

# BEST PRACTICE



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## Citizens' Solar Power Plant

Vienna, Austria – 1.8 million inhabitants

PV – Electricity – Green Investment

Wien Energie elaborated an innovative model to allow its citizens to take part in the installation of photovoltaics on public buildings' roofs or just beyond the city boundary.



Credits: Wien Energie

### Project in a Nutshell

The project started in 2012. Each citizen can purchase a maximum of ten panels (online or by phone) at the price of EUR 950. The contract with Wien Energie comes into force when the amount is paid and the citizen officially becomes a co-owner. At that point, Wien Energie build the photovoltaic module on behalf of the citizen. Each citizen then leases the panels to Wien Energie and receives, once a year, a percentage of the amount invested as remuneration (started with 3,1%, now 2,25/1,75%). The amount can be also received in forms of vouchers, thanks to the collaboration with the SPAR supermarket chain. The contract lasts a minimum of five years, but can be terminated before, by paying a EUR 75 fee. Once the lifetime of the panels has been reached (approx. in 25 years), Wien Energie buys back the solar panels and the full amount invested is returned to the individual owner.

### Impact & Next steps

After the first 5 years of the project, Wien Energie installed 30 plants producing 19,3MW of green electricity. The investments amounted to EUR 35 million, with 10 000 citizens involved in the project. The citizens' installations produced 50 000MWh, equal to the annual consumption of 550 000 fridges, therefore saving around 17 000t CO<sub>2</sub>. Since October 2017, citizens can also purchase e-charging stations of 11kW with the same model used for the PV panels. The target is 1 000 e-charging stations by 2020.

### Replicability: Challenges & Success Factors

This model was extremely successful in mobilizing the citizens in generating renewable energy. The majority of citizens in Vienna live in flats, so do not have the possibility of taking part in RE generation: they lack the physical space, but also the technical expertise and they would have to go through a very complex approval procedure. The Municipality of Vienna managed to overcome all these issues, providing a simple, profitable and secure option. The supermarket vouchers model was particularly appreciated – it sold out in only 72 hours!

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