



# Marseille Energy Communities

## Marseille, France

### IN A NUTSHELL

*Marseille is fostering a transformative energy community through citizen-led initiatives, partnerships with local energy companies and municipal efforts, such as installing solar panels on public school buildings.*



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### Why an energy community?

The city of Marseille is aiming to boost its renewable energy production by amplifying grassroots movements and guiding new approaches. It's now on the move in collaboration with local actors who are working to establish energy communities by following a bottom-up approach. Many projects are focusing on installing solar panels on residential, municipal and cultural buildings, including the successful coverage of a local art centre.

Energy communities are groups of local people or organisations that team up to produce renewable energy for their neighbourhoods. Working with organisations such as local cooperatives and energy companies, Marseille is aiming for a future where buildings across the territory will produce and consume energy locally within a one-kilometre radius.

The city is a Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy signatory, and part of the EU Mission for 100 Smart and Climate Neutral Cities by 2030. The ambitious targets it has set under these initiatives will require the engagement of all local actors and a comprehensive strategy to promote and integrate these projects into the city's energy plan.

### A collaborative effort

Collaboration has been a key driver in expanding Marseille's energy communities. The municipality has teamed up with citizen initiatives such as Marseillia Sun Systems and Enercoop, which has been engaged in promoting energy communities for many years. The municipality is keen to continue fostering such partnerships. The plan is to systematise energy communities in the city, developing a model that integrates renewable energy systems into the landscape and engages local companies in the renewable energy sector.

In parallel, the city is also launching a municipal energy company focusing on renewable energy production. There are over 100 similar entities across France that are municipally owned or supported by public and private organisations. The strategic goal behind these developments is to create a blend of citizen-led communities, municipal funding and assets, leading to a dynamic and self-sustaining energy ecosystem within the city.

## MARSEILLE



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#### Population:

869,815

#### Area:

240 km<sup>2</sup>

Signatory to the  
Covenant of Mayors  
since:

October 2021

Covenant of Mayors  
GHG emission  
reduction:

-55% by 2030

The city administration has maximised its resources to progress on renewable energy. Marseille is currently undergoing a renovation of its 480 public schools which the city has identified as ideal sites for solar panels given their intermittent energy demand. To date, solar panels have been installed in 60 schools, and the plan is to extend this to another 50–100 schools.

## Regulatory hurdles

Despite these positive developments, the city has faced regulatory hurdles. A recent French law aimed at promoting renewable energy has sparked a series of discussions around public procurement rules.

Initially, the city administration proposed amendments to these rules to simplify procurement processes in scenarios where only one company currently operates in a district. In such cases, the administration was seeking to simplify the tendering process. However, these proposed amendments were ultimately rejected.

Nevertheless, the new law has brought some positive changes for the city's energy community. One significant advantage is the provision for long-term energy purchase agreements with energy communities. Before the new law, agreements had to be renewed every two years, creating an environment of uncertainty and instability for these communities. Now, the city administration can negotiate agreements that span a much longer period of 15–20 years. This change is expected to promote stability, foster growth and facilitate long-term planning within the city's energy communities.

## Results and next steps

The Sirius project has introduced the idea of significant cost savings for local people through local energy production. The city aims to eventually be able to offer renters involved in the project a zero-euro electricity bill.

The project is aiming to reduce emissions by 90% and heating consumption by 80% while increasing renewable energy use by 20%. However, the ambition to achieve free electricity for renters presents significant challenges, particularly in terms of managing and regulating energy consumption to avoid a potential explosion in usage. To address this issue, there are plans to conduct extensive education and awareness campaigns on efficient energy use.

The city administration also plans to launch an open call for the installation of renewable energy systems by 2025. This invitation will target local companies, encouraging them to propose solutions that promote innovative pricing structures and efficient energy distribution within the community.

As part of the future development of Marseille's energy communities, the city plans to involve more local companies in its initiatives. This strategy will ensure that the corporate sector is actively investing in the city's energy future. The selection process for future projects will prioritise companies that demonstrate innovation in terms of pricing, and algorithms for energy distribution within the community.

### KEY FIGURES

**250 hectares**

**5000 inhabitants**

**1490 dwellings**

**+25% renewables electricity**

**-80% heating consumption**

**-90% CO2 emissions**

### FINANCING THE PROJECT

-  **Marseille Metropolitan Authority**
-  **City of Marseille**
-  **Département**
-  **SUD Region**
-  **Agence Nationale de la Rénovation Urbaine - State**
-  **Programme d'investissement d'avenir (PIA) - State**

### USEFUL LINKS

- » <https://www.marseille.fr/marseille-2030-objectif-climat-et-le-programme-100-villes>



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