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Summary

Lochem is one of the municipalities in The Netherlands that has a program to aim for a climate neutral environment. Lochem is at the forefront of sustainability. Resource efficiency is part of it.

For acceptance and maximum results it is necessary that the inhabitants, organisations and business work together, and that the projects are started in the community itself. The role of the local government is to facilitate existing and new projects. The benefits of a project should remain in the area. Participants get the benefits of their efforts and investments.

Issue/Problems

Natural resources are scarce and we should constrain the waste of energy and emission of harmful gasses. Spoiling natural resources cost the society a lot of money and leave the next generation a huge environmental problem. Therefore the local government, trade and (agricultural) industry agreed a net zero climate neutral footprint in 2030. For acceptance and maximum results it is necessary that the inhabitants, organisations and business work together and that the project is not implemented from outside the region.

Background

Lochem is one of the municipalities in The Netherlands that has a program to get a climate neutral environment. The local government takes the responsibility together with the community to use the scarce resources in a responsible manner. Initiatives from society are facilitated by the local government. The revenues are invested in the community. This is for the betterment of the economy and the quality of living in the villages and rural areas.

Interests in the issue

Many projects regarding wind power or recycling natural resources face resistance from local communities. Only a few reap the benefits from wind power, while the burden is placed on the local area. Acceptance and support is possible when projects are launched from the local people and when they benefit of the revenues. The bottom-up approach on a variety of projects contributes to a positive attitude and a better chance to reach the goal of a climate neutral community.

Existing Policies

The method 'Met Frisse Wind' (a New Wind) is based on local participation in wind energy. Started as a regional project in the Stedendriehoek region, it was developed and executed by Lochem Energie with 40 inhabitants of Lochem. Lochem Energie has published this method and has been asked to independently offer this method outside of Lochem. There is no blueprint for the implementation of wind power. It is an open and democratic process where there is room for every argument.

Existing Policies (continued)

Lochem is one of the 12 pilot communities of the Dutch government to experiment with smart grids in an existing built-up environment. The goal is a practical experiment in fitting decentralised renewable generated energy into an existing grid and to understand how to involve and stimulate residents to use less and renewable energy. This experiment of Lochem Energie should demonstrate what it means for the load, availability and controllability of the grid.

Lochem Energy, started as an initiative of a group of inhabitants, wants to have solar energy accessible for everyone. Also for people who don't own their own home, but are renting or have a house with no possibilities for solar panels. Alderman Thijs de la Court lobbied the last two years for a change in the law to allow citizens to generate and manage energy on a larger scale than restricted to their own roof. The law has been changed and Lochem Energie can start with a solar park.

Vedel and Adel are Sustainable Energy Landscapes (Verwolde and Armhoede-Apsen). The aim is a, (as much as possible, climate neutral area in 2030. Sustainability is more than just solar or wind energy. This includes different approaches to waste, hedgerows, water, roadsides and verges, fertilization, etc. It contributes to a better living in the region. Everyone, citizens, school, companies etc. can contribute in varying degrees. We see that when results disappoint people, they tend to give up or want to change the objectives. When people spend a lot of time in such processes, quick progress must be made to keep every one's attention and enthusiasm. Long procedures will discourage inhabitants.

Policy Options

Bringing local, sustainable energy to the grid is an interesting pilot, with possibilities in the Netherlands and abroad. The disadvantage is that it is not yet clear how to deal with laws and regulations on a larger scale. Solar energy is widely accepted and has not the environmental issues as wind energy does.

Recommendation

For acceptance and maximum results it is necessary that the inhabitants, local organisations and business work together and that the projects are started in the community itself. The role of the local government is to facilitate existing and new projects. The benefits of a project should remain in the area. Participants should get benefits of their efforts and investments.

Sources

www.lochemenergie.net

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