

Civic Tendering and the Solar Route A37

The Solar Route A37 is part of the pilot Renewable Energy on State Grounds. In the project, a solar park of about 200 MWp will be developed in the verges of the A37 state highway. It involves a 42 km section on the territory of the municipalities of Emmen, Coevorden and Hogeveen. Because the land is owned by the state, the development of the Solar Route must be put out to public tender. At the same time, the Dutch Climate Agreement states the ambition to develop 50% of each renewable energy project under local ownership. Local ownership means that half of the legal or economic ownership of the project is held by local energy cooperatives in the vicinity of the project. The local energy cooperatives, in turn, give citizens and local businesses the opportunity to benefit from the proceeds of the project. The question facing the municipalities involved is how the ambition of 50% local ownership can be realized within the conditions of a public tender.

The municipalities of Emmen, Coevorden and Hogeveen want to do this by including a policy framework for financial participation in the spatial policy of the three municipalities. The government will then issue the land in a public tender, where the bidders must meet the conditions of the spatial policy of the municipalities.

In practice, this means that all participants in the tender must offer the surrounding area a share in the development of the Solar Route A37, with the aim of achieving a 50% share in the development of the project. The larger the share of local ownership offered, the more likely the developer is to win the tender.

If the surrounding communities are given the opportunity to participate in the development, management and operation of the Solar Route A37, a professional organization is needed that can fill in the local ownership for the surrounding communities. The municipalities of Emmen, Coevorden and Hogeveen are therefore working to establish an umbrella organization for the local energy cooperatives in the three municipalities. In the Koepel A37, financing, expertise and technical capacity can be bundled so that the individual local energy cooperatives can participate fully in the development of the Solar Route A37.

The statutes of Koepel A37 lay down that the local energy cooperatives will use the financial proceeds of the project to make homes and buildings in the vicinity of the national road more sustainable. In this way, the proceeds of the Zonneroute A37 contribute -in the long run- to lowering the energy bills of the inhabitants of the three municipalities.

For more information:

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