

ECOEMPOWER Best Practice:

France Regional Site



The French regional site hosted by ACV stands out as a strong example of institutional maturation under difficult framework conditions. The French Regional One-Stop Shop has not only grown organisationally, but has also responded to market and regulatory pressures by investing in diversification, training, and practical support tools.

Introduction

ECOEMPOWER defines the One-Stop Shop as a support structure through which citizens and stakeholders can access integrated services and tools for the development of energy communities. The broader project framework also highlights that OSS models should be territorially adapted and supported by business modelling, engagement methods and service design. The French case illustrates this principle particularly well, because it combines organisational growth with a clear awareness of the national regulatory constraints affecting community energy.

What worked particularly well

A major best-practice signal is the successful organisational development of the OSS itself. ACV expanded by three employees since 2023, which indicates that the structure has moved beyond a pilot-stage initiative and developed operational resilience. In communication terms, that matters because visible institutional growth sends a message of reliability to municipalities, citizens, and emerging energy communities.

The French site also demonstrates strong ecosystem reach. With 80 energy communities involved, the OSS is active in a broad field of practice even though the creation of new communities has slowed due to the French regulatory environment for photovoltaics. This combination of scale and realism is important: it suggests that a mature OSS does not measure success only by the number of new entities created, but also by the quality of support, continuity of service, and ability to accompany communities through changing market conditions.

A further best practice is the willingness to diversify. The strategic direction is significant, because it recognises that long-term viability may depend on moving beyond a narrow technological or regulatory model and preparing communities for a more plural renewable-energy landscape.

The development of training modules and tools is another particularly transferable strength. ACV worked on modules relating to ground-mounted photovoltaic systems, citizen engagement, and communication. This is exemplary because it couples technical themes with social and communicative capabilities, thereby acknowledging that energy communities depend as much on mobilisation and understanding as on engineering and finance.

Challenges turned into lessons

The French side is candid about structural barriers. A barrier was the regulatory environment for photovoltaics in France and the difficulty of adapting some common ECOEMPOWER tools to the French context, leading to a slowdown in new energy communities here. These remarks point to an important best-practice lesson: transnational project outputs create value, but they require contextual translation if they are to be operationally useful in each country.

ACV also identifies economic viability and a broader paradigm shift as key challenges. The presentation links this to a move

towards collective self-consumption, diversification of renewable sources, and advocacy efforts. This is especially instructive for replication, because it shows that a successful OSS must work not only on service delivery, but also on strategic framing and policy dialogue when the surrounding system does not yet fully support the desired market model.

Citizen and stakeholder engagement appears as a second major challenge area. In response, the French site emphasises the development of a training module and the creation of tools. This indicates a thoughtful best-practice approach: when participation is difficult, the answer is not simply more messaging, but better formats, stronger capability-building, and clearer pathways for local actors to become involved.

Transferable message

The French regional site shows that best practice is not the absence of constraints, but the ability to professionalise despite them. Its experience suggests that resilient One-Stop Shops combine organisational growth, realistic reading of regulation, investment in training and tools, and a willingness to diversify beyond established routines.

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