



EUSALP EU STRATEGY FOR THE ALPINE REGION

www.alpine-region.eu



Operationalising one-stop-shops on local level:

Implementing sustainable energy management through easy-access support structures

80 million people, 7 countries, 48 regions,
mountains and plains addressing together
common challenges and opportunities



The project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

Authors

Dorothea Palenberg

blue! advancing european projects

Managing Editor/Action Group leader

Ulrich Santa, Maren Meyer, Benjamin Auer; Agency for Energy South Tyrol – CasaClima



To make the territory a model region for
energy efficiency and renewable energy

The publication is available online at <https://www.alpine-region.eu/action-group-9>.

This publication was prepared in the framework of the Alpine Space project “Implementing Alpine Governance Mechanisms of the European Strategy for the Alpine Region (AlpGov)”. This project is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund through the Interreg Alpine Space programme. Purchaser: Agentur für Energie Südtirol - KlimaHaus / Energy Agency South Tyrol - CasaClima, EUSALP Action Group 9 Leader. Contact person: Benjamin Auer, benjamin.auer@klimahausagentur.it

AlpGov Deliverable D.T-4.1.1.



Operationalising one-stop-shops on local level:

Implementing sustainable energy management through
easy-access support structures

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
2. A quick look into societal transition: How can change be triggered?	4
3. Setting up a one-stop-shop	6
3.1 Checklist: Three relevant pre-conditions for successful OSS.....	7
3.2 What to consider? Key questions to prevent long-term difficulties	7
3.2.1 Set up of decision-making structure and implementation team.....	7
3.2.2 Choose a structure independent from the local administration.....	8
3.2.3 Choose neutrality over private sponsorship or product placement	8
3.2.4 Choose a topic that is not too general – be specific!.....	9
3.2.5 Cover the entire scope from general advice to implementation and support	9
3.2.6 Start from well-known structures instead of a new set-up!.....	9
3.2.7 Set-up efficient financial support structures as incentives.....	10
3.2.8 Set up an understandable and interactive communication platform	10
4. Operation of a one-stop-shop: Areas of activity	12
5. Conclusions	15
List of references.....	16

1. INTRODUCTION

One-stop-shops, referred to as OSS hereinafter, represent a fundamental change in perspective: Instead of thinking from the side of the production of knowledge and services, an OSS is developing the concept from the perspective of the customer, the “consumer” of knowledge and services.

The following booklet will add a contribution to the discussion “how to implement sustainability”. All the thoughts in this direction are based on the assumption that enough concepts and scientific discourse has paved the way to more concrete and practice-oriented implementation.

Considering the current “Fridays-for-Future”-movement, it can be stated that these movements do also reflect the insight that real change can only be achieved through practical action: “What do we want? Climate justice! When do we want it? NOW!”¹ In this context, OSS can be seen as being part of a more implementation-oriented movement that is based on the aggregation and interpretation of “societal knowledge”.

The booklet is structured as follows:

- A short reflection that points towards the relevance of the local level and the introduction of a general list of key success factors.
- A chapter that summarises some relevant aspects to be considered for the set-up of a OSS
- A chapter that reflects the main areas of activity of a long-term operation
- Conclusions and recommendations

The content of the booklet is based on the following input:

- Three studies that reflect the topic of OSS²
- 2 interviews with experts on the concept of OSS³

Furthermore and as part of this contract, a parallel study has been conducted on possible regional and national funding sources in the Alpine Region especially analysed as to their potential to finance OSS. The present booklet has to be used in connection with this matrix analysis.

2. A QUICK LOOK INTO SOCIETAL TRANSITION: HOW CAN CHANGE BE TRIGGERED?

The present chapter pulls back a little in order to see a bigger picture already mentioned in the introduction. It will justify the orientation towards the local level as well as a few other success factors presented in chapter 3. In times where practical implementation is asked for more urgently than ever before, the questions need to be raised what mechanisms trigger a general societal transition that is currently taking place. In order to provide a short and concise answer, an existing literature analysis with regards to societal transition⁴ in the context of the “Green Economy Action Programme”⁵ by the Alpine Convention has been revisited and applied to the mechanisms of an OSS.

Insights from literature analysis	Insights for planning an OSS
Concentrate on the local level! When reflecting where change really happens, the local level appears to be the level that sets the step-by-step milestones for progress. While policy strategies may reflect the political will to change the society towards new development goals, an implementation gap can be observed when it comes to shared assumptions and dominant practices on the local level. It has been recognized that the most important players for change are companies and people acting at the local, the ‘micro-level’. Here, at best under the umbrella of a political initiative, change can be sustainably triggered: It is, however, important that a critical mass of activity happens on the local level in order to provoke the desired transformation effect.	Based on the assumption that a favourable framework is created, the “action” should take place on local level
Start with the “well-known” When it comes to the question “where to start”, the literature suggests considering the existing structures as a suitable starting point: Managing a transition process should be seen as complementing rather than conflicting with current policy.	Consider existing and well-known structures as a starting point for an OSSd...

<p>Co-evolution and multiple driving forces</p> <p>A transition can be described as a set of interconnected changes, which reinforce each other but take place in different areas. A successful transition can be understood as a spiral that reinforces itself, driven by multiple causalities and co-evolution which (may) interlink during the transition process. It is, therefore, obvious that joint and coordinated learning of many different people is needed to make a (societal) transition work.</p>	<p>Respect both the side of the offer and the demand equally. Do not create demands that cannot be satisfied and do not hide knowledge but allow absorption through comprehensibility.</p>
<p>Refrain from full control and supervision – create favorable climate</p> <p>Transitions cannot be managed in the classical manner of full control and supervision, but rather in terms of “influencing” and “adjusting” which represents a more subtle, evolutionary way of steering. This way of steering is the creation of a climate, in which societal innovation can flourish at the time, level and location where needed.</p>	<p>Spread a positive climate in which ideas are formulated and developed.</p>
<p>Communication is key!</p> <p>With regards to transition management, a sound and transparent communication among all parties involved is of crucial importance in this process. Furthermore, the need for a long-term commitment to the process allows bringing structural change in an evolutionary, step-wise manner. Goals and policies should be periodically adjusted during the development</p>	<p>Devote a lot of your capacities to the question “How do I communicate with my customer” and “who needs to be involved”?</p>
<p>Pay specific attention to the frontrunners!</p> <p>Considering the role of the different actors in societal transition the roles of individuals that push new developments should be emphasized. A specific focus of transition management is on ‘frontrunners’, individuals with specific competencies and innovative ideas or practices with regard to a persistent problem. Individual actors are described in roles such as ‘frontrunner’ ‘change agent’, ‘champion’ or ‘policy entrepreneur’.</p>	<p>Understand, that is usually requires a motivational and charismatic person to initiate an OSS such as a mayor. Make a plan how to reward and acknowledge proactive users of the OSS.</p>

Table 1: Insights from literature on societal change and exemplary aspects for planning an OSS

3. SETTING UP A ONE-STOP-SHOP

The present chapter reflects an OSS within the phase of its development. As a basic orientation, the CITYINVEST guide presents a chart that shows an easy step-by-step development towards an OSS:

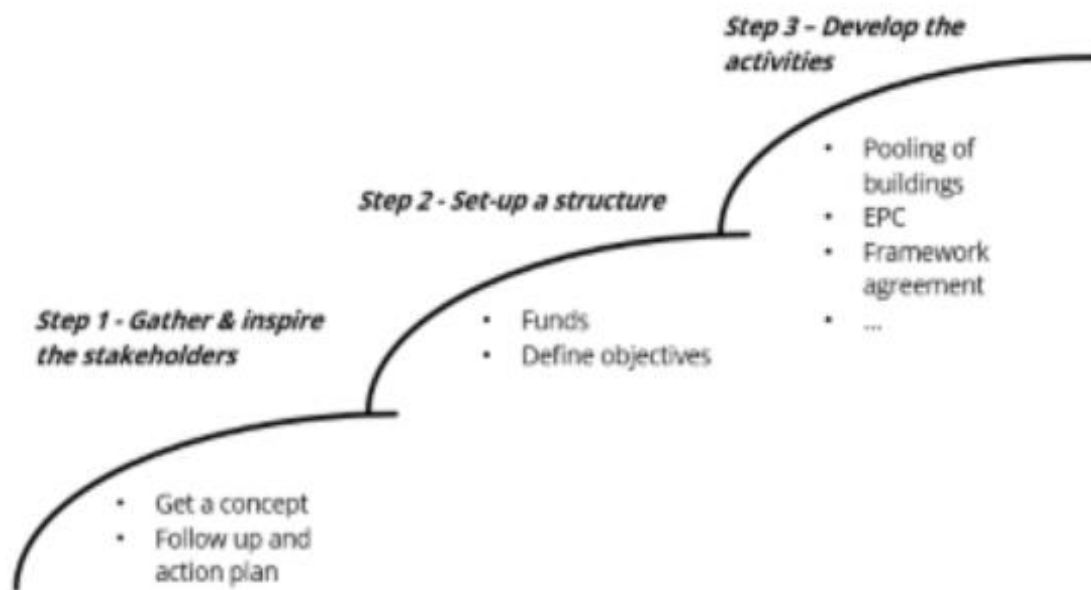


Figure 1 : Step-by-step guide RenoWatt Retrofitting OSS

Figure 1 shows an easy step-by-step guide used by the experts that set up the RenoWatt Retrofitting OSS in Liège, Belgium. However, it is proposed that this step-by-step guide could be enriched by a set of considerations that are intertwined.

Although the proposed scheme is accurate and can look upon a successful set-up, the following chapters 3.1. and 3.2. suggest that a set of guiding questions can enrich this process.

3.1 Checklist: Three relevant pre-conditions for successful OSS

In order to set up and maintain sustainable action on local level, it is mostly crucial that specific framework conditions are met in order to step forward and make the desired progress. In order to set up an OSS, the following framework conditions are recommended to be checked upon:

- ✓ The literature analysis on societal transition suggests that local action can flourish when national and regional policies set a suitable framework. Check the regional and national policy framework for new programmes on renewable energy or energy efficiency on which the OSS can rely.
- ✓ An OSS in general is a response to a fragmentation on mostly both the demand and supply side. Only then, the OSS can play out its added value and provide integrated and comprehensive information. It needs to be checked whether this is the case or whether an alternative structure does already do the job.
- ✓ Furthermore, it is necessary that the local mayor is convinced that the municipality will benefit from the OSS in terms of location marketing as well as environmental effects. It is necessary that the roadmap to realization is not a workaround, but right at the center of the municipal set of objectives.

3.2 What to consider? Key questions to prevent long-term difficulties

When setting up an OSS, many aspects need to be considered at the same time in order to build a resilient roadmap to realisation. The following areas of activity are recommended to be tackled parallel and in close connection to each other, preferably through a round table, steered by a core team.

3.2.1. Set up of decision-making structure and implementation team.

3.2.1 Set up of decision-making structure and implementation team

A good way to start is to look beyond the border of the own administrative unit. Although one unit has to initiate the OSS, it is recommended to also include other administrative units that might be interested. It is recommended to form a transparent, but not too formal round table that meets once or twice a year. Furthermore, it is recommended to organize the day-to-day work, especially in the starting phase, via a core implementation team of approx. 3 people who will report to the round table.

3.2.2 Choose a structure independent from the local administration

It is recommended that the OSS should be set up as an independent structure. However, it can be closely attached or part of the organizational plan of the administration. Many case-studies showcase so called public equivalent bodies, e.g. a public limited liability company or an association. This is relevant in order to boost visibility and allow dynamic, responsive, and fast development.

In this context, it is also of major importance that the staffing of the OSS is independent from the administrative units in the municipality. If a municipal employee needs to split his/her time between the OSS and the “other work”, it will not be of benefit for the OSS’s performance. In addition, solutions for smaller municipalities have demonstrated their practicability through co-operation. Typically, some smaller municipalities co-operate to jointly finance and run an OSS

3.2.3 Choose neutrality over private sponsorship or product placement

In order to run a successful OSS, it is crucial to ensure credibility and neutrality for the customer. It is thus relevant to set the OSS up with public funds and refrain from private sponsorship offered by the providers of i.e. the desired technology. In many cases regarding energy questions, an OSS is attached to the regional energy provider or other municipal utilities. However, especially in the innovation sector, private sponsorship can be achieved many private sponsors co-operate on a topic and commit to neutrality.

Furthermore, also the advice given is recommended to be strictly neutral with regards to products presented. For the affordable public funding, different sources can be considered for the set-up of an OSS. These might be different from the long-term financing plan. For possible sources, please find the adjoined matching analysis that provides a searchable table for all Alpine regions based on the funding source analysis of EUSALP AG1. Also, many regional or national funding programmes assist specifically with the financing of skilled staff, e.g. a German federal programme that funds “climate protection managers” in municipalities.

3.2.4 Choose a topic that is not too general – be specific!

If the topic is too broad, the employees that represent the OSS will have difficulties to keep up with the dynamic developments in the knowledge sector. Furthermore, this will also hamper the comprehensibility of the service provided. Hence, it is recommended to have straightforward and specific topic that meets the following criteria:

- A concrete response to a citizen's or SMEs needs, such as photovoltaic, energy efficient building, heating, etc.
- Be understandable and concise
- Demonstrate how a concrete need will be met

3.2.5 Cover the entire scope from general advice to implementation and support

As already mentioned in chapter 3.1., an OSS is a response to a fragmentation of services and information that are needed to plan and realise a specific process. Hence, an OSS can be seen as a facilitator that guides through the procedures and delivers updated information.

An OSS is recommended to provide a comprehensive assistance within one meeting. It is thus crucial that the support provided is specific, but at the same time covers the entire process from “first idea” to “implementation”. Hence, an OSS needs to solve the following challenges:

- Giving personal and comprehensive advice and explanation by skilled people.
- Providing information on “how to receive an incentive e.g. the financial support” which might come from non-municipal sources as well.
- Providing a direct line to the companies that help to realise the project, i.e. a list of skilled companies that could do the job.

3.2.6 Start from well-known structures instead of a new set-up!

As already mentioned, the structure of an OSS in the field of energy is often attached to municipal facilities or energy providers. Furthermore, it can also be attached to other services in the municipality. A recommendable fact for planning and OSS is to assess the structure of the municipal services, how well known these are to the future customers of the OSS as well as the potential to attach the OSS to one of these

services. It has in the case studies proven more successful if the structure is already well-known to the citizen or SME, it is more likely that the services are starting to be used more smoothly.

3.2.7 Set-up efficient financial support structures as incentives

It is important for the success of an OSS that an effective incentive is provided which is easy to obtain and limited in its administrative burden for the municipality. It does not need to cover all the costs but should demonstrate that the municipality is seriously encouraging its citizens or SMEs.

The source of a financial incentive programme can also be a small budget that is set aside by the municipality itself. Many case studies show that this provides a lean and simple management system and that there is no dependency from other donors. Examples have shown that with a budget of 5000 EURO/year, already a visible impact (e.g. the assistance of 20 households that introduce photovoltaic). The support structures can also comprise free advice, on-site visits or financial support for a service company.

3.2.8 Set up an understandable and interactive communication platform

An OSS must be visible and understandable. As a basis, it is therefore necessary that an easily accessible website is set up. However, it is crucial that there is also a contact person available and that personal and individual meetings are possible. In the case studies were a number of municipalities share an OSS, there are more flexible solutions that work, e.g. certain “consultancy hours” or even a “tour bus”, similar to mobile libraries.

With regards to an interactive option, it is recommendable to organise a short checklist on the website or the option to book a meeting time online. With an advancing digitalisation, it is also thinkable that online meeting times can be booked.

With regards to a continuous communication and promotion of the service, it is highly recommendable to organise a continuous communication line in cooperation with another channel that reaches every household or SME, depending on the targeted group. Here, two examples do represent this:

- One case study provides a “builder’s guidebook” for every new citizen in which all information, including the OSS service, are presented.

- Also, citizens can be reached through networking with municipal service agencies that have continuous communication with the citizens.

With regards to meetings and events, it is relevant that the assigned staff is enabled and has enough capacities to attend meetings and organise regular information events as well.

4. OPERATION OF A ONE-STOP-SHOP: AREAS OF ACTIVITY

A successful OSS operates in a stable continuity of a long period. Thereby, the subject for support can be changed or the range of services can be enlarged. In order to maintain a high-quality operational level, a set of activities has to be carried out that are closely intertwined with each other:

✓ Ensuring staff capacity, skills and knowledge

It is crucial for the operation that the quality of the advice given is credible and of high quality, because for individual citizens or SMS that are the OSS's customers, their readiness to invest is significant and the result of the advice given will be visible every day in their further life. It is relevant that for the long-term operation, the following aspects are a basis for success:

- Secondment or assignment of staff on a long-term view
- Continuity of contact persons and advisors; Changes should be considered relevant and presented on the website or flyers.
- The assigned staff needs to actively ensure that his/her knowledge is continuously updated, e.g. should attend regular trainings and take part in network meetings with other OSS.
- The selected person should not only be knowledgeable in their area, but be skilled in communication and moderation

✓ Ensuring up-to-date provision of information

The operation of an OSS needs to be enabled to provide updated information at any time in order to maintain credibility and make the advisory service unique and of high quality. As already mentioned before, one of the preconditions of an OSS is a fragmented supply side, where services, financial support and information are presented in a scattered way that is difficult to access and assess for the customer. The OSS is the hub where all this information is pooled and presented in a comprehensible and integrated way. In order to ensure this the following recommendations, apply:

- Regular check and update of the available sources of information in the field of knowledge
- Regular exchange with experts
- Maintaining of a database of regional companies that could perform the services.
- Regular meetings with those companies in order to make sure that they are aware of a possible service.
- Overview on sources, funding mechanisms and obtainability of financial support.

✓ **Establishment of a continuous cycle of financial support**

As already mentioned, a successful OSS provides incentives which are most of the time of financial nature. It should be mentioned that also other sorts of support such as free advice etc. are relevant, but more effective if connected to financial support. Many examples show that already small budgets such as 5000 EURO / year can make a difference.

In addition, it is helpful to establish a financial cycle in which a certain backflow of money is thinkable. This might not apply for private households but is realistic for e.g. public institutions such as schools on the one hand or companies on the other hand. This cycle can be set up and used in an individual and creative way and can be a significant contribution to the long-term operation of an OSS:

✓ **Regular networking, inspiration and knowledge development**

For knowledge development and the building up of experiences, it is relevant that the personnel assigned to the OSS are enabled to engage in regular exchange with other networks and trainings. For small municipalities, this does often include a change in the employee's contract as to the scope and frequency of travels. Furthermore, it is relevant to be part of those networks and a regular scan of key networks is recommendable.

As already mentioned in chapter 2, every development can always look upon a game changer that initiates and drives the process. In the case of OSS, this is often the mayor of the municipality. Hence, also this mayor should set aside time and capacities to engage in exchange of experience.

✓ **Continuous communication with providers and target group**

An OSS needs to be visible and understand the needs of the target group. Furthermore, it needs to provide custom-fit solutions and should therefore be able to draw from up-to-date knowledge. In order to achieve this on a long-term view, efficient and effective communication mechanisms need to be established. For these mechanisms, the following recommendations apply:

- Regular personal communication with possible providers: The contact person in the OSS needs to have a clear picture on possible providers of the services. For this reason, regular information meetings or bilateral exchanges are necessary.
- Furthermore, the customer does not only need to be informed in face-to-face meetings or online but does also need to be able to exchange with other customers and give feedback in order to continuously improve the services of the OSS and trigger mutual trust.
- All this communication is best to be designed as a win-win situation: The meetings or communication channels must be of mutual benefit for both parties. For example, a joint meeting with companies that provide a certain technology does not only help the OSS but does also give the companies information on their competitors. As another example, a feedback and exchange session with customers provides not only valuable information of the OSS but does also provide an exchange and identification platform with other customers.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Although OSS are recommended to follow a set of common rules to be successful, they need to be played out in an individual and creative way that is custom fit to the respective municipality. This can apply for example to co-operation of a set of small municipalities, to creative ways of positioning the OSS in structures that are well known to the customer or the set-up of creative incentive mechanisms.

An OSS can be a great tool for the marketing of a municipality. Here, the person and personality of a “game-changer! or “frontrunner” (as described in literature of societal transition) is a key element for success. Within the field of OSS operation, this is mostly the mayor. A successful OSS can be used as a tool to attract or keep citizens, promote the location and create a favourable image. This applies also to very small municipalities which were able to achieve supra-regional recognition for their effort.

For a successful operation, an OSS must dispose of personnel that is committed on a long-term view and is both skilled in communication as well as in the topic itself. The operation of an OSS is based on personal exchange; hence, this person should be a proactive communicator and a hub of information.

In order to set up and operate an OSS, relevant framework conditions apply that reflect either the execution of a national / regional policy as well as the added value of its operation with regards to a fragmented landscape of services and information.

Last but not least, it is relevant that the people who operate the OSS, but also the providers and customers can engage in regular exchange of experience for mutual inspiration and the building up of trust, identification and knowledge.

Many examples of successful OSS can be used as a source of inspiration and motivation. Although an OSS is not a “cure-all” instrument, it can provide a valuable contribution to implementing sustainable approaches in a practicable and understandable way.

LIST OF REFERENCES

1

Motto of the „Fridays-for-future“ – movement

2

- One-Stop-Shops for energy renovation of building – case studies; JRC, ISPRA, 2018
- CITYNVEST – A guide for launch of a One Stop Shop on energy retrofitting – Based on RenoWatt's experience in Liège –
*produced within the HORIZON2020 research and innovation programme, grant agreement no 649730
Bayerisches Landesamt für Datenschutzaufsicht – EU Datenschutz-Grundverordnung – Kapitel XIII „Der One Stop Shop“

3

- Armand Dütz, Managing Partner of „Beratungs- und Service-Gesellschaft Umwelt“ in Berlin; in the context of OSS: Inventor of the „European Energy Award“ and 50 years of experience in local energy consultancy.
- Marianne Badura, Managing Partner of blue!; Since 16 years „Gewässernachbarschaftsberaterin“, an OSS concept within Bavarian regional water associations

4

The chapter summarises key messages from following four papers:

- Managing Societal Transitions: Dilemmas and Uncertainties: The Dutch energy case-study, p 9/10, 15, 20
- Actor roles in transition: Insights from sociological perspectives
- Kooiman, 2003; Rothmans and Loorbach 2010; p. 108-109
- Sukhdev P. (2012) Corporation 2020, p.2

5

<https://www.alpconv.org/en/home/news-publications/publications-multimedia/detail/action-programme-for-a-green-economy-in-the-alpine-region/>