



SYNOPSIS REPORT

A.T.2.2 Joint development of a motivational programme to increase the use of renewable energy sources

Prepared by: PP12 - National Energy Cluster NEK, Slovak republic

In the framework of the NRGCOM – Creating appropriate operational conditions for renewable energy communities in the Danube Region project

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Disclaimer

We have informed the Activity Leader, PP5-IRENA that we have officially started implementation according to the approved schedule and budget of the NRGCOM project at the beginning of this 1st period. As we see a lot of parallels between activities, we use our knowledge and already achieved informations.

We have also already informed all project partners about our progress in this activity.



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1. Contextualisation

1.1 Project-specific objective

NRGCOM aims to disseminate a positive perception of REC initiatives, encourage the society to take similar actions and thereby cut dependence on fossil fuels. Creating a network of 'REC ambassadors' will facilitate the consortium's operation, give more credibility to the project's mission and ensure wide reach to the target audience to spread the concept of RECs. The goal is to address the widest possible audience in a rational and targeted way. PPs will develop a motivational programme to raise awareness of the benefits of switching to renewables and belonging to sustainable communities. The method will address different groups: A2.3 will increase motivation and test the general public's willingness, while A2.4 will assess and increase the engagement of municipalities and economic actors via professional trainings. The extent of behavioural change will be measured and based on the results (nr. of new initiatives), PPs will develop an awareness raising toolkit to be used freely.

1.2. Communication Objective

To reach a wide audience, trigger the widest possible public enthusiasm to create RECs, promote the project activities and capitalise the results, PPs will create a 'REC ambassadors' network, develop a motivational scheme and launch transnational awareness raising campaigns targeting the general public and the key actors: A3.2 campaign will consist of social media campaigns, public events, educational videos and online seminars to share knowledge on renewable solutions and practises on the efficient use and storage of renewable energy. Professional trainings under A3.3 will be held for the main stakeholders to increase their engagement in REC creation and remove their concerns. Based on the success of the campaigns, a toolkit (O2.3) will be compiled of the final motivational method, videos, infographics, guidelines and online educational materials on energy efficiency and RECs, and made transferable in order to ensure the widest possible uptake and the rapid transition to renewable.

3. Goal and responsibilities of PP12 - NEK

The goal of this activity is to ensure the development of an own domestic motivational programme based on motivational reasons and the needs and expectations of members, partners, interested parties and managements of energy communities (EC) for influencing municipalities, professional and business public. Formulation of measures for the creation of a motivational strategy and subsequent testing in pilot actions in the next stages of the project in the fulfilment of follow-up activities A.T.2.3 and A.T.2.4.

Two work internal sub-activities were set within A.T.2.2 in the first period, namely:

Internal Sub-activity 1:

Studying the available options, theory and methodology of various motivational programs and schemes and developing a draft methodology for the strategy of motivating members and management as well as the professional public to the creation and development of EC.

Internal Sub-activity 2:

Proposal of a theoretical database for motivational action, decision-making and elaboration of parameters for the pilot action of creation and integration of RECs into the system based on the RES application.

In the next period, the methodology will be aligned with the leading task force of PP5 – IRENA and other partners for the synergy of future results and will be built on two pillars, namely:

1. providing general knowledge about the benefits of using renewable energy
2. supporting entities and persons to establish energy communities.

In the next part, there is a brief overview of specific results for PP12 - NEK in the current stage of solving the task.

The motivational program for Slovakia will be established at the end of the solution of the problem after a joint evaluation of the participants of the NRGCOM project and will then be tested in a pilot action for selected ECs in Slovakia with measurement and evaluation of the expected results.

This is a task, the development of which is happening in this 1st Period, but the completion of the task is planned only at the end of the 2nd Period of the project.

Special emphasis must be placed on the broad involvement of ambassadors, experts and stakeholders for Slovakia, but also their contractual partners in the regions and locations of business for the success of the awareness campaign and the actual launch of the EC.

A.T.2.2: Joint development of a motivational programme to create or join energy communities

The PPs will develop an incentive programme based on motivational reasons and the recommendations of RECs members (A.1.3) to influence the general public, municipalities and further stakeholders, and even the PPs and ASPs to create or join existing energy communities. The programme will involve collaborative efforts among REC ambassadors, experts, community representatives, and further stakeholders invited by the PPs. The measures formulated will be incorporated into a motivational strategy in order to be tested in the awareness raising pilot actions in each partner country, on their native language. The main goal of the activity is to inspire and empower individuals to take an active role in transitioning to renewable energy and foster a sense of community engagement and collective action.

The method will build on 2 pillars: 1) provide general knowledge about the benefits of using renewable energy and 2) encouraging people/institutions/SMEs/authorities etc. to set up energy communities. The methodology will be tested in the framework of an awareness raising campaign on the general public (A.2.3) and the participants of the professional trainings (A.2.4), and its effectiveness – the willingness of the general public - will be measured prior and post to the pilot actions via surveys (A.2.3 and A.2.4). The programme will consist of the workshops and professional trainings, awareness campaigns, educational materials and short videos in order to highlight the benefits of energy communities, such as the reduced energy costs, increased energy independence and environmental sustainability. The strategy will be translated into the languages of all participants to facilitate the launch of their pilot actions. The results of the pilots will be evaluated and the conclusions will be included in a methodological part of the final awareness raising toolkit (O.2.3). The deliverable of this activity will be the motivational programme with the related strategy, to be tested within the pilot actions. The motivational programme will be jointly developed by all the partners; however, it will be coordinated by IRENA as an activity leader as they are accomplished in proposing energy efficiency and RES measures and in holding awareness raising workshops and training seminars.

4. Deliverables

D.2.2.1 Motivational programme to be tested in pilot actions

IRENA will coordinate the development of the motivational programme and the related strategy (O2.1) to be tested. The programme will target 2 different groups: the general awareness raising pilot is aimed at the general public, while the professional training is aimed at potential REC founders.

PP12 – NEK will make efforts in this activity both by contributing to the research and the development of the motivational strategy, as well as the awareness raising campaign. We will educate both professionals and the general public and promote the concept of energy communities. This will build a real basis of the energy community for successful testing of the project in the conditions of the Slovak energy production and distribution market.

5. The proposed approach to the activity for PP12-NEK Slovakia

PP12 – NEK chose the following approach for solving activity A.T.2.2 in this time stage, namely:

1. Retraining of ambassadors and experts to prepare the content of the activity and the distribution of individual assignments for the distribution of domestic analysis and starting points as well as the theoretical database of information on EC in the special environment of RES in Slovakia.
2. Brief summary of theoretical input information and conceptual framework for the implementation of the activity.
3. Description of the incentive system, legislative foundations, and the integration of support, motivation, and stimulation for members, management, and stakeholders in REC. This also encompasses the organisational structure, legislative prerequisites, and techniques for sales and customer care within REC.

Basic concepts and interpretation in Slovakia:

Energy communities are citizen-led initiatives that allow them to take control of local energy production and consumption. They help decentralize those energy systems where the grid is owned by local residents with solar and wind farms set up in fields or solar panels installed on rooftops. By doing so, the local residents consume clean and renewable energy that they produce at home, and each household becomes an actor in the energy sector. Citizens actively participate in the decision-making process and participate in management within the local community, as these projects stimulate local employment. In this way, energy communities organize collective and citizen-led energy events that help pave the way for the transition to clean energy and at the same time bring citizens to the fore. They also contribute to increasing public acceptance of renewable energy projects and spark the interest for private investments in the clean energy transition.

The principles of community energy in Slovakia are generally defined only on the basis of conclusions from a number of important national conferences on the subject, such as:

Democratization-Community energy is characterized by the fact that power plants are owned by people who democratically decide on their management and development. People can be involved within the so-called energy communities or energy cooperatives, participate in the construction of new renewable energy sources and share and consume locally produced energy among themselves, or sell it and partially distribute the profits, for example according to the shares invested, but above all continue to invest in local development.

Decentralization - Thanks to the decentralization of energy, thousands of municipalities and communities can participate in the production and sharing of electricity. Thus, the electrical transmission system does not have to be highly centralized, dependent on a few main, especially fossil, sources. Hundreds of energy communities thus participate in the production of electricity. Energy communities are an integral part of the new energy system based on local production and consumption of energy from renewable sources.

Decarbonisation- Decarbonisation means weaning our energy sector from fossil fuels to switch to renewable energy sources with low or zero emissions.

Digitization- The efficient functioning of community energy is facilitated by new technologies that enable two-way communication between the producer and the consumer through an intelligent network and thus manage the optimization of consumption.

Today, Slovak legislation and especially the general professional public views Energy Communities and Associations as new market participants

The basic definition of the energy community and associations producing energy from RES is based on the law of the European Union. The primary purpose of new players in the energy market is the organization of community activities in the field of energy, namely:

- through a legal entity established by specific people ,
- with democratic management principles and
- for non-commercial purposes and on a non-discriminatory basis in relation to other market participants.

The above-mentioned principles formulated by experts based on European legislation were subsequently transformed into the newly created paragraph. § 11a of the Energy Act. This provision regulates both the energy community and the community producing energy from RES.

The main activities of the energy community are the production of electricity, the supply of electricity, the sharing of electricity, the storage of electricity, the activities of aggregation, distribution of electricity, the operation of a charging station or the performance of other activities, the provision of other services related to ensuring the energy needs of its members or partners.

The main activities of the community producing energy from RES are very similar, but with the difference that the community producing energy from RES can operate not only on the electricity market, but also on markets with other energetic industries, under the condition that it is energy from RES is met.

The goal of carrying out the above-mentioned activities of the energy community and the community producing energy from RES is the implementation of environmental, economic or social community benefits.

Communities producing energy from renewable sources

According to Directive 2018/2001 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, a community producing energy from renewable sources is a legal entity,

a) which, in accordance with pertinent national law, is based on open and voluntary participation, is independent and effectively controlled by shareholders or members located in the vicinity of renewable energy projects owned and developed by said legal entity;

b) whose shareholders or members are natural persons, SMEs or local authorities, including municipalities;

c) whose main purpose is to provide environmental, economic or social community benefits for its shareholders or members or for the local areas in which it operates, rather than financial gain. According to the recital, Member States are to ensure that communities producing energy from renewable sources can participate in available support schemes under the same conditions as large participants.

To this end, Member States should be allowed to take measures such as providing information, providing technical and financial support, reducing administrative requirements, incorporating community-oriented selection criteria, creating targeted bidding rounds for communities producing energy from renewable sources or rewarding communities producing energy from renewable sources through direct support if they meet the requirements for small installations. Providing guidance to applicants during the administrative granting and permitting process through the administrative contact point is intended to reduce complexity for project proponents and increase efficiency and transparency for, among others, self-consumers of renewable energy and renewable energy communities. Such advice shall be provided at an appropriate level of management, taking into account the particularities of the Member States. The single points of contact should guide the applicant and facilitate the entire administrative procedure so that the applicant does not have to contact other administrative authorities during the process of issuing permits if he does not wish to do so.

The tasks of the single point of contact will be performed by the Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency. This new task for SIEA was approved in the amendment to Act. no. 309/2009 Coll. on the support of renewable energy sources and highly efficient combined production and on the amendment and supplementation of certain laws, which Page 7 of 8 of the National Register of the Slovak Republic approved on 19 October 2022, and the paragraph regulating these obligations will enter into force on 1 December 2022.

The specific characteristics of local renewable energy communities in terms of size, ownership structure and number of projects may impair their competitiveness against large entities, namely competitors with larger projects or portfolios. Therefore, Member States should be able to choose any form of entity for communities producing energy from renewable sources, as long as the entity can, when acting in its own name, exercise rights and be subject to obligations. In order to prevent abuse and ensure broad participation, renewable energy communities should be able to maintain independence from individual members and other traditional market actors who participate in the community as members or shareholders, or who cooperate through other means such as investment. Participation in renewable energy projects should be open to all potential local members based on objective, transparent and non-discriminatory criteria. Allowing renewable energy communities to operate in the energy system and facilitating their integration into the market is part of measures to compensate for the disadvantages related to the specific characteristics of local renewable energy communities in terms of their size, ownership structure and number of projects. Communities producing energy from renewable sources should be able to exchange with each other the energy produced by the equipment they own.

However, members of the communities should not be exempt from the relevant costs, fees, levies and taxes that would be borne by non-community end-users, producers in a similar situation, or if any public network infrastructure is used for such transmissions. Households as consumers and communities participating in self-consumption of energy from renewable sources should retain their consumer rights, including the right to contract with a supplier of their choice and to switch suppliers.

Benefits of energy community and associations

In practice, it may look like, for example, that active customers will not be dependent only on consuming electricity themselves, or storing it in their own storage facilities or selling it to the network. Associated with sharing are wider possibilities in the area of community energy, in which it will be common practice to share surpluses between members, for example neighbors or sharing to local production factories. The actual operating model of the energy community or community will already depend on the mutual agreement of the members and their needs.

A great advantage of the Slovak legislation is that, as regards the energy community or the community producing energy from RES, activities such as electricity production in a facility with an installed capacity of up to 1 MW, the storage of electricity in an electricity storage facility with an installed capacity of up to 1 MW, the aggregation or supply electricity, and the production or supply of biomethane for its members are not considered business in the energy sector, and a "simple" notification to the Regulatory Office for Network Industries (in slovak „Úrad prer reguláciu sieťových odvetví“- ÚRSO) is sufficient for their implementation.

Creativity and innovation in project management

A cluster that wants to exist in the current competitive environment must constantly improve. The constant effort to achieve a new, better and more perfect state is connected with the ability of a person to create, invent, dream and implement ideas - to be creative and thereby bring about positive real changes - innovation. Creativity can be defined as a mental process involving the creation of ideas, concepts, associations and vision among the pre-existing environment of available solutions in the matter in which creativity takes place. Creativity is an ability, but also an approach and attitude to things, and at the same time a creative process, it is one of the basic psychological abilities of a person and, if it is successful, it has a positive effect on the self-confidence and activity of the worker.

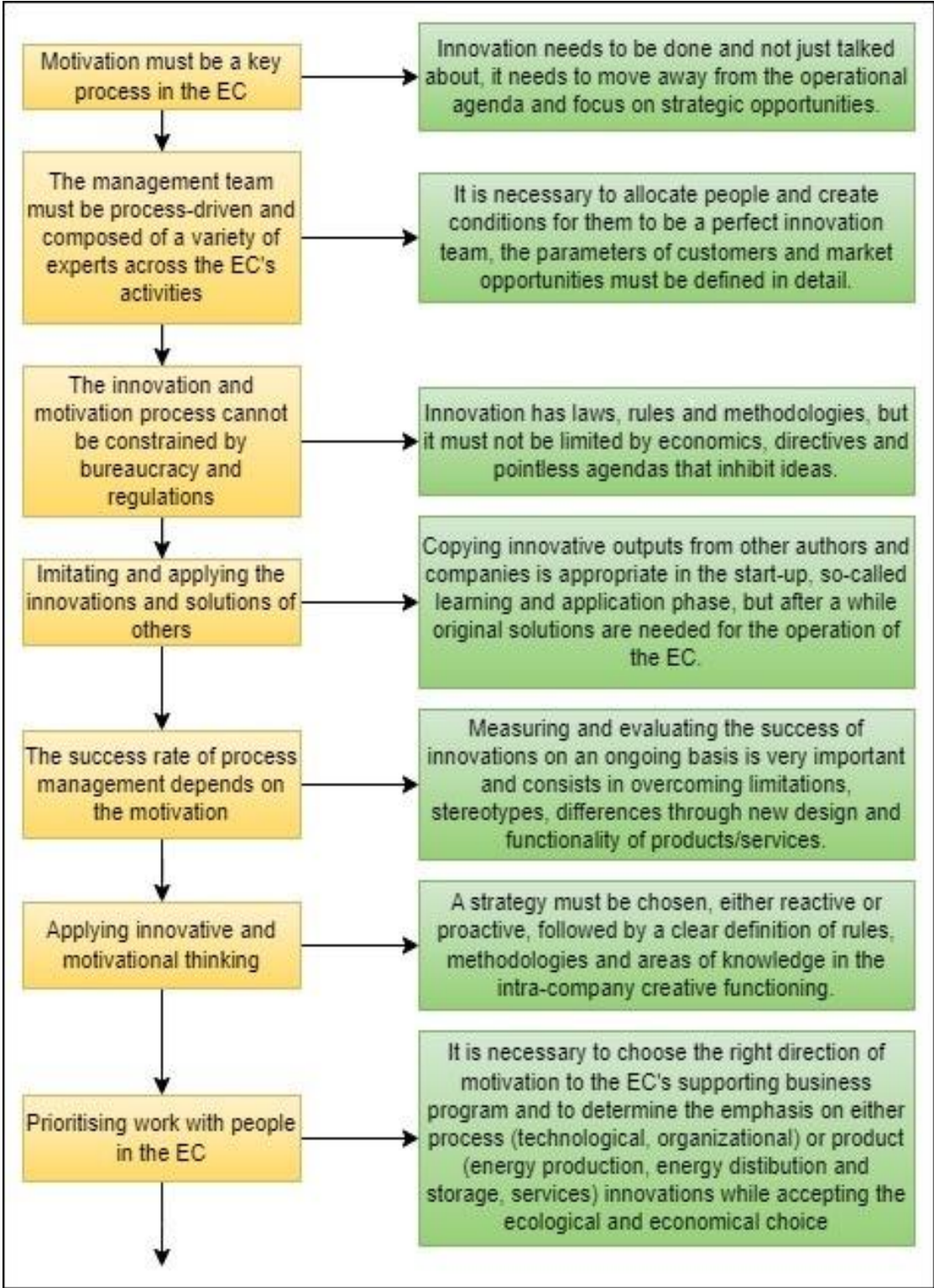
Basic obstacles to creative thinking include, for example:

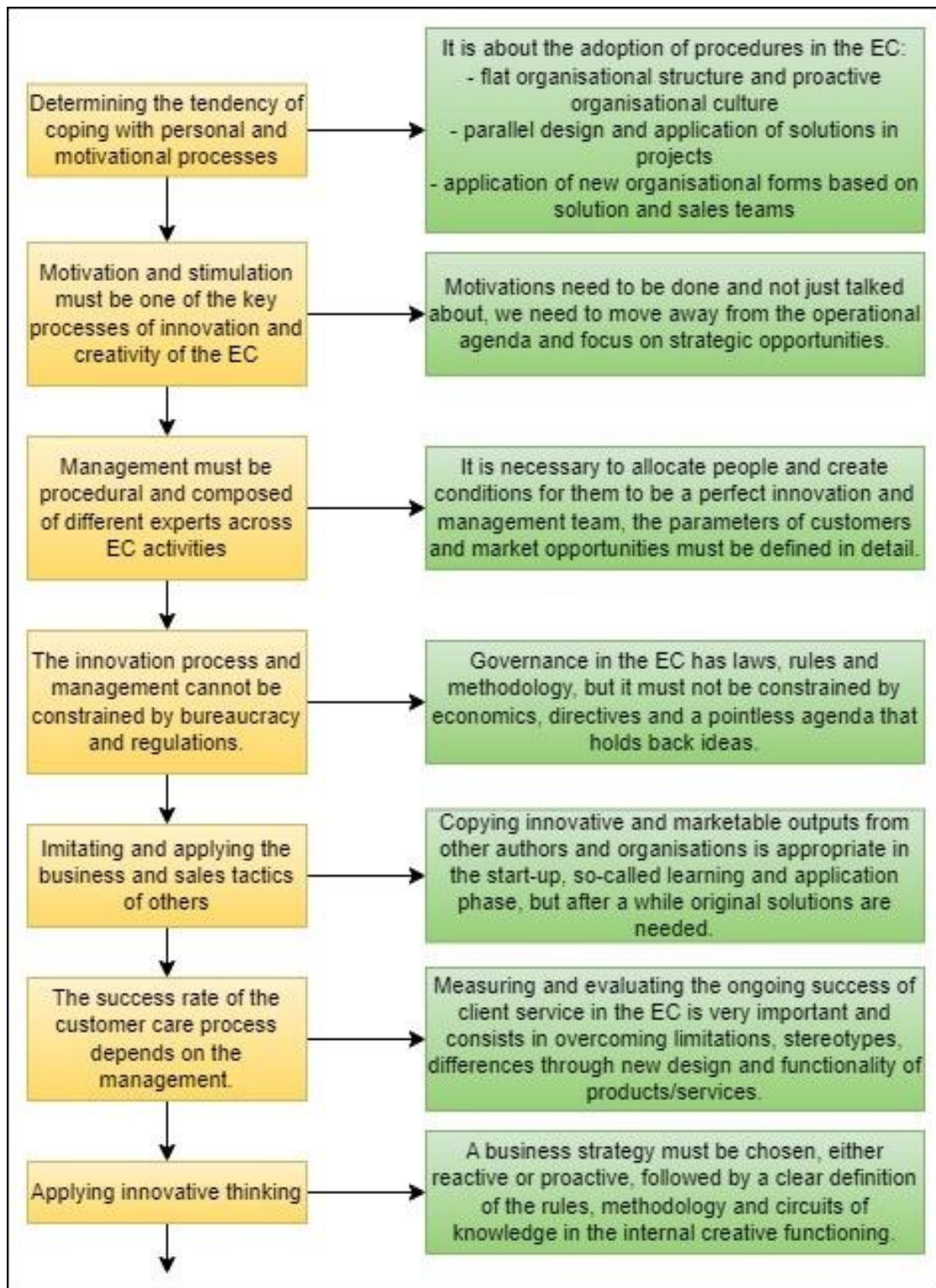
- excessive bureaucracy and administration
- high degree of control
- self-underestimation, unwillingness and inability to "play and dream"
- negative regressive criticism, fear and concern
- reduction of decisions to: either / or
- lack of resources (time, technology, finances)

Long years of experience in renowned companies and cluster associations and energy communities have proven theses among top managers that their organizations cannot survive without innovations and strong internal social, educational, personal and financial motivation and stimulation for innovative and modern work results, but the reality is sad and often these people are the ones who hold back innovation the most. This is due to the fact that innovation is usually not the main thing that the organization lives by, the focus on security prevails, the ego of people is greater than the effort of an honest solution. There is often a lack of marketing information about the market and EC's place on it, but there is also a weak conceptualization of innovations, there is no time for systematic work and study of management, and there is a persistent inability to finish even really good things and implement them on the market.

Another problem is that EK does not have a developed methodology, the management does not understand in depth the issue of innovation and motivational systems, but also the business strategy and sales technique in customer care, and this is not organically installed as an innovation culture into the organizational culture, and the management model is inappropriate innovations and there is a lack of responsible objective evaluation of benefits from innovations in EC.

The rules for putting innovations into practice in a cluster organization, which after free processing from information sources can be summarized also through the following figure No. 1 as follows:





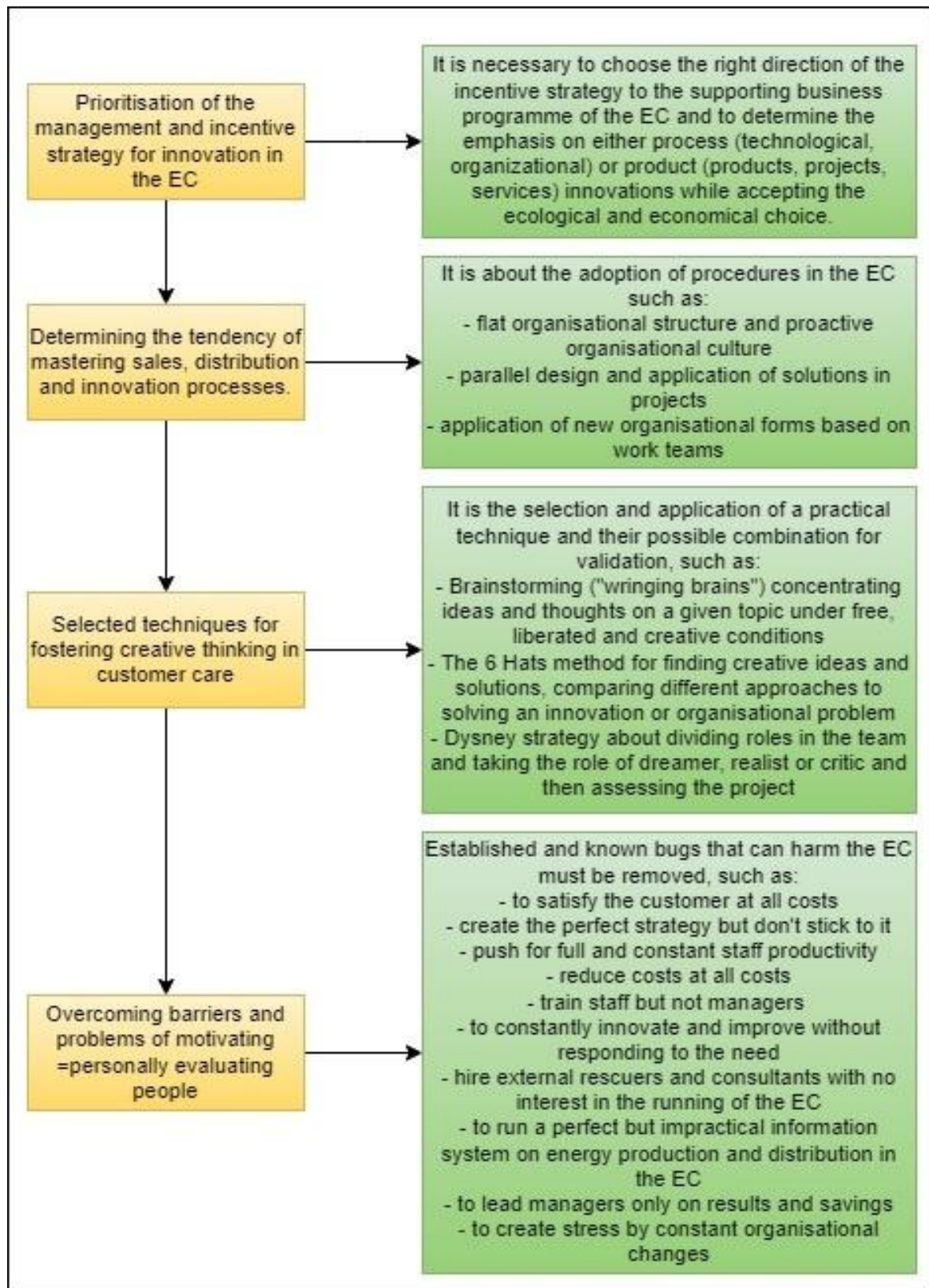


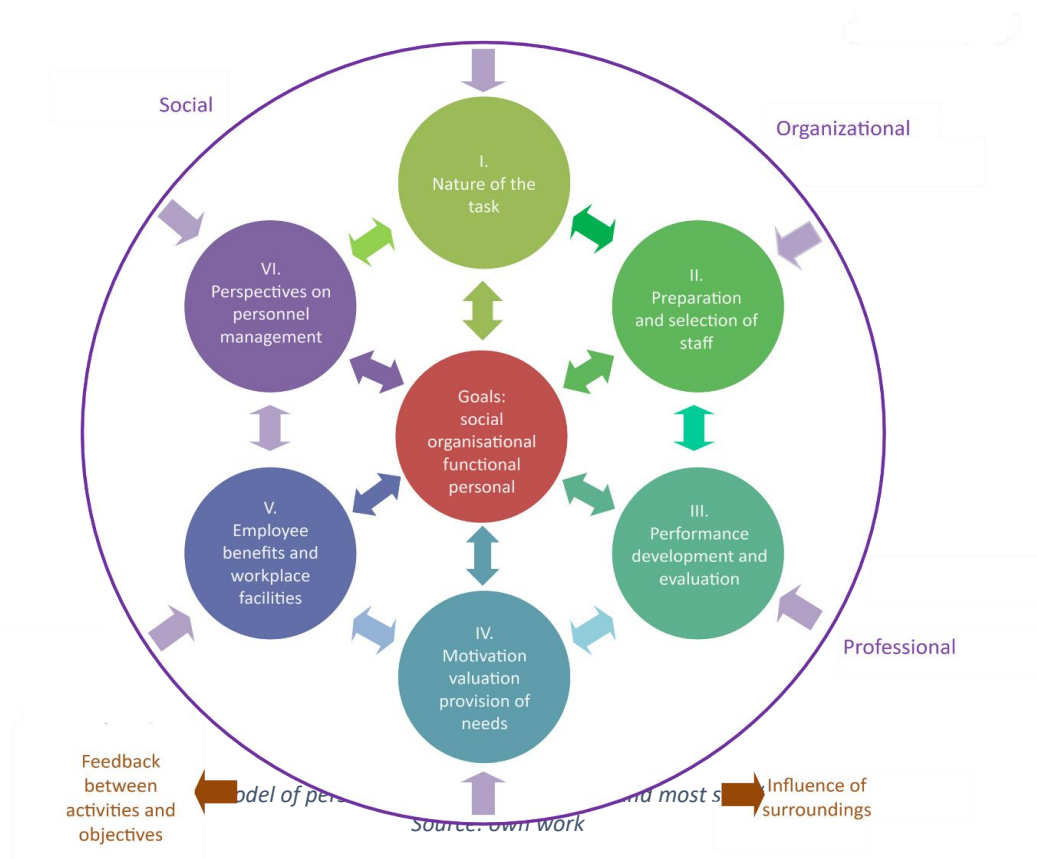
Image no. 1: Schematic display of the rules for applying motivation and stimulation in the organizational system and EC management

Another very interesting way to gain EC's position on the regional or local energy market is paradoxically not intensive improvement of internal parameters, innovativeness and quality of production and acquiring customers, but rather achieving a state where a customer or business partner becomes a fan of EC - its loyal partner and long-term supporters. Of course, this is preceded by previous satisfaction, but also by educating the customer about the features of the product.

Today, experiences play an important role in the modern supplier-customer relationship. They are long-term binding, progressive, emotional and are the subject of memories and the client's sense of belonging to the cluster. It is actually an innovation that directs the products of each energy group in such a way that, in addition to fulfilling the order, they please, motivate and convince the customer to believe in it and be its fan and representative.

At the same time, there is a risk that customer loyalty is constantly decreasing due to greater availability of information, and therefore the creation of product experiences is a tool of innovation to support customer loyalty to the cluster.

As part of the study of the issue of personnel motivation, it is necessary to include the motivational system in the overall personnel system of the EC - its management and control, and to determine the place, internal links and influences of the external environment.



One of the significant and most significant tools of motivation is the appreciation of the performance and results of the work of EC members, its management and staff, each individual based on predetermined and clear rules. Remuneration not only fulfills basic hygiene factors, but is also an excellent motivator (if it is sensibly and purposefully divided and applied). Remuneration supports and

motivates and stimulates work results, innovation and creativity, and especially the creation of products that EC realizes on the given regional or local market with profit. This is how everyone becomes successful, motivated and grows.

The modified and adapted general principle of the Nestor of Slovak Innovations Tomáš Novotný applies that:

"THE SUCCESS OF A MEMBER OR EMPLOYEE IS NOT RELATED TO HIS POSITION IN A GIVEN ORGANIZATION, BUT TO THE POSITION OF THIS ORGANIZATION IN THE RELEVANT MARKET".

Coherence model and planning of processes and products

The model of identification of a member, manager or worker with EC is essential for every small or medium-sized organization under investigation in that the marketing concept, strategy and management must be based on business philosophy, program of activities, knowledge of the purpose of its existence and set goals while adhering to the principles and the specifics that this project and I dream about, the joint research of NRGCOM partners deals with.

In doing so, the authors' idea can be expressed that:

"EACH EMPLOYEE IS A MERCHANT, PRODUCT PROVIDER AND AT THE SAME TIME A MANAGER RESPONSIBLE FOR RESULTS".

An important way of innovative approach in this task A.T.2.2 is also the design of a scheme of recommended important activities that the examined EC needs to implement in its organizational structure. The proposal itself depicts a diagram of the activities of the management and working project and product teams in solving and motivating management and work performance in production, distribution and services related to energy in EC based on RES (in picture no. 3).

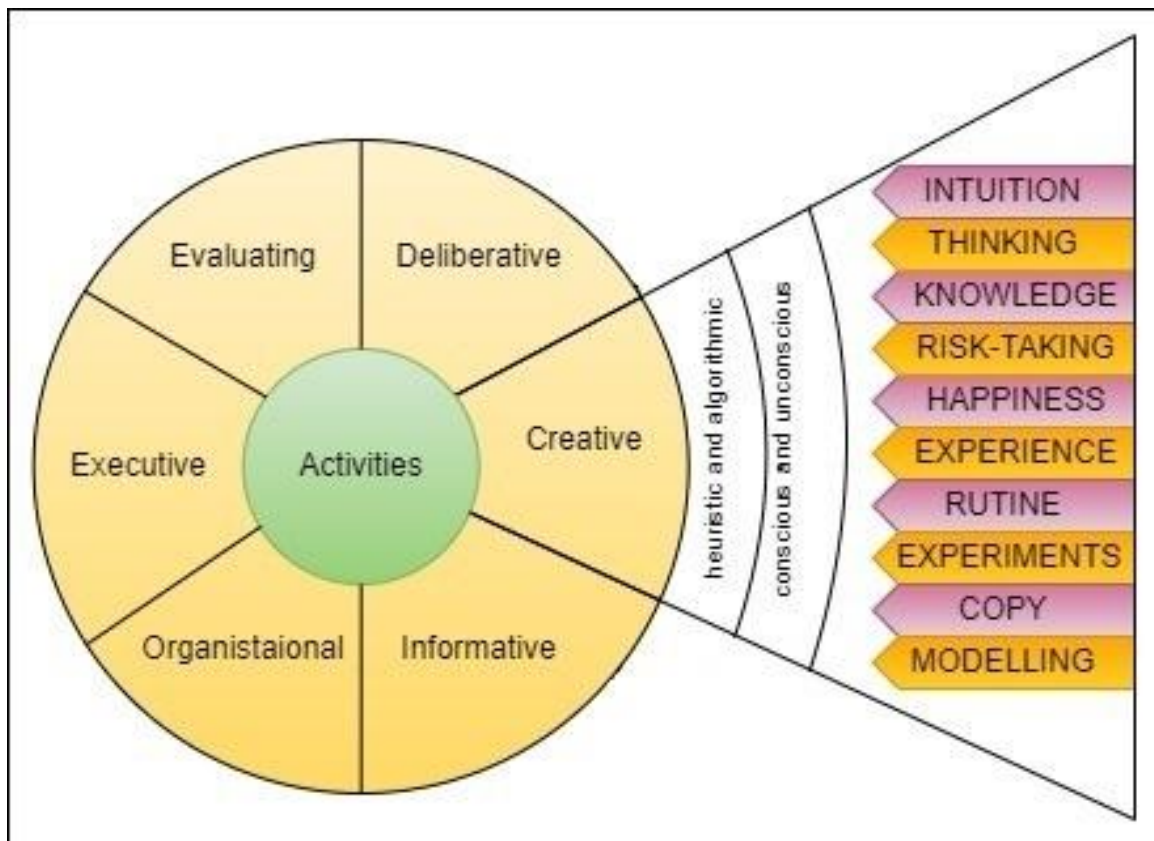


Figure No. 3: Concept of management activities when designing processes and products
Source: own work

A successful, innovative and appropriately motivated staff is key to the success of EK. Bringing these levels closer together, identifying them is a kind of nirvana for every personnel system, every business oriented organization.

6. Conslusion

Currently, PP12 – NEK has completed the following ongoing activities for activity A.T.2.2, namely:

1. Processing this input information message with the knowledge base
2. Elaboration of a set of critical research on publications, information, similar projects and documents available in Slovakia on the topic of motivational strategy and preparation of a pilot action for EC
3. Coordination of ambassadors and experts and stakeholders for processing and education in the regions for the fulfillment of the second period of this task.

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