

## Case study: Darmstadt City council taking the lead on green energy

Over the past few years, the city of Darmstadt, Germany, has been buying green electricity from NaturPur AG. Firstly this was to cover 80% of all power consumed in public buildings, but it was also designed to stimulate citizens and companies in buying green energy. Currently, 32% of the electricity need is covered by electricity from renewable energy sources.

The purchase of green energy is only one small part in the overall climate policy of the city of Darmstadt. "These are investments in the future", Darmstadt's City Councillor for the Environment Klaus Feuchtinger says. One of the main reasons Darmstadt started looking into green energy was the German government's decision to phase-out nuclear energy. "If you don't want dirty nuclear energy, you have to come up with something else. If you want to relieve the climate and you don't want any nuclear waste, you have to face the consequences. We did, up to the highest regions of the city's magistrate."

Some years ago, as a part of the general climate policy of the city, Darmstadt started with a considerable share of green power in meeting the electricity demand of its public buildings. Other initiatives in the climate policy field have been developed in the last twenty years. Feuchtinger, the city's 'Stadtrat für Stadt und Ökologie' and member of the Green Party: "We have our zero-energy house. We are also keen on reducing the energy consumption in new building sites as much as possible and promote energy savings with our citizens and enterprises."

Mr Feuchtinger adds: "No, we haven't purchased green energy in our public lighting yet. But that is only marginal, partly due to efficiency measures we have taken there. 80% of all the power used in public buildings, swimming pools, schools, etc. is now covered by green energy. We'd rather raise the green share in public buildings to 100%, that is more interesting than greening the public lighting. In total we now buy 4.5 million kilowatt-hours at NaturPur AG, which saves us 2,600 tonnes of greenhouse gas CO2 emissions".

## Labels

Darmstadt did not just buy any kind of green power, but made a broad comparison. "The green energy brand NaturPur Light was judged 'excellent' by the German Goods Inspection Department (Stiftung Warentest) in May 2000. We just didn't want to buy old renewable energy. It is very important that we can be sure to purchase power from new renewable installations. It is very important that every cent we pay will be invested in new installations." For this, Darmstadt chooses to purchase green power that meets the standard of *ok-power*, the German label accredited to the Eugene Standard.

The responsibility of the city councillor does not stop at buying green power. "For us, it is not just a window dressing; we really want to show we are concerned and want to take action", explains Feuchtinger. "In several press conferences in the last few years we paid attention to NaturPur, in order to stimulate citizens and companies to buy green energy as well. After all, it is only an investment of a few cents per kilowatt-hour."

On top of that, the city of Darmstadt cooperates with the green power supplier HSE, together with some fifty smaller municipalities in the neighbourhood, to find rooftops for photovoltaic installations. "Energy suppliers are eager to invest, because the law on renewable energy guarantees a profitable payment per kWh. In the region, 86 installations have now been installed at kindergartens, schools and so on. In the next few years we will continue to look for more rooftops that are suitable." According to NaturPur AG, Darmstadt now hosts sixteen photovoltaic installations, with a total peak capacity of 116 kilowatts. Half of that capacity covers the park and ride garage near Darmstadt's central station (see picture). This will be Darmstadt's second step, together with increasing the share of green power in public buildings to 100%.

## **First green electricity tram in Germany**

Since July 2005, the city has the first CO<sub>2</sub> –neutral tram, which is functioning with electricity from renewable energy sources, saving 257 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. The electricity is supplied by NaturPur Energy AG, which is an ecolabeled RES-E supplier.

### **Contact:**

Herr Jens Bolze  
Leiter des Agenda-Büros  
Dezernat III  
Agenda-Büro  
Bessunger Straße 125  
64295 Darmstadt  
Tel.: 06151 / 13-3757  
[Jens.bolze@darmstadt.de](mailto:Jens.bolze@darmstadt.de)  
Internet: <http://www.agenda21.darmstadt.de>