

Delft (the Netherlands): e-deals to achieve a carbon-neutral target by 2050

Delft has been a member of Energy Cities since 2004.

The context: “Delft energy neutral 2050” vision

The city of Delft (100,000 inhabitants) has had an **active energy policy since the 1990s**, resulting in a 15% greenhouse gas emission reduction between 1990 and 2012. In 2011, the municipality took a big step by adopting **the ambition to become energy neutral by 2050** and decided to reduce GHG emissions by 35% between 2012 and 2020 to achieve this aim.

This decision resulted in the need for **a radically different approach**. The municipality had a direct influence on only 2% of the emissions generated in its territory, i.e. the emissions generated by municipal buildings and facilities. The city of Delft opted for an innovative approach, moving from **a role of initiative instigator to one of facilitator** after noticing that an increasing number of initiatives in favour of sustainable development had been launched by local businesses and citizens. While increasing numbers of citizens felt the need to reduce their dependency on large utility companies by generating their own energy, businesses were seeking to reduce fossil energy costs and an increasing number were paying growing attention to their environmental footprint. **A genuine trend in favour of a “green economy” based on innovative solutions and the responsible use of available resources was therefore emerging¹.**

The municipality thus decided to **encourage these committed local players to take on more responsibilities**, by giving them enhanced powers over the interpretation of the targets and over the means to achieve them.

E-deals: a choice of agreements

In this context, the municipality implemented **e-deals** (e- standing for energy), a **local version of the national green deals²**. They are agreements signed between stakeholders and the municipality, either for specific projects or to express their commitment in favour of Delft’s ambition to become carbon neutral by 2050. Two municipal employees, Maaïke Kaiser and Pauline van Gijn, of the team in charge of relations with local stakeholders and responsible for implementing the local energy plan, work on *e-deals* in Delft.

¹ “Delft energy neutral 2050 - Delft 2013-2016 Implementation Programme”, Delft municipality. URL: http://www.energy-cities.eu/db/delft_1308_en.pdf

² *E-deals* are a local version of the national *green deals*, but these programmes are not linked. The *green deal* approach focuses on various wide-ranging projects from businesses, organisations and local authorities to encourage the engagement of the private sector in sustainable development. Since their launch in 2011, around 160 *green deals* have been signed and implemented.

Since 2013, **17 local stakeholders** have signed a **general scope e-deal**, thus expressing their support for Delft's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2050, including the municipality of Delft, several universities, Orange Gas, Ikea Delft, the Datacenter Group and Eneco. The municipality has also supported **ten specific e-deal projects**: two energy retrofitting projects, one project with the Technical University on hydrogen-powered vehicles, "*Delft Solar City*" for the development of solar panels in the city, and other projects with hotels and schools.

For these specific *e-deals*, the municipality provides small **subsidies** and gives projects more **visibility** through articles in newspapers, a Facebook page and a website. The municipality has chosen to adopt a **market approach**, which means that it will not refuse to support two potentially competing projects. A few conditions, however, have to be met: the project must be in line with the city's energy plan and must have a business model to ensure that the municipality does not finance the totality of the project. Projects must also be sufficiently significant to justify the signature of an *e-deal*, a relatively long process requiring the involvement of several municipal employees. Smaller and less costly projects may benefit from other types of financing, notably through the energy plan.

The "*Widar in the sun*" example

This *e-deal* was initiated by the parents of pupils from the Widar school, who wanted to install **solar panels on the school rooftop**. Faced with financial difficulties and lacking expertise, they contacted the municipality. The subsidies granted under the *e-deal* made it possible to hire a financial consultant and to launch an efficient communication campaign about the project.



In **collaboration with the organic supermarket Ekoplaza**, the necessary funds were raised within a few months. Parents and other interested individuals were able to support the project by buying Ekoplaza vouchers (buying €250 entitling them to a €300 discount voucher at the supermarket). It was then the supermarket that invested in the solar panels and will receive the profits of its investment for ten years while paying an annual rent to the school. After the ten-year period, ownership of the solar panels will be transferred to the school, which will also benefit from the renewable energy they produce. Thanks to this project, **not only is the school supplied with renewable energy, but the initiative means that energy-related issues have become a meaningful part of its curricula.**

Results and lessons learnt

Generally, the fact that the municipality has remained in the background has proved to be somewhat positive. Starting a **dialogue with the various stakeholders about their expectations, needs** and the *e-deal* scheme was sufficient to encourage them to come up with their own ideas. There remains, however, a source of disappointment: the international companies located in the territory have not felt concerned by the city's ambitions. True to its market approach, the municipality has not insisted and is biding its time until these companies could become interested in the communication and visibility it can offer them.

The difficulties encountered:

- **Evaluation** relies on the stakeholders and checking everything would be too costly.
- **Communication** is a key success factor of the *e-deal* scheme. A website, social media, articles in the press: no communication channel must be overlooked! Meetings must also be organised to connect the scheme to a solid network and encourage the emergence of new projects.
- In Delft, only two community initiatives have been launched so far under the *e-deal* approach, whereas in the neighbouring city 80 have been launched, even though the same approach has been adopted. In December 2015, a final session should conclude three months of reflexion with local residents on the best **way to involve them in e-deals**.

Success factors:

- **Taking advantage of existing structures:** the municipality of Delft has for example been able to rely on the “*Technological Innovation Campus*” and “*Delft Amazing Technology*” networks, two initiatives launched by the municipality to stimulate collaboration between local players. The municipality used these networks to start a discussion on energy transition with individual partners. This was not difficult as most of the stakeholders were already involved in energy issues.
- The market approach adopted by the municipality places it in the **position of a facilitator**: through subsidies, communication and networking, the municipality hopes to promote cooperation between citizens, businesses and universities and to encourage them to take action by getting them identify with the city's objectives. This position of facilitator is a genuine success factor in the sense that it makes it possible to **harness the pre-existing local dynamics**. However, as the municipality does not require anything from anyone, it has to **insist hugely on the opportunities provided by the e-deals and adopt a real marketing strategy** to attract motivated stakeholders.

***E-deals* are not an end in itself, but a wonderful tool to support emerging projects and communicate about them. They encourage all stakeholders to get involved and create an emulation of them, since the municipality plays a facilitator role. It is still too soon to recommend this approach to other municipalities. It is however possible to establish a dialogue with local stakeholders to understand each player's needs and expectations.**

For further information

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Useful links and information

Delft *e-deal* website (in Dutch). URL: <http://www.delftwordtgroen.nl/>

“A l'action !” workshop organised by Energy Cities on 1st October 2014 as part of the PCET symposium.

URL: <http://www.energy-cities.eu/-Pays-Bas-mobilisation-des-acteurs>

“Atelier 10 / Échange d'expérience sur la mise en mouvement des acteurs du territoire : l'exemple des Pays-Bas Synthèse – Plans climat énergie territoriaux”, ADEME, 30th September – 1st October 2014.

URL: <http://restitution-colloque-pcet2014.ademe.fr/pdf/syntheses/atelier-10.pdf>

“Delft energy neutral 2050 - Delft 2013-2016 Implementation Programme”, Delft municipality. URL: http://www.energy-cities.eu/db/delft_1308_en.pdf