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Requiem in Power (RIP)

A public service model for collective self-consumption: sharing solar energy from municipal cemeteries with vulnerable households

Energy poverty is usually addressed through social assistance and support with energy bills. Requiem in Power (RIP) explores a different approach: using a municipal investment in renewable energy, on five municipal cemeteries, to create a long-term structural response that reduces households' energy costs while supporting the energy transition.

AT A GLANCE	
Initiative	Requiem in Power (RIP), Public Service Model for Collective Self-Consumption
Host organisation	València Sostenible / València City Council
Location	València, Spain
Scale and size	City-level, with five municipal cemeteries and their surrounding neighbourhoods. The current design can potentially reach more than 800 vulnerable households.
Budget	Approximately €3.3 million for the five photovoltaic installations
Target groups and outreach	Households experiencing energy vulnerability, identified by Municipal Social Services and contacted directly; the first group to be connected are users of the municipal Home Care Service
Current stage	Moving from the infrastructure and model-design phase towards operational implementation
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1. Context & background

What RIP aims to do

RIP combines the generation of renewable energy on municipal land with a social objective: using collective self-consumption (where the electricity produced by one installation is shared among several users) to reduce the electricity bills of municipal buildings and households experiencing energy vulnerability.

The project is also the basis for a new public service model for collective self-consumption, in which the municipality owns and manages the photovoltaic installations and vulnerable households are granted free access to a share of the renewable energy produced.

The local challenge and the response

The model also seeks to go beyond the economic benefit. Participating households receive support to understand their electricity bills, improve their energy use and participate in training and collective activities. The aim is to move from households as passive recipients of support towards more informed and active energy citizens.

How it started

The photovoltaic project was launched through a municipal public tender in 2022, covering five municipal cemeteries: Grau, Benimàmet, Campanar, Cabanyal and General. The installations have been developed in phases. The social dimension of the project was further developed through POWER UP, a European project which used RIP as the basis for defining and testing the public service model.

Key milestones

- Identification of five municipal cemeteries as suitable locations for large-scale photovoltaic (PV) generation.
- Public procurement of the five installations.
- Development of the public service model for collective self-consumption through POWER UP.
- Definition of a social allocation of renewable energy: 25% of the energy generated across the five sites is dedicated to vulnerable households.
- Establishment of cooperation mechanisms between València Sostenible, Municipal Social Services and municipal technical services.
- Development of protocols for identifying, referring and supporting vulnerable households.
- Recruitment and engagement of the first households through Social Services.

Where it stands today

Three of the five PV plants have already been installed; one of them is working. The main pending step is the legalisation and activation of the other two, so that energy sharing with participating households can become fully operational.

On the social side, more than 100 households referred by Social Services were contacted and 31 decided to join the project and complete the required documentation. València Sostenible recently met with Municipal Social Services to agree on the first group of households to be connected to the scheme.

2. Innovation

The innovation is not only technological. It lies mainly in **connecting municipal renewable energy generation with energy poverty policy**. RIP transforms a municipal investment in renewable energy into a potential social policy instrument:

Municipal land + public investment in renewables → **Collective self-consumption** → **Free access for vulnerable households** → **Lower energy bills + energy advice and empowerment**

Unlike a conventional energy community, the model does not require vulnerable households to make an initial investment or become members of an energy community. The municipality owns and manages the installations and can therefore ensure that vulnerable households identified through Social Services have access to the benefits.

> **RIP also represents an innovative form of cooperation inside the municipality, connecting climate and energy policy with Social Services and municipal technical services.**

3. Stakeholders involved

The model requires strong coordination between departments because the initiative combines infrastructure, public procurement, energy management, social policy, data protection and collective self-consumption procedures.

Stakeholder / organisation	Type	Role in the initiative
City of València / Climate Improvement and Energy Efficiency Department	Public	Political leadership, investment and overall framework for the model
València Sostenible	Public	Energy poverty component, coordination, household support and implementation of the social model
Municipal Social Services	Public	Identification and selection of vulnerable households and follow-up of their participation
Architecture and Central Technical Services	Public	Technical management of the installations, municipal energy management and maintenance
Engineering company	Private / technical	Design and execution of the photovoltaic installations and related technical works
AeioLuz (energy cooperative)	Private / social energy organisation	Provides energy advice and support to households referred by Social Services
Senda	Private / energy management	Acts as the collective self-consumption manager, coordinating the operational management of the energy-sharing scheme
Vulnerable households	Citizens	Beneficiaries and participants in the model; receive renewable energy, energy advice and training

4. Target groups: who they are and how they are reached

How do they define and identify the target groups?

RIP targets households experiencing energy vulnerability. The selection of beneficiaries is led by Municipal Social Services, who identify households according to their professional assessment of vulnerability. Protocols have been developed for identifying, referring and supporting these households, and València Sostenible then supports the energy-related assessment and engagement process.

Municipal Social Services apply their own vulnerability criteria for selection, including income threshold. The initial participants will be people already receiving the municipal Home Care Service (Servicio de Ayuda a Domicilio). This group was considered particularly suitable for the first phase because they generally have a relatively stable home and are regularly visited by a professional who provides support at home, such as delivering meals or assisting with household tasks.

How do they reach out to them?

Households referred by Social Services are contacted directly, receive an explanation of the model and its conditions, and have their energy situation and bills analysed. So far, more than 100 referred households have been contacted and 31 decided to join the project and complete the required documentation.

For the first phase, the existing relationship with the home care professional provides a practical channel for identifying, contacting and supporting households throughout the connection process. AeioLuz, an energy cooperative, provides energy advice and support to the households referred by Social Services.

5. Representation and inclusion of vulnerable voices

The project does not simply provide an energy benefit: participants can also take part in training and collective activities. A further objective is to create a sense of community among participating households, allowing them to exchange experiences and learn together about energy use and rights.

6. Impacts

~2.8 MWp	25%	31
of planned photovoltaic capacity across five municipal cemeteries	of the renewable energy generated reserved for vulnerable households	households completed the documentation to participate, out of more than 100 contacted

Energy and environmental impact

- Five large-scale municipal PV installations.
- Significant renewable electricity generation from previously unused municipal land.
- Potential contribution to reducing approximately 1,000 tonnes of CO_2, according to the municipality.

Social impact

- Potential to reach more than 800 vulnerable households as the scheme is progressively implemented.
- Participants receive an initial energy bill analysis and tailored advice where needed.

Institutional impact

The project has generated new knowledge and capacities within the municipality around collective self-consumption, renewable energy deployment, social targeting and interdepartmental coordination. It has also generated protocols, contractual models and technical knowledge that could be useful for replicating similar approaches in other municipalities.

7. Key challenge: where the team would like peer advice

> **How can we move from administrative inclusion to meaningful participation?**

RIP faces several technical, administrative and organisational challenges. However, the one the team is particularly interested in discussing with peers is the social participation of vulnerable households. There is a significant difference between identifying vulnerable households, having them formally enrol and connecting them to the collective self-consumption system, and ensuring that they actually understand what collective self-consumption is, how the scheme works, what benefits it can bring them, and how they can actively engage with it.

The ambition is to go beyond a model where Social Services identifies and refers a number of households, participants sign the necessary documents and are subsequently connected to the installation. Ideally, households would also receive tailored energy advice, understand their electricity use and the collective self-consumption model, and participate in group activities where they can exchange experiences and learn from each other. The team plans to have dedicated human resources for this purpose. Nevertheless, meaningful engagement remains a major challenge, particularly when working with people who may face time constraints, low energy literacy, social isolation or other barriers to participation.

Question for the FETA community: how can meaningful participation of vulnerable households in collective energy schemes be designed and sustained, so that they move from being beneficiaries of a service to becoming informed and active energy citizens? And to what extent should they be asked to be “active”?

8. Find out more



Video introduction