

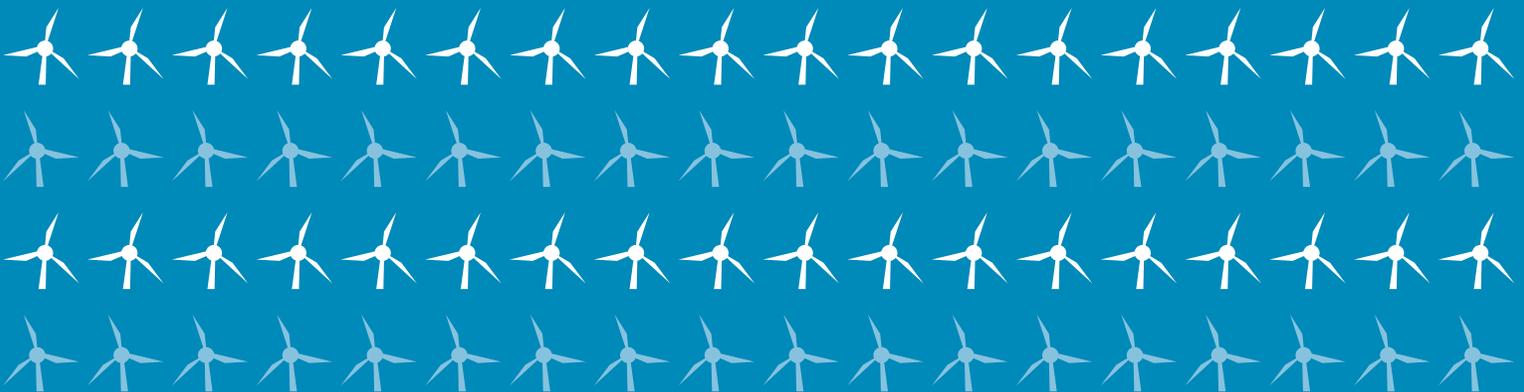


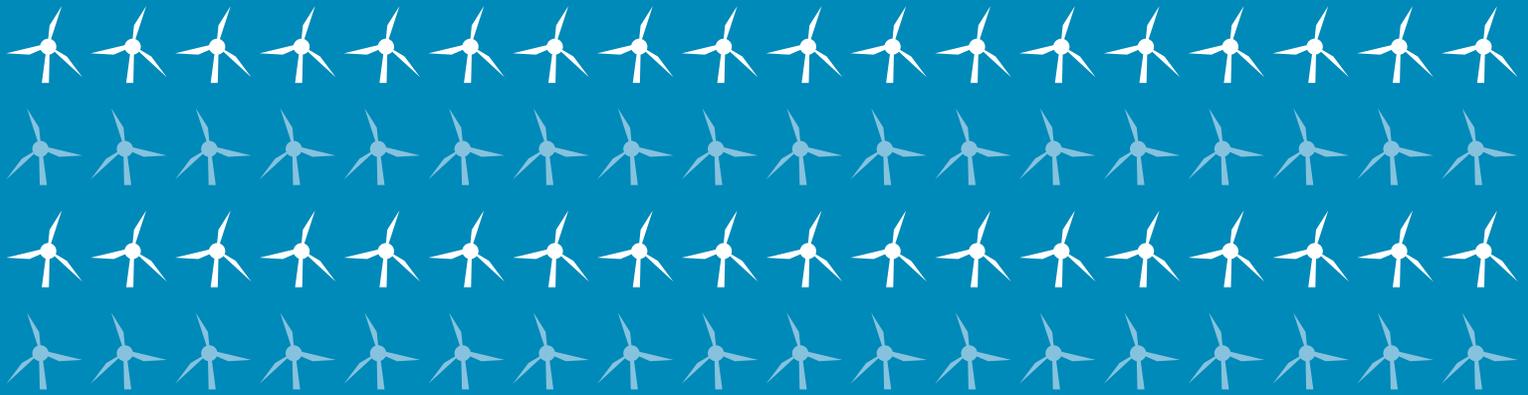
NORTH SEA
SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PLANNING

THE FINAL COMPENDIUM

CHAPTER IV

HOW TO SET UP AND OPERATE REGIONAL
NETWORKS FOR ENERGY PLANNING?





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1 INTRODUCTION

The costs of energy, in particular fossil energy, have increased dramatically during the last decades. Even if the price of energy cannot rise without limit, it is obvious that it will remain at a high level in medium to long term. Rising energy costs contribute to a steadily increasing financial pressure on households, companies and public utilities. In addition, the small and smallest towns, which are often situated in rural areas, face decreasing numbers of inhabitants. This leads to a negative cycle: the incomes of local communities are decreasing while costs are rising, despite lower demand. One way of absorbing rising costs is to critically question local energy consumption, and to use the existing energy- saving potential and potential for local energy production. Because local actors are part of the solution, it is important that they are connected to the chain of actors involved in implementing local strategies. This connectivity can be achieved in regional networks.

The chapter »How to set up and operate regional networks for energy planning?« focuses on the benefits and necessities for building regional networks and different types of networks which have been established in the scope of the project.

One of the goals of the North Sea – SEP project was to build new regional networks around energy planning, energy efficiency and renewable energy. Networks play a major role in the processes of acquiring commitment and creating conditions for local partnerships around energy.

The term network used within this project is based on the definition that professional networking for energy planning concerns establishing new relationships and connectivity between actors in the field of energy planning (customers, producers, advisors, facility managers, energy companies, governments, etc.), by using social capital and interpersonal interaction. Networking aims to raise knowledge and commitment to energy goals and to create opportunities for investment in energy measures, to develop new business cases and to increase cooperation in projects.

In this context, the reinforcement and exploitation of existing networks and the construction of networks from scratch are both considered to be parts of building up networks. These networks can be formed within the project itself but also external actors can be involved. In order to get an impression about the networks existing in the scope of North Sea-SEP a survey has been conducted. The project partners were asked to provide information about their network activities on international, national and regional level.

The collaboration within the project can be seen as branched. In 2010, 67 networks between the partners in North Sea – SEP dealt with energy issues, and over 300 different kinds of networking activities took place. The partners in North Sea – SEP founded at least seven new networks during the project. Partners joined and helped to maintain at least five new networks founded by others in the North Sea Region. More than 6,440 persons have been directly reached through the network activities in the North Sea – SEP project. An unknown number has been reached indirectly. Furthermore, 62 meetings with external stakeholders took place until March 2012.

A special kind of international cooperation and networking was formed through regular Think Tank meetings which took place several times during the projects. A special aim of North Sea – SEP is to collect and share information. The Think Tank was established to serve this purpose and to produce and discuss new ideas and methods in the context of sustainable energy planning. In addition, advice concerning future developments in sustainable energies and techniques should be given to the different project partners.

2 NETWORKING: AN IMPORTANT PART OF ENERGY PLANNING

2.1 Networking – a description

For this report a network is defined as

»A regional group of persons or organisations that have a similar interest and that use some kind of interaction or communication structure specifically for this issue«.

Networking is a common phenomenon. Every organisation works in the context of networks and is related to multiple actors. Within the North Sea – SEP project, »professional networking for energy planning concerns establishing new relationships and connectivity between actors in the field of energy planning (customers, producers, advisors, facility managers, energy companies, governments, etc.), by using social capital and interpersonal interaction. Networking aims to raise knowledge and commitment to energy goals and to create opportunities for investment in energy measures, to develop new business cases and to increase cooperation in projects«.

However different networks can be, there are some common characteristics:

- Networking is a social activity. The members of a network use social interaction to explore the possibility for new partnerships and other activities.
- Networks are dynamic. The members may change over time, networks come and go and many kinds of sub-relationship arise between individual members within the network.
- Networks connect a mix of individual and collective interests.
- The information flows in a network are diverse.
- Networking is an important instrument to foster decision-making for stakeholders. During their participation in a network, partners will develop relationships on different levels.

Table 1 shows how the focus of an individual actor may change during involvement in a network.

	LEVEL OF RELATIONSHIP IN THE NETWORK	ROLE OF THE NETWORK	NEED OF INDIVIDUALS ACTORS	OUTPUT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL ACTOR
	Getting introduced	Creating opportunities for contact and acquaintance	Understanding the relationships in the network, becoming visible	Increased network
	Networking	Continuity, facilitation of contacts, organising the exchange and increase of knowledge	Establishing personal relationships, sharing information and experiences between members. More knowledge, high status of information, personal interaction	Applicability of experiences in different situations. Increased viability of projects and policy
	Informal cooperation	The network provides a safe environment for sparring partners and is a source of up-to-date knowledge	Initial cooperation in smaller groups	Implementation
	Formal cooperation	A source of business opportunities and win-win situations	Running projects with other actors, selling products, creating business	Profit, new business, innovation

Table 1: Interaction in networks as a resource for new business cases

2 NETWORKING: AN IMPORTANT PART OF ENERGY PLANNING

2.2 Network types

In general networks can be either formal or informal. While informal networks often only serve to exchange information on a given topic, formal networks have precise aims and goals that should be reached through different activities of the network partners. An informal energy network exists when there is no administration, network name or secured financing. An informal network may have an irregular agenda; the networking goal may not be evident for the group as a whole; individual partners may use a more ad hoc approach; and information may not be synchronised throughout the group. An informal network may arise when an existing structure is used in the context of energy planning. Such networks may function as a preliminary stage in forming a formal network. In other cases, such networks may experience early extinguishment.

A formal network exists when there is an administrator and an evident networking aim. Formal networks do not always have a name: the meetings that IMOOG organises for sustainability officers and communication officers, for example, have a networking goal (the exchange of knowledge) but no formal network name. It is important to define a precise aim, as this is the base for setting goals and targets for the networks. Successful cooperations need specific aims and the identification of possible results. Only then a network can work, be stable and produce tangible and usable outputs (or contribute to specific results).

2.3 Aims and triggers for setting up a network

The aims of the networks cover a wide variety and include almost all aspects of energy use and climate change, from trainings and courses for different target groups and promoting better energy use locally to lobbying in Brussels. Examples of aims are:

- Develop and spread energy and CO₂ strategies
- Work for a sustainable region/country
- Improve all aspects of waste treatment
- Promote biogas
- Promote and develop sustainable construction

- Develop biomass-fuelled heating plants
- Disseminate knowledge from the academic sphere to the private sector
- Encourage community cooperation
- Share good practices and information
- Lobbying
- Encourage collaboration between academic institutions
- Hold training courses
- Work with academic qualification and standards

Overall, there are four main factors that need to be considered when establishing a network:

1. Networks have to offer a precise added value to their members. Networking needs time and resources, this has to pay out in one way or the other. Thus, the benefits have to be obvious for each member.
2. Networks need a specific concept, strategy and action plan. In the founding phase they are subject to discussions between the founding partners. This implies a functioning communication structure and culture and a main partner that (at least informally) takes the lead.
3. This lead is considered to be a vital instance for the network, functioning as a central source for information and communication, giving advice to single members and moderating the whole set-up and working process.
4. Concentrating on specific questions and problems helps to find a common focus in the first establishing phase of the network.

»In some cases, networks help to disseminate results and knowledge to other networks. This is the case for the network for sustainability officers from IMOOG, and for the »Energie Kompetenz« network in Osterholz. The results and knowledge of such networks for energy experts can be spread to the public sector. It may be a good idea in such cases to set up a parallel network of mayors in the region, in which work from the expert network is presented and »approved«. This ensures that mayors are more likely to use the knowledge from the expert network.«

¹ See: Dr. Kerstin Schulenburg: Vernetzen ohne sich zu verheddern – Netzwerkprofile und Qualitätsstandards Ein praktischer Leitfaden zum Aufbau von Netzwerken. Source: http://www.dialog-im-mittelpunkt.de/pdf/vernetzen_ohne_sich_zu_verheddern.pdf (in German only).

2 NETWORKING: AN IMPORTANT PART OF ENERGY PLANNING

2.4 Composition of a network

Each network has a specific composition, demanding that special types of partners participate. The triple-helix networks, for example, have members from the private, public and scientific sector. Networks may interact vertically or horizontally. In the latter case, members are on the same level (e.g. in a network of CEOs, policymakers, or mayors). One example of a horizontal network is the DEKO-network in Drenthe, which is a network of environmental officers working on climate and energy issues. They have established a platform to exchange experiences and discuss opinions aiming at strengthening the individuals. Another example is the Regional Network of Facility Managers organised by Leiedal. There are advantages for both types: horizontal networks offer information exchange concerning a special branch or level of decision making/qualification whereas vertical networks can provide a broader view of the problem/issue that needs to be tackled. This also shows among the North Sea – SEP partners' networks: Most networks are semibroad in their approach, welcoming a wide range of members,

and some are open to the public, NGOs, environmental groups, etc. Other networks are very narrow with members from only, for example, organisations working with waste treatment. A few networks focus solely on the participation of politicians. Important stakeholders in energy networks might for examples be:

- Politicians
- Facility and utility managers
- Companies
- Installers and energy advisors
- Municipalities and regional governments
- Policymakers
- Homeowners and tenants
- Housing companies
- Organisations for park management
- Waste companies
- Landowners

The precise composition of a regional network depends on the aims and the regional actors that are available for networking. An example for a regional energy network is shown in figure 1.

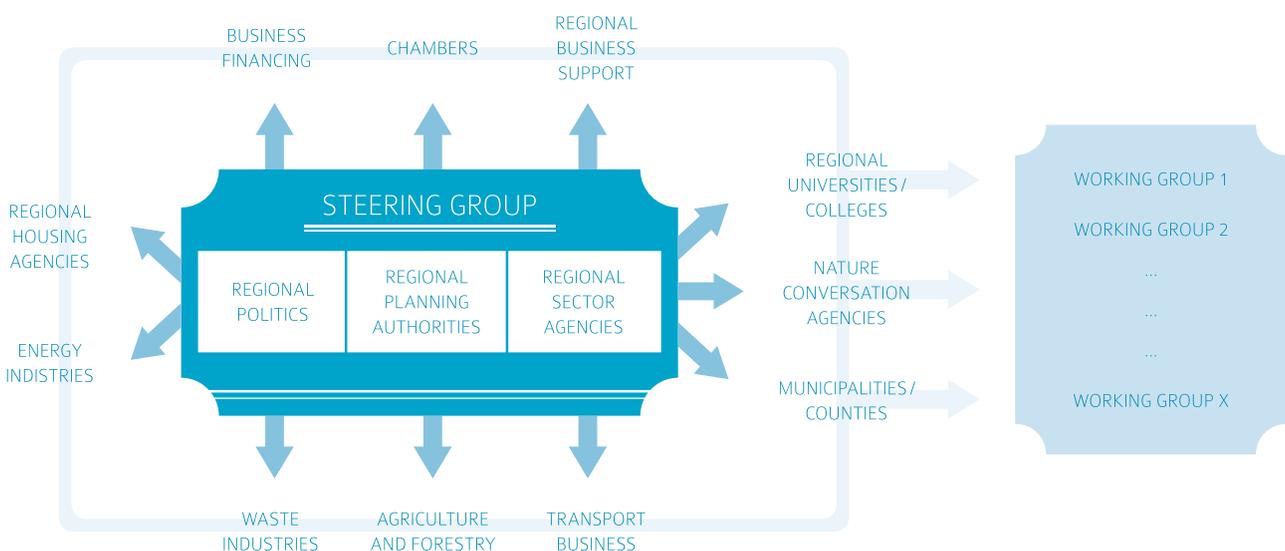


Figure 1: Example for a Regional Energy Actors Network Source:

2 NETWORKING: AN IMPORTANT PART OF ENERGY PLANNING

The area of operation of the networks covers an enormous range, from small networks that include only one organisation and its neighbours, to networks active

throughout a municipality or a region. Some networks work at the national level and some work over the whole of Europe.

BEST PRACTICE: OSTERHOLZ' MUNICIPAL NETWORK APPROACH: ALSO INFORMAL NETWORKS WORK!

One of the success factors mentioned is the power of local networks. Making the region of Osterholz in Germany »energy-neutral« – and thus saving an estimated EUR 140 million annually on energy spending – has only been possible due to cooperation between public and private parties. While it is true that politicians gave the green light for a new approach, things really got moving only when advisors, energy companies and partners joined in. Working together gives more power: a single municipality, for example, would never have achieved the same results alone. However, a separate project bureau was not needed. The partners agreed on what to do, and divided the work. Conclusion: »It's all about networking and bringing the right stakeholders to the table«. This cooperation has subsequently led to specific initiatives at local level. One example is the way in which the municipality was able to bring a furniture company searching for a new, sustainable location into contact with various partners in the network. New concepts become more feasible by bundling manpower and content-related resources. A beneficial side effect of this cooperation is that the parties involved are now able to get in contact with each other much more easily. Before the network was established, it was not always possible for an advisor or business party to contact the municipality directly. This is no longer a problem in the 'climate for solutions' that has emerged.

2.4.1 ESTABLISHING A NETWORK

Building up a network usually is accomplished in different successive phases. They surely differ

according to the involved actors and the initial aims and issues that lead to forming the network. However, in general the process of building up a network will follow an approach like this:

1	Evaluating the preconditions	What is the motive for building a network? What is the problem/the main issue? Which partners are needed and what is their motivation? Who will take the lead in the starting phase?
2	Building up an informal network	Establishing a communication structure/culture including first (informal) meetings, building up an initial communication and organisation infrastructure.
3	Defining roles within the network	Defining and distributing concrete roles within the network (lead, responsibilities for special topics or target groups, competences for decision making, etc.)
4	Creating an overall concept	Definition of a common understanding of the aims and goals of the network – what should be reached until when and which means are appropriate / available?
5	Building up a formal network	Following the often not so easy definition of the overall concept and the initial distributing of roles a concrete concept for commitment and participation needs to be elaborated and rules have to be defined. If financial commitment is needed contracts should be elaborated and agreed upon.
6	Joint actions	First actions will take place, testing the capacity of the network and revealing weak links and threads.
7	Stabilising the network	How well do the partners work together? Which means are further necessary? Are there any issues that need change for future successful networking?
8	Joint projects	Elaborating and implementing projects will take place in the last phase of establishing a network. This will only be successful if the other phases are thoroughly worked out and finalised.

Table 2: General phases for establishing (regional) networks

2 NETWORKING: AN IMPORTANT PART OF ENERGY PLANNING

2.4.2 NETWORK MANAGEMENT

Starting a network is often easy, especially for informal networks. However, management must start at an early stage in order to keep track of all processes and activities and to ensure proper establishing and running of the network. If the establishment of the network has not been properly carried out, network management and maintenance may turn out difficult because network members hold different views about the aim and scope of the network, its communication methods, financing, etc. Difficulties may especially occur when the roles within the network are not properly defined. Networks may be maintained in different ways. Some of them are suitable for networks of any size. Others are suitable for large networks or for small networks. Network management mainly includes the administration, financing and communication activities. Administration is often needed to sustain formal networks. Activities of an administrator include keeping the address and e-mail list up-to-date, sending out newsletters and invitations, setting the programme, and managing communication (also with social media). Administration can be done either by one of the network members as part of normal work or (if the network has a budget) by a person employed part or full time. Informal networks usually do not have any formal administration.

Financing

Networks of any type may work with or without a budget (formal financing). It is not necessarily expensive to establish and maintain a network, but the minimum that a network requires are time to organise and the support with locations for meetings. Financing the network (which involves, for example, the time that each network member spends on being active in the network and expenses for network activities) can come either from the members' own budgets or from special funds assigned to the network. Financing from the members' budgets is typical for informal networks without their own budget. In many cases, such networks are purely for the exchange of information and knowledge, and thus the only cost each member incurs is the time they spend. Any activity arranged by an informal network is financed by sharing the costs

among the network members. Formal networks, in contrast, have a dedicated budget, which is normally financed by membership fees. They may have funding also from external sources. Some networks have only external funding and no membership fees.

Communication

A good communication structure is inevitable to meet the aims of the network. This includes both, internal communication between members and external communication towards target groups. The means of communication can be shown as in Table 3.

The two types of dissemination (member and target group oriented), combined with the two types of activities (active and passive) altogether lead to six parameters that define the dissemination profile of the North Sea – SEP partners. The parameters are:

- Dissemination of information between members. The network members mutually share information. The aim is to build know-how within the network and to that end discussions take place with network members. The purpose could be further collaboration between partners, learning from each other, knowledge building between partners, to create new projects or actions.
- Dissemination of information towards target groups. Here we can observe a one-way form of communication: the network mostly shares information but does not retrieve feedback. The purpose could be to inform people: citizens, industry, but also decision makers and other stakeholders. It mainly concerns the information or results of a finished project or program.
- Use of »active« techniques linked with dissemination of information between members (e.g. meetings, events, talks, discussions, workshops, study visits ...).
- Use of »passive« techniques linked with dissemination of information between members (e.g. electronic newsletter, press releases, newsletters, email).
- »active« techniques linked with dissemination of information towards target groups (e.g. training courses, conferences, lectures, workshops,

2 NETWORKING: AN IMPORTANT PART OF ENERGY PLANNING

	INSTRUMENTS			
	ACTIVE		PASSIVE	
TYPE 1: MEMBER ORIENTED	Collective, aiming at involving stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Events, · Fairs, · Information markets 	Collective aiming at discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Events, Meetings, · Energy forums, · Bilateral discussions 	Direct, printed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Newsletters · Papers · Formal invitations 	Direct, digital: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Email · E/newsletter
	Personal contacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Face to face meetings · phone calls, · kitchen-table talks 	Collective aiming at learning by experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Study visits · seminars 	Sharing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Online sharing of documents · and information 	
TYPE 2: TARGET GROUP ORIENTED	Group or individuals, aimed at learning by experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Company visits, · guiding tours · Mobile · Mobile Compost 	Aimed at forming a target group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Facebook, Twitter, Linked In 	Topic based: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Brochures · flyers 	News: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Discussion papers · Press releases
	Collective, aimed at increasing knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Courses, Lectures, · Workshops 	Collective aimed at gathering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Conference 	Indirect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Press releases 	

Table 3: Various instruments to be used in different communication strategies

company visits, energy mobile, events).

- »passive« techniques linked with dissemination of information towards target groups. (E.g. brochures, press releases, newspapers, website).

2.4.3 NETWORK ACTIVITIES

Communication, dissemination and activities often go hand in hand. They complement each other and in many cases network activities are mostly dissemination activities. Thus, the most common activities are meetings, seminars and conferences, while some networks also work with training of their members or of school pupils. Newsletters and e-mails are also fairly common, as are excursions, company visits and

visits to schools. A few networks work with lobbying the national government, developing games for energy efficiency in buildings, workshops, and other activities. The elaboration and implementation of precise projects, e.g. involving investments or building up infrastructure, is rather difficult, time consuming and dependent on financial means. They can be accomplished in stable, long-lasting networks with members that commit themselves to the issue to a large extent. Common and important types of activities identified within the North Sea – SEP project are summarised in table 4.

2 NETWORKING: AN IMPORTANT PART OF ENERGY PLANNING

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	EFFECT IN THE NETWORK
SEMINARS	Seminars about saving energy or new technologies are very common network activities. A professional speaker can lift the seminar to new heights, raising interesting questions and initiating lively discussions. A speaker who provokes makes people think and gets discussions going.	Raising knowledge about energy issues Raising interest for innovative energy projects
DEBATES	Invite two or more people to hold a debate. This presents different angles of the subject in a way that a single speaker can't, since a single speaker tends to see things from only one point of view.	Developing a vision Developing a common language about energy planning
EXHIBITIONS	This is a good way to show others the work that the network is doing, and can also be an opportunity of spreading information about a specific subject to network members and others.	Spreading information Synchronising knowledge with other networks Marketing
EXCURSIONS	An excursion is not only for sharing knowledge and experiences, but is also a very good opportunity for getting to know other people during traveling and eating. Such contacts can be more fruitful than the excursion itself in many cases.	Raising knowledge about energy issues Deeper knowledge
BREAKFAST MEETINGS	Such meetings can be an effective way to spread information and to market activities or companies. People come to breakfast followed by a seminar or other activity.	Low-threshold meetings. Good for making acquaintance and creating familiarity and personal relationships, building up trust
CONFERENCES	A conference usually needs a lot of work, and may not be suitable for small networks or networks with small administrative capacity. A conference to which the network members bring a speaker may provide new impulses. This approach can lift a conference in unexpected ways, especially when the speakers mix with conference participants.	New contacts Activating the members by letting them bring in speakers Raising interest for the subject of the network
NEWSLETTER	Most newsletters are now sent out by e-mail, but paper-based newsletters may be used, depending on the aim and target group.	Spreading information Up-to-date news on the subject
WEBSITE	Many networks use websites, and some also have member areas where the members login to obtain access to more content, discussion forums, etc.	Easy way to be found Keeping profiles of members
E-MAIL LISTS	E-mail lists are a very powerful tool for network members to communicate with each other, and to obtain information and help from each other.	Interaction between members within and outside the network
FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS	Network members meet to have lunch, a cup of coffee or a smaller meeting.	Members share information, plan cooperation, etc.
WORKSHOPS	Workshops, in contrast to many other activities, allow two-way communication, requiring the participants to make an active contribution.	Activating the members Envisioning Achieving concrete results
DISSEMINATION	The objective of many networks is to spread knowledge. See also the report describing how North Sea – SEP disseminates information.	Spreading the message of the network Reaching new target groups
A WEB-BASED INTERACTIVE FORUM	Members can share experiences in such a form, or ask questions, discuss problems and obtain important contact with other members.	Strengthen the network and the cooperation
COMMON PROJECTS	A common project can be used to strengthen the commitment within the members. The project can use the activities mentioned above to obtain its goals. A network may have several projects under way at the same time where different members are involved in different projects. This can be described as a kind of learning network within the bigger network.	

Table 4: Networking activities – examples from North Sea – SEP

3 NETWORKING EXAMPLES – INSIGHT INTO PRACTICE

The following chapter illustrates two examples from the regions in North Sea – SEP. The first is a stakeholder analysis carried out in Halland (SE). Such an analysis is very important because having an accurate and detailed profile of the actors in the region helps to choose the right type of network and the right activities. The second example shows how networking was used as an integral part of the planning process for a sustainable housing development in Tynaarlo (NL). Stakeholders were invited to participate right from the start of the process in order to raise interest in participation in the future development. The municipality of Tynaarlo used a roadmap as a plan to guide the network. During the project, a survey has been developed in order to get an impression about the networks established in the scope of North Sea – SEP. The study's objective was to present an overview about the networks in the project, its members, the size and their aim.

3.1 Survey

The survey was conducted on the basis of a questionnaire and on information obtained from discussions and presentations within the project. Network building has much in common with dissemination, cooperation and acquirement of knowledge. Low profile networks or networks in their initial phases were also considered as relevant. The questionnaire was developed within the partnership and was mandatory for all North Sea – SEP partners. The aim was to collect information about networking, such as good and bad ways of networking, types of network, activities, etc. Furthermore, the objective was to use the information to define criteria to measure the effects and success of networks. As a results of the survey an overview table was elaborated, displaying basic information on the networks established and/or used by the partners within North Sea – SEP. The list is by no means exhaustive, but gives an overview of active networks and an indication of the variables that are important in making a network successful. The fourteen project partners of the North Sea-SEP project were/ are involved in 67 different kinds of network. Their role is various, as they take part in networks as members, as organisers, as administrators, as supporting bodies, etc.. In some networks, the North Sea – SEP partner

is the founder or initiator of the network, and in some networks the partner is also the financier. The ways in which the partners participate in regional networks is best explained by examples. Table 5 gives an overview on regional networks in which the partners in the North Sea – SEP project play a prominent role in building up or maintaining the network.

3 NETWORKING EXAMPLES – INSIGHT INTO PRACTICE

PARTNER	NETWORK NAME	AIM	TYPE OF MEMBERS	PUBLIC/ PRIVATE	SIZE	NEW Y/N
LEIEDAL	Regional energy steering committee	Regional think tank to help to develop the regional strategy and to carry it out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Housing companies, · experts, · local authorities, IMOG 	both	16	Y
	Inter-municipal network on energy and public infrastructure	Sharing knowledge and best practices in the region, work on shared solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Facility managers, · aldermen of the 13 cities and municipalities, · IMOG 	public	26+ 1	N
	Regional energy forum	Discuss the regional strategy and increase knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Stakeholders involved with energy issues 	both	W100	Y
ABERDEEN	North East Climate Change Partnership	Lead by example, learning from experiences of others, discussion and debate, identify joint projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Public organisations, · local authorities, · police, · healthcare trusts, · fire services · local companies 	both	8	N
DUNDEE	Community Energy Scotland	Promotion of renewable energy community projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Citizens, · public bodies 	both	1000	N
	Solar Cities	Promotion of renewable energy community projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Public bodies, · companies 	both	150	N
	Tayside construction forum	Sustainable construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Public bodies, · companies 	both	150	N
OLDENBURG	OLEC (Oldenburg Energy Cluster)	Dissemination of energy knowhow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Energy-related companies, · university, · municipalities 	both	≈45	N
MUNICIPALITY OF TYNAARLO	Municipal Network De Bronnen	Realisation of a sustainable residential area, exchange and increase of knowledge about energy-neutral planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Experts in sustainable building, · provincial authorities, · municipal workers, · companies, · citizens, · water board 	both	≈75	Y
	Pilot Group Smart Grids	Exchange of knowledge about photovoltaic and smart grids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Municipalities, · Energy Valley, · companies 	both		Y
PROVINCE OF DRENTH	DEKO	Implementation of climate plans and CO ₂ goals, exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Environmental officers of the municipalities, · province, national authority 	public	≈20	N

3 NETWORKING EXAMPLES – INSIGHT INTO PRACTICE

PARTNER	NETWORK NAME	AIM	TYPE OF MEMBERS	PUBLIC/ PRIVATE	SIZE	NEW Y/N
ENERGIKONTOR SYDOST	Klimatkommission Kronoberg	Combine sustainable growth and attractive settings with effective use of resources and minimal influence on the climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Politicians, · university, · county governor, · director of regional council, · trade & industry branches, · property & transport sector 	both	22	N
	Växjö Group for Bioenergy	Develop capacity of biomass fuel heated plants, 0.5 to 10 MW as well as business models for this development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Consultants, · producers, · distributors of biomass 	both	8	N
IMOG	Masters of Compost	Training and support for masters of compost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Citizens 	citizens	200	N
	Sustainability officers	Exchange of knowledge and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sustainability officers of municipalities 	public	≈20	N
	RESOC	Stakeholders meeting for the socioeconomic development of the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Public institutions, · companies, · associations 	both	≈100	N
U.A.N.	RURENER	Supporting small rural communities to become energy-neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Public institutions, · companies 	both	12	N
	CEMR (Council for European Municipalities & Regions)	Lobbying for local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · National municipal associations 	public	50	N
OSTERHOLZ	Informal network	Development of concrete business cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · County and local companies 	both		Y
	Energie Kompetenz Osterholz	Foster cooperation of local companies: increase activities in energy conservation & renewable energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Companies involved in energy conservation & renewable energies in Osterholz 	both	15	Y
CAMPUS VARBERG/ EMC	MEK-rådet	Interaction/cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Public, · private, · university, · NGO 	both	20	Y
	Miljöaktörerna	Interaction/cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Public, · university, · NGO 	both	7	N

Table 5: Active regional networks concerning energy issues in the North Sea Region

3 NETWORKING EXAMPLES – INSIGHT INTO PRACTICE

3.2 Example: Stakeholder analysis as a precondition for networking in Halland

The County Administrative Board of Halland required a description of stakeholders in the region working in the fields of environment, energy and climate. At the same time, the Coalition for Energy and Environment (EMC) required a description of stakeholders in different networks, mainly in energy, as a baseline report within North Sea – SEP. A joint project, stakeholder analysis for environment, energy and climate in Halland, was established to meet these requirements. The Alexanderson Institute, Campus Varberg and the Halland Regional Development Council were also involved in the process of mapping the networks. In the end, the region was provided with a comprehensive matrix of existing cooperations and networks – vital source of information and for building up and/or fostering thematic regional networks.

3.2.1 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS AS A TOOL IN ENERGY PLANNING

The analysis was to be a tool in on-going and future actions to achieve regional environmental objectives and implement the regional energy and climate strategy for Halland. The stakeholder analysis provided the basis for increased dialogue and interaction between stakeholders in Halland. Information was collected from stakeholders primarily through semi-structured interviews by telephone. Stakeholders also responded by e-mail. Unclear replies in the completed forms were followed up by telephone interviews.

The survey was widely distributed and 120 stakeholders were contacted, of which 53 responded. Some types of stakeholder, such as energy and climate advisors, were overrepresented, and it was necessary that only a few of them responded. The same was true for coordinators active in Agenda 21 and some other types of stakeholder. The fisheries, both professional fishermen and recreational fishermen, were not included in this review, but this category should be included in a future review.

3.2.2 METHODS

Several categories of stakeholders were identified: industry, R&D, public bodies (municipalities, municipal corporations, counties, the Halland Regional Development Council) and NGOs. Many stakeholders called for more dialogue and interaction with other stakeholders in Halland. Approximately, half of the participants were engaged in external information activities. It is probable that these activities differed significantly, but the analysis revealed the possibility of coordination benefits in this field. It revealed also a potential for arrangements to stimulate a deeper commitment among stakeholders that could be matched more closely to achieving some of the environmental objectives. The analysis showed that stakeholders differ greatly in how they fund their activities, in particular the outgoing and informative activities. Several work mainly on a project basis, while others have relatively stable funding from the state, region or municipality. Several stakeholders, such as municipalities, the Regional Development Council and the county administrative board, are affected by policy changes, and this leads to special conditions that characterise the perspective and behaviour of such stakeholders. The effect of such policy changes is passed on indirectly to other stakeholders who receive funds from those immediately affected. Several of the NGOs expressed a desire to be heard, so that the skills they have acquired after many years of dedicated volunteer work can be used to better advantage.

3.3 Example: Regional networks in the county of Kronoberg

There are many different networks in the fields of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Sources in the county of Kronoberg. The following part presents some of the most relevant networks, their aims and actors.

3.3.1 ENERGY EFFECTIVE BUILDINGS

This network has about 25 members, private and public. The work is built-up according the triple helix model and the Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden

3 NETWORKING EXAMPLES – INSIGHT INTO PRACTICE

is the administrator of the network. The aims of the network are for example to develop the region further for sustainability and competitive strength, to foster a professorship and a group of researcher at the Linnaeus University in Växjö, establish projects focusing on rebuilding and to foster different companies such as purchasers, consultants, suppliers and contractors with edification of knowledge and future access of personnel. The companies in the network will make it available for the researchers to use their existing buildings for measurements to study the total influence of the buildings and the construction work.

3.3.2 BIOGAS SOUTHEAST

Biogas Southeast is a regional network acting for better conditions and progress of biogas in the southeastern part of Sweden. The network brings together public and private actors. The network will support the access of biogas and especially gas for vehicles in order to meet the aims for the environment. It has about ten members, e.g. municipalities, regional authorities and companies. The Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden is the administrator of the network. The network aims at bringing together all actors in the supply chain of biogas and to support an enlargement of biogas in the region, work for capacity-building and -transmission, support an enlargement of the distribution system and raise the use of biogas in different fields such as gas for vehicles and production of heat and power. The Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden coordinates this network in order to foster and to disseminate new information, including the Swedish Energy Agency. The meetings in the networks entail capacity building. The aim is to establish working energy advising in every municipality of the region and that every inhabitant knows it and is using it. Energy advising is available in every municipality in the county of Kronoberg.

3.3.3 THE VÄXJÖ GROUP FOR BIOENERGY

The network was established in 1996 and includes companies in the field of bioenergy which cooperate to develop and introduce energy from biomass. The companies in the network are firms of consultants, plants, distribution and delivery of bioenergy. The work

for the group has been focused on the development in the field of bioenergy for capacity building about biomass-fuel heat plants with the concentration on characteristics for combustion and environment for power from 500 kW to 10 MW, studies of emissions of small particles and their influence of the health. The network is also fostering the annexe of biomass-fuel heat plants in the region and co-operation for developing business models in the field of bioenergy. The work is built-up according to the triple helix model and the Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden is the administrator of the network. Some of the aims of the network are to develop the sector with the help of R&D and to raise the use of bioenergy in order to decrease the emissions of carbon dioxide. The Växjö group for bioenergy has been the driving force for the project »Small district heating in the county of Kronoberg«. The investments for these bio-fuel small heating plants have been about 35 million euro and the total production of energy has been about 200 GWh /year from these plants. They have given rise to significant decrease of carbon dioxide in the region.

3.3.4 THE CLIMATE COMMISSION OF KRONOBERG

A network was built-up with the purpose that Kronoberg will connect sustainable growth and attractive general settings with effective use of resources and minimal influence to the climate. The commission will elaborate suggestions for actions in order to reach the goal of a region free from the use of fossil fuels and suggestions for changes in the local strategies and plans, to reach sustainable growth. The climate commission will be represented by politicians, the headmaster of the regional university, the county governor, the director of the regional council and representatives for energy companies, trade and industry and the branches of property and transports. The operating work in the network will be fostered by the Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden.

3 NETWORKING EXAMPLES – INSIGHT INTO PRACTICE

3.4 Networking with the housing sector in southeast Sweden

The following part describes a step-by-step cooperation model for building up a regional network, in this case for Energy Efficient Buildings. It describes the following aspects:

- how the network was formed
- how it is administered
- how it organises its work
- how it is financed.

The Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden administers the Association Energy Efficient Buildings in the Southeast. The Energy Agency sees a great potential in developing the work put into energy efficient buildings in the region through common effort, based on the Triple Helix Model with participation from public actors, university and the private market. The vision is that the Southeast region will be a centre for energy efficient buildings.

3.4.1 GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE NETWORK

The Network Energy Efficient Buildings (Goda- Hus) is a registered association under Swedish law. The network covers three regions in southeast Sweden: Kalmar, Kronoberg and Blekinge. It is organised according to the Triple Helix Model and it includes 25 local companies from the construction and housing sectors, the Linnaeus University and public companies in the housing business. The purpose of the network is to promote energy efficient buildings through knowledge development. The members share the idea that access to updated and innovative knowledge on energy efficient buildings is a competitive advantage that can improve their market position at the same time as local development is enhanced. For this reason the network finances a professorship at the regional Linnaeus University with the objective of developing a research group on the issue. The mixture of public organisation, private companies and the university working together in an association is considered to be the right approach for exchange of know-how and experiences in energy efficient buildings.

3.4.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION

The association was officially established on the 9th of June, 2009 as a non-profit organisation. But the informal work with starting up the association took at least one year. In the summer of 2008 a local energy consultant, specialised in energy efficiency in building, approached the Energy Agency of Southeast Sweden with the belief that much capacity building was needed on this issue and that there was in general much to be done in order to improve the current situation of energy demands in buildings. The Energy Agency took the consultant's idea seriously and contacted local stakeholders with experience on the issue and the local university and formed a working group. The Energy Agency became the node of the initiative that successfully ended up in the formation of the association.

3.4.3 PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION

The purpose of the association stated in the bylaws is to develop and improve strategic energy and environmental performance of its members as well as of the region of Southeast Sweden. The organisation has a focus on energy efficiency in buildings and welcomes members from the private sector, academia, the public sector as well as other civil associations within the energy, industry, services and housing sectors. Another objective of the association is to support research and development in the construction sector with a focus on energy efficiency and a holistic approach to construction processes. The local university shall be prioritised but other universities can also be involved.

3.4.4 ADMINISTRATION

The network is administered according the state-of-the-art in Sweden for civil associations and in accordance with the country's legal requirements. The assembly is the decisionmaking body and meets once a year. The board represents the association and administers it according to its purposes. The board is formed by representatives of the association's members.

3 NETWORKING EXAMPLES – INSIGHT INTO PRACTICE

There is a controller and an election committee. A technical committee has been recently appointed with the purpose of advising the Board on research and development issues.

3.4.5 PROJECT BASED ASSOCIATION

The association works in a project based form. The members come up with project proposals that the board evaluates and decides on. An application form has been developed. The following aspects should be described in the form:

- Title of the project
- Name of the initiator
- Background and purpose
- Action plan
- Finance of the project
- Possibility for students to do their thesis work within the project

The form contains some fields for the evaluation of the proposal and the possibility for the applicant to ask for funds from the association. The projects are divided in three categories:

- Components and parts in a system. These projects compromise development or evaluation of components in ventilation, heating and other energy demanding systems in a building. An example is a project comparing two different ventilations systems in terms of energy demands, costs and residents' satisfaction.
- New buildings or comprehensive renovation of buildings. In these projects the buildings are considered as a unit, as a whole system and the project addresses many aspects of the buildings' energy consumption. An example is the development of a system for controlling the compliance with a tender demand on energy use in a newly built health care centre. The tender prescribes an energy demand of 75 kWh/m².
- Society's perspective, energy provision and consumption. This last category deals with projects that have a more holistic approach to energy issues in buildings. The projects can deal with

issues such as changes of behaviour in energy consumption or the analysis of synergies and challenges in combining existing district heating from biofuels and passive houses in the same area.

3.4.6 FINANCIAL METHODS

Financing a professorship on Energy Efficient Building

The association signed a contract with the Linnaeus University and compromised itself to partly finance a professorship on energy efficient buildings with at least 1 million SEK (circa 100.000 Euro) for one year if their members contribute with funds. The University committed itself to establish a research and education group on energy efficiency in buildings. Through collecting an annual fee the network finances the professorship. The network has signed contracts with all its members in order to gather sufficient funds. The agreement is valid for three years and can be extended by two years if the objectives of the network stated in the bylaws are accomplished. This financial model has led to the appointment of a professor at the local university.

Financing projects

Regarding finance of projects in some cases the member initiating the project also finances it. In other cases a group of members collaborates in a project and shares the costs. Many projects apply for the possibility to get help from university students through thesis work and others take into consideration contribution with working hours from different members.

Finance from LÅGAN

Lågan is a Swedish programme for buildings with a low energy consumption. The programme started in 2010, and is planned to run for five years. It provides financial support for demonstration projects and local/regional collaboration initiatives. It also encourages new thinking by evaluating and disseminating information from demonstration projects, and by supporting development projects. The programme is intended to:

3 NETWORKING EXAMPLES – INSIGHT INTO PRACTICE

- encourage new construction of and conversion to energy-efficient buildings,
- foster a national market for buildings with low energy consumption, and
- assist in the establishment of an extensive national body of suppliers of products and services, and to create confidence in them.

LÅGAN is a collaborative project between the Swedish Construction Federation, the Swedish Energy Agency, Region Västra Götaland, Formas and others. The network Energy Efficient Buildings has applied for funds from the program and was recently awarded a budget for maintaining and development the association's activities for two years.

Participation in European projects

Within Interreg IVC there is a project called EnercitEE, European networks, experience and recommendations helping cities to become energy efficient. EnercitEE contributes to the improvement of local and regional policies and provides assistance in the transfer of knowledge on energy efficiency and sustainable transport. Seven partners in six European regions carry out the project that works as a miniprogramme. The network Energy Efficient Buildings has applied for funds for a sub-project titled Regional Impact with Energy Efficient Buildings, together with three other partners in Germany, Poland and France.

3.4.7 CONCLUSION

The Network Energy Efficient Buildings has now been working for almost four years and has 25 members from companies in the sectors of construction and housing, the Linnaeus University and public companies in the housing business. There is interest from more companies so the number is supposed to increase. The network arranges seminars and workshops in the region and is fostering different initiatives regarding energy efficiency in the housing sector. It is fostering the development and research via co-financing of a professorship on energy efficient buildings. With the help of e.g. North Sea – SEP, it has been possible for the Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden to foster the network and to take actively part in the regional development.

3.5 Example: Tynaarlo's roadmap for coalition planning

3.5.1 NETWORK AND COALITION PLANNING FOR »DE BRONNEN«

The municipality of Tynaarlo planned the development of a sustainable and energy neutral neighbourhood called »De Bronnen«. The municipality realised that establishing a regional network would offer a platform for innovative partners. Within the scope of North Sea – SEP, the municipality drew up a strategy for a regional public-private network that would act as a breeding ground for practical innovations and contributions. The municipality strove to attract excellent partners and regional stakeholders, and for this reason invited local stakeholders and experts to join innovation sessions and meetings to help to develop the plans.

3.5.2 MOTIVES

In an innovative project such as »De Bronnen« it is important to involve not only public and private investors (while exploiting the knowledge they hold), but also NGOs and consumers. The goal of building up a regional network was to establish a structure through which innovative partners could participate in the development and exchange ideas. The network structure gave interested partners the opportunity to meet and to investigate joint interests. Other motives were:

- To create an increased need of knowledge due to the very high level of ambition.
- To lead to innovations in the energy supply, the treatment of wastewater, and other building concepts. These are subjects on the cutting edge of private and public interests. Public-private partnership is necessary in such cases, and this will require new coalitions and cooperative relationships that do not yet exist within the municipality or region.
- To offer a project in which new developments can be practised and implemented, based on the extensive knowledge that is available from innovative partners from NGOs and the private sector.

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- To ensure that private partners have the necessary know-how about development in shared responsibility, risks and financially sound criteria. This early involvement is necessary for later commitment to the plan.

3.5.3 STRATEGY

The network was part of an integrated strategy. The effectiveness of the network was supported by:

- Multi-level decision-making:
The plans were drawn up at three levels so that future partners would be able to take part. The first level concerned longterm planning and infrastructure of the complete neighbourhood. The municipality was responsible for this level. The second level concerned directives to give flexibility and the direction of partnerships, and these directives had to be set by the network. The third level concerned decisions to be taken by the consumers and end-users.
- Explicit marketing and communication:
The plans were presented as an »offer you can't resist« in order to attract attention from the right partners. Target groups during the planning process were professionals and existing inhabitants of the village. As part of the North Sea – SEP project, the municipality produced a short film called »Roemers Odyssee«. This film was to be used to start discussions and dialogue about sustainability. As the plans became more specific, marketing became more focused onto future consumers and buyers.
- Internal communication:
The internal network of workers in the municipality was invited to all activities and special lunch meetings were organised to inform about progress. Internal commitment to achieving the goals of the network, which may be subject to changes in the economic and political conditions, was in this way nurtured. Internal communication also ensured that sufficient organisational capacity was available.
- Innovation sessions and meetings:
The municipality organised inspirational meetings together with the province of Drenthe to stimulate the exchange of knowledge and to provide the

opportunity for networking. Three meetings have taken place: the innovation session during the initial phase of the Global Development Plan on 17 April 2009 in Zeegse, a municipal meeting in October 2010, and an expert meeting on 3 December 2010 in Vries. Several smaller meetings were also arranged around specified topics, and municipal workers had meetings with co-workers from other public bodies to gain experience with such topics as energy-neutral building and sanitation.

- Website:

A website was developed to inform partners in the network about the plan and progress: www.vriesdebronnen.nl. Future plans for De Bronnen include developing The Podium, a website for brokering between suppliers and purchasers of equipment for sustainable living. The Podium will attract marketing initiatives that are independent of the main structure. The municipality is investigating the possibility of hosting a digital platform for this initiative. Users will be able to log onto the digital platform (website), and seek partners there. The Podium will be developed within the marketing plan.

3.5.4 TYNAARLO'S ROADMAP

Tynaarlo's strategy has been translated into a roadmap with four steps: defining perspectives, marketing, building up a network structure and building up a business case. This roadmap is visualised in figure 2. The arrows show the step-by-step approach. Each phase is based on a decision paper with details about the approach, the means and measures. Interactions that take place in reality cannot, of course, be predicted accurately by a model or roadmap.

3 NETWORKING EXAMPLES – INSIGHT INTO PRACTICE

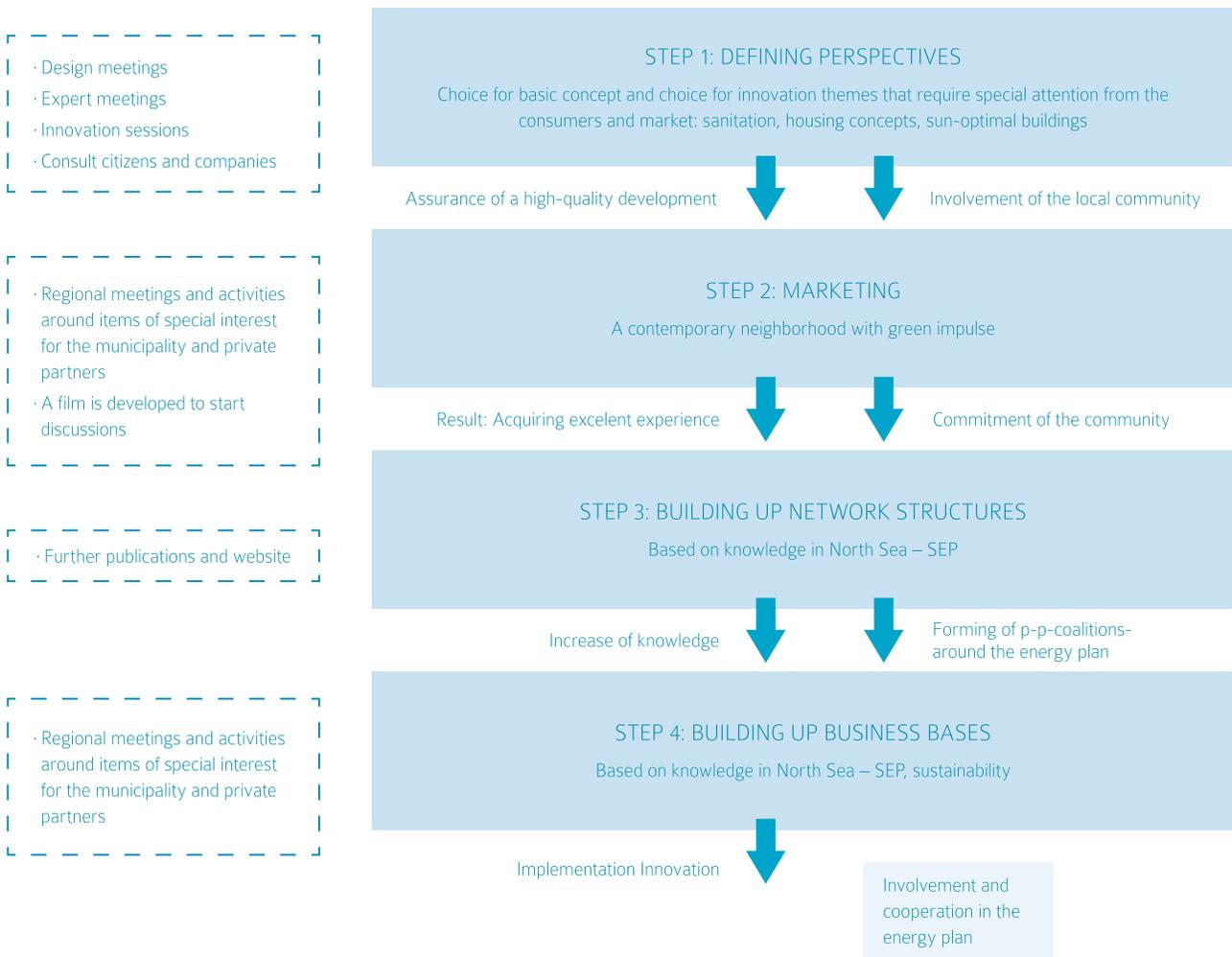


Figure 2: The Tynaarlo roadmap

3.6 The Think Tank - an international network for collecting and sharing information

3.6.1 WHAT IS A THINK TANK?

A Think Tank is »a committee of people with experience in a particular subject that an organisation or government establishes to produce ideas and give advice«. The members are politicians (from local,

national, European level) but also energy experts and scientists from research institutions, non-governmental organisations, and the industry. It should be possible to invite special guests to the Think Tank meetings especially when specific subjects shall be addressed and discussed. The North Sea – SEP Think Tank was made up of nine permanent members from six partner countries. In the following chapter, the role and benefits of the Think Tank are presented.

3 NETWORKING EXAMPLES – INSIGHT INTO PRACTICE

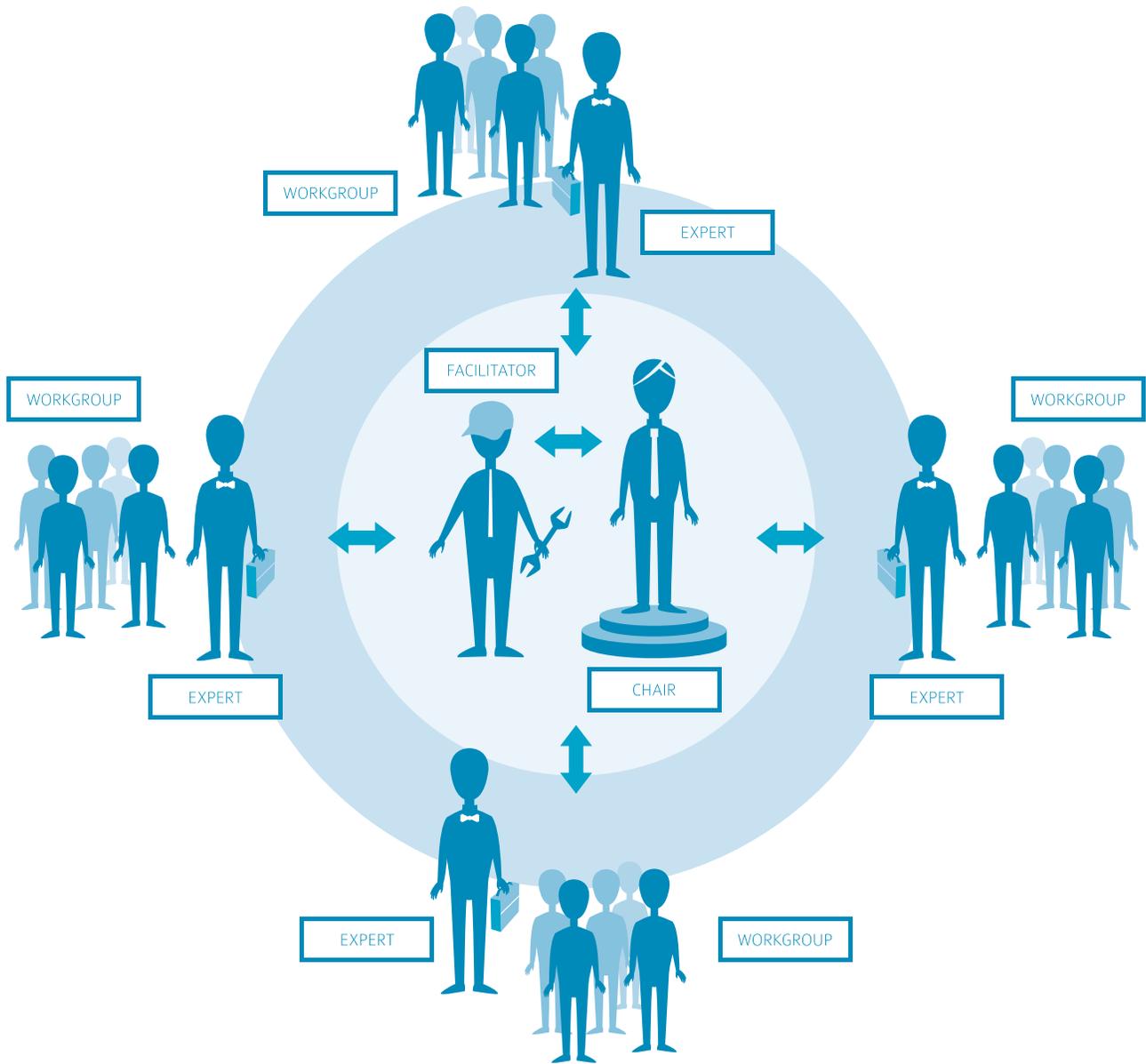


Figure 3: General structure of a Think Tank

3 NETWORKING EXAMPLES – INSIGHT INTO PRACTICE

There are different ways for initiating and managing a Think Tank. The most important and common steps are summarised in Table 6.

PHASE	TOPIC	ACTIVITIES / DESCRIPTION
1	Idea	Definition of a purpose, a topic, an aim, goals etc. as a starting point for the Think Tank. Write a short outline that can be sent to potential members to attract their attention (step 3).
2	Parameters	Define the scope (what are the thematic limits of the Think Tank?), the scale (how many members are suitable for the aim?) and the frequency (what amount of work is adequate to reach the goals?). In some cases it will be necessary to finance certain actions (such as events and publications). It is necessary at a very early stage to think about funding possibilities that serve the objectives of the Think Tank.
3	Members	Define prototypes of members that should take part in the Think Tank. Members should be experts for the topic defined for the Think Tank. Address them, clearly pointing out the benefits of the Think Tank. Ideally, the experts are already part of networks.
4	Structure	Appoint a chair for the Think Tank, the expert of experts who will lead the content related work of the think tank. Ideally this chair should be known well by all members. Also appoint a facilitator that is not member of the Think Tank, but knows the topic well. The Facilitator is supposed to manage and maintain the Think Tank, to provide and spread all relevant information and to organise meetings, outputs and overall communication.
5	Communication	Set up an adequate communication structure and culture. This includes defining the frequency and form of mailings, newsletters, reports etc. regular contact between the facilitator and the chair as well as the facilitator and single members is inevitable for the success.
6	Meetings	Organise meetings on a regular basis; the frequency depends on the topic and its demands. If there are political decisions ahead, plan the date well. Meetings should be thoroughly prepared regarding the content (information for the members send out well in advance) as well as the overall organisation to support the members as much as possible. Meetings should also be well documented to keep track of decisions, tasks etc.
7	Facilitate	To make sure the experts of the Think Tank can work as effectively as possible it is necessary to professionally facilitate all related processes. This includes : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · the complete communication and information procedures, · the organisation of meetings (of the whole Think Tank or bilateral), · keeping track of all activities and task of single members that are related to the Think Tank and · ensuring the quality of outputs.
8	Publish and disseminate	Make sure results of the Think Tank are published in an adequate way. This can be accomplished by frequent notes on a Think Tank website, in social networks or in media channels of any kind. Publications should meet the aims of the Think Tank and take place in an adequate way. Dissemination also includes the organisation of events inviting further experts, stakeholders, the public, the press etc. This should only be done, when results are strong enough to last discussions.

Table 6: Setting up a Think Tank – 8 general steps

3 NETWORKING EXAMPLES – INSIGHT INTO PRACTICE

3.6.2 ROLE OF THE THINK TANK

The Think Tank acts as an advisory board to the project. Project results and outcomes can be evaluated, discussed and assessed during the workshops. There are several issues that were discussed during the six Think Tank meetings. For each meeting a preparatory paper was written, so the members had a common basis for the discussion and about the status-quo of the project. The discussion with work package leaders concerning market and technology developments was an essential point of every meeting, so was the evaluation of the progress of the project. Finally, working on recommendations and new cooperation models create additional value for the transnational partnership. It was obvious that Think Tank meetings should not be stand-alone events but should be integrated in a broader context. Therefore, the project partners decided that collaboration between Steering Committee and Think Tank meetings would be very helpful fostering a vital exchange regarding project related topics. The slogan »It shall inspire us and make our results better« is thus integrated in the joint work of the Think Tank and the project partners. Besides the Think Tank activities, its members also acted as ambassadors (especially in case of politicians) and as promoters for North Sea – SEP.

3.6.3 BENEFITS OF THE THINK TANK ON LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

It is assumed that all partners benefit from the Think Tank on local or regional level. These benefits can be visualised in different fields. Firstly, the Think Tank can affect the political influence of every single partner positively through helping each other solving special problems. Furthermore, network activities can be stimulated like the promotion of partners or their activities. Secondly, the Think Tank can also create a support for scientific competences. Partners can give each other feedback on their outputs. In addition, a Think Tank in general gives its members a platform to discuss and evaluate future technologies and its potentials. Achievements in regional developments can easily be exchanged. The positive effects of an involvement of Think Tanks are related to several factors: In general, the positive image of North Sea – SEP has to be ensured. Furthermore, it is also important that Think Tank members are actually involved in the project activities. The interest for the project has to be aroused especially on local level. In terms of the network itself, the participants have to guarantee that the other partners are regularly informed about their activities. Also new members should be attracted in order to benefit from new ideas as well as to increase influence of the Think Tank in general. The Think Tank shall act as a »growing core«. In terms of the procedure within a think tank it is important to create a clear structural framework in terms of the task of every single member.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Urban regions host many of the processes (such as urban development, traffic, and logistics on waste, industrial activities) that lead to the emission of CO₂. The responsibility for such processes has been largely placed onto the municipalities, but they cannot solve the energy problem alone: cooperation is required on regional level. It is obvious that each actor has a different role to play and a different position to hold. Some are customers, some are producers, some are pioneers, and some must be convinced. By building up new appropriate networks, the distances between actors become smaller, more people and organisations become interested, and meeting others allows them to obtain the necessary knowledge. Even more importantly, meeting others allows them to participate in solving energy issues. This chapter is a collection of basic principles, success factors and critical points that might become important in the process of setting up a network for regional sustainable energy planning.

4.1 Basic aspects of network building

Establishing a network may appear to be easy, but an improperly planned network can quickly run into difficulties and create extra work. Several key aspects of establishing networks have emerged during the North Sea – SEP project, and these aspects are not specific for networks centred on energy issues. Experience has shown that the initiator of a network should consider the following, before starting work to establish the network:

- **A well-functioning administration** will ensure continuity. The type of network defines the nature of the administration that is needed and how it should be provided. A network that pays for administration will require funding. Make sure that the rules are clear: How will new members be added? Who pays for the network?
- **Secured finance** – a network with expenses must have income, and this should be secured for more than the first year. The financing must be long-lasting and realistic. Avoid subsequent conflicts about finance by establishing a clear financial structure from the beginning.
- **Objective** – each network must have an objective that is clear to all members from the start. An

unclear objective will lead sooner or later to disappointed members, lack of focus and a loss of momentum in the network.

- **Interested network members** – the members should be genuinely interested in the network, and it must be remembered that »interested« is not the same as »active«. Membership in a network should be based on interest and not only something that is good for marketing or the company image. A stakeholder analysis is a good method of finding potential members.
- **Agreement on communication methods, roles and responsibilities** – it is very important that the network members are aware of the methods of communication that will be used. It must be clear, for example, that a network will rely heavily on internet communication, to prevent stakeholders who do not use the internet becoming members, something that inevitably results in disappointment.

4.2 Success factors for sustainability in a network

It is important to define the activities of a network once it is up and running. It can be a good idea to involve the members in the planning of activities, because they will then become more dedicated to the network's aim. Things to think about are:

- **Common focus and defined aims**
Make sure that the network has a common focus or direction (knowledge, influence, business opportunities), but be prepared to be flexible. Let the network's energy decide the direction in which the network develops and be prepared to move forward. However, limit the network's ambitions – it is better to have one concrete goal in the short/middle term. Define a new goal or terminate the network when the goal is reached.
- **Adequate organisation**
Provide a moderator and a central address that keeps the machine running.
- **Regular content-based meetings**
Even network activities that are free of charge cost members time, and attending the meeting must give something that compensates the cost. If it becomes evident in advance that a meeting will

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

not have sufficient content to make it worthwhile, the meeting should be cancelled or replaced by a telephone conference or information via email.

- **Different kinds of activities**
Meetings are important, but there should be more and diverse activities planned and organised.
- **Define small steps/small projects**
This will create a feeling of success, which is important for holding the network together, and a feeling that the network is moving forward. This will also help the network in its marketing and acquiring new members, more funding, etc.
- **Adequate members for the topic**
The initial step for a region that wants to develop an energy strategy may be to establish a network simply by inviting the relevant stakeholders. Some knowledge of the stakeholders in the region is, however, required before the network can be planned: who are the stakeholders, what roles do they play, how are they and the body taking the initiative to the network interdependent?
- **Win-win for all members**
All members must gain from their membership. This does not mean that every member will benefit from every activity, but all members must feel that they have gained something from their membership over a certain period of time. Benefit from network membership must be balanced: no single member should obtain considerably more benefit than other members.
- **A fluid membership**
It must be possible for members of large networks to adjust the level of activity depending on their possibilities at any given time. Do not focus merely on private-public networks: public-public networks are also important.
- **Snowballing**
One method of acquiring new members of a network is to ask early participants to identify others who might be interested.
- **Trust and interest among members**
Make sure that the members can trust each other (promote an open culture). Also make sure that members interest each other (promote a level playing field; promote interest and motivation for members to meet each other)

4.3 Beware! – Obstacles for networks

There are a number of pitfalls to beware of, relevant to both new and old networks. Examples are:

- **Boring speakers**
For events it is not enough to have an interesting subject and fancy invitation: the speaker must also be good and the topics catchy. Be aware of the social aspects: meetings should be not only useful, but also fun.
- **Badly planned meetings or events**
People feel that they are wasting both time and money when events are badly planned, and they tend to focus on the problems and not on the content of the activity.
- **Lack of administration**
Networks that need administration must ensure that it is functioning properly and fully financed.
- **Lack of a clear objective**
An unclear objective will result sooner or later in disappointed members, a lack of focus and loss of momentum in the network. This is important also in older networks, which may have had a clear objective in the beginning that has become lost with time.
- **Little attention for communication and dissemination**
Activities that do not communicate any content to the participants do not work!
- **Members that are not committed**
The most important thing is not the size of the network but the commitment and interest of the members, because they carry the network.
- **Anonymous networks**
Some networks work fine without a name, but any network that requires finance should have a name to lift its status. Names also help members to identify with the network and make communication a lot easier.
- **Introspective networks**
It is very easy for knowledge from the network to fail while reaching the network members' organisations. This is true also for invitations to network activities such as seminars, workshops, etc.

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