



# ALLIES

Activating and Learning from  
Local Investments in Energy Savings



## ALLIES Virtual and Interactive Final Conference and ADB meeting Fostering Local Energy Transition Documentation May 26 and May 12, 2020

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Supported by:



Federal Ministry for the  
Environment, Nature Conservation,  
Building and Nuclear Safety



based on a decision of the German Bundestag



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## 1 BACKGROUND, AGENDA, OBJECTIVES, CENTRAL MESSAGE

The ALLIES Final Conference was originally planned as a physical meeting on the island Krk, Croatia including a meeting of the ALLIES Advisory and Dissemination Board. Due to the coronavirus pandemic we reorganised and held two separate virtual events, the ADB meeting May 12 and two weeks later a one day Virtual and Interactive Final Conference. This documentation recaps both conferences, moderated by Ludwig Karg (CEO B.A.U.M. Consult).

The project results, challenges encountered along the way and the different experiences of the project partners KÖVET and FEWE will be made available in a Whitebook which will be published on the [ALLIES website](#), July 2020.

AGENDA ADB MEETING, MAY 12, 2020		
9:00	Introduction and status of ALLIES project	Rainer Kant (B.A.U.M. eV)
9:15	KÖVET's core learnings in ALLIES – Hungary	Katalin Herner, Tamas Trenyik (KÖVET)
9:30	FEWE's core learnings in ALLIES - Poland	Szymon Liszka , Jan Twardowski (FEWE)
9:45	Core learnings in ALLIES in Allgäu	Ludwig Karg (B.A.U.M. Consult GmbH)
10:00	expectations and outline of interactive discussion	Ludwig Karg
10:15	<i>coffee break</i>	
10:45	Interactive discussion on LFEEE pilots, challenges and replicability in ADB structures (with virtual white board)	two groups: 1) Ludwig Karg 2) Laura Börner (B.-C), Rainer Kant
11:45	Final wrap up in plenum	Ludwig Karg

### Agenda of the ADB meeting

AGENDA, ALLIES INTERACTIVE AND VIRTUAL FINAL CONFERENCE, MAY 26, 2020	
09:00	Welcome & introduction to ALLIES
09:20	ALLIES in the frame of European developments on local energy transition
10:15	ALLIES in the EUKI community
10:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
10:45	The ALLIES concept: Learnings and prospects
11:30	ALLIES, a role model for future economy and society?
11:55	Introduction to breakout sessions
12:00	<i>Lunch break</i>
13:00	Validation of ALLIES approach for Balkan, Baltic and Mediterranean countries
14:00	Recap of the working group results
14:30	Virtual market place
17:00	<i>Goodbye</i>

### Agenda of the ALLIES Interactive and Virtual Final Conference



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This marks the end of the EUKI funded project beginning January 2018 and concluding June 2020. In the project, lead partner B.A.U.M. e.V., Germany supported the partners, KÖVET Association, Hungary and FEWE, Poland in their endeavour to adapt the German REEG – model of Regional Energy Efficiency Cooperatives to their national and local contexts.

The slides of the conferences are available on ALLIES website:

<https://allies-project.eu/News/23/Final-Conference-of-the-EUKI-project-ALLIES>

The two main objectives of both conferences were to

1) discuss options for integrating the ALLIES model of so called LFEEEs – Locally-rooted Financing Entities for Energy Efficiency within the broader notion of the EC's concept of Citizen/Renewable Energy Communities;

2) drawing on the project partners' experiences, investigate into the challenges and prospects for replicating the LFEEE model in other countries, in specific, in South-East Europe, the Baltic countries and the (European) Mediterranean.

Finally, the conference made it possible for experts to ad hoc network – despite the coronavirus - on financing and fostering local energy transition in a Virtual Market Place.

## 2 THE ALLIES PROJECT: LESSONS LEARNED

After a brief introduction to the basic parameters of the ALLIES project by lead partner Rainer Kant from BAUM e.V., the project partners KÖVET, HU and FEWE, PL discussed the main challenges they experienced in setting up an LFEEE in their national and local contexts.

### 2.1 ALLIES in Hungary

Below, we see an excerpt of some of the challenges KÖVET discussed in the ADB meeting.

**Discussion: Challenges**

- Ch 1: Hungarian legal framework  
>>> Sol 1: at the beginning of the project we had to learn about the legal framework and find out about alternative ways
- Ch 2: financial framework: private lending and collecting money is difficult due to bureaucratic financial, legal obstacles and lack of confidence in a new system  
Financial resources are sufficiently at hand from various sources (mainly banks), but awareness is lacking on how to tap them  
>>> Sol 2: to involve an organization who already possesses permissions, IT and expert background and is reliable (Community Bank)
- Ch 3: project management: so far KÖVET Association gained experience in practical sustainability projects, this is an entirely different approach of sustainability  
>>> Sol 3: to find a financial expert, improve staff' skills in legal and technical field

ADB Meeting May 12, 2020 18

KÖVET: Challenges when setting up an LFEEE in HU



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Step by step, KÖVET first identified important stakeholders/multipliers for the LFEEE. Luckily, they came across MagnetBank which is the only community bank in Hungary and also a member in KÖVET. In this case their **OWN STAKEHOLDER NETWORK** proved extremely helpful in finding the key partner in setting up an LFEEE.

Generally, building an LFEEE is a weary and slow process which demands many talks, coordination and marketing activities, promotion, road shows, workshops, conferences etc.

As one project of the LFEEE KÖVET distinguished the refurbishment of a thermal bath in a town in Zala owned by the local government. The plan is to install a solar panel system to cut costs. To this end 100 local community members which are somehow connected to the facility each contribute 1.430,00 Euro - to ensure the bank loan till the end of the project.

Unfortunately, due to the covid-19 crisis which hit tourism especially hard the project has not yet been launched. The plans for the retrofit are finalized and once the crisis is over the project implementation can begin within a few months.

On the question from the ADB, what are the risks for the deposit owners? KÖVET explained, generally, the conditions of these deposits do not differ from normal bank deposits. However, the risk is minimized because the deposit owners have a say in the choice of companies to do the works and other decisive questions and thus can influence the prospects of the project. But they have no role in management.

In Hungary, it makes sense to choose the tourism sector for LFEEE financed projects because it otherwise does not have the capital for EE investments.

## 2.2 ALLIES in Poland

When explaining the process of setting up an LFEEE in Poland, FEWE first stated that cooperatives - which have proven successful in Germany - cannot work in Poland and many other Eastern Europe former socialist countries due to negative historical connotations.

Generally, in Poland, EE is always only second best and never first priority. It always comes after improving air quality, living comfort in buildings and the like.

This is why it is more difficult to justify applying for money for EE than for other projects.

Private capital to invest in EE is lacking.

There are several (public) support mechanisms on the market and privately financed projects are not attractive. People expect EE projects to be publicly subsidized.

A further barrier for energy savings is that the energy prices in Poland are relatively low and this again undermines incentives for investing in EE.

The Polish government pursues the objective to maintain low energy prices so that consumers can afford them. This again is contra-productive to the idea behind ALLIES that energy savings can save costs.



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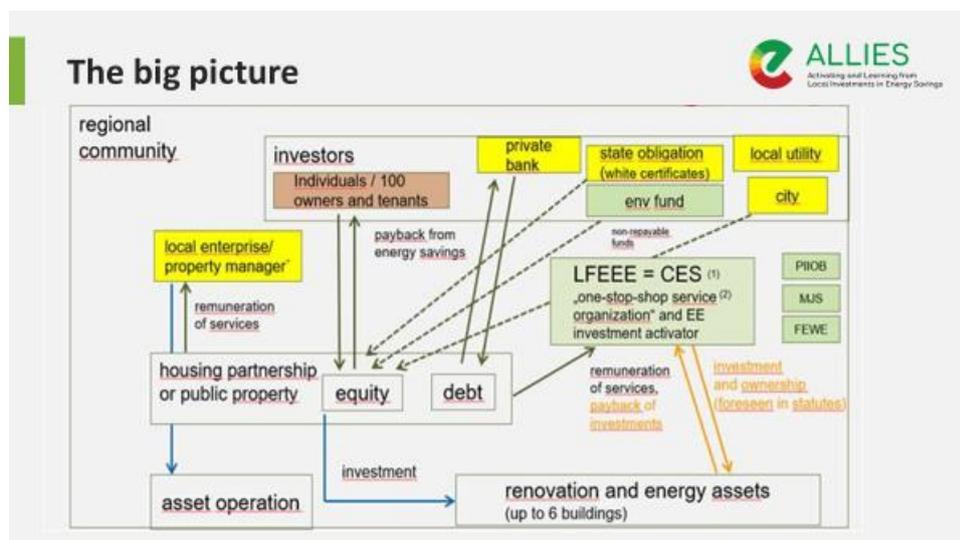
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Additionally, the legislative framework for EE projects is unclear, see, for example, white certificates. These were developed, in concept, for EE projects to be possible to be implemented in line with commercial financing in order to make investments in EE more profitable. However, this supportive mechanism doesn't work properly in Poland.

Thus, EE policies are suboptimal in Poland which makes the one-stop-shop idea very attractive. Accordingly, FEWE pursued to set up a new company working on a one-stop-shop basis offering services from the beginning of the feasibility studies of an investment project through planning such as technical design, selecting contractors for the works up to support in commissioning project verification. However, it is especially costly and difficult to sell this on a market which is used to selecting the cheapest offer.

So FEWE turned to a new opportunity: the EC ELENA mechanism through the EIB. In recent years institutional funding through ELENA (institutional funding) has been highly promoted in Eastern Europe, because it had not been popular there before. ELENA also finances preparatory works leading to EE projects and is thus very attractive for FEWE's objectives in ALLIES of setting up a one-stop-shop.

FEWE's proposal for thermo-modernization of residential, multifamily (cooperative) buildings in Silesia received preliminary approval by EIB. However, the EIB needed guarantees of FEWE which FEWE had difficulties in providing. So, instead, FEWE proposed the project to a private entity RFE owned to 100% by the Silesian government. FEWE prepared a concept for adapting the structure of RFE to become a one-stop-shop as conceptualized in ALLIES. The figure below visualizes the main actors in the Polish LFEEE and their relationships.



The LFEEE model in Poland



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## 2.3 ALLIES in Allgäu, Germany

In Allgäu, Southwest Germany, B.A.U.M. Consult prompted the discussion among the regional energy agency eza!, the traditional energy supplier AÜW – Allgäuer Überlandwerk GmbH, the association of regional waste management ZAK - Zweckverband für Abfallwirtschaft, the local banks Sparkasse/Raiffeisenbank and the climate protection management of the county on:

Is there a need to establish a REEG or an LFEEE in Allgäu?

While financial resources are available and banks are willing and able to finance good projects the challenge in the Allgäu is that many municipalities aren't aware that they are qualified for getting advice and money for energy efficiency investments/projects.

Therefore, a one-stop shop is highly attractive because it offers all services from the idea to finances to implementing means and measures and managing cash flows back and forth on long term like 20 years. Before the decision was made if the partners will join forces to formally establish an LFEEE this question was tested in the context of implementing two energy savings projects in a municipality and in a hotel. The result was that the municipality doesn't really need it, the hotel may benefit from such a structure, however, then the coronavirus put all developments to a stop.

In the meantime, the Climate plan 2040 for Allgäu came into being. This initiative calls for implementation of 100.000 energy efficiency projects. This demands high financial investments which the banks could stem. However, they, too face restrictions due to lacking expertise, Basel III regulations and others. Furthermore, lacking private equity may challenge the implementation of some projects. Therefore, a combination of private equity and contributions from the LFEEE may provide a solution. Against this background, Allgäu climate action stakeholders agreed to the need of an entity to attract the necessary investments to implement climate activities including public funds. To date, it is not yet decided if this will be an LFEEE, a cooperative or the like. One option is that eza! adapts their statutes and they collect investments.

Simon Steuer, climate mitigation manager from the county: "One problem is that strict regulations on data privacy hinder cooperation among stakeholders. Consultants cannot pass on the data to banks and vice versa. A one stop shop would provide a solution to this problem".

As a bottom line, there are other possible legal forms like citizen shareholder companies, see for example "Regionalwert", as Teubner (ICLEI) added. However, generally, the legislative framework in Germany is favourable to cooperatives in comparison to stock market companies.

CEC/REC don't state specifically that the institutions have to be cooperatives formally but the governance structure is similar. Operating as cooperatives gives you benefits over stock companies, shareholder companies or ltd. companies

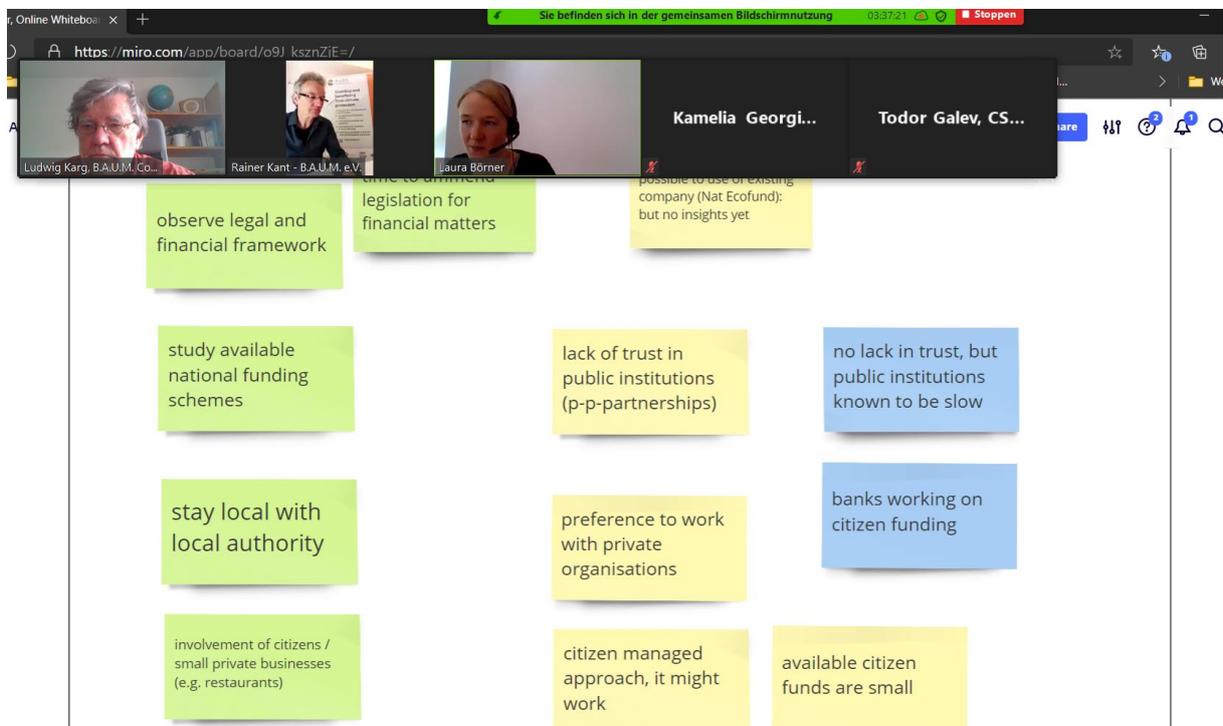


## 3 WORKING GROUPS: REPLICABILITY OF ALLIES

In the second half of the ADB meeting the participants split up in two working groups to discuss the replicability of the ALLIES models in other contexts and countries based on the lessons learned from the two pilot cases.

### 3.1 Working group Hungary and Southeast Europe

The experience in Hungary showed that it is crucial to be well familiar with the legal and financial framework. It takes time to amend legislation like two years to make the needed adjustment. Be familiar with national funding schemes, stay in touch with local authority and citizens. The figure below sums up the discussion in the working group.



Whiteboard, working group Southeast Europe

In Bulgaria, there is a lack of trust in public institutions. Therefore, public funding may thus not be feasible and working with private organisations may be preferred. Motivation can be increased if citizens are involved in the projects. Need of knowledge transfer between banks between countries. Network of stakeholders is important. It could be helpful to connect to key networks such as networks of municipalities or ESCO companies. Also, use the chance to connect supporting stakeholders on national level.

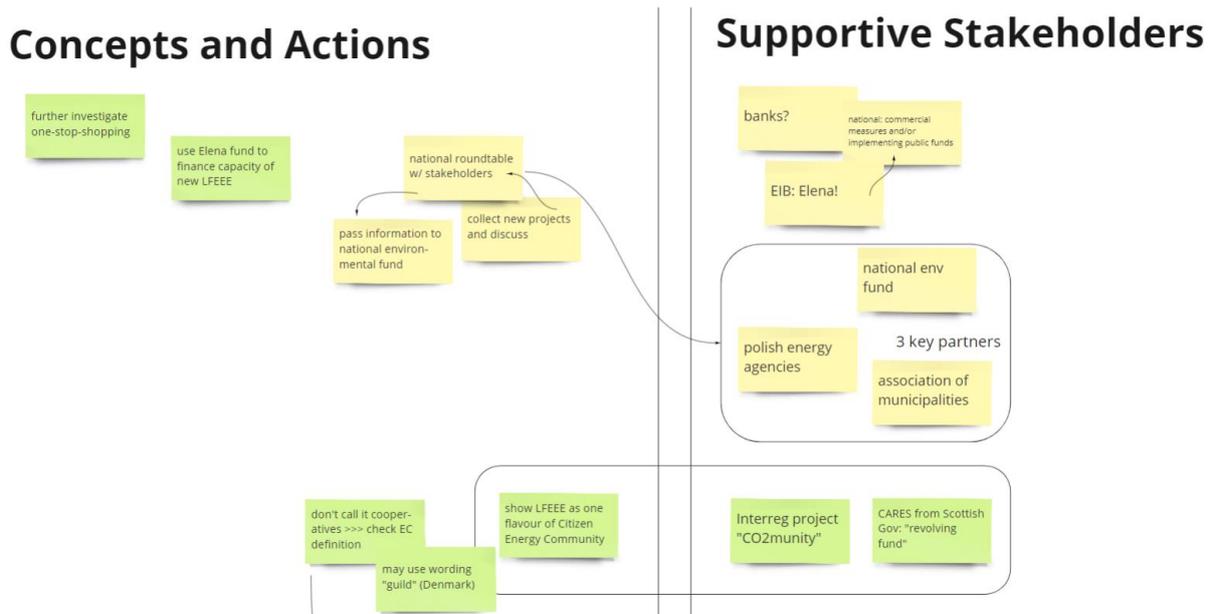


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## 3.2 Working group Poland and the Baltics

The experience in Poland shows that it makes sense to combine funding through banks which favour commercial measures like deposits as we see in Hungary with funding programmes like ELENA or national funds. The figure below recaps the discussion in the working group.



### Whiteboard, working group Poland and the Baltics

How can we take it further in PL?

- Gather Env Fund, energy agencies, association of municipalities in national roundtables. Institutions would describe plans and projects. Banks could fund them then.

We could run ALLIES through existing frameworks in existing programmes such as the Interreg Baltic Sea Region CO2munity or the funding scheme CARES by the Scottish government- all reflecting developments in implementing REC/CEC.

Don't call it cooperatives but maybe Guild (DK) or Hanse. This leads to the question how to communicate the concept.

SEI Swedish Energy Institute has a project, ALLIES could be integrated here.

The ADB meeting ended with an outlook on the ALLIES Virtual and Interactive Final Conference which took place two weeks later and is documented here.



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## 4 ALLIES IN THE FRAME OF EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTS ON LOCAL ENERGY TRANSITION

Rainer Kant opened the conference with a brief introduction to the roots and context of the ALLIES project and the institution of LFEEEs that it has brought forward.



In the following panel discussion renowned experts from the most relevant national and international organisations engaged in fostering Energy Transition in Europe came together to discuss ALLIES against the background of recent developments in European Energy Policy.

- Jan Steinkohl, **European Commission, DG Energy**
- Dr. Márk Alföldy-Boruss, **Head of Decarbonisation Department at the Ministry for Innovation and Technology, Hungary**
- Dirk Vansintjan, **REScoop – European federation for renewable energy cooperatives and Ecopower**
- Wolfgang Teubner, **ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability & Covenant of Mayors**
- Zbigniew Michniowski, **Advisor to the Polish Association of Municipalities**
- Darko Jardas, **FEDARENE – European Federation of Agencies and Regions for Energy and the Environment**

The leading question in the panel was how do LFEEEs relate to the EC's concept of Citizen and Renewables Energy Communities. The panelists identified several overlaps in the LFEEE idea and the activities in the panelists' institutions.

Ecopower shows what is possible. It started in the mid 1980s and now comprises 60.000 members. As Ecopower grew Dirk Vansintjan also took on REScoop a European umbrella for renewable energy cooperatives.



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Wolfgang Teubner from ICLEI also began his work across different levels of governments on sustainable urban developments in the early 1990s. The current ICLEI workplan has 5 pathways among them low emission, equity and people-centred development, resilient development (post COVID-19), circular economy and cooperation with the EC. Together with FEDARENE Wolfgang Teubner also represents the Covenant of Mayors (CoM).

Darko Jardas, director of regional energy agency and FEDARENE, umbrella organisation for more than 80 regional energy agencies. Energy agencies are moderators more than operators and do not compete with the commercial sector.

## **Discussion:**

LK: What is EE? @Jan Steinkohl

- Jan Steinkohl is focusing on the uptake of RES in order for Europe to reach the RE target by 2030 of 32% both electricity as well as heating/cooling and transport.

LK: Relation between EE and the uptake of RES

- Jan: Principle EE first! Because the energy you save will have no environmental impact.

LK: What are CEC and REC?

- Jan: REC are one of the instruments that could help to increase the deployment RES in Europe. CEC nourishes the concept of RES for the electricity market.
- The relation between REC and EE is indirect. The REC needs to develop bylaws that stipulate social and ecological value. This is where EE comes in. However, REC are not made to increase EE, per se.

LK: Collecting money and jointly investing in EE is one flavour of an energy community.

- Jan: Citizens come together, invest jointly. However, access to the market, how to share self-generated energy is not reflected here. The importance, however, is that you have a body/structure that can promote the energy transition.

LK: Are LFEEEs candidates for CEC?

- Dirk: Directives have their scope. These definitions reflect the scope of these two directives. In reality, this is not new, at least to REScoop. Examples of energy communities already exist everywhere. Even if energy efficiency is not formulated on the top of the focus list of energy communities it is naturally integrated in their activities. For example, the cooperative Flemish members consume half of the average energy consumption in Belgian households.
- Cooperatives are hardly existent in South and Southeast Europe in contrast to North and Western Europe.
- REScoop members are a kind of LFEEEs

LK @ ICLEI on the idea of involving citizens?



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- The idea of LFEEEs and energy communities resonate two sides of the coin which are intrinsically linked.
- Some elements can overcome the hurdles to EE
  - o Make value-creation clear resulting from EE investments: 1) savings; 2) creating jobs; 3) keeping the value in the region by self-producing energy in the region
- Importance of a combined one-stop-shop bringing together planning, financial capacity, legal framework for implementation
- Issue of payback periods is beneficial for municipalities, continuity, like a revolving fund system

LK @Zbigniew Michniowski: Why is it difficult to establish cooperatives in Hungary and Poland? And what can we do instead?

- Better to work in partnerships with European cities/institutions

LK @Darko: what is the role of energy agencies when it comes to establishing a one-stop-shop?

- Darko wrote declaration for small islands and invited some 50 other small islands in Europe and sent it to the European Parliament. It was signed and pushed as clean energy for islands in Europe. This is an example of how to push energy transition from local level to the transnational level.
- The result of this initiative is that these islands are now more advanced than the Croatian national level policies.
- All energy projects are long term projects. First, you face resistance based in inertia. This demands taking a step back and being patient in order to then take two steps forward when the time is ripe. One year we did public lighting, next year water supply, next year PV plant, this year it's a big H2020 project. Things work gradually, step by step.

LK: What about the status of cooperatives in Croatia?

- Darko works with a range of stakeholders which is decisive for success in energy transition. We learn from each other.

LK @ Mark Alföldy-Boruss: Are you happy with ALLIES in HU? Why didn't the cooperative work?

- From a financial point of view these formations (LFEEEs) may bring clarity to the projects on risks etc. in order to be able to negotiate with banks. They can also create trust.
- Joint acting could help also in reaping the benefits of economies of scale.

LK @ Mark: Is ALLIES in HU a good role model for replication?



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- These activities will be much easier in the coming years due to the EU legislative developments. When REC/CEC have been implanted in national legislation legal clarity will be given and this will immensely facilitate setting up LFEEs and the like.
- Jan: EE is important, so is system integration. Both are not directly reflected in the directives. However, they nonetheless serve good purposes

LK @ Dirk: Legal clarity is important but we need more. How can you help? For example, in Eastern Europe where cooperatives have a hard stand?

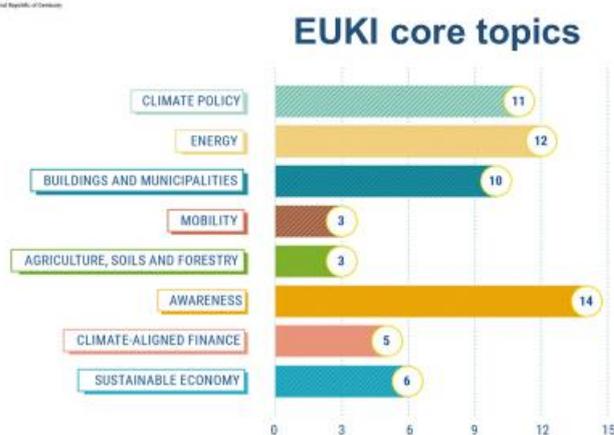
- H2020, Interreg with the aim to give REScoop members tools that they can work with, for example one standardized app for several countries for EV.

LK @ Darko: What can FEDARENE do?

- Stop talking about saving energy and highlight earning money! Every saved energy KW saves money. This helps in communicating EE to the public.

## 5 ALLIES IN THE EUKI COMMUNITY

After the panel discussion Matthias Baum from the EUKI financing programme presented his institution and discussed the ALLIES' role within the EUKI community. Out of 64 currently ongoing projects only a handful are related to financing whereas another 19 are related to energy.



## 6 THE ALLIES CONCEPT: LEARNINGS AND PROSPECTS

After lunch the plenary split up into three groups to analyse the replicability of ALLIES in three different regions. These were the Mediterranean, the Baltic countries and South East Europe.

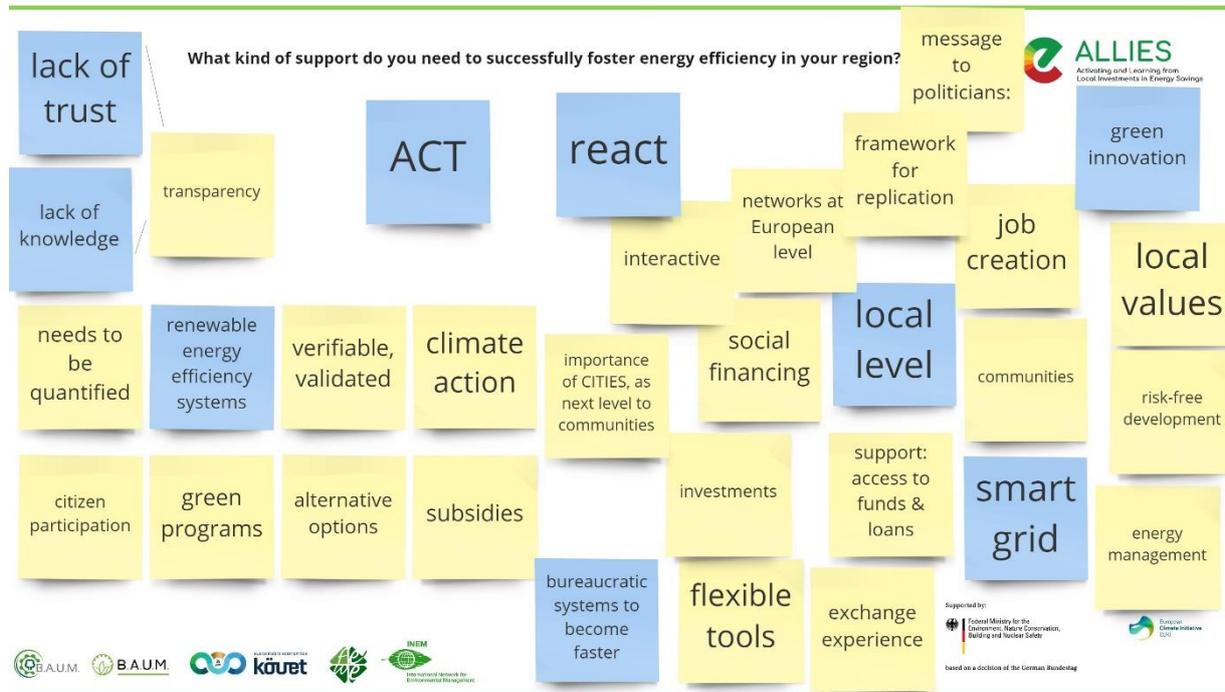


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## 6.1 Validation of ALLIES approach for the Mediterranean

Katalin Herner, KÖVET moderated this workshop together with Rainer Kant from B.A.U.M. e.V. Several experts on the diverse Mediterranean working group co-hosted this session like Vincenzo Bianco, University of Genoa and Luisa Candido, Estabanell Catalunya.



Whiteboard, working group on ALLIES in the Mediterranean

## 6.2 Validation of ALLIES approach for the Baltic countries

In the working group on ALLIES in the Baltic countries Szymon Lyszka, FEWE and Anna Stetter B.A.U.M Consult moderated the discussion together with Matthias Grätz from the Baltic Environmental Forum and Eloise Stancioff from the Ekubirojs, Latvia.



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## Financing Energy Transition (Energy Efficiency and Renewables)



## Energy Performance Contracting



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based on a decision of the German Bundestag



### Whiteboard, working group on ALLIES in the Baltics

Generally, there is high potential for buildings refurbishment in the Baltic countries. The Riga revolving fund was created in 2016 for this cause but only a small portion of the funding has been demanded for up till now.

The discussion showed how important it is to manage stakeholders well, that is identifying the necessary stakeholders and not only creating incentives for them to engage in energy savings but first and foremost to raise awareness for the benefits of energy savings. In regards to residential buildings it is necessary to make house owners understand that there are no risks involved and that it is worth it to invest in energy savings as the quality of works down will enhance the living quality.

While the controversial statement was made: "Grants ruin EPC markets" no solution for this problem could be found.

### 6.3 Validation of ALLIES approach for South East Europe

Todor Galev, CSD and Philip Mathies, B.A.U.M. e.V. moderated the workshop on ALLIES in South East Europe. The experts Kamelia Georgieva from The National EcoTrust Fund, BG, Vjerran Pirsic, Eko Kvarner, HR added to the discussion.



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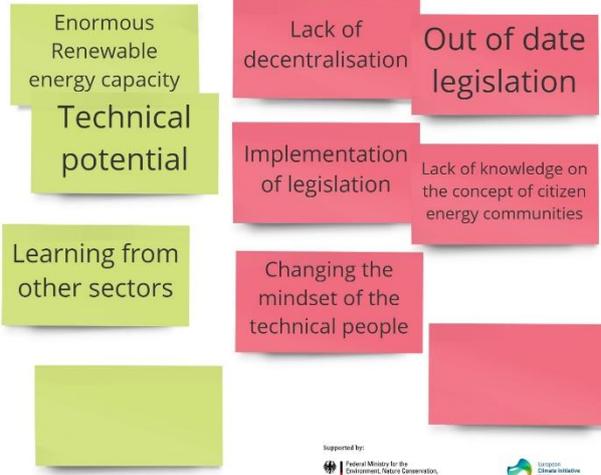
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## Barriers for introduction & implementation of local financial entities for EE (economic, political, socio-cultural)



## Weaknesses and strengths in implementing Citizen Energy Communities as envisaged in RED2



Whiteboard, working group on ALLIES in Southeast Europe

## 7 VIRTUAL MARKET PLACE

Despite the Final Conference being virtual, after the panel discussion and the working groups we gave the participants the opportunity to network in an ad hoc manner normally only possible in face to face meetings- The Virtual Market Place made it happen. Here, experts in their field presented their work and projects and participants came by spontaneously to hear what they had to say. Below, we have an overview of the planned topics to be presented. In addition, the floor was open to anyone interested in sharing ideas and plans in this space.



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<b>The Virtual Market Place</b>								
	14:45	15:00	15:15	15:30	15:45	16:00	16:15	16:30
1 Funding programs and projects	EUKI project Financing			EUKI project Financing				
2 Financing models for LFEEEs and similar	Financing Energy Transition, BG		"On Bill Schemes" for Financing EE (Evidences from H2020 project)		Financing Energy Transition, BG		"On Bill Schemes" for Financing EE (Evidences from H2020 project)	
3 Communication and motivation tools		Stakeholder management in H2020 FinEERGo-Dom		Motivating Action to Energy Independency	Stakeholder management in H2020 FinEERGo-Dom		Motivating Action to Energy Independency	
4 Networking in Europe and beyond	The Network Platform FEDARENE		The Network Platform FEDARENE					
5 Energy Efficiency means and measures	Private Financing post-COVID-19 Energy Transition		Building Structures for local Financing of EE in HR	Private Financing post-COVID-19 Energy Transition		Building Structures for local Financing of EE in HR		
6 Organizing energy transition		SaaS Data Management for						

The Virtual Market Place

## 8 NEXT STEPS

In just a few weeks the ALLIES project will be coming to an end. We now know that creating an LFEEE and selling the structure to the public will be much easier throughout Europe and especially in Eastern Europe where cooperatives traditionally have poor connotations as soon as the EU directives on REC and CEC have been implemented in national legislation.

This is the perfect setting to not only promote the LFEEE model among followers but actually to gather Letters of Interests from associations and networks willing to test the model in their contexts.

On behalf of the ALLIES team, we are looking forward to working together with you in future.