



# Valencia: creating a more democratic and sustainable energy system

## Valencia, Spain

### IN A NUTSHELL

*The city of Valencia has developed a strategy to involve the whole community to reach its energy transition targets, while also supporting those at risk of energy poverty through the creation of energy communities.*

### The origins: a roadmap for energy transition towards 2050

In February 2021, Valencia approved the Valencia 2030 Climate Mission with the aim of becoming climate neutral by 2030. The city's ambition is to reduce its GHG emissions by 40% and increase its energy efficiency and share of renewable energy by 27% by 2030. To achieve this goal, the local authorities have developed a strategy, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to involve the whole community in the energy transition. The strategy was developed through a broad social and political consensus that involved a team composed of decision makers from local and regional government, media representatives, civil society and academia. This group of actors, referred to as 'The Energy Transition Roundtable', helped develop the six demonstration projects that were later integrated into the strategy.

One of the projects is the 'Renewable Energy Communities in the city' project, which was launched in 2020. It allows Valencia to engage its citizens in the reduction of GHG emissions while producing renewable energy at a lower cost.

### Fostering local ownership to democratise access to energy

In 2019, the Valencia Climate and Energy Foundation launched the city's first energy office. It aims to serve as a one-stop shop, offering advice to citizens interested in learning more about energy topics. The energy office currently performs different activities to improve and spread knowledge about energy sources among citizens. The office provides information and offers training and workshops on energy bills, efficiency, home renovation, the right to energy and renewable energy generation to those who are interested. These services have allowed citizens to save an average of €226 per year. Due to the ever-increasing demand from citizens for support and advice, two more offices will be launched by the end of 2022.



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## VALENCIA



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#### Population:

810,064

#### Area:

134.6 km<sup>2</sup>

#### Signatory to the Covenant of Mayors

since:

2009

#### GHG emission reduction:

-40% by 2030

## USEFUL LINKS

- » <https://www.euractiv.com/section/cities-regions/interview/valencia-major-we-are-ready-to-become-testing-ground-for-innovation-in-europe/>
- » [https://www.missionsvalencia.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/MisionClimaticaVLC2030\\_ENG-1.pdf](https://www.missionsvalencia.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/MisionClimaticaVLC2030_ENG-1.pdf)

Valencia sees the energy transition as an opportunity for citizens to be involved in the definition and decision-making of energy production, management and consumption. It does so by promoting a collective model of energy generation and consumption that allows citizens to move from a customer role to being designers. This is done through VCE and its energy office, which act as catalysts for the deployment of energy communities in the city.

## Supporting vulnerable households through the creation of energy communities

The city has already created two energy communities using both public and private buildings. The first community, CEL Castellar-L'Oliveral, has recently installed the first solar system fully financed by its members. The creation of this system will allow citizens to generate clean energy and reduce their bills. The system is located on the roof of a municipal building, but the energy community is in charge of its management. In this first energy community, a total of 63 associates will benefit from renewable energy generation and lower energy bills, including 3 families at risk of energy poverty whose share costs are covered by VCE.

When it comes to financing the project, each household participates with an initial investment of EUR 600, which turns into savings of around EUR 130 per year. The regional government also contributes by covering up to 50% of the initial investment once the energy community is operational.

While the first energy community was created for the internal use of its members, the second arose with a charitable purpose. The board of the municipal school Ballester Fandos, located in one of the most deprived districts of Valencia, championed the creation of a second energy community to provide energy to the vulnerable households surrounding the school. In this case, VCE also offered legal and administrative support to the initiative by taking part as founding member.

## Lessons learned and next steps

Convincing neighbours to participate and invest in the projects has been a smooth task for the city. The existence of community movements and leaders trusted by their neighbourhoods and the constant increase in energy prices have been key to engaging citizens in the creation of energy communities. Nonetheless, there have been many challenges on the technical and administrative side leading to delays in the citizens obtaining permits for installation.

Currently, Valencia is exploring other collective energy production projects. This work is part of the European POWER UP initiative, which aims to promote social energy market players and collective business models to tackle energy poverty. To play an active and demonstrative role in promoting renewable energy generation, during the next few months the municipality will install at least three solar systems in public cemeteries. These will account for more than 2 MWp installed power. The project is called Requiem in Power (RIP), and POWER UP will help define how the generated energy is socialised to ensure accessibility for the most vulnerable in the population.

### KEY FIGURES

#### Mission

Create **100** energy communities

Create **1 network** of energy communities (peer learning)

#### Achieved

Launched in 2020

2 energy communities created

1 energy office created

2 additional energy offices by Q1 2023

3 households at risk of energy poverty supported

#### Key figures for first energy office

**7,207** direct beneficiaries

**613** individual assessments

Average savings of **€226/year** per family

**87** workshops organised

**1,144** workshop attendees



### FINANCING THE PROJECT

- + **POWER UP:** EUR 141,503.75
- + **Municipal budget:** EUR 20,000/month to the energy office
- + **Other contracts from Valencia Climate and Energy Foundation (VCE):** EUR 25,000 to stimulate dynamization and support for creation of energy communities  
EUR 8,000 covering grid connections  
EUR 4,000 as membership quota to be part of the first energy community



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