

We believe in the evolution towards a fully sustainable energy society!

We believe in YOUR future!

Within this vision our mission is to

Enable Intelligent Local Energy Communities by means of innovative software solutions to create economic and ecological value for all people and companies.

Thus ... For you and your offspring

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The path to sustainability and democracy

Stefan Lodeweyckx, CEO and co-founder of **i.LECO**, has spent the past six years in the driving seat of the green energy revolution, and has vast experience in evolutionary and revolutionary concepts relating to renewable energy. He discusses the potential offered by local energy communities in achieving a democratic and sustainable future.

If there is one thing on many agendas worldwide, it's climate change and humanity's influence on it. The bottom-up call for action, by means of the recent 'marches for climate' across Europe by so many young people, really demonstrates its importance, and business leaders should take this matter seriously and act upon it. Luckily, various positive initiatives have been taken up by big corporations. Closing the stakeholder loop in Europe – for example, in the top-down policy-based instances – has resulted in a very elaborate and well-thought framework named the 'Clean Energy Package' that aims for an ambitious climate-neutral Europe by 2050.

Where the production of green energy was, even only a few years ago, still a decision that needed funding support, it is now turning into a market that is economically viable on its own under favourable regulatory conditions. The same will be happening soon with electric mobility, once the total cost of ownership is properly understood by the masses. The next big wave on the electrification train is the heating processes, but in certain countries this will surely take longer, leaving room for low-priced, lower-impacting fossil fuel energy sources.

Causes for concern

One thing that is not really understood by many people is even though this great lower-cost green electrification wave is picking up, it will cost the overall system more money if this transition is not carried out in a very smart manner. More eye-opening still is that all of this can cause network problems, and worst-case electrical distribution and transport failures, which means that – for Western countries – the stability and guarantee of energy is in danger.

The positive side is that the world has all it takes to go 'full green' without the negative side effects, as long as it is able to evolve the current, centralised network model towards a distributed, clustered and intelligent version.

On one end of the spectrum, the good corporate examples of better energy management are very much oriented towards 'we aim to ultimately do it all ourselves', versus the only other real alternative being 'somewhat smart' but still very centrally managed and operated. Neither is good and neither will help make the much needed big energy shift.

The middle solution – 'working together locally' – is actually the better solution and the European Clean Energy Package fosters and supports this concept through the 'Local Energy Community' model.

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The optimal model

Most people have already heard about 'peer2peer energy trading', and 'blockchain' and 'AI' are already seamlessly voiced in the same sentence. These options are a bit too limited and are not even the right ones from a total system perspective.

In principle, the real energy community models optimise for economical total cost of ownership that, if well implemented, automatically drive for maximum sustainability. As a great spin-out value, such models improve and foster the local citizen coherence, and have the potential to maximise the democratisation of the energy market. In projects that iLECO has carried

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out, the company has actually seen the latter occur between different participants, because sustainability is visible in those neighbourhood and such models offer a number of advantages over paying a monthly bill to a central energy provider.

The economic aspect is easily understood in the context of the global dropping costs of even small green energy productions – on one's house, for example – mixed with the concept of complementary regional energy consumption profiles – such as places to put extra solar power to use when

a house overproduces energy. Combining this with the full digitalisation of the energy streams, relevant metadata and performance algorithms to forecast and further optimise the demand profile will reduce the local aggregated energy system cost in comparison with the current and even future single acting/optimising 'smart' consumers.

The key point to enable this is regulation allowing these type of novel business models and concepts. Once this happens, the way towards a green, sustainable and democratic energy future is bright. ●

For further information

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