

Vilawatt: a new form of governance Partnership

→ VILADECANS, SPAIN

**KEYWORDS: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT;
PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY**

DURATION: November 2016 - October 2019

WHO: Municipality, private companies and citizens

BUDGET: € 4,269,862.8 – Funded by EU Regional Development Fund (Urban Innovative Actions)

SUMMARY

Viladecans, a city in the province of Barcelona, has changed the role of communities by involving citizens in the energy transition process by creating a **Public-Private-Citizen Governance Partnership** (PPCP) as part of **Vilawatt** project. The PPCP is a central hub promoting energy savings through learning activities and managing the implementation of energy renovation projects in buildings and the production of renewable energy. The project partners are the Municipality of Viladecans, the Urban Ecology Agency of Barcelona and the Catalan Energy Institute (ICAEN). Private companies also participate and play different roles such as co-design the local energy currency.

GOALS

- Build an Integral Energy Operator, through a PPCP formed by citizens, businesses and the Municipality of Viladecans with the aim to achieve efficient management of energy, promote the **energy rehabilitation of buildings** and **strengthen the local economy**;
- Contribute to the energy transition and social justice locally by addressing **energy poverty** from within the energy system, and by promoting secure, clean and efficient energy
- Reduce the city's environmental impacts by creating a **local renewable energy supplier** and implementing **energy efficiency** measures.



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HOW IT WORKS

One of the core activities of the project was the creation of a new organisational structure: a **Local Energy Operator** (LEO) through the PPCP to achieve more efficient local energy management.

LEO aims to support the capitalization of savings to be used to finance the energy rehabilitation of 3 buildings of 60 homes selected through an open participatory process. To start, these rehabilitations have been carried out in the Montserratina neighbourhood

"We strongly believe in this project, because one of the most important challenges that cities have to face is the improvement of the quality of life".

→ **Carles Ruiz, Mayor of Viladecans**

The PPCP is formed by 9 public and private partners:

- Viladecans City Council, the promoter of the project;
- Ubiquat Technologies, responsible for the co-design of the local energy currency;
- Cercle Gespromat, in charge of the management of social mediation and legal, financial and technical aspects related to the rehabilitation of buildings;
- EGM, a local energy consultant responsible for the analysis of data to create an energy information system;
- LIMA, promoting sustainable construction and contributing to the design of buildings with low environmental impact;
- VIGEM and VIMED, municipal companies, providing support in the technical management and implementation of the project;
- CÍCLICA, a cooperative supporting community participation and engagement;
- Barcelona Urban Ecology Agency, supporting the implementation of the local energy operator The Catalan Institute of Energy for the definition of the model of energy savings contract.

A complementary **local currency** called Vilawatt was designed to stimulate energy savings and to improve the local economy. Vilawatt will be adopted by PPCP members and local shops in the neighbourhood. The energy sector will be developed by empowering local professionals and thus creating new jobs opportunities.

A **Strategic Participation Plan** analysing the specific role of 10 social stakeholders (schools, political groups, local retail, demo-renovated buildings, residents, etc.) has been developed.



Based on this plan, four open spaces have been created to enable learning and knowledge exchange among citizens, business, professionals and schools.

Since September 2019, each space has been organising **monthly learning programmes**: residents are learning how to use energy more sustainably, schools are participating in programmes to save energy, professionals are working on trends and the future of the sustainable building sector, and local shops are benefiting from free power audits.

TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL

Taking a multi-stakeholder approach, and thus combining the perspectives, needs and power of citizens with public and private sector allows for an integrated approach to address local energy needs in more sustainable and just ways. It goes beyond focusing on citizen initiatives or policies by **taking also the private sector** along in the energy transition efforts. In addition, the creation of a local energy currency represents an opportunity for strengthening the local economy and fostering community awareness on sustainable energy management.

MORE INFORMATION

[Viladecans website](#) in Spanish/Catalan

[Urban Initiatives Actions website](#)

[Presentation of Vilawatt project](#)

