

Effective engagement of citizens and stakeholders in LHP

Good practice template

Participation of local stakeholders in local heat planning is highly relevant to:

- *ensure that there is a legitimacy for proposed measures*
- *reach the successful realisation of planned investments in the years to come.*
- *entail the positive effects of an enhanced decision-making processes,*
- *create greater acceptance of renewable energy projects, positive behavioural change, and increased investment in community-led initiatives.*

*PlanHeat has a **special focus on target group involving citizens** and citizens associations, community groups, neighbourhood energy cooperatives, climate protection initiatives etc.*

It is worthwhile that the good practices of activities engaging citizens (online campaigns, events, trainings/seminars, local initiatives, interesting materials) are related to the topics of existing local heating supply (e.g. district heating networks) and planned new investments (e.g. new heating grids, use of renewable energy sources, or energy efficient housing refurbishment).

Country: Germany (City of Rostock, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania)

Title: Projektgruppe Wärmeplan (Project Group Heat Plan)

Introduction:

The overarching process of developing the heating plan was accompanied by the advisory board "Project Group Heating Plan." The members of the Project Group Heating Plan represented the key stakeholder groups and interest representatives in the heating sector. This central and overarching body supported and guided the heating plan process through critically constructive discussions, inquiries, and suggestions from an interdisciplinary, holistic perspective.

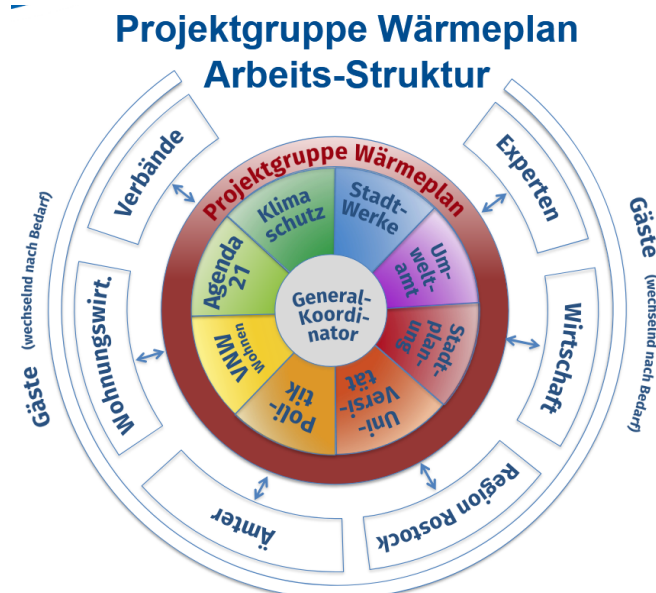
The city of Rostock's approach to their LHP (incl. stakeholder involvement and participation) has been part of the blueprint for the suggestions/guidelines now provided by the national Competence Center for Municipal Heat Transition (KWW) (self-disclosure by Rostock's local government).

Stakeholders engaged:

Select which stakeholder groups are affected by the good practice: citizens, citizens associations, community groups, neighbourhood energy cooperatives, climate protection initiatives, other (identify)

The Project Group Heat Plan included representatives from Rostock's municipal utilities, the climate protection control center, local politics, the University of Rostock, the housing industry, the Agenda21 Council and city administration offices:

- Rostocker Bürgerschaft - Ausschuss für Stadt- und Regionalentwicklung, Umwelt und Ordnung (Rostock City Council – Committee for Urban and Regional Development, Environment, and Public Order)
- Agenda21-Rat für nachhaltige Stadtentwicklung – AK Energiewende (Agenda21 Council for Sustainable Urban Development – Working Group on Energy Transition)
- VNW - Verband norddeutscher Wohnungsunternehmen (Association of North German Housing Companies)
- energielenker projects GmbH
- Universität Rostock – Lehrstuhl für Technische Thermodynamik (University of Rostock – Chair of Technical Thermodynamics)
- Stadtwerke Rostock AG (Rostock Municipal Utilities)
- Amt für Stadtentwicklung, Stadtplanung und Wirtschaft (Office for Urban Development, Urban Planning, and Economic Affairs)
- Amt für Umwelt- und Klimaschutz, Immissions- und Klimaschutz / Umweltplanung (Office for Environmental and Climate Protection, Emissions and Climate Protection / Environmental Planning)
- Amt für Umwelt- und Klimaschutz, Klimaschutzleitstelle (Office for Environmental and Climate Protection, Climate Protection Coordination Unit)



→ This 'Project Group Heat Plan' is comparable to the Core Group (heat producers, heating network operators and planners) involved in LHP in the City of Bremerhaven

Planned continuation for the 2050 update of the LHP: formation of a heat council with the Citizens' Council and the Consumer Advice Center. The heat council's role is to give advice to the 'Bürgerschaft' (legislative assembly of the state of Bremen).

Context:

Information about the institution that implemented the practice, its operation and capabilities. Where did the idea for a good practice come from?

City of Rostock (Klimaschutzleitstelle - Climate protection control centre) – aim to include the public in local heat planning as early on as possible to ensure a high level of acceptance for the project from the beginning and achieve the highest possible consensus among all stakeholders.

Involvement and cooperation of stakeholders to recognize potential together, formulate solutions together, clarify responsibilities, create commitment.

Rostock set itself ambitious goals for the LHP process: a high level of public participation, comprehensive information, transparency, early recognition of obstacles and consensus building. These factors should increase the population's willingness to implement the plan

Methods and tools:

Methods and tools used for involving citizens, communication channels, incentives used, approaches to build commitment etc.

- Monthly meetings of the Project Group Heat Plan (core group + additional 'guests' from different groups, organisations etc. depending on the topics discussed)
- Development of a questionnaire for citizens at the beginning of the project → 'information questionnaire' with information on key aspects of the heating transition in Rostock and to obtain citizens' opinions, suggestions, comments
- four public forums to regularly inform citizens about the objectives, work status and (interim) results of the heat plan (50-100 participants per meeting)
 - o Kick-off forum with the constitution of the Heat Plan project group
 - o two interim report forums
 - o a final forum with subsequent discussions in small groups
- In total, over 100 meetings were held with technical working groups, expert advisory boards, and the Project Group Heating Plan
- In addition, around 50 internal consultations took place between the Climate Protection Coordination Unit and the General Coordinator
- Finally, in addition to the citizen forums, several presentations were given to municipal committees and bodies of the City Council

The methods and tools used (e.g. seminars, presentations) roughly comply with the legal requirements for stakeholder participation and engagement. The practices used in the city of Rostock have influenced the now existing legal requirements and the suggestions/guidelines provided by the national Competence Center for Municipal Heat Transition (KWW).

Practice description:

Detailed information on a specific practice. Description of activities implemented as part of good practice, for example online campaigns, events, trainings/seminars, local initiatives. Step-by-step instructions or guidelines for its implementation. Illustrations or diagrams, if available and helpful. Goals set and achieved.

See above.

Benefits:

3 key benefits of the practice. Highlight what challenges can be solved by the practice

- Project group was able to resolve conflict issues quietly and without public controversy
- Misunderstandings about the heat planning can be addressed early on
- A transformation plan has been developed by the city and will serve as a blueprint for the energy company (75% city-owned)

Challenges:

3 issues that may hinder the implementation/replication of good practice and affect its proper and beneficial operation

- Due to a shift in political majorities, former opponents of the heat planning — who were previously in opposition — are now in power. They do not welcome the re-establishment of the advisory board, especially with the proposed inclusion of civil society representatives

References and additional sources:

Additional materials and sources of information, websites, publications, photos, videos etc.

References:

Local Heat Plan of the City of Rostock: https://rathaus.rostock.de/media/rostock_01.a.4984.de/datei/2022-06-16%20W%C3%A4rmeplan_Rostock_FI-NAL.444911.pdf

Press release - New project group Heat Plan Rostock 2050 supports energy transition to renewable heat sources: https://rathaus.rostock.de/de/rathaus/aktuelles_melden/neue_projektgruppe_waermeplan_rostock_2050_begleitet_energie_wende_zu_erneuerbaren_waermequellen/310888

AEE + DUH online seminar "Municipal heat planning - law and practice" - Heat Plan Rostock 2035" - Rostock Senate Department for Infrastructure, Environment and Construction [AEE + DUH Onlineseminar "Kommunale Wärmeplanung - Recht und Praxis" - Wärmeplan Rostock 2035" - Rostock Senatsbereich Infrastruktur, Umwelt und Bau]: https://www.unendlich-viel-energie.de/media/file/5681.Kommunale_Waermeplanung-Recht_und_Praxis_Praesentation_Hempfling-Stadt_Rostock_Waermeplanung_in_der_Praxis.pdf

Municipal heat planning webinar from the Competence Center for the Municipal Heat Transition: A practical look at Rostock [Webinar Kommunale Wärmeplanung vom Kompetenzzentrum Kommunale Wärmewende: Praxisblick nach Rostock]: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOd8L89GITE&ab_channel=DeutscheEnergie-Agentur

Personal correspondence between Till Scherzinger and a member of the 'Leitstelle Klima' (Climate Control Centre) of the City of Rostock.

Additional Sources:

German Environment Agency: Social support for a successful heating transition: Handbook on social participation in the municipal heating transition [Umweltbundesamt: Gesellschaftliche Unterstützung für eine erfolgreiche Wärmewende: Handbuch zur gesellschaftlichen Beteiligung in der kommunalen Wärmewende]: <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/publikationen/gesellschaftliche-unterstuetzung-fuer-eine>

KWW Guideline: Stakeholder participation in municipal heat planning [KWW Leitfaden Akteursbeteiligung in der Kommunalen Wärmeplanung]: https://api.kww-halle.de/fileadmin/PDFs/20250213_KWW_Leitfaden_Akteursbeteiligung_01.pdf

German Environment Agency: Overview paper on possible formats, to communicate and activate the 2030 Agenda (SDGs) in municipalities [Umweltbundesamt: Überblickspapier zu möglichen Formaten, um Kommunen die Agenda 2030 (SDGs) zu kommunizieren und zu aktivieren]: https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/sites/default/files/medien/479/publikationen/texte_47-2021_ueberblickspapier_zu_moeglichen_formaten.pdf