
Municipality of Midden-Drenthe [NL]

Summary Roadmap



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Municipality of Midden-Drenthe, NL

Target energy-neutral: focus on heat

ROADMAP SUMMARY DOCUMENT

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Monitoring of climate and energy programme

Background and context

The municipality of Midden-Drenthe (*Central Drenthe*) has a population of about 33,300 and a surface area of about 342 km². The main towns and villages in the municipality include Beilen, Westerbork, Smilde, and Bovensmilde.



In July 2017, the local council adopted a motion including the ambition to become energy neutral and reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases, and asking the local government to prepare an action plan for the next 10 to 15 years. It is the ambition of the local government to develop this action plan in close collaboration with relevant (local) stakeholder groups (e.g. citizens, house owners, SME's and other relevant stakeholder groups).



One of the key challenges that (local) governments face today in relation to the energy transition is to effectively mobilise and engage with relevant stakeholders in order to trigger them to initiate actions (e.g. to implement energy saving measures, to invest in renewable energy, to take collective action in a specific region/area). In many cases, the (local) government is the central actor, initiator and driver of such initiatives. But there are limits to the time and resources local governments have available to structurally initiate and lead. There are quite a few example of initiatives where the (local) government tried to take a step back (and act more as a facilitator) and 'let society take over', which have either ended or continued with less ongoing impact. On top of that, there is strong evidence that suggests that community initiated and community driven transition initiatives generally have a more lasting impact and continuity. A key challenge for local government is thus to select the right role (e.g. time, resources, etc.) that fits with the characteristics of the relevant stakeholder community and their own available resources.

Energy transition initiatives that are initiated/driven by municipalities can be more challenging to 'keep alive' as a lower sense of ownership is felt within that community as an 'outside entity' (e.g. the municipality) wants to drive change within that community. Also, due to the sheer size and scope of the energy transition process - that spans across all sectors of the economy and is likely to take decades – it is not likely that (local) governments can/will be involved in all energy transition and societal change processes as a leading actor. More and more (local) governments in the Netherlands are experimenting with ways in which local communities (i.e. specific stakeholder groups) can mobilise themselves to address a specific challenge ('Participatiesamenleving') and in which the (local) government assumes more and more the role of facilitator / enabler.

In certain sectors, geographic areas or on specific topics (e.g. safety), local stakeholder communities are better organised than in others. For example, burglary prevention via a local Whatsapp group has taken off quite well in the Netherlands in a broad variety of cities, villages

and communities, and local energy cooperatives, particularly those focussed on basic energy savings and solar pv also work quite well. Local energy cooperatives on wind energy, biogas production, deep energy savings in households or with home owners have had a more mixed success and appear to face some more barriers / obstacles. It is in those areas or on those topics, where (local) stakeholder communities face more challenges to 'get themselves mobilised and organised', where a (local) government can put focus on when trying to aid the energy transition process. This is not to say that the support from (local) governments to already existing (and functional) energy transition processes should be limited / mitigated, but in those processes a municipality does not necessarily have to take an initiating and leading role as one of the relevant actors (scoping).

On top of the organisational challenge to ensure meaningful and lasting stakeholder engagement for the energy transition process, (local) governments also have more 'classical' challenges in the area of energy transition planning, communication, monitoring and implementation of energy transition actions.

The typical planning horizon for a (local) government is four years, which is often destabilising for the energy transition process. One drawback of such a short time-horizon is that it omits mid- and longer term plan development, and puts a focus on more easy to implement, short-term oriented measures/actions ("quick wins"). Many existing energy transition plans or strategies to date have more been an ad-hoc collection of one-off short-term projects rather than a set of consecutive actions that is in line with long-term plans and ambitions (e.g. a local community planning to focus on insulation and solar pv implementation in year 1-10, and on switching to alternative heat in years 7-15).

Also, ongoing communication that is led by a (local) government requires that (local) governments always have to ensure that the right (level of) expertise is available. Communication and information transfer regarding the energy transition is a knowledge intensive process, that requires a continuous, multi-annual flow of information and interaction with relevant actors. There are only a few municipalities around that are equipped (i.e. have the right resources) to commit to such a structural effort. As such, one often sees that knowledge/information transfer and communication actions typically have a more ad-hoc character.

In terms of monitoring the status and progress of energy transition actions and measures implemented, (local) governments – especially when some form of public support is given to an initiative – are often confronted with setting up and maintaining extensive, time and resource consuming monitoring and reporting processes. Many local governments try to strike a balance between some kind of generic monitoring framework, for which key monitoring data and/or default reporting values are available and more targeted project-specific monitoring.

Objectives: focus on heat

The key objective of this Roadmap is to help the municipality of Midden-Drenthe to develop a pragmatic modus operandi for the municipality in their ambition to become energy neutral.

Regarding energy neutrality, energy use can be split among three energy carriers: electricity, heat, and transport fuels. Of the total energy use in Midden-Drenthe (5,590 TJ in 2015), more than half is heat (3,139 TJ).

As 56% of energy use in Midden-Drenthe is for heat, this is an important focus point. For electricity, the municipality is already energy neutral: 121.5% of electricity used in Midden-Drenthe is generated sustainably within the municipality (mostly through a waste incineration plant). Although transport is an important sector in terms of energy use, the municipality in this sector largely depends on national and European legislation and regulations, and has only limited influence on the energy use. The potential influence on energy use with regard to heat is much larger, and therefore the municipality and this roadmap focus on this.

96% of heat for households in the Netherlands is based on natural gas. The government aims to substantially reduce the heat use, while for the remaining demand transitioning from natural gas use to electricity and heat use with low CO₂ emissions. Apart from the global climate challenge, also energy security (import dependence) and earthquakes induced through natural gas extraction are reasons for a transition away from natural gas use.

The PUBLENEF roadmap aims to support the municipality of Midden-Drenthe in the transition from natural gas use for heating in households to other heat sources, combined with substantial energy savings through among others insulation. PUBLENEF will set up a pilot programme to assist the municipality in guiding home owners in their choice of new heat sources.

Target groups

The primary target group of this roadmap is the local government (municipality), however this roadmap also targets a wide variety of different stakeholder groups that are active within the different economic sectors within the Midden-Drenthe region (scoping), with a key focus on households.

Action plan

PUBLENEF has started to inventory the potential options for the heat transition in Midden-Drenthe, by contacting organisations such as contractors and installation companies, as well as heat technology experts. Using a 'card game', a pilot will be carried out to identify the preferences for the heat transition in a certain part of the municipality (such as a neighbourhood association, energy cooperation, or sports club).

The results of the inventory based on the card game will be analysed in order to suggest actions for the municipalities to accelerate the heat transition, firstly in the targeted part of the municipality, and secondly by providing a guidance on replicability of the pilot programme.

Learning from others

A few other PUBLENEF roadmaps focus on elements included in this roadmap:

- Organise stakeholders
 - Communication energy efficiency measures Corinth, Greece
 - Setting up an Energy Cluster in Gierattowice, Poland
- Energy Planning
 - Supporting SEAP implementation in Valladolid, Spain
 - Supporting implementation of regional energy action plan in Alicante, Spain
 - Supporting the implementation of the energy action plan in Bucharest, Romania
- Monitoring
 - Developing a System for monitoring, measuring and verification of energy savings in Croatia
 - Monitoring of energy consumption and identification of energy efficiency measures in public buildings in Castelbuono, Italy

Of course, outside the PUBLENEF there are also a considerable amount of national initiatives initiated by local governments that focus on the above three elements, and from which we can learn and benefit from. Within the frame of this roadmap, we will put particular emphasis on learning from existing initiatives in relation to the successes/failures in terms of mobilising and engaging stakeholders.

Replication potential

The full, or specific elements of the (generic) approach proposed in this roadmap (e.g. organisation, planning, monitoring) can in theory be replicated by various public and/or private stakeholder groups / communities that have an ambition to take a pro-active role in the energy transition.



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