



## The Drechtsteden cooperative



### Summary

In 2017, Drechtsteden was one of the first regions in the Netherlands to create a Regional Energy Strategy (RES) called RES 1.0 in cooperation with 30 other organisations. In 2018, the Drechtsteden Energy Agreement was signed. The Drechtsteden cooperative works with many regional partners, each with their own interests but sharing the same goal of a sustainable future. The energy cooperative also acts as a facilitator and intermediary organisation for the partners involved in the energy transition in the region. For example, Drechtsteden ensures alignment and correspondence between the seven municipalities regarding their regional 'Heat Transition Vision' programme.

### Why is it a case of energy citizenship?

Drechtsteden Energy is a good example of a regional organisation that works with many stakeholders. They draw up the RES agenda with local residents, entrepreneurs, businesses, environmental organisations, water boards, seven municipalities, and other interested parties. Residents of the region were closely involved in the process of drafting the RES.



DIRECT ENERGY  
PRODUCTION /  
CONSUMPTION



COLLECTIVE



PERI-URBAN



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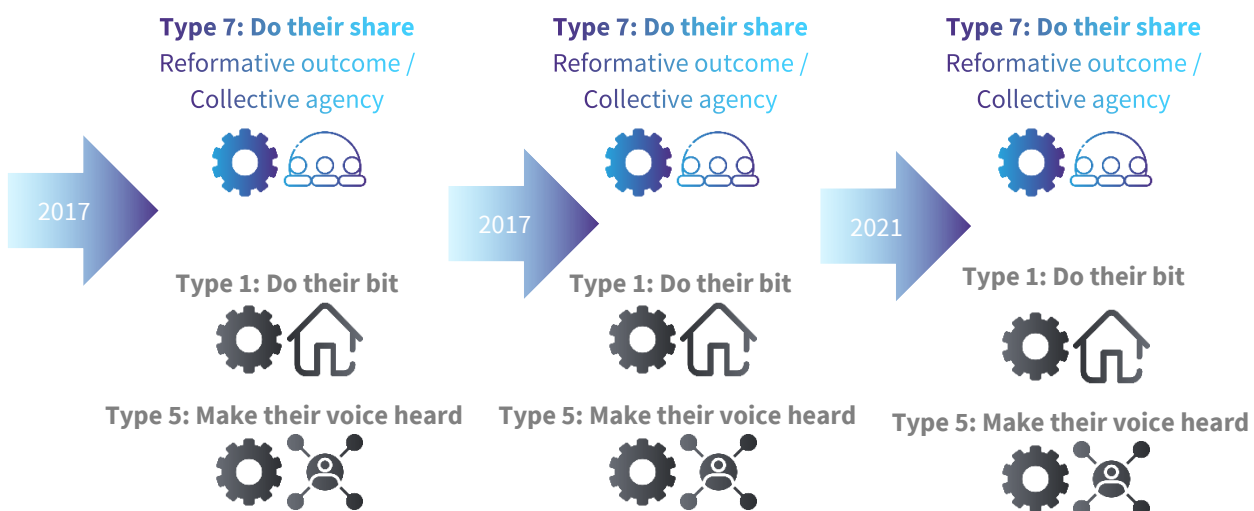


## Goals

1. Producing energy sustainably in the Drechtsteden region;
2. Promoting more sustainable homes and heat infrastructure;
3. Making the energy transformation as socially rewarding as possible.

## The story and the typology

Drechtsteden Energy can be classified into the expanded “citizen-based and hybrid” ideal energy citizenship category with collective agency. Although it focuses on energy citizenship in the broader sense, it enables it at the level of hybrid organisations, also by involving people/citizens. Thus, the main ideal type of energy citizenship supported is Type 7. Accordingly, it has a reformative outcome orientation. Citizens participated in the formulation of RES 1.0, and also participate through getting solar energy in their homes, but do not (yet) participate in internal decision-making involving the case. In terms of RE projects at Drechtsteden, citizens are also given the opportunity to get involved via participation/consultation evenings and online surveys. Thus, another secondary, public, with individual agency, is also relevant, as indicated in the figure below.



### Case history summary

For the summary  
methodology,  
click [HERE](#)



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## Phase 1: Creation of the case in 2017

Drechtsteden Energy came into existence in 2017 after the drafting of the Regional Energy Strategy (RES 1.0) for the Drechtsteden region.<sup>1</sup>

Two concrete goals have been defined for these regions. The first was to contribute to the national 2030 target of having 35 TWh of sustainable electricity generated on land. Drechtsteden aims to contribute 1.1% (0.37 TWh) of this target.

The second concrete goal (set by the Dutch Climate Agreement for the 30 energy regions) is to collectively make 1.5 million homes more sustainable by 2030 and use more sustainable heat sources. Drechtsteden Energy aims to consume 20% less energy (electricity and gas) in the built environment by 2030. Moreover, they aim to make 12,000 - 25,000 more sustainable homes that are connected to sustainable heat sources by 2030. By planning and implementing this objective, the case supports individual energy citizenship as well (Type 1 in the table).

The Dutch Climate Agreement was formulated by the national government and involved dividing the

Netherlands into 30 energy regions. Drechtsteden is one of those regions; hence, Drechtsteden Energy is closely tied to the government through the specific area of the RES. This is because each energy region was tasked with drawing up its own RES document, with the involvement of citizens.

Due to the scope of activities, public, citizen-based, and hybrid agencies appear as the main type of citizenship. In the second place, since citizens are invited to express their views on the strategies developed, Type 5 agency is also relevant.

	Individual			Collective	
					
 Reformative	<b>1. Do their bit (in the household)</b>	3. Do their bit (within organizations)	<b>5. Make their voice heard</b>	<b>7. Do their share</b>	9. Do the job
 Transformative	2. Do their own (in the household)	4. Do it their way (within organizations)	6. Make their vote count	8. Go ahead	10. Make their claims

### Main type: Do their share

Reformative outcome / Citizen-based and hybrid agency

### Secondary types

#### Do their bit

Reformative outcome / Private in the household agency

#### Make their voice heard

Reformative outcome / Public agency



<sup>1</sup> The Administrative Consultation RES consists of the parties/coalition responsible for drawing up the RES (seven municipalities: Alblasserdam, Dordrecht, Hardinxveld-Giessendam, Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht, Papendrecht, Sliedrecht and Zwijndrecht, the Province of South Holland and two water boards: Water Boards Hollandse Delta and Rivierenland) based on the Dutch National Climate Agreement.



## Phase 2: Impact of the Drechtsteden Energy Agreement, 2017-2021

In 2018, the Drechtsteden Energy Agreement was concluded, establishing the Drechtsteden Energy Programme Council. The Agreement was signed by more than 35 parties, who committed to achieving energy neutrality by 2050.

The partners represent organisations with their own ambitions and planning regarding the energy transition who are committed to deploying their knowledge, people and resources to substantially reduce the region's energy consumption and the use of fossil fuels.

### Phase 3: Current phase since 2022

Completing the RES 1.0 is perceived as an achievement by the case actors. However, they do acknowledge that it has not yet been significantly impactful because it needs to be translated into practice. Importantly, they have selected development areas for large-scale sustainable energy generation in the region and intend to start granting permits as soon as possible.

As a part of this, Solar on Land ('Zon op Land') was successfully launched in 2022 as an online platform (called 'Denk mee!' ('Think Along!')) where citizens can register and participate in renewable energy generation projects as well as express their opinions about the proposals, design and construction of forthcoming solar parks in the region. The 'Denk mee!' platform is also used for democratic voting (e.g., concerning the potential locations of solar farms in the region); 'the basic principle is that everyone is allowed to participate – without

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Reformative outcome / Public agency

restrictions.' Until recently, several initiatives have been developed in the region, the largest being the solar park Kijfhoek (with 91,245 panels) in the municipality of Zwijndrecht, which provides over 22,000 households with green electricity and contributes up to 0.031TWh (towards the overall target of 0.37TWh) of renewable energy generation by 2030.

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## The aspects of energy citizenship

Drechtsteden Energy promotes citizen participation via the use of public consultations, an online platform, and financial participation. The RES 1.0 was also made with significant citizen input and citizens can respond to the area selections for renewable energy generation. **However, the democratic energy future envisioned by the cooperative appears to be limited.** It does not seem to be a core concern because the organisation does not appear to put the energy system in citizens' hands but rather includes them in the process.



Citizens participated in drafting the RES 1.0, but in general, they do not participate in internal decision-making. Decision-making regarding the implementation of its aims is done primarily by the seven collaborating municipalities. Together, they map the opportunities, capacities and resources that are available. **Citizens' input does not appear to be compulsory in the decision-making process, although it does appear to be meaningful.**

### Citizen control

**Citizens can express their views, but their views are not necessarily taken into account**



### Democratic energy future

**Energy democracy is considered as a positive value, but it remains limited to formal energy democracy**



### FOCUS ON DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Anyone from Drechtsteden Energy can participate in the online platform and in public meetings regarding the renewable energy projects. **The organization is striving for an energy transition in which the benefits and burdens are distributed fairly and no one is left behind.** They have taken more than a year to draw up a policy and undertake an intensive participation process for involving residents, entrepreneurs, social organisations and governments in this issue.

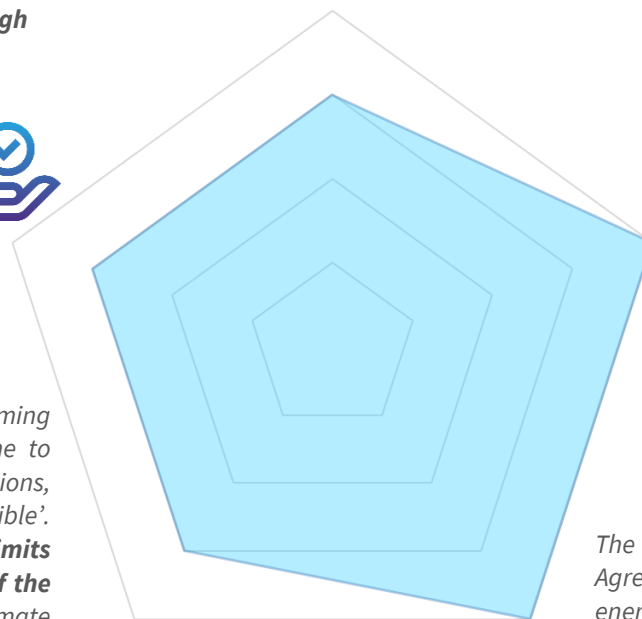


**Equity and justice  
Involvement is fully open**

It is described in the summary of RES 1.0 that 'if global warming exceeds 1.5 degrees Celsius, irreversible damage will be done to Earth's ecosystems. To keep the earth liveable for future generations, it is therefore important to stabilize the climate as quickly as possible'. **The goals are tied to the explicit recognition of the ecological limits of atmospheric carbon emissions and the carbon footprint of the region, as the former was developed as a result of the Dutch Climate Agreement and the national carbon emission targets for 2030.**

### Carbon limit

**Explicit recognition of the carbon limit**



The Drechtsteden Energy cooperative refers to the Dutch Climate Agreement and the environmental reasoning which justifies the required energy transition (e.g., regarding natural gas and global warming). **In their code of conduct, they say that no irreversible development will take place and no pollution or waste will be left.** The ecological value of nature reserves is also acknowledged in the selection of areas for solar fields 'in order to protect the natural values [that are] present'.



**Environmental sustainability  
Environmental sustainability is a core issue, and is considered in goal setting**



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## Further information



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[linkedin.com/company/smartdeltadrechtsteden](https://www.linkedin.com/company/smartdeltadrechtsteden)



[www.drechtstedenenergie.nl](http://www.drechtstedenenergie.nl)

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### References

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### Source of images

[www.res-drechtsteden.nl/](http://www.res-drechtsteden.nl/)



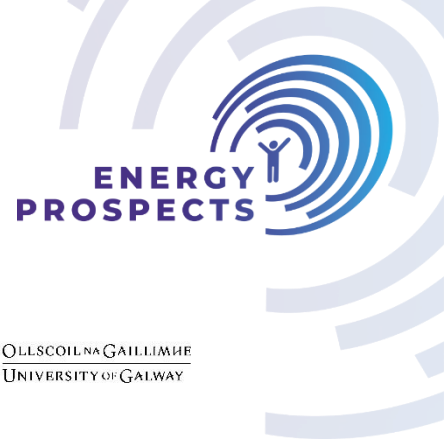
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