



Som Energia – Green Energy Cooperative



Summary

Som Energia is a non-profit green energy consumer cooperative. Its main activities are the marketing and production of energy from renewable sources. Som Energia is committed to driving a change in the current energy model to ensure the use of 100% renewable sources.

Som Energia was created due to the increasing need for purchasing electricity derived from renewable sources, but this was impossible in Spain in 2010. Thus, in the same year, Som Energia arose as a citizen participation project, whose *raison d'être* was to bring about a change in the energy model, to create a cooperative and to put energy in the hands of citizens.

Why is it a case of energy citizenship?

It is a clear example of a citizen initiative for energy sustainability and democracy. Over the years, Som Energia has been growing and diversifying its operations; the activities carried out are numerous, although it maintains the essence of its social innovation model based on the non-profit consumption of green energy.



DIRECT ENERGY
PRODUCTION /
CONSUMPTION



COLLECTIVE



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101022492.

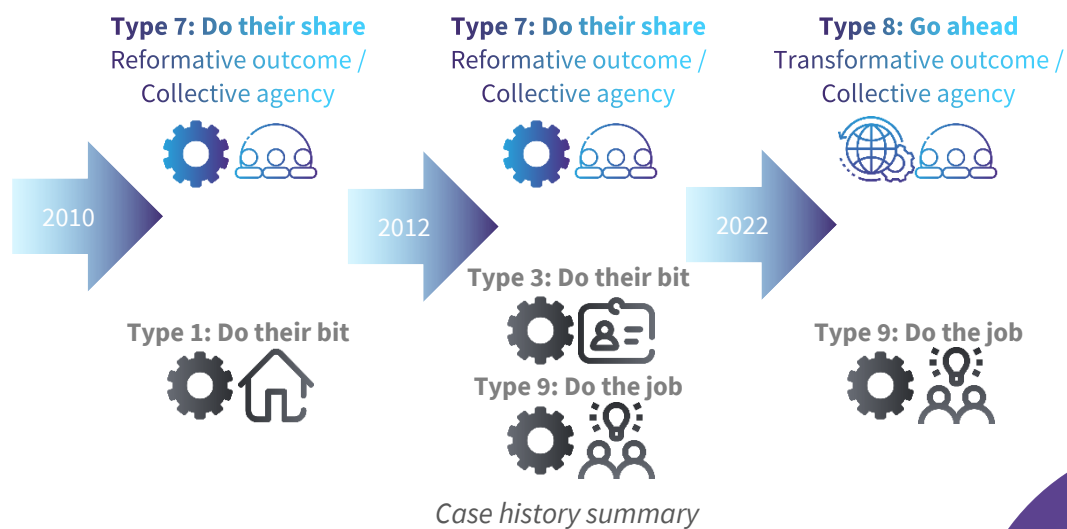
Goals



1. Promoting a 100% renewable, efficient and citizen-owned energy model;
2. Favouring the growth of a more social and solidarity-based economy;
3. Participating in a transformative social movement.

The story and the typology

Som Energia is Spain's first national energy cooperative, so it is a pioneering case in the country. Moreover, it serves as a reference and example for other European cooperatives. Since its foundation in 2010, Som Energia has achieved significant citizen participation through its local groups and, at the same time, incorporated more transformative objectives.



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



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Phase 1: Creation of the case, 2010 - 2012

Som Energia started as an initiative proposed by Gijbert Huijink, who wanted to install solar panels at home. To do this, he asked friends and colleagues to organise and create the cooperative. Therefore, it is primarily a participatory citizenship project since it involves a group of people, but it also has an individual component since it originates from an individual and affects people who install solar panels at home individually. The initiative began as a campaign for citizen participation to transform the non-sustainable energy model. It started as a citizen-based participative project that enabled both individual and collective agency.

	Individual			Collective	
					
 Reformative	1. Do their bit (in the household)	3. Do their bit (within organizations)	5. Make their voice heard	7. Do their share	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 type: Do their bit (in the household)

Reformative outcome / Private in the household agency

Phase 2: Creating multiple local groups, 2012 - 2022



Several other local groups were created as decentralised forms of government that allowed the initiative to be self-managed from different parts of the country, thus increasing the number of people who could be involved. Therefore, citizen-based collective agency was maintained, and organisationally integrated individual agency was incorporated.

A change came with the introduction of local groups, which allowed citizens to take part in the initiative more directly.

Som Energia has experienced rapid growth in recent years. As reported by the European Environment Agency (2022), between 2018 and 2021, the cooperative almost doubled its electricity sales. Creating a "kWh Generation" financing scheme¹ has enabled the cooperative to initiate projects with financial conditions that would not be profitable for a traditional business but are sufficient for the community.

Som Energia's operations are not limited to installing its own plants, but it also aims to promote other local energy cooperatives by advising them and becoming partners.

It has expanded throughout Spanish territory by creating local groups, thus incorporating organizationally embedded individual agency.

	Individual			Collective	
					
 Reformative	1. Do their bit (in the household)	3. Do their bit (within organizations)	5. Make their voice heard	7. Do their share	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 type: Do their bit (within organizations)

Reformative outcome / Organisationally embedded agency

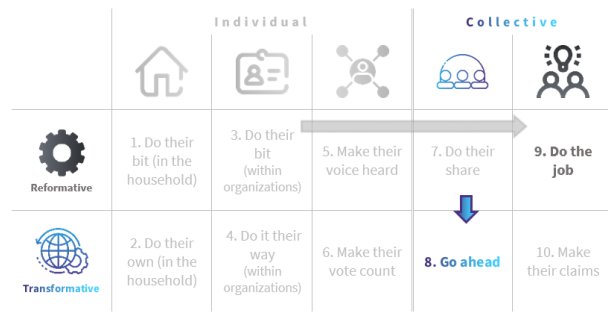
Secondary type: Do the job

Reformative outcome / Social movements agency

¹ Generation kWh is an innovative contribution model based on energy returns rather than financial returns. It is a way for the cooperative to obtain financing for the construction and start-up of renewable energy production plants.

Phase 3: Current state, 2022 -

The cooperative has started to build momentum at the national level. It has started becoming involved in public debates (e.g., an appearance in the Senate) to talk about the challenges of the energy transition in Spain. Som Energia has begun to act in the public sphere, participating in debates on energy transition that affect the country. New contacts have been established with different political parties and central and regional governments to convey Som Energia's vision of the energy transition. Moreover, all these meetings have been requested by the other parties, not Som Energia. Slowly, it is beginning to have a voice in the broader energy system, thereby also becoming a social movement.



Main type: Go ahead

Transformative outcome / Citizen-based and hybrid agency

Secondary type: Do the job

Reformative outcome / Social movements agency

GRUPOS LOCALES



GRUPOS LOCALES QUE IMPULSAN UNA COMPRA COLECTIVA EN 2021 **40**

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Alacant | Extremadura | Osona |
| Almería | Garraf | Ripollès |
| Alt Penedès | Girona | Rubí |
| Anoia | Granada | Sabadell |
| Bages | La Manchueta | Sant Cugat |
| Baix Llobregat | La Palma | Selva Marítima |
| Baix Montseny | Lleida | Sevilla |
| Baix Penedès | Los Alcores | Tenerife |
| Baix Vallès | Madrid | Terres de l'Ebre |
| Barcelona | Málaga | Terrassa |
| Berguedà | Mallorca | Valencia |
| Castellar del Vallès | Maresme | Zaragoza |
| Energia Gara Nafarroa | Menorca | |
| Eivissa | Moianès | |

GRUPOS LOCALES QUE IMPULSAN UNA COMUNIDAD ENERGÉTICA EN 2021 **9**

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Barcelona | Lleida |
| Castelló | Sabadell |
| Energia Gara Nafarroa | Sevilla |
| Granada | Sierra de Huelva |
| La Palma | |

NUEVOS GRUPOS LOCALES 2021 **2**

- | | |
|--------------|---------|
| La Manchueta | Moianès |
|--------------|---------|

TOTAL DE GRUPOS LOCALES **57**



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The aspects of energy citizenship

Som Energia believes that as energy is central to our society, **citizens should be able to decide on how it is produced** and if they want more sustainable management methods to be implemented.

Som Energia's relation to the democratization of the energy system has been used as an example in essays and reports related to the social and solidarity economy, as well as prosumerism.



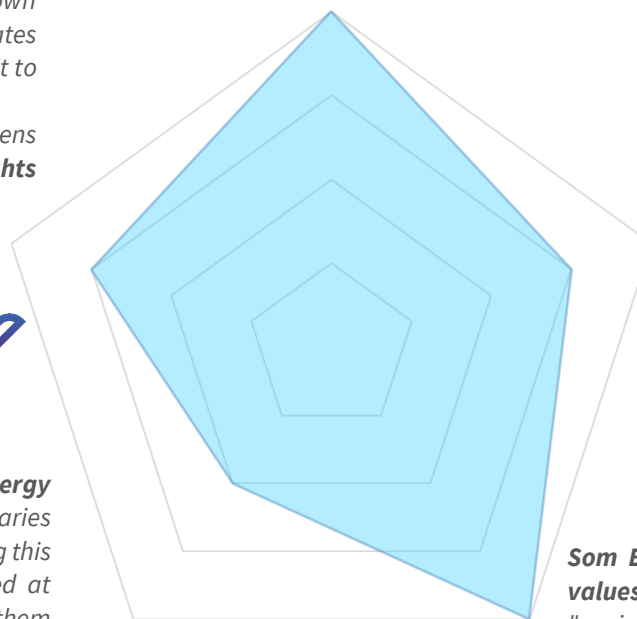
Som Energia is a cooperative with clear horizontal organization, in which "all members have their degree of autonomy in making their own decisions", and where a management team – which coordinates different decisions – contributes to self-management. The only limit to autonomy derives from the different regulations.

To participate in internal governance and decision-making, citizens must be a member of the coop. **The Statues recognize several rights of members.**



Democratic energy future

A more democratic energy future is a core concern of the case, and is part of the vision



Som Energia invites any individual, company or public body that shares their values to be part of the cooperative. Its Statutes establish the obligation to make a minimum contribution to share capital (100 euros/member) to become a member. Further, the General Assembly has introduced the possibility of making a voluntary donation (0.01 €/kWh used), part of which is used for activities related to reducing energy poverty and advising people in need of this. It also incorporates a concern for equity in its Code of Ethics, advocating the use of a close, human, and transparent model.

Citizen control

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



The cooperative questions the sustainability of the current energy model based on the use of fossil fuels. They also act as intermediaries for other institutions that are partners of Som Energia in achieving this goal. They provide partners with an Infoenergía service aimed at improving their understanding of energy use and accompanying them in their journey to improve energy efficiency and make economic savings. Their mission is also to convey a message about the need to minimize energy use and production.



Equity and justice

Equal access is granted, but limited by various criteria

Som Energía's Code of Ethics establishes – as one of the main values guiding the achievement of the organization's objectives – "environmental, but also social and economic sustainability". They do this through producing energy using renewable sources and marketing energy certified as 100% renewable, although their mission is also to convey a message about the need to minimize energy use and production.

Carbon limit

Implicit recognition of the carbon limit



Environmental sustainability

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



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grEIndependent
Institute

Further information



facebook.com/somenergia
instagram.com/somenergia
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References

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Source of images

<https://www.somenergia.coop>



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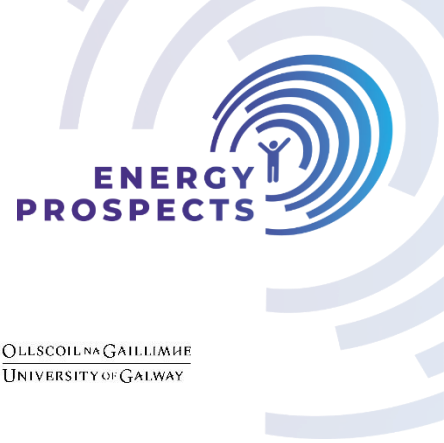
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