Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy EUROPE

ENERGYCITIES

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Malaunay (France)
Growing an electricity sharing culture

Malaunay is one of those suburban towns that sit in the shadow of a bigger city. It started by producing solar electricity on municipal roofs, but quickly realised local energy could go further when shared. Step by step, this small French town scaled up from powering public buildings to building one of France's early collective electricity sharing schemes involving residents and the municipality itself.

Aiming for 100% energy independence by 2050, the municipality of Malaunay first improved its internal energy management and reached an 80% renovation rate in its own buildings. From there on the team progressed step-by-step.

Malaunay | France 6200 inhabitants
Readiness level: Running
Energy sector: ☑ Electricity ☑ Heat **Type of plant(s):** ☑ Solar PV ☑ Biomass
Energy activity: ☑ Production ☑ Energy sharing
Who was in lead: the City Council of Malaunay
Key partners: Citizens, the French state, service providers and local companies

Malaunay en transition(s)

The challenge

In 2012, the municipality could no longer pay their bills and was at risk of cutting its public services. This was the turning point when the mayor decided to reduce fossil fuel use and to heavily invest in the energy transition – an inspiring learning path for everyone in town.

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Credit: Ville de Malaunay

The local solution

Going green and clean started in Malaunay in 2016, when the City Council secured a €2 million grant from the French government. This was as much as half of their annual budget! The grant enabled the city council to install solar panels on almost every municipal building roof, covering 1,700 m² of roof space with 300 kWp PV. The first, iconic, building to be covered was the local church. A battery has been linked to the 135m2 solar panels installed on the church roof to experiment storage for self-consumption. Overall, surplus energy was sold to the French electric utility cooperative Enercoop. Enercoop was a natural partner as the municipality was co-founder and member of the cooperative's regional branch.

The city council has decided to open and enlarge the electricity sharing scheme for more players in the area. There were a political will and pragmatic wish to increase the consumption of local solar production and to help local stakeholders become financially stronger. When it comes to the heat needs in its own buildings, the municipality switched from gas to biomass heating plants (woodchips) in 2017. In 2022, this covers up to 62% of heating needs.

Malaunay's support to citizen renewable energy started early and has never stopped: One of the solar roofs has been financed by **crowdlending from residents**. A few years later, Malaunay launched one of France's first electricity sharing schemes involving municipal assets, attracting considerable media attention.

Role of the municipality and partners

In 2016, the municipality renewed its territorial marketing by using the label «Malaunay en transition » (Malaunay in transition). This helped to make the energy transition a cross-cutting topic that would be embedded in all local government activities. It was also a great means to mobilize all local players around energy and climate matters.

The municipal staff:

- Mobilised local community to become prosumers by encouraging residents to install solar panels and generate more than their individual needs, with a view to sharing electricity with others.
- Provided subsidies to the energy community for expert support.
- Lends legitimacy to the project by being member of the energy community and contributing own municipal solar energy output.

Civil servants from Malaunay municipality spend **one full-time equivalent month of work per year on tasks related to the energy community**. Another big share of work is done by citizen volunteers, and by external professionals, such as the legal firm.

Implementation insights: how it was grown in practice

For several years now the city has been running its own electricity sharing scheme. First solar panels were installed on municipal buildings. The solar electricity produced was primarily self-consumed. Any surplus was shared with other municipal buildings. In 2022, the city council started extending the sharing idea beyond municipal assets.

An energy community was created using the legal form of an "association". Nicolas Violette, an inhabitant of Malaunay holds the energy community's Presidency. The Board is composed of representatives from different categories, including households, public authorities and local businesses. The town hall has one vote. These rules were established through co-design workshops in which all members determined the governance mode, the community's key values, and the electricity tariff.

It took some time to become operational : since 2026, the association started its test in the electricity sharing scheme involving three households, before integrating the municipal production.

The monitoring of the electricity sharing and its data is done by Enogrid for the municipal buildings and by the cooperative Enercoop for the energy community.

What changed in practice?

In 2025, **the municipality generated 223 MWh. 84% was consumed by the municipal buildings**: 75 MWh was used for a public building's self-consumption and 112 MWh for collective consumption by the municipal buildings; the remainder was fed into the grid. **41% of the council's electricity needs are met by solar power (self-sufficiency rate)**.

Local benefits

- **Savings:** The municipality saves €51,250/year thanks to the photovoltaic system, compared to buying electricity from a supplier. In 2025, the municipality spent €125,000 on electricity.
- **Stable budget:** the municipality proves its ability to maintain balanced finances and managed to diversify its funding sources.
- **Local pride and action:** The energy community has attracted newcomers who weren't previously involved in village life and who may well go on to launch further initiatives in the future.

Key take-aways for municipal staff

Skills & knowledge needed

- Collective renewable energy projects require a broad set of skills, from project management, facilitating meetings and a general knowledge of energy systems to expertise in developing the community's business model.
- No matter the skills, municipal teams should be aware that these are long-term projects that take years to be implemented.

Don't hesitate to get external support:

- Legal experts to deal with legal matters
- Technical experts to assess the technical feasibility for the PV system installation
- Management software to manage, track, and bill shared renewable energy among users in the energy community
- Don't underestimate the importance of volunteers


Credit: Ville de Malaunay

What was harder than expected

By progressively expanding local electricity sharing beyond public assets, this small French town is showing how municipalities can grow collective energy one step at a time - despite certain obstacles.

Did you know?

In France, consumers and producers involved in a collective self-consumption scheme need to be coordinated by a manager, a so called PMO (Personne Morale Organisatrice). The city plays this role for the municipal collective self-consumption scheme whereas the association “Communauté énergétique de Malaunay” manages those technical, legal and administrative tasks for the energy community.

Capacity & know-how

When the municipality went beyond municipal assets and started setting up the energy community, several questions popped up such as:

- Legal options: who is responsible for what ? who can be a member?, how do public procurement rules apply?,...
- Invoicing: how to set up a billing process
- Outreach: how to activate participants were new to the municipal team.

The small municipal team was ready to find solutions and to take leadership.

Skilling up

One of them was the involvement of external experts: the municipal team called in legal experts and an engineering company, financed thanks to government grants. At the same time and in order to increase own capacity, the municipal team got trained in renewable energy and collective governance. Even though citizen assemblies had been part and parcel of the municipal energy and climate strategy since 2006, it was useful to grow additional skills throughout the process.

Conditions to grow something similar in your place!

- Set an example by starting with municipal assets before trying to bring citizens on board
- Set a political and organisational frame for cross-cutting collaboration
- Fill internal skills gaps through training and external expertise
- Go step-by-step and be patient

> The city’s strategy “Malaunay en transition” (in French)
> Malaunay’s transition project on Radio France (in French)

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