

Izgrei, BULGARIA

Bulgaria has one of the highest levels of energy poverty in the EU. Therefore, energy efficiency measures and renewable energy installations are crucial to achieve a decarbonised and energy efficient building stock in Bulgaria. However, the current renovation rate remains low. Izgrei is one of the community-based energy initiatives driving change from the ground up.

Izgrei is an energy community located in Plovdiv, in south-central Bulgaria. The energy community was founded in 2021 and has just completed its first pilot project. The project consisted of the installation of solar panels and a small renovation of a single-family house. In addition, Izgrei has supported the development of a how-to guide for setting up an energy community in Bulgaria and carried out advocacy work for community energy in Bulgaria, including interviews with national television and newspapers.

Izgrei faces several challenges in developing its activities. The main challenges for the energy community are the lack of a legal framework for energy communities, insufficient public funding for renovation, lack of awareness and knowledge of renovation opportunities among the public, and lack of public trust in institutions. Therefore, Izgrei is looking for concrete help in developing a business model for renovation and support in communication.

To support the energy community, the Citizen Led Renovation Initiative will assist Izgrei with business model development, communication and community engagement. During the support period, Izgrei aims to renovate a multi-family building in Sofia, including the renovation of the façade and the installation of a renewable heating and hot water system. Izgrei is currently building its network for cooperation in Sofia. A face-to-face workshop between the energy community and the initiative is planned for November 2023. A final output of the collaboration between Izgrei and the Citizen-led renovation Initiative will be a how-to guide for citizen-led renovations in Bulgaria.

Pilot information	Izgrei
Location	Plovdiv
Legal form	Limited company
Established in year	2021
Members	3

Activities

- Renovation and solar installations for one single-family house
- Co-development of a How-to guide for setting up an energy community in Bulgaria
- Advocacy work for community energy in Bulgaria, including interviews given to national television and newspapers

Future aims/ perspectives

- Implementing new pilot project outside of Plovdiv