Power to the people – A new model for french wind energy

Béganne community-owned windfarm

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Based on danish and german long time experience

Two main principles:

- Wind is a local resource; it has to be used by and for local people
- The growth of renewables energies is nothing without a strong focus on reducing our energy needs

Éoliennes en Pays de Vilaine was set up in 2003 to launch cooperative windfarm in the Redon area (Brittany)
Project launched only with good will, voluntary resources, and self confidence of the team

=> No employees, no money

**First stage**: partnership with local company involved in renewable energies

But 3 years and 3 different sites have to be given up

**Second stage**: searching for new sites, starting new partnership, first employee

**Third stage**: failure of the partnership, but 2 sites to develop.

Stand on no one else but yourself if you want to keep your projet

=> Gathering money to set up a local company: 300 K€ for surveys and planning authorizations
Local company Site à Watts sarl funded by:

- association Eoliennes en Pays de Vilaine, 24 members of the association,

3 investment clubs (60 people), a public company, involved in renewables (Sem ENEE 44)

=> local people keep the wheel of the project

=> people involved in the technical choice and design of the project

Building permit obtained for both projects:

Béganne in 2009, Sévérac in 2011
Financing the windfarm

Once the autorisation completed, a need to raise between 2.5 and 3 M€ in equity, for a 12 M€ investment (4 x 2MW)

But legal constraint with a Financial Authority (AMF) agreement required

➢ Two complementary ways to reach the goal:

- **The mainstream way** : set up of the national investment fund *Energie Partagée Investissement*, to raise equity for community own-project through a nationwide public offer

- **The innovative DIY way** : local canvassing to induce people to gather into local investment clubs, with a private communication strategy
The stake of local mobilization

The success of the community financial mobilization stands on:

- a project with deep, long time roots in the area
- a project led by local people, in a trusting relationship
- a shared information on all the faces of the project: technical, legal, financial
- a mobilization time long enough for the people to get in touch with the project, make up their mind, and join in the project
A cooperative-like commercial company, with every voice taken into account

- Founding members: 30 people + EPV + Site à Watts => 400 K€  Right of vote: 35%
- Investment clubs: 53 clubs => 1.4 M€  Right of vote: 31%
- Eilan (regional investment fund) => 300 K€  Right of vote: 18%
- Energie Partagée Investissement => 500 K€  Right of vote: 1%
- Local social business => 50 K€  Right of vote: 15%

⇒ Decision taken in common, even in the hard days
⇒ People involved beyond money: construction supervision; neighbourhood relationship, communication, production management
A new model for wind energy in France?

More and more projects, involving local authorities and/or inhabitants

- Every project has to find its own design to fit with the territory and its stakeholders

- A real opportunity for energy transition (both financial and cultural)

- We all need to learn to work together, and share skills and means

- Citizen wind energy, i.e. community owned and managed project => not simply local financing of a part of the wind farm

_We're working to build a global framework_

_for community owned power: regional, national and european networking; training; technical support & advisory; skills and help spread across the country;..._
Thank you for your attention