THE TAO FOR ENERGY COMMUNITIES IN SOFIA – AN EXAMPLE OF HOW AN ENERGY AGENCY EMPOWERS PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND ENERGY COMMUNITIES

13 February 2024

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The legal definitions of REC and CEC were defined in the Bulgarian legislation - correspondingly - in the Energy Law and in the RES Law in October 2023, thus transposing the IEMD 2019/944 and the RED II 2018/2001. This step paves the way to the development of EC in the country in the next years.
In 2022-2024 a lot of changes took place in the legislation on RES use to ease their use by the customers in the country. Actions were taken to overcome some of the obstacles:

- Administrative and bureaucratic issues;
- Tax policy;
- Access to finance;
- Low awareness of households and citizens;
- Historical encumbrance and worldview, etc.
Development of Energy Community in Bulgaria

Legal steps:
Steps to shorten the administrative procedures took place in 2022:

- Amendments adopted in the Act on RES easing end customers in building PV installations for electric energy production from RE on building roofs and facades when used for own consumption.
- Further amendments adopted in the Territorial Planning Act for optimizing the terms for spatial planning and investment on RES design and construction for own consumption.
- Changes in the Act on Excise Duties and Tax Warehouses;

In 2023:

- New changes in the Act on RES and Energy Act: REC and CEC definitions in line with the EU one.

In 2024:

- Ordinance on easing the joining procedures for producers of electrical energy from RES with up to 1 MW installed capacity.
Financing from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan:

- "Construction of new RES installations for own consumption (up to 1 MW) in combination with local facilities for energy storage in SMEs" – 50% grant.
- “Support for RE use for the households” - Purchase of solar installations for domestic hot water supply - 100% grant; Purchase of photovoltaic systems for the home (up to 10 kWp), including electrical energy storage systems – 70% grant.
- "Energy renewal program for multi-family residential buildings": 1-st stage: 100% grant of 1,1 billion BGN; 2-nd stage: 80% grant of 0,3 billion BGN with the goal of 30% primary energy saving and energy consumption class "B" or higher.
For the successful implementation of these programmes, there is the need for instruments to provide consultancy, training and information. Such instruments are the One Stop Shops platforms and the Technical Assistance offices. **National Decarbonisation Fund** is under construction to help the clean energy transition and to provide financing and technical support to energy initiatives and projects.
Centralized internal unit
Combines all aspects and services related to TA

Local network for one stop service
30 OSS to be developed from bottom up by public and private entities with leading role of local authorities;
Market context

Financial support
Financing for the CIU, the local network, for capacity building and energy audits
Create Technical Assistance Office

Technical assistance is a form of consultation on a variety of issues. It includes communications and collaborations across different systems with the ultimate goal of bridging the gap among the interested parties (citizens, local authorities, technical experts and providers, etc.).
What is TAO?

The TAO is a physical (and/or virtual) place where interested parties, citizens, organisations and businesses, etc. can receive advice and find all information and services they need to create and operate a project for energy community implementation. It is a place to discuss specific energy community needs.
Sofia Technical Assistance Office

TAO is built on and further developed using the Sofia Energy Poverty Office at the premises of Sofia Energy Agency SOFENA created under POWERPOOR project.
Sofia POWERPOOR EPA office is situated in the heart of the city, within the office of SEA SOFENA, at 65 Tsar Asen II Str., First floor. It is served by all of the SOFENA employees but one is highly involved in the activities and programmes for energy poor people. It includes a dedicated desk and sitting area for visitors.
The goal of the Energy Poverty Offices

- To strengthen energy poor citizens’ engagement by disseminating various informational materials, such as relevant websites, leaflets/brochures and other appropriate promotional material.
- To provide information to citizens and directly to support them to actively participate in activities (e.g. uploading information through the ICT tool) and to support energy poor households to participate in joint initiatives.
- To communicate the benefits of implementing EE interventions and installing RES, while also encouraging energy efficient behaviour, practices and habits.

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<tr>
<th>Home visits by energy supporters</th>
<th>Mentors providing support through the EPAO</th>
<th>Mentors providing online support via e-mails, phone calls</th>
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Business Model of the Sofia TAO - Facilitation model

TAO - Sofia provides support to potential Energy Communities across the municipalities of the Greater Sofia Metropolitan Area and in the country.

Free of charge advice

TAO

Interested parties
TAO ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **To build general-capacity**: to raise the awareness on energy communities benefits; to provide general information on the optimal solution.

- **To build project-specific capacity**: to give advice at the ‘orientation stage; to support the set-up and implementation of an energy community.

- **To facilitate communications across several systems** (energy experts, local/regional authorities, communities, citizens and providers, etc.), to provide a list of technology providers and investors, etc.

- **Information, training and consultation** on technical, financial, management, regulatory and administrative issues, etc.
Proactive engagement of participants in EC through targeted communication and marketing tools to reach out to the right groups.

Offer capacity building for municipalities and other interested stakeholders.

Provide advice on the legal form of registration and statute of the energy community.

Propose tailor-made plans and guidance to achieve the goal.

Info on affordable financing means, ESCO, crowdfunding, etc.

Matchmaking with technology providers and investors.
TAO Sofia Resources

- One Stop Shop platform to provide integrated services;
- List of technology providers and investors;
- Database of relevant documents and templates;
- List of trainers and training materials.

The TA Cookbook includes all the ingredients and steps necessary to deploy Energy Communities by promoters (e.g., public authorities, private investors and Local Action Groups).

The self-assessment Energy Community checklist covers all the elements needed for the creation of an Energy Community by a promoter.
Collaboration among local authorities, citizens, academia and businesses.

They include public authorities at local (municipalities), provincial / regional and national level, energy agencies, Local Action Groups, engineering / energy companies, equipment manufacturers, private investors, energy retailers, and citizen associations.
According to its statute SOFENA has been working for public benefit providing information, consultation and training in the field of energy saving, renovation of buildings and use of RES for public authorities, businesses and citizens.

Its permanent staff includes 2 experts with engineering expertise, and 2 - with humanitarian expertise and Master degrees in energy markets and in energy safety.

SOFENA staff has the responsibility of providing TA support for ECs and offering information and advice for the deployment of ECs to the interested citizens, SMEs and stakeholders, and in answering to inquiries by phone and email during the working time of the Agency.

Two persons of SOFENA’s staff give consultation in person when asked within 2 hours per working day.
Good Practice Examples

Dedicated units in Gabrovo, Burgas and Sofia town administrations to provide administrative support to potential investors are established.

Energy Office Burgas
A series of events and trainings targets representatives of local and state administrations, of SMEs, of homeowner associations, public building managers, and residents of multi-family apartment buildings.

https://energy-office.bg/
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**Energy Office Burgas**

A series of events and trainings for representatives of local and state administrations, of SMEs, of homeowner associations, public building managers, and residents of multi-family apartment buildings have been organized. Consultancy and advice offered.

[https://energy-office.bg/](https://energy-office.bg/)
THANK YOU!

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