

COOPEM - Mouscron's energy cooperative

MOUSCRON, BELGIUM

KEYWORDS: COMMUNITY ENERGY; SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

DURATION: Since 2017

WHO: City Council, citizens, companies

BUDGET: Unknown

SUMMARY

The **Cooperative Energy Mouscron (COOPEM)** was founded in 2017 by 14 citizens, two entrepreneurs, ENERGIRIS (a Brussels-based cooperative) and Aralia (an investor in PV), with the support of the municipality of Mouscron. Their aim was to make photovoltaics (solar power) accessible to the largest possible number of citizens and companies in the area of Mouscron. As a cooperative, citizens can be shareholders of COOPEM. In doing so, citizens benefit financially from the energy transition but more importantly decide on the strategy and actions of the cooperative. COOPEM has joined forces with regional development organisations Ideta and IEG, as well as the Energy IT company Haulogy, to create the project ColéCo. This project aims to stimulate enthusiasm and interest around the self-consumption of renewable energy in the 23 municipalities of Wallonia

GOALS

- Promote the **production of renewable energy** locally;
- Foster citizen organisation around the self-production of renewable energy;
- Make photovoltaic energy more accessible to citizens and local businesses;
- Offer a **collective way to manage energy** and an alternative financing model for renewable energy production.



HOW IT WORKS

COOPEM is a cooperative funded by citizens, aiming to promote local photovoltaic energy as well as a **financial alternative model** for energy production for citizens and local companies.

The Energy council member of Mouscron chairs COOPEM's on behalf of the City, which demonstrates the **municipality's support for the cooperative** and the city's effort towards mitigating CO2 emissions.

As a cooperative, COOPEM offers two types of packages: for citizens and for local businesses.

- **Citizens** have the possibility to purchase photovoltaic installations through a collective group purchase. Citizens benefit from a reduction on the cost of the installation and they receive advice and support throughout the process. COOPEM also takes care of the administrative aspects and the installation;
- **Businesses** are asked to pay a 10% fee as a contribution to the cost of the installation. Through the savings on the electricity bill they can pay back the investment (in approximately 2 to 3 years). After 10 years, the businesses become the owners of the solar panels and therefore get the full benefits from the energy savings.

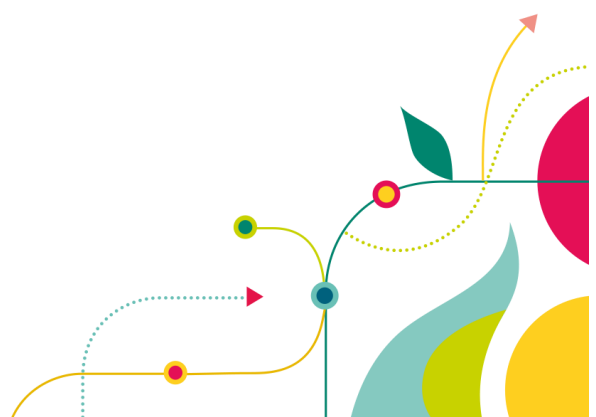
"To start a real energy transition at the scale of a municipality, we must take the citizen by the hand, show him the way, accompany him as closely as possible in his personal projects and above all facilitate."

→ **Anne Cloet, Mouscron
Deputy Mayor and President of
the COOPEM**

The **joint project ColéCo** promotes the installation of solar panels on school roofs. The concept is that schools can make use of the energy during the day, while in the evenings the surrounding neighbourhood benefits from the photovoltaic energy produced. ColéCo is inspired by the new European legislation on renewable energy communities, which mentions the principle of **co-ownership, and local production and consumption of energy**. In 2018, after one year of activity, COOPEM has installed around 90 PV units and public awareness has been increased.

TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL

In order to replicate such projects, **political support is key**. COOPEM needs to establish a close collaboration with public authorities to carry out the ColéCo project, especially regarding the use of the public grid and the installation of solar panels on the school's roofs. The initiative has a potential for replication in other cities. Other local authorities in Belgium are trying to adapt and replicate Mouscron's model in their contexts.



MORE INFORMATION

[COOPEM website](#) (in French)

[Energy Cities' website](#)

