

A neighbourhood's cooperative for heat recovery

AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

KEYWORDS: COMMUNITY ENERGY

DURATION: Since 2014

WHO: Neighbourhood cooperative, companies and residents

BUDGET: Unknown

SUMMARY

The residents of the **Middenmeer area** in Amsterdam have discovered an energy source in their neighbourhood: heat released from the cooling of computers of the Equinix company, specialized in internet connection and data centers. A group of residents, therefore, created a cooperative, **MeerEnergie**, to investigate the feasibility of implementation of a project to transform the data centre's heat into heating for the local households. To that end, they started to collaborate with Equinix and Alliander, an energy company that develops and operates energy networks

GOALS

- Reduce the **consumption of natural gas**;
- Promote the development of an energy network that is **cost neutral** for residents;
- Reduce the impact of the neighbourhood on the environment by promoting the consumption of heat that otherwise would be wasted
- Develop an **inclusive cooperative** in which neighbours residents, companies and housing companies can become co-owners of the heat network;
- Use the cooperative as a starting point for future sustainable initiatives in the neighbourhood (e.g. energy-saving and solar energy projects)



HOW IT WORKS

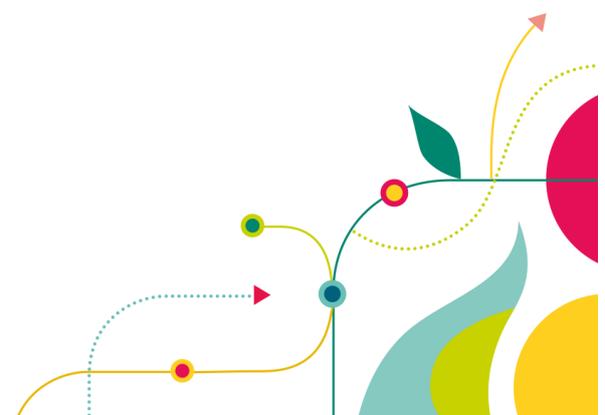
- MeerEnergy cooperative has been created in order to make the data centre heat available for household consumption.
- MeerEnergie is engaging local residents in different ways and it is giving them **different options to participate**: some members can invest and can expect returns at a later stage while other members only participate to purchase heat. The idea behind this choice is to make the cooperative open and inclusive to all the neighbours and other local stakeholders.
- MeerEnergie cooperative has initiated the **collaboration with relevant local stakeholders** like the municipality, Equinix company, Alliander energy company as well as housing corporations. These actors are willing to collaborate and they consider MeerEnergie as an important pilot project that can be implemented in the future in other areas of the city. Equinix company has agreed on releasing the heat without costs and Alliander will be working on the development of the grid together with the MeerEnergie cooperative.
- Additional research and technical analysis still need to be conducted in order to install the heat network.

"This is the first time that we are looking for cooperation with a resident cooperative at the scale level of an entire neighbourhood, to investigate how we can organise locally managed energy provision. How that will work out, we don't know yet (...) we learn a lot from what we are going to do here. We will use that knowledge and experience to make Amsterdam natural gas-free"

→ **Marieke van Doorninck,**
Alderman for Sustainability

TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL

MeerEnergie is an example of a neighborhood cooperative promoting an **innovative model of energy consumption** and ownership. It can be considered as a pilot project for developing alternatives to the current heat markets in cities, for accelerating the energy transition and for exploring new forms of energy governance. MeerEnergie successfully developed collaborations among different local stakeholders: local residents, the municipality, energy company and a business. The combination of a **technical solution** to reduce energy with the development of local **multi-actor collaborations** has the potential to be replicated in other contexts.



MORE INFORMATION

[MeerEnergie website](#) (in Dutch)

[Interview to MeerEnergie initiators](#)

[Article in de Brug Magazine](#) (in Dutch)

