

Project acronym: EnergyPROSPECTS
Title: PROactive Strategies and Policies
for Energy Citizenship Transformation
Grant Agreement number: 101022492



EMPOWERMENT TOOLKIT AND KNOWLEDGE REPOSITORY

EnergyPROSPECTS partners

University of Galway (UoG)
University Road, H91 TK33, Galway, Ireland



Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB),
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt 50-1050, Bruxelles, Belgium



GreenDependent Institute (GDI),
2100 Gödöllő, Éva u. 4., Hungary



Universiteit Maastricht (UM),
Minderbroedersberg 4-6, 6200 MD, Maastricht,
Netherlands



**Applied Research and Communications Fund (ARC
Fund),** Alexander Zhendov Street 5, 1113, Sofia,
Bulgaria



Notre Europe – Institut Jacques Delors (JDI),
18, rue de Londres 75009, Paris, France



University of Latvia (UL),
Raiņa bulvāris 19, LV-1586, Riga, Latvia



Technische Universität Berlin (TUB),
Straße des 17. Juni 135, 10623, Berlin, Germany



Universidade da Coruña (UDC),
Rúa da Maestranza 9, 15001 A Coruña, Spain



Acknowledgment: EnergyPROSPECTS is a Horizon 2020 project funded by the European Commission under Grant Agreement No. 101022492.

Disclaimer: the views and opinions expressed in this publication are the sole responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

Fostering individual empowerment.

Types of motivation and their impact on energy citizenship

Now that we have answered some basic questions on motivation, we now focus on what motivates people (including perhaps yourself) to act. Also, we ask *would it be possible to use my personal interests for further (even collective) action on sustainable lifestyles?*

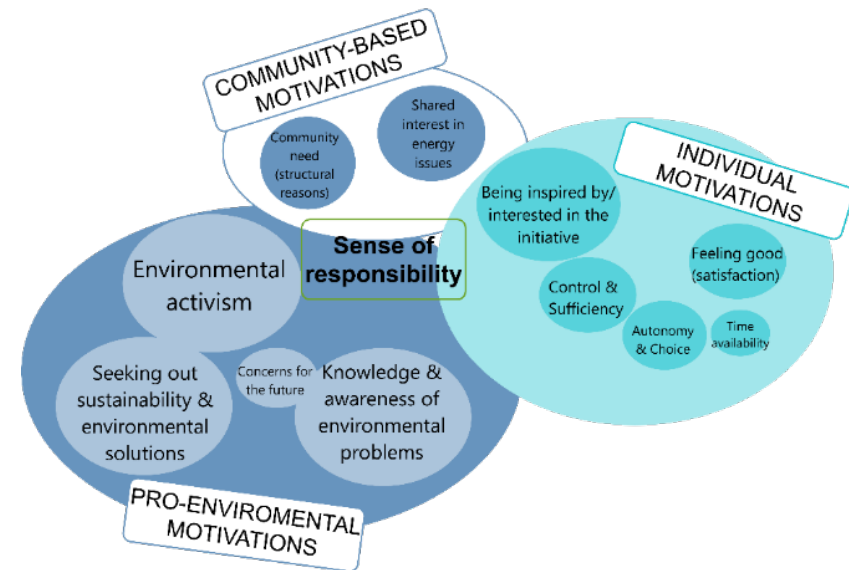
Keep your notes handy, and let's see what other people tell us. You may well be surprised to learn that motivations we encountered are not so far from removed what you yourself have written!

We have conducted in-depth interviews with 52 people whose actions have a positive bearing on the energy transition and who have an impact on others. The aim was to find out what motivates them to get involved in ENCI initiatives and how they are empowered through them. These actions are either:

- individual (e.g. as social media influencers)
- collective (e.g. volunteers, workers, founders and members of production and consumption cooperatives, founders and residents of co-housing, policy makers and representatives of citizen participation associations, social movements, etc.)

In Figure 1 a series of concepts are displayed. This figure reveals the complexity of motivations people face in moving towards a low-emission energy system.

Figure 1. Factors motivating energy citizenship.



In the above image, we illustrate in circles three types of motivations: individual, community-based and pro-environmental motivations. We must note that some care must be taken when interpreting this information! The image contributes to a better understanding of the idea of motivation, although it is difficult to view them as isolated and independent elements. At the centre of motivation is a sense of individual and collection responsibility with respect to the environment:

We are not environmental freaks, but we want to contribute to this. The reduction in energy bills is a nice perk. Doing something about the energy transition and climate change since this is the way forward as a society (Interview 28, Energy cooperative).

Individual motivations. It includes the desire for self-reliance and the inspiration for certain collective initiatives, which are integrated under the banner of energy citizenship, and assess what they represent for these people.

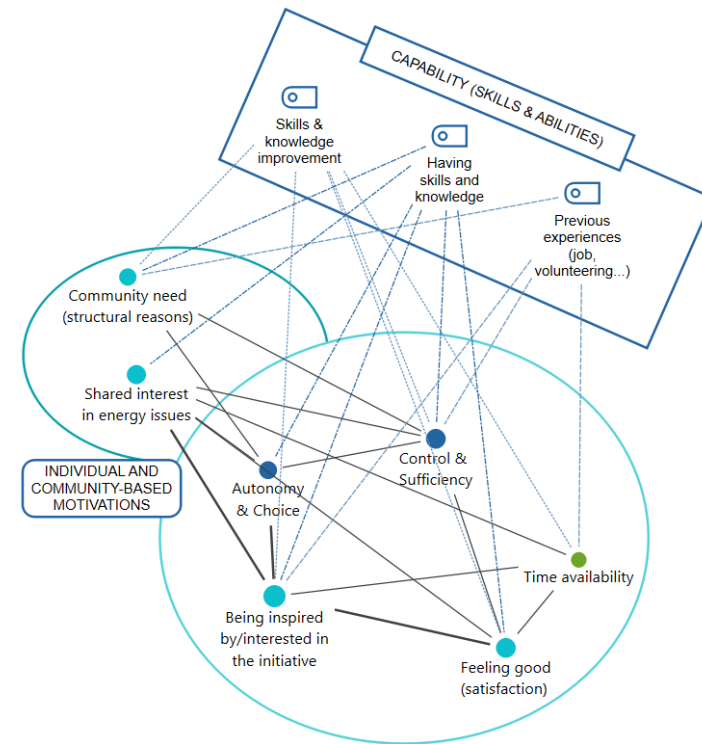
- **Autonomy and choice.** Many people make changes in their energy-related behaviour because "There is a choice. I am the one who always says that everyone always has a choice" (Interview 23, individual energy citizen). It is also important to "start with oneself" (Interview 33, energy cooperative) by incorporating changes in home, such as DIY solutions, installing solar panels. These changes are a demonstration of the personal empowerment and choices they feel they have in the matter.
- **Feeling good.** Introducing these changes offer people the opportunity to improve their life satisfaction ["When you do it, it makes you feel good, even if you still don't have much experience." (Interview 6, energy consumption and production association)].
- **Control and sufficiency.** In certain cases, they give people the means to become self-sufficient "owning own energy production micro-solution was an attractive idea to increase self-sufficiency" (Interview 53, cooperation project for renewable energy production) and regain some control over their lives:

The fact that I use the primary energy of the sun makes me less dependent on energy suppliers who somehow sell gas or oil, and therefore, it makes me more flexible and independent. I can also further increase my degree of independence, technically, by deciding to install an additional battery storage system at my home, which I have not yet done (...) that makes you more independent, And that's a good feeling (Interview 49, energy cooperative).

- **Time availability.** To a lesser extent, people see their time as both a motivation and a hindrance: "Time, on my part, too, time to be able to think about it and devote to it, well, they gave me the tools to get involved" (Interview 39, energy cooperative) which makes many people reluctant to make certain changes or to become actively involved in collective ENCI initiatives (see '[resources and barriers](#)').
- **Inspiration/interest in a initiative.** Whether you have the sufficient skillset, bear in mind that you can learn while you practice! Not all people currently involved in these actions set out from a deep-rooted knowledge of energy-related issues. As one of our respondents points out "at the beginning, I had

very little knowledge in this subject. It was not my area of expertise. Definitely. But yes, it's exciting in any case to better understand how it works" (Interview 9, Mobility cooperative).

Figure 2. Links between individual and community-based motivation and their relationship with capability



Indeed, through contact with other people, groups, and organisations users have gained a better understanding of how the energy system works.

Community-based motivations. Inspiration or interest in the characteristics and functioning of collective energy citizenship agency initiatives has been a driving force for many people to become actively involved in the transition to a zero-

emission energy system.

- **Shared interest in energy issues.** For some of the respondents, this inspiration was not, provided by the initiative directly, rather through people close to them with whom they share an interest. Having people close to them with shared interests is an important driver of behavioural change. It could not be clearer than with this statement: "the first point is that, indeed, you work together to create and work out the project together while having fun together to view a common result" (Interview 49, energy cooperative).
- **Community need.** There is also the search for community solutions to structurally based needs (e.g. renovation of buildings, supplying electricity in remote places, fighting together against weather phenomena).

Pro-environmental motivations. There is a very broad set of factors within this type of motivations. Among the most prominent are:

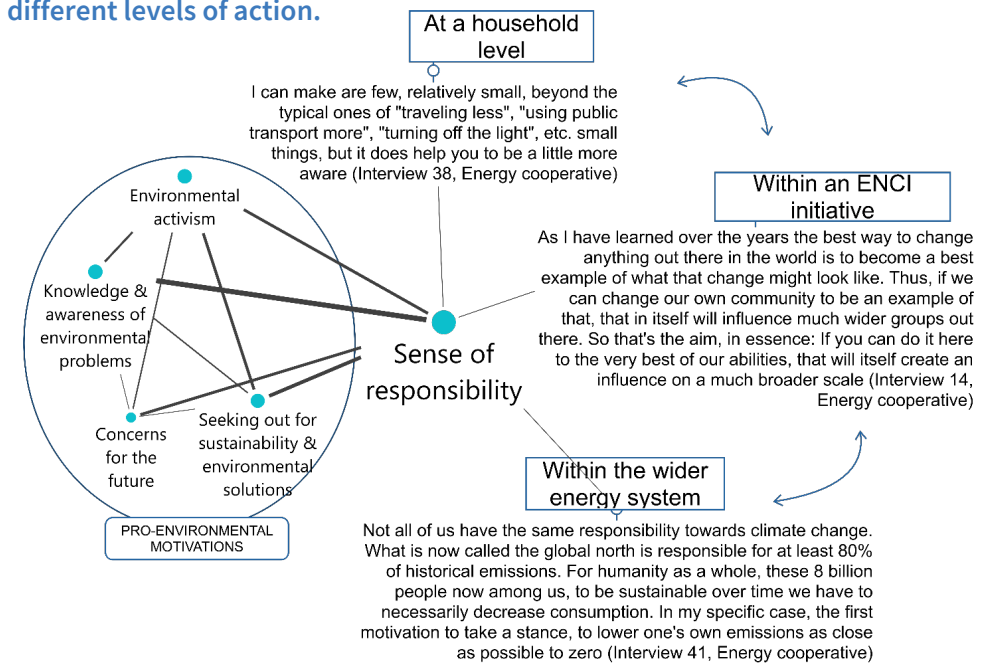
- **Knowledge and awareness of environmental problems.** This awareness is a call to action, especially when it is intertwined with concern for the future that will be left behind for coming generations: "We did not inherit this earth from our parents, we have it on loan from our children". That appealed to me enormously. I wanted to try it for my son and for other kids" (Interview 14, Energy cooperative)].
- **Environmental activism.** Many people become actively involved in a wide array of environmental movements, organisations, and activist groups to react against social and, above all, political inertia: "we can't expect everything from the state. We also need citizens to get involved, if only to go and prod our elected representatives to spring them into action, but also, I think, to further themselves through these actions" (Interview 6, energy consumption and production association)].
- **Seeking out sustainability and environmental solutions.** Instead of getting involved in a visible way, some people try to make their small contributions by finding environmental and sustainable solutions that are helpful to other people: "I don't do it for, you know, honour and glory. It's just that, intrinsically, I think we should also help people or citizens or businesses here

to reach the next level in terms of sustainability" (Interview 29, Energy Cooperative). It involves everyone doing our part:

I think that we can act from an individual point of view and that's what will be useful. It's not so much about responsibility or I would say that everybody should take care of producing their own energy. But if you want to be useful, if you want to do something that has an impact, do something very concrete that you can do, that doesn't cost much (Interview 7, Energy cooperative).

In conclusion, to return to the concept of responsibility that drives most of our respondents to act at three different levels, as we try to illustrate in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Pro-environmental motivations and the sense of responsibility: different levels of action.



[Please, go to „List of commitments for action”]

List of commitments for action

Being an Energy Citizen is not a matter of all or nothing. It ranges from baby steps to full-scale actions. The level of commitment depends on yourself, your motivations and interests, your perception of your capacities, autonomy and choices. We encourage you to start by committing yourself to a few actions. Let's see what you think of these:

- I will reduce my energy consumption through new habits, such as turning off appliances on standby or turning the light off when it is not needed.
- I will start becoming involved by making changes in my home, such as controlling my energy consumption with web or mobile applications.
- I will investigate the advantages of installing solar panel and think whether is worth it to be self-sufficient.
- I will participate in a more transformative change, e.g. I will find out about how to install solar panels (or another type of system) in my place and what advantages it would bring to the community to be able to discuss it and carry it out.
- I already control my energy consumption at home, but now I want to involve more people and create social awareness, both in my workplace and within my inner circle. I will propose the idea of participating to some extent in the energy transition and converting the building into an energetically sustainable one.
- I will learn more about energy communities and the energy transition (e.g. going to conferences and workshops where I can learn about others' experiences and gain scientific knowledge).
- I will join a group of people with whom I share the same interest related to the energy transition and who inspire me to move forward in this topic, or even I can even become the motivation for others.
- I am already involved in energy transition, but I think that the current legislation falls short and with my experience I can contribute valuable ideas. I will initiate the procedure so that citizens can propose to congress the adoption of legislative measures to promote energy citizenship.
- I will find out about planes and government and European projects to participate in any of them. These projects can provide me with a lot of knowledge that will enrich me and new companies with which to share ideas and create a community.
- I have knowledge and contacts. I am going to start a transforming energy citizenship project in which different citizens, associations, political parties and organizations can participate, and that has a greater impact on energy sovereignty at the local level.
- I have knowledge and I want to share it with others. I will do informative workshops, both for the general public and for people active in the energy transition. I want to be a driver and help for others.
- I am willing to actively participate in demonstrations or strikes, even to initiate it with different contacts (NGOs, unions...) to demand changes. We are very concerned and not everything is in our hands, so we demand more responsibility from the rulers and we want the whole world to see it.

