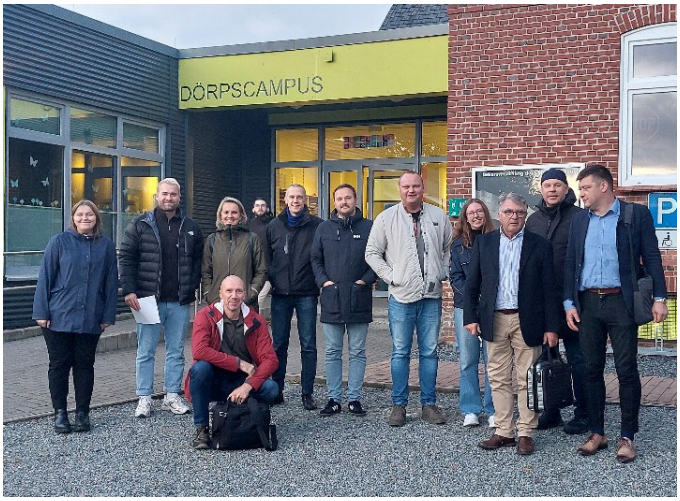
8 October 2024
Visit to the community wind farm in Wiemersdorf
(Photo: Marie Halbach)



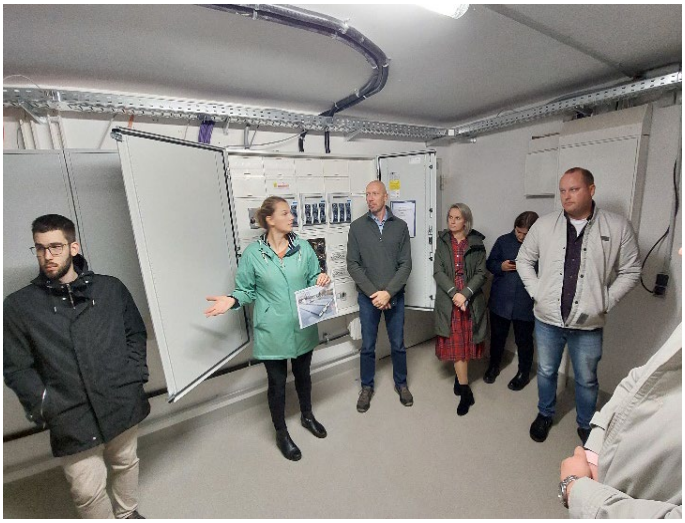
9 October 2024
Visit to the Heinrich Böll Foundation Schleswig-Holstein (Cowork-House/ Anscharcampus)
(Photo: Lena Untrieser)

9 October 2024
Dialogue with experts from the Heinrich Böll Foundation Schleswig-Holstein and Local Action Groups in Schleswig-Holstein
(Photo: Michael Krug)

10 October 2024
Community solar farm and community wind farm in *Sprakebüll*
(Photo: Michael Krug)



10 October 2024
The group in front of the *Dörpscampus* in the village of *Klixbüll* with the former mayor and volunteer ambassador for development policy in German local authorities *Werner Schweizer*
(Photo: Michael Krug)



11 October 2024
Anna Leidreiter from the energy cooperative *BürgerEnergie Nord eG* explains a tenant electricity project implemented in cooperation with a housing cooperative in the municipality of *Norderstedt*
(Photo: Michael Krug)

Policy factsheets

The project partners continuously monitored the relevant policy and regulatory developments in Germany and Latvia. HBS SH prepared and disseminated a policy factsheet to the participants of the first policy dialogue addressing the status quo of community energy development and regulatory framework in Germany/Schleswig-Holstein. The factsheet was updated in early 2025 and is available on the project section of the HBS SH website. The Latvian partner LRF decided to prepare the **Latvian policy factsheet** later, in February 2025 to consider the legislative changes of December 2024 when the Government Regulation for the Registration and Operation of Energy Communities[1] was adopted by the Latvian government. The Latvian policy factsheet was updated in late 2025, considering changes in the legal framework for energy sharing. In addition, HBS SH prepared a **synopsis** comparing key provisions for energy sharing in both countries. This synopsis will be soon published on the project section of the HBS SH website.

Inter-Regional Task Force engaging the rural planning regions in Latvia

The five Planning Regions are key actors in Latvia promoting, among other things, regional development. LRF established an **interregional task force** engaging experts of all five Panning Regions (including Riga) dedicated to the development of energy communities**.** The purpose of this task force was to exchange **information and experiences** and to learn from emerging community energy initiatives. LRF coordinated two **online meetings and personal task force meetings. The first meeting** was held on **16 October 2024, the follow up meeting** on **23 September 2025.**

After the first task force meeting, there was huge interest among the planning regions and municipalities to continue the knowledge exchange. Hence, LRF offered to organise **additional informational meetings** separately with several of the planning regions and interested municipalities:

- Rīga Planning Region – online meeting held on 29.01.2025 with nine municipalities and a representative from the Ministry of Climate and Energy;
- Vidzeme Planning Region – face-to-face meeting on 04.03.2025 with 11 municipalities and the Ministry of Climate and Energy;
- Kurzeme Planning Region – face-to-face meeting in presence on 19.03.2025 with eight municipalities and the Ministry of Climate and Energy.

Participation and active involvement in policy debates

The project aimed to regularly inform policy makers in both countries, to represent rural community interests in the national policy discourse and to strengthen cooperation with policy makers and relevant stakeholders. Instead of preparing formalised policy input/position papers, LRF decided to convey policy related project findings and lessons directly to the concerned ministerial officers. This was facilitated by the close and fruitful collaboration

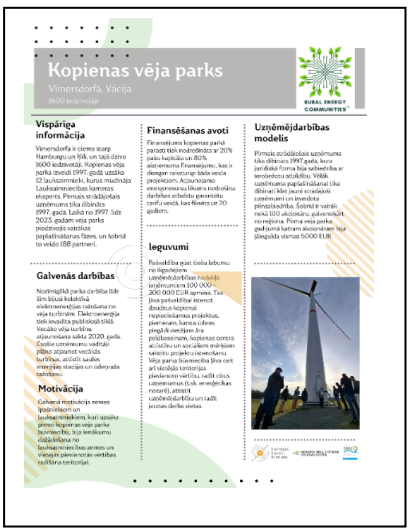
[1] Ministru kabineta noteikumi Nr. 808 Energokopienu reģistrēšanas un darbības noteikumi. Rīgā 2024. gada 10. decembrī (prot. Nr. 52 90. §), available from https://likumi.lv/ta/id/357125-energokopienu-registresanas-un-darbibas-noteikumi

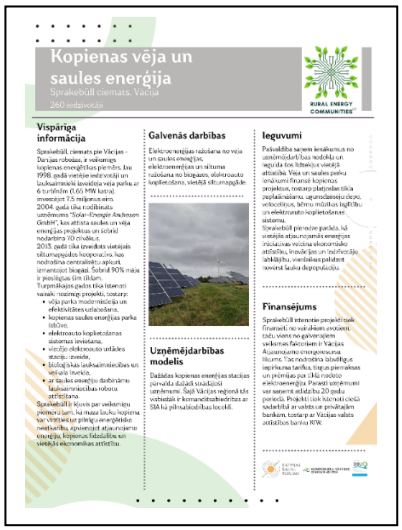
between LRF and the Ministry of Climate and Energy throughout the entire project lifetime. Policy related project findings and recommendations were also included in a **Resolution**[2] which was adopted by the **Latvian Rural Communities Parliament** in June 2025. In August 2025, HBS SH organised an **informal policy dialogue** (in person) dedicated to energy sharing, engaging the State Secretary in the Ministry of Energy Transition and energy cooperatives from Schleswig-Holstein. In this meeting, HBS SH also provided insights from ongoing policy and regulatory developments in Latvia.

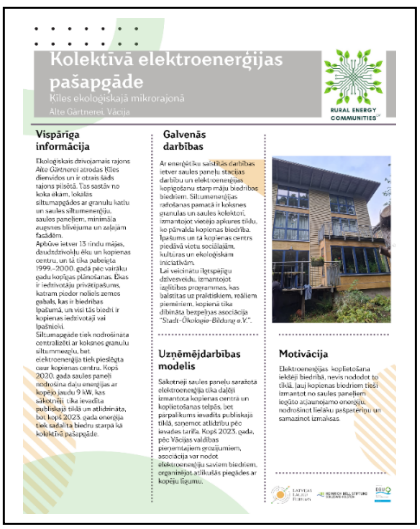
3.3 Capacity Building in the Planning Regions (Work Package 3)

Good practice catalogue and fiches

In light of the study visit of the Latvian expert group to Schleswig-Holstein (see above), HBS SH prepared a **catalogue of existing good practice projects** in Schleswig-Holstein with essential background information. The compilation was prepared in English and was published on the HBS SH website. The preparation of the good practice cases included a screening of existing Local Action Groups under the LEADER programme in Schleswig-Holstein and their respective Local Development Strategies with the purpose of identifying promising or good practice measures promoting and facilitating the development of energy communities. This **good practice compilation** formed the basis for the elaboration of **five good practice fiches** which were prepared by LRF in Latvian language. The fiches were published on the LRF website. These good practice fiches provide information on the types, benefits, legal forms, financing sources, and business models of rural energy communities and was sent out to all LRF members, published in social media and shared in the bi-weekly newsletter.







[2] 7. Latvijas Lauku Kopienu Parlamenta Rezolūcija, available from https://parlaments.laukuforums.lv/rezol%C5%ABcija

Dedicated information and communication activities in Latvia

The Latvian partners carried out manifold information and communication activities targeting citizens, rural municipalities, SMEs, Local Action Groups and the four rural Planning Regions. LRF organised **four regional seminars addressing various stakeholders.** The first one was held in June 2024 in *Bebrene*, the second on 25 January 2025 in *Valmiermuiža*.[3] Two more seminars were held in May 2025 and June 2025 (linked to the Latvian Rural Communities Parliament). All four seminars were organised in close cooperation with the Latvian Ministry of Climate and Energy which contributed with informational presentations about the legal and regulatory framework. To increase public outreach, the seminars were partly held back-to-back with other events.[4] Altogether, 200 persons were involved in those seminars.
LRF prepared various dedicated communication materials which were published on the LRF website, social media and the LRF weekly newsletters (185 subscribers). The seminar participants became 'REC ambassadors' in their region. LRF prepared several press releases for national and regional media. One highlight was a radio interview with *Ilvija Ašmane* from the Latvian Rural Forum and *Gunārs Valdmanis* from the Latvian Ministry of Climate and Energy on 3 January 2025 (see below).

'Train the trainers' workshops

LRF organised three **'train the trainers' workshops** targeting regional energy agencies, the regional planning regions, representatives from municipal energy departments and Local Action Groups. The purpose of these workshops was to inform and train potential multipliers and mentors, in order to further facilitate the development of RECs. Participants were selected considering their capacities to offer mentorship to local energy communities. The workshops engaged four potential mentors/experts from other regions in Latvia. The first workshop was held online on 29 November 2024 and addressed potential mentors, and multipliers in the Latgale Planning Region, particularly with representatives from nine municipalities. The second workshop was held on 05 December 2024 as a face-to-face meeting addressing stakeholders in the Zemgale Planning Region with representatives from six municipalities. In 2025, LRF organised one additional 'train the trainers' workshop. This was held back-to-back with the **Latvian Rural Communities Parliament**, a three-day event organised by LRF in June 2025. This event brought together 300 policy makers, representatives from Local Action Groups, local governments, academics, entrepreneurs, civil society and NGOs being active in rural development from all over Latvia and abroad. The Parliament focused on rural policies implemented by rural communities in Latvia and various practices and initiatives promoting self-determination, resilience, efficient use of resources and talents.

[3] https://laukuforums.lv/energokopienas-klimata-risinajumi-un-ilgtspejas-prakses/
[4] See for example the meeting of the Joint Working Group on Climate, Energy and Environmental Coordination of the Zemgale Planning Region https://laukuforums.lv/llf-piedalas-apvienotaja-klimata-energetikas-un-vides-koordinacijas-darba-grupas-sanaksme/

Support tree

LRF also prepared a **'support tree'** as a structured organigram mapping key actors and stakeholders involved in the context of Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) at national and local levels in Latvia, including their functions, roles, and areas of expertise. The tool facilitated networking among stakeholders, improved understanding of responsibilities and interests, and informed potential RECs about available sources and types of support. The Support Tree was disseminated to Local Action Groups (LAGs), which acted as multipliers by sharing the information with their members and local stakeholders.

Ad hoc advice and guidance

LRF continuously provided ad hoc advice and guidance to various community stakeholders, promoting mentorship and networking, based on individual queries and requests. The project helped to further develop LRF as a key contact point for rural communities. LRF regularly received phone calls and emails referring to energy communities and asking for consultation. LRF also contributed to several external meetings organised by other organisations. On 2 March 2025 LRF delivered a presentation at a seminar organized by the Local Action Group *Jūrkante* to explain the concept of energy communities in more detail.

3.4 Pilot Energy Community (Work Package 4)

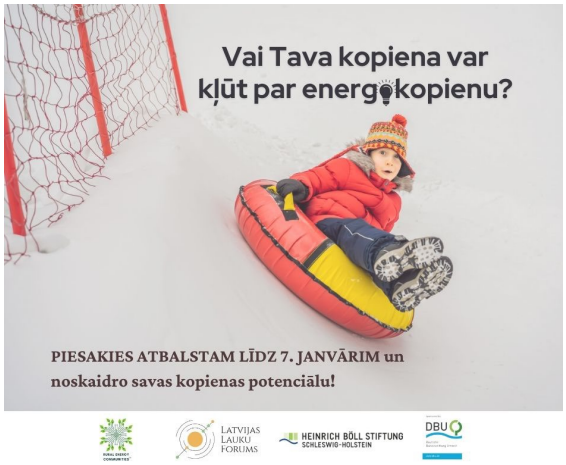
First steps in the rural community of *Sece*

Initially, the project partners intended to support the establishment of a pilot energy community in the community of *Sece*. During the project, LRF conducted several informal meetings with the mayor of *Sece* and the prospective founder of such an energy community, the CEO of a local agricultural enterprise. The company operates tunnel greenhouses in the vicinity of *Sece* for the cultivation of strawberries and autumn raspberries. To meet the energy demand of these facilities, particularly from spring through autumn, the enterprise operates a 10-kW ground-mounted PV plant. The enterprise management planned to expand both agricultural production and PV capacity, with the additional aim of selling future surplus electricity to the municipality and local residents via energy sharing. However, during the project, it became evident that attracting further investors to support the company's expansion plans proved difficult. In addition, the existing PV plant was considered too small to enable an economically viable energy sharing scheme under the prevailing legal framework. A further obstacle arose with the regulatory regime introduced in December 2024, which rendered the establishment of an energy community financially unattractive. The government was reluctant to provide financial incentives to facilitate energy sharing, such as premiums or reduced grid tariffs. Consequently, LRF and the enterprise's management concluded that, under the framework conditions at that time, *Sece* did not represent a suitable pilot case.

Open Call for Interest

Initially, LRF planned to conduct a local online stakeholder survey in *Sece* to assess the willingness of local authorities, citizens, and SMEs to participate in a potential rural pilot energy community. However, due to increasingly unfavourable conditions in *Sece* (see above), LRF decided to modify the work plan and to adjust the scope of the survey. On 10 December 2024, LRF launched an open **call for interest**, inviting rural municipalities and local community stakeholders across Latvia who were interested in establishing energy communities to apply for targeted expert advice provided either directly by LRF or through external specialists. The call remained open until 7 January 2025. Its objectives were threefold:

- To identify additional communities interested in establishing energy communities and serving as potential pilot cases within the project,
- to determine their specific potential and needs,
- to prepare the ground for targeted consultancy and expert guidance.



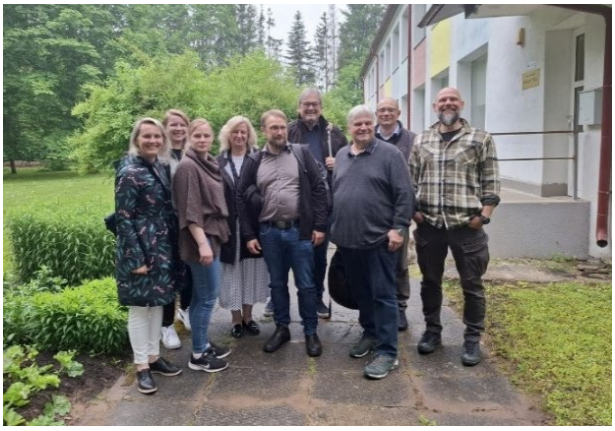
LRF received **12 applications** and selected **three potential pilot communities**—*Lapmežciems* (*Tukums* municipality), *Vārme* (*Kuldīga* municipality), and *Kalniena* (*Gulbene* municipality). During February 2025, LRF held face-to-face meetings with committed stakeholders in all three villages.[5] The purpose of these meetings was to further evaluate the actual situation, actor constellations and interests, technological framework conditions, potential and specific requirements of each pilot case.

Visit of German energy community experts to Latvia

As part of the Rural Energy Communities[LV] project, a group of three German community energy experts visited Latvia from 10 to 13 June 2025 to engage in a dialogue with local stakeholders in the selected pilot communities. The group consisted of *Thomas Leidreiter* (founder and board member of the energy cooperative *BürgerEnergie Nord eG*), *Christian Andresen* (Managing Director of *Solar-Energie Andresen GmbH and* Chairman of the Renewable Energy Association of Schleswig-Holstein) and *Dr Gilbert Sieckmann-Joucken* (City Councillor, Vice-President of the *Segeberg* District, Consultant). The group was accompanied by *Michael Krug* (HBS SH) and hosted by *Ilvija Ašmane* (Latvian Rural Forum). The three participating experts were already actively involved in the study visit of Latvian policy makers and experts in Schleswig-Holstein, which took place in October 2024. The aim of the expert visit in June 2024 was to further deepen the exchange of knowledge, experience and good

[5] See https://laukuforums.lv/latvijas-lauku-foruma-tiksanas-jurciema-par-energokopienam/ https://laukuforums.lv/otra-tiksanas-ar-potencialo-energokopienu-varme/

practice between Schleswig-Holstein and Latvia and where possible and feasible to provide advice for the emerging initiatives in Latvia. The visit included meetings and discussions with local actors from the citizen energy initiatives in *Vārme* and *Lapmežciems/Ragaciems*, rural communities in the western part of Latvia. Inspired by the open call of interest conducted by the Latvian Rural Forum, these actors are planning to establish energy communities with the aim of sharing electricity. The German experts entered a dialogue with these initiatives, discussed opportunities and challenges, and provided suggestions for practical implementation. Topics discussed were local acceptance of wind and solar farms and measures to promote local community acceptance, procedural and financial participation of citizens, perspectives and steps for establishing energy communities (e.g. cooperative), strategies for mobilising citizens, the shared use of energy, financing models and opportunities for using plug-in PV systems in Latvia. One of the key conclusions was that establishing an energy sharing community will be hardly attractive under the given framework conditions. On 12 June 2025, the group actively took part in the **7th Latvian Rural Communities Parliament** in *Mālpils*, a bi-annual event organised by LRF with around 300 participants from rural regions of Latvia. The German experts provided various inputs for two workshops on energy communities on their own experiences and good practices in the field of community energy. On 13 June 2025, the group visited the district heating company *Salaspils Siltums*, which operates an innovative solar district heating system.



11 June 2025
Visit of German energy community experts in the community of *Vārme* (Photo: Gundars Ašmanis)

11 June 2025
Dialogue of German energy community experts with community representatives from *Ragaciems* (Photo: Michael Krug)

Box 1: The three Latvian pilot energy communities identified in the project

Vārme *has 880 inhabitants and has undertaken several notable sustainability initiatives. The community was awarded the label of a 'Smart Village.' In its vicinity, a 94 MW open space solar farm is currently under construction. This project is owned by the Lithuanian developer UAB Ignitis Renewables. Commissioning is planned for 2025. Ignitis Renewables has launched a benefit sharing programme for local communities affected by the RE projects that the company implements. In Vārme, there are currently two projects funded under this programme: the project 'Smart Solar Circle 2030' provides for the installation of 100% solar lighting lanterns and video surveillance in the village. This also includes increasing the number of EV charging ports. The second project aims to improve infrastructure by renovating pedestrian sidewalks and installing environmentally friendly lighting for the sports field. Several local actors are considering creating an energy community with the aim of sharing energy among its members. Challenges are a lack of funding for the installation of PV installations on municipal buildings and the unclear terms under which an energy community can cooperate with an energy trader and surplus electricity might be sold to the grid. Another challenge for the community is the fact that Ignitis Renewables is currently planning to construct a wind farm with 20 wind turbines and a total capacity of at least 150 MW in the vicinity of the community. This raised harsh resistance among local residents and the conflict overshadows the idea of establishing an energy community.*

The coastal village ***Lapmežciems*** *has a fish market with an outdoor area and several small buildings (fryer, cooling devices, shops, etc.) which together have a high electricity consumption in summer. Several local entrepreneurs developed the idea of setting up an energy community by installing solar panels and sharing electricity. However, so far, no further steps have been taken.*

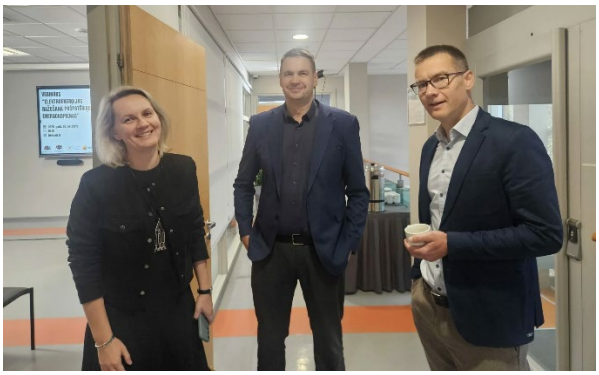
Kalniena *is a village in the northeast of Latvia forming part of the municipality of Gulbene. In the town of Gulbene, solar PV panels were installed on several municipal buildings, and projects for low-temperature heat supply and smart management of building energy systems were implemented. In Kalniena, a local community energy initiative was formed driven by private individuals and enterprises. This initiative is planning to set up an electricity sharing scheme bringing together the village's residential buildings and businesses. Of the three pilot initiatives, this initiative turned out to be the most advanced one. LRF provided tailored advice and helped to conduct a* ***preliminary assessment of the technical, legal, organisational, and economic feasibility*** *of establishing a* ***pilot energy sharing community*** *in Kalniena. These efforts culminated in the formal registration of the country's first rural pilot energy community. The energy community was founded as an association (Latvian: biedrība) on 21 September 2025 and registered as an association on 29 September 2025.*[6] *The energy community was officially registered in the Energy Community Registry on 28 October 2025. It has currently nine members, all private individuals. According to the organisation's statutes, the association forms an 'electricity energy community' engaged in production, consumption, sharing, storage, trading, or other energy services of electricity generated from renewable energy sources. The foundation of this energy community can be considered as one of the key success stories of the Rural Energy Communities*[LV] *project.*

[6] https://kalniena.lv/index.php/energokopiena-kalniena

Pre-feasibility study for *Kalniena*

The project helped to **pre-assess the technical, legal, organisational and economic feasibility** of establishing a pilot energy community in *Kalniena* (municipality of *Gulbene*). The study was carried out by external experts from the Riga Technical University considering different technological scenarios.

The assessment proposed a stepwise approach while noting that with current electricity and equipment prices, tariff structures and electricity grid export prices, the financial performance of a hybrid energy sharing scheme of 15kW including battery storage (40.5 MWh) remains rather poor with payback periods exceeding 15 years. The situation would change significantly if investment grants became available. Overall, the *Kalniena* project demonstrates a scalable and replicable model for rural Latvia.[7]



30 October 2025
Project manager *Ilvija Ašmane* (Latvian Rural Forum, left)) with *Jānis Barinskis* from the newly founded energy community in *Kalniena* (centre) and *Agris Kamenders* (Riga Technical University), author of the pre-feasibility study, during the final project conference in Riga.
(Photo: Latvian Ministry of Economy)

4 Results

Strengthened German-Latvian collaboration

During an official visit in May 2022, the Minister President of Schleswig-Holstein, *Daniel Günther*, and the President of Latvia, *Egils Levits*, formally announced their intention to intensify bilateral cooperation between Schleswig-Holstein and Latvia. The leaders identified renewable energy, medical technology, education, and scientific research as priority fields for collaboration. This political commitment has been substantiated through the *Rural Energy Communities*^{LV} project, which provides a tangible example of how high-level declarations can be operationalized. By translating political intentions into concrete practice, the project demonstrated the potential of decentralized energy solutions to serve as a bridge between regional policy objectives and transnational cooperation.

The expert study visit to Schleswig-Holstein for policymakers, regulatory authorities, energy agencies, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from Latvia proved to be highly effective. Through exposure to practical case studies and structured exchanges with local experts and pioneers in Germany, the Latvian participants gained a comprehensive understanding of the regional context, including the regulatory framework, financing and support mechanisms, stakeholder motivations, and established practices of citizen-led energy

[7] See Energokopiena Kalniena, Gulbenes novads Kopsavilkums / Summary. Available online https://laukuforums.lv/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/TEP_kopsavilkums_publicesanai.pdf

initiatives in Schleswig-Holstein. The visit enabled participants to deepen their insights into operational models, governance structures, and financing schemes, while also providing inspiration for potential adaptation in the Latvian context. In addition, the visit facilitated the establishment of bilateral contacts between Latvian experts and the managers of the visited projects, thereby laying the groundwork for continued exchange and cooperation.

Policy makers informed and successfully engaged

The virtual policy dialogues, study visits, and other project activities—including a series of information seminars and workshops conducted in Latvia—contributed significantly to strengthening relationships between the project partners and national, regional, and local policymakers. In addition, the project fostered closer cooperation between policymakers in Germany and Latvia at the cross-border and international levels.

Both partner organisations held regular online and in-person meetings with ministerial representatives to prepare the virtual policy dialogues and expert study visits. The Latvian Rural Forum (LRF) was particularly successful in engaging the Latvian Ministry of Climate and Energy as an active and knowledgeable partner in all cross-border and national project activities.

The project partners also succeeded in engaging high-level policy makers. On 25 April 2024, the German partner presented the project to the State Secretary of the Ministry of Energy Transition of Schleswig-Holstein *Joschka Knuth*. The State Secretary expressed his readiness to support the policy dialogue and encouraged the project partners to explore opportunities for developing a cross-border energy community involving citizens and stakeholders from both Latvia and Germany. The policy dialogues were attended by the State Secretary of the Ministry of Energy Transition of Schleswig-Holstein, while the project's closing event in Latvia was attended by the Latvian Minister of Climate and Energy, *Kaspars Melnis*. The closing event took place on 30 October 2025 as a hybrid event, organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Climate and Energy and other relevant stakeholders. The event addressed key aspects of electricity generation for households, businesses, and apartment buildings, covering topics ranging from the legal framework and operational principles of energy communities to practical implementation solutions and fire safety requirements. Participants were also informed about the planned support programme for energy communities, opportunities for electricity procurement from energy communities, and available energy storage solutions.

Recognition of the Latvian Rural Forum as a competence centre for energy communities

Through its active involvement in the *Rural Energy Communities*^{LV} project, the Latvian Rural Forum (LRF) has significantly strengthened its role as a central competence centre for rural energy communities in Latvia. The project has contributed to positioning LRF as a trusted information and advisory hub, providing expertise on the development, governance, and implementation of citizen-led and community-based energy initiatives. Building on its long-standing experience in rural development and stakeholder engagement, LRF has expanded its capacities in the field of renewable energy communities by facilitating knowledge exchange,

organising policy dialogues, and supporting capacity-building activities at national and local levels. As a result, LRF is increasingly recognised by policymakers, public authorities, energy agencies, and local stakeholders as a key reference point for guidance on regulatory frameworks, financing mechanisms, and practical implementation models for energy communities in rural areas. The project has further enabled LRF to strengthen its advisory role by translating international and cross-border experiences into the Latvian context and by fostering dialogue between practitioners, policymakers, and community representatives. In doing so, LRF has contributed to improving awareness, understanding, and institutional readiness for energy communities in Latvia. This enhanced role as a competence centre is expected to have a lasting impact beyond the project's duration, supporting the continued development and scaling of inclusive and sustainable rural energy communities across the country. LRF strengthened its international standing and became a supporting organisation within the European Federation of Energy Communities, REScoop.eu. During the project, *Ilvija Ašmane* successfully served as Latvia's National Expert in the European Energy Community Facility (ENERCOM).[8] She also secured Latvia's selection as the host of the Energy Community Forum 2026, which will take place in *Jūrmala*, with LRF acting as the main organiser.

Capacities built and networks developed

The *Rural Energy Communities*^{LV} project adopted a holistic, multi-level approach that effectively contributed to capacity building and network development across the community energy 'ecosystem' in Latvia and beyond. Through its diverse set of activities, the project informed, activated, and engaged a broad range of actors and stakeholders, including policymakers, regulatory authorities, rural planning regions, municipalities, local communities, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). By combining policy dialogue, capacity-building measures, and practical exchange formats, the project fostered mutual learning and facilitated the development of durable professional networks at local, regional, national, and cross-border levels. In addition, the project produced a set of quality deliverables that supported the dissemination of project results and findings. These included (updated) policy factsheets, a bilingual catalogue of showcases presented in the form of good practice fiches, model statutes for energy communities and organisational documents. Together, these outputs provide accessible and transferable resources for stakeholders interested in initiating or supporting energy communities, thereby contributing to the long-term sustainability and replicability of the project's outcomes. This broad engagement was further strengthened through a series of complementary add-on activities implemented by the project partners, which enhanced outreach, knowledge transfer, and stakeholder interaction.

Latvia's first rural energy community founded and registered

Although the prospects to establish a rural pilot energy community in the community of *Sece* have worsened during the project, the Latvian partner LRF successfully managed to identify three new potential pilot communities in a quite short period of time. The open call of interest

[8] https://energycommunitiesfacility.eu/national-expert/ilvija-asmane

launched in December 2024 did not only help to identify potential pilot communities, but also to increase the visibility of the project and to draw public attention to it. Community stakeholders, civil society organisations, NGOs, Local Action Groups, SMEs and business networks as well as other stakeholders have shown great interest in cooperation and engagement to support the creation of energy communities driven by different motivations, including reduced energy prices, energy independence, renewable and more climate-friendly energy sources, established cooperation and other aspects. LRF offered a range of capacity-building and networking activities for the most advanced pilot communities. These efforts culminated in the **formal registration of the country's first rural energy community** in the village of *Kalniena* (municipality of *Gulbene*). The energy community was founded under the legal form of an association (Latvian: *biedrība*) on 21 September 2025 and registered as an association on 29 September 2025. The energy community was officially registered in the Energy Community Registry on 28 October 2025. It has currently nine members, all private individuals. According to the organisation's statutes, the association is an 'electricity energy community' engaged in the production, consumption, sharing, storage, trading, or other energy services of electricity generated from renewable energy sources. This can be regarded as one of the most significant achievements of our project. This showcase can serve as an inspiring example for other communities in Latvia. The residents of *Kalniena* have jointly embarked on the path to energy independence by using local resources and the power of community cooperation. Although no financial support in the form of investment grants was available for the creation of the *Kalniena* energy community within the framework of the project, a technical and economic justification was developed to help understand the practical and financial aspects of creating an energy community.

German-Latvian collaboration in the field of LEADER

The project, particularly the study visit in Schleswig-Holstein helped to facilitate an information exchange between Germany/Schleswig-Holstein and Latvia in the context of the LEADER programme, particularly on the question of the extent to which LEADER and LEADER regions can facilitate the development of energy communities. During the study visit in October 2024, HBS SH organised a dedicated workshop and invited representatives from LEADER regions, the regional LEADER coordination unit in Schleswig-Holstein, and the German National Network for Rural Areas (*Deutsche Vernetzungsstelle Ländliche Räume*, *DVS*). Both HBS SH and LRF in its role as the LEADER coordination unit in Latvia are committed to continue the dialogue between LEADER regions and coordination units. The German National Network for Rural Areas and LRF emphasised their interest in a further dialogue with the German and Latvian partners. Inspired by the workshop, the good practice compilation prepared by HBS SH included a section with examples of Local Action Groups (in Schleswig-Holstein called *Aktivregionen*) facilitating the development of community energy.

5 Discussion

5.1 Achievement of Key Objectives

The project 'Catalysing and building capacities for renewable energy communities in rural Latvia' aimed to promote the development of renewable energy communities (RECs), particularly in rural regions of Latvia. The project intended to facilitate dialogue, mutual knowledge transfer and cooperation between political decision-makers and other relevant actors and stakeholders in Schleswig-Holstein and Latvia. The project also aimed to strengthen capacity development and network formation in rural regions of Latvia. Finally, the project aimed to facilitate the foundation of the first rural energy community in Latvia.

In our view, the project achieved all project objectives. It managed to facilitate the foundation and official registration of the first rural energy community in Latvia, namely in the village of *Kalniena* (municipality of *Gulbene*). This can be regarded as one of the most significant project achievements. Citizens and SMEs in *Kalniena* have jointly embarked on the path to energy independence by using local resources and the power of community cooperation. Our project helped to support this initiative by preparing a technical and economic pre-feasibility assessment to help understand the practical and financial aspects of creating an energy sharing community. The technical and organisational implementation of a socially inclusive, real-life energy sharing scheme in *Kalniena* is envisioned in the planned follow up project (see below).

5.2 Deviations of the Results Obtained

There were only few and minor deviations from the work plan. Initially it was planned to carry out a **local online stakeholder survey** in the potential pilot community of *Sece* assessing the willingness of local authorities, citizens, and SMEs to participate in a rural pilot energy community led by a local SME. Due to the increasingly unfavourable framework conditions in *Sece*, LRF decided to **modify and broaden the scope of this task**. Instead of a 'survey' in the narrow sense of the word, LRF organised an open **Call for Interest** among all communities in Latvia offering targeted advice for particularly advanced pilot initiatives. Although the prospects to establish a **rural pilot energy community in Sece** have worsened during the project, the Latvian partners successfully managed to identify **new potential pilot communities** in a quite short period of time (see above). The Call of Interest was launched in December 2024 and did not only help to identify three potential pilot communities (instead of one as initially planned), but also to significantly increase the visibility of the project and to draw public attention to it.

It is worth noting that **several project tasks and outputs have been overfulfilled** and the partners engaged in several **add-on activities.** This refers to the number of good practice cases (six instead of five), the compilation of good practices in a **dedicated report**, and the elaboration of **model statutes for energy communities in Latvia**[9] by LRF. LRF carried out three **additional seminars** for interested planning regions and held **additional physical and online meetings** with three potential pilot communities.

[9] See https://laukuforums.lv/energokopienu-statutu-paraugs/

On 8 April 205, LRF joined a meeting in the Ministry of Climate and Energy where 12 experts mainly from energy providers discussed the perspectives of energy communities, energy sharing and the net accounting system. Moreover, on 21 May 2025, LRF organised a **high-level seminar** titled 'What is the overall goal of energy communities and the purpose of its activities in rural Latvia?' The seminar addressed key market actors including project developers, energy providers and traders, and DSOs. This event was organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Climate and Energy and other stakeholders and gathered 24 persons. LRF also co-organised a **concluding project conference** which was held as a hybrid event on 30 October 2025.[10]

5.3 Working with Cooperation Partners

Both partner organisations organised regular online and face-to-face meetings with ministry officials to prepare for the virtual policy dialogues and expert visit. LRF succeeded in engaging the Latvian Ministry of Climate and Energy as an active partner in most of the events. The collaboration with the Planning Regions and municipalities was also very fruitful and constructive.

5.4 What is Lacking for the Uptake of Energy Communities?

The showcases demonstrated during the study visit in Germany clearly illustrate that community projects may offer various co-benefits including local income generation, tax revenues, added value and job creation, rural development, social cohesion, community support and acceptance of projects. Under certain conditions energy sharing can help to reduce grid bottlenecks and reduce strain on the power grids. At the same time, energy communities face structural disadvantages compared to traditional market actors like cumbersome decision-making, less favourable project financing conditions, less possibilities to make use of economies of scale etc. Therefore, it appears to be justified to incentivise the development of such collective approaches. The revised Renewable Energy Directive (RED II) explicitly requires all Member States to develop an enabling framework for renewable energy communities and to take their specificities into account when developing support schemes for renewable energy.

In December 2024, the Latvian government launched legislation providing a regulatory framework for energy communities and energy sharing transposing European rules. This is a fundamental pre-requisite for establishing functioning energy communities in the future. However, the government pursues a liberal policy approach and intends to reach a level playing field for all market actors. It is reluctant to introduce privileges for any market actor or stakeholder group. Therefore, it does not foresee any accompanying promotional measures like other European countries, e.g. stimulating energy sharing schemes through reduced grid charges, special market premiums etc. In our view, the Latvian government should not only create the legal foundations for energy communities and energy sharing schemes but also develop an effective enabling framework for energy communities as requested by European legislation. The government should actively support the development of pilot projects, particularly in rural regions which may serve as lighthouses and help to gain experience with

[10] The presentations and recordings are available here: https://www.em.gov.lv/lv/notikums/elektroenergijas-razosana-paspaterinam-energokopienas

this novel concept, e.g. by providing seed money for pilot projects. The citizen energy fund established by the state government of Schleswig-Holstein may serve as an orientation. The government should also provide information and guidance to municipalities and other community actors.

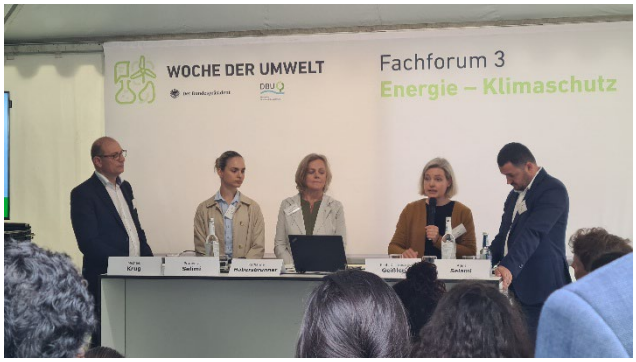
6 Public Outreach

6.1 Key Outreach Activities

Both partners carried out continuous public outreach activities. Each partner has a dedicated section informing about the project on its website. Both partner organisations publish regular newsletters in which they informed about the project events and activities. The newsletter of HBS SH has 514 subscribers. The sister project *bewirk.SH* implemented by HBS SH has more than 500 subscribers. Both newsletters informed about the project and promoted the Virtual Policy Dialogue. Furthermore, the Virtual Policy Dialogue was promoted by the German Citizen Energy Alliance (*Bündnis Bürgerenergie e.V.*) via their website[11], LinkedIn and Facebook.[12]
LRF produced various communication materials which are available on the organisation's website[13] and which were disseminated via social media and the LRF bi-weekly newsletters. LRF sends out bi-weekly newsletters to its members. The organisation is also very active on Facebook. For now, LRF has 270 subscribers for the newsletter, 7000 followers on Facebook and 130 in LinkedIn. LRF published one press release in national media.[14]
Both partners presented the project in the frame of other seminars and events organised by the partner organisations or third organisations. On 31 January 2025, HBS SH organised the so called *Böll Covenant*, a one-day conference titled 'Social Resilience - What Holds Society Together?' The covenant encompassed several parallel workshop sessions. In cooperation with *Maura Rafelt* from the sister project *bewirk.SH*, *Michael Krug* led one workshop session titled '*What role can community energy and energy communities play in strengthening social resilience?*' In his presentation, he also referred to the project Rural Energy Communities[LV]. On 12 November 2025, *Michael Krug* presented the project to a group of German and Latvian pupils and teachers visiting Schleswig-Holstein in the frame of the sister project '*Action Weeks: Future energies – learning from the past for the future, recognising opportunities and acting together*'.
LRF joined several seminars and events organised by other institutions in Latvia and abroad. In February 2024, LRF contributed to an event organised by the Riga Planning Region with a presentation about the project. In May 2024, the Latvian Wind Energy Association organised a discussion about community energy in which LRF was participating. Moreover, LRF was invited to give an **expert interview** on community energy in the project POWERyouth. *Ilvija Ašmane* (LRF) participated in the 6th European Rural Parliament held from 21-23 October 2025

[11] https://www.buendnis-buergerenergie.de/aktuelles/artikel/2024-6-26/virtueller-politikdialog-zwischen-schleswig-holstein-und-lettland
[12] https://www.facebook.com/100064306795046/posts/834149002071985/
[13] https://laukuforums.lv/project/energokopienu-stiprinasana-latvijas-lauku-teritorijas/
[14] https://lvportals.lv/dienaskartiba/370817-biedriba-latvijas-lauku-forums-aicina-lauku-iedzivotajus-pieteikties-atbalstam-lai-noskaidrotu-savas-kopienas-potencialu-klut-par-energokopienu-2024

in Scotland. She joined the *Energy Futures* study visit to Udny, where she moderated a workshop session on energy community support systems in different countries.
On 3 January 2025, *Ilvija Ašmane* (LRF) was invited to a **radio interview**[15] together with *Gunārs Valdmanis* from the Latvian Ministry of Climate and Energy and one expert from an SME who participated in the study visit and who is also considering setting up an energy community in cooperation with other stakeholders.
On 4 June 2024, the project coordinator *Michael Krug* (Heinrich Boell Foundation Schleswig-Holstein) was invited by the Technical University of Berlin to take part in the panel discussion *'Citizens' Engagement in the Energy Transition: Community Energy Concepts in Central and Eastern Europe'* organised during the DBU 'Week of the Environment' (*Woche der Umwelt*) in the premises of the Federal President of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier at *Schloss Bellevue* in Berlin. The panel discussion brought together 50 experts from Germany, the Baltics and Western Balkan countries to discuss the critical role of energy communities. The panel discussion was held as part of the ongoing DBU project '*Citizen Energy in Central and Eastern European Countries*'.



Panel discussion on 4 June 2024 (Photo: DBU)

On 6 November 2024, both project partners took part in the **Online Status Workshop** for DBU-funded citizen energy projects in Central and Eastern European countries organised by the Technical University of Berlin on behalf of DBU. The event brought together 30 experts from Germany, Central and Eastern European and Western Balkan countries to discuss the critical role of energy communities and facilitate networking and exchange of experiences.
Both partners contributed to the **DBU conference** which took place in Budapest on 8-9 May 2025 with a project dialogue session '*What Makes a Successful Community Energy Project? The Case of Latvian-German Collaboration'.* Both partners are planning to contribute to a **joint publication led by the Technical University of Berlin** in cooperation with DBU and the coordinators of the sister projects funded by DBU in the citizen energy cluster.

6.2 Beneficiaries of Project Outputs and Results

The main beneficiaries of the project outputs and results are emerging energy communities, the Regional Planning Regions, local authorities, SMEs, civil society organisations, and citizens. We also see policy makers and public authorities concerned with an enabling framework for energy communities as secondary beneficiaries. The project empowers particularly emerging communities and initiatives by providing them access to inspiring and replicable showcases, structured and practical guidance and model statutes/templates to start operation or to operate more effectively and sustainably. The Regional Planning Regions also gain access to information, replicable models and guidance, enabling them also to integrate collective

[15] https://lr1.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/ka-labak-dziivot/energokopienu-veidosana-latvija.a201238/

energy solutions into broader development strategies. Local authorities benefit from enhanced knowledge and capacity to support community energy initiatives, and foster citizen participation. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) profit from new opportunities in energy sharing, renewable energy services, technology deployment, and community-based business models. Policy makers and concerned public authorities gain insight in the transposition and implementation of relevant EU legislation in the partner countries and beyond, the respective policy and regulatory frameworks, support schemes and funding mechanisms.

6.3 Outlook and Follow-up Activities

The project partners have successfully applied for DBU funding to implement a follow-up project. The follow-up project aims to support the practical implementation of the first rural lighthouse/pilot energy sharing community in the municipality of *Kalniena* in close cooperation with the recently established energy community, local citizens, SMEs, and local authorities. The energy community plans installing solar PV facilities including battery storage either on one or several private or municipal (e.g., city hall, school, social service building) buildings functioning as a nucleus and energy sharing facility for the future energy community. The main purpose of the energy community is to collectively invest in a PV plant and battery storage and share the produced electricity among the members of the energy community. In the proposed project, special attention will be paid to practical solutions to mobilise/empower vulnerable households, particularly low-income households and elderly/disabled people, either directly as members of the energy community or indirectly via redistributive solidarity models.

7 Conclusion

The chosen approach has proven to be successful. The project clearly demonstrates that favourable economic framework conditions, together with a supportive legal and regulatory environment, are crucial for the uptake and long-term viability of energy communities. In retrospect, the project objectives were realistic and well defined, and no adjustments would have been necessary. The results confirm that energy communities are not solely a matter of decentralised energy production but also depend fundamentally on the capacity of local citizens to cooperate, plan collectively, and assume responsibility for the future development of their communities. In this context, social cohesion, trust, and local organisational capacity emerged as key enabling factors alongside technical and financial considerations.

The project further showed that a conducive legal and regulatory framework is an essential precondition for the successful establishment and scaling of rural energy communities. Clear rules, legal certainty, and appropriate incentives significantly reduce barriers for citizen participation and investment. At the same time, targeted support structures and advisory services are needed to translate regulatory opportunities into concrete local action.

Overall, the project represents an important step towards a greener, more sustainable, and economically viable Latvian countryside. It provides valuable insights and practical lessons that can inform future policy development, replication efforts, and capacity-building initiatives. By

strengthening local ownership and participation in the energy transition, rural energy communities can contribute not only to climate and energy goals, but also to regional development, social inclusion, and long-term resilience in rural areas.