

Application Form submitted by the initiative to participate in the Transformative Cities People's Choice Award

GENERAL INFORMATION	
<b>Location:</b>	City of Cádiz, Spain. Affected population: 119,000 inhabitants
<b>Title of the Transformative Initiative:</b>	<b>The municipalist drive for an energy transition in Cádiz</b>
<b>Name of organization:</b>	Mesa de Transición Energética de Cádiz (Roundtable on the Energy Transition in Cádiz)
<b>Type of organization:</b>	Civil participation spaces promoted by the City of Cádiz: Mesa contra la Pobreza Energética (Roundtable on the Fight against Energy Poverty) and the Mesa de Transición Energética de Cádiz (Roundtable on the Energy Transition in Cádiz)
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.transicionenergeticacadiz.es">www.transicionenergeticacadiz.es</a>
<b>Category and Edition:</b>	ENERGY. Transformative Cities Award 1st edition (2018).
STORYTELLING	
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>Our goal is to fight climate change locally and build a collectively managed and safe energy model – one that generates local employment and does not have the same perverse consequences as the current energy model: pollution, North-South inequalities, resource plundering and wars to control these resources, among others things.</p>	
<b>Context and problem definition</b>	
<p>In May 2015, a recently created coalition of citizen-candidates, <i>Por Cádiz Sí Se Puede y Ganar Cádiz (For Cádiz, Yes We Can and Win Cádiz)</i>, was elected to municipal government, with renewable energy on their platform. This victory put an end to 20 consecutive years of conservative party government (Partido Popular).</p>	

The newly elected government inherited a municipal debt of 200 million euros and a failed city model. The city's population fell from 160,000 in the 1980s to 119,000 in 2017. Many, mostly youth, have been forced to migrate elsewhere.

The city's decline began in the 1990s, when the decision to close its shipyards gradually was made. Cádiz went on to depend heavily on tourism – an industry that is very limited largely due to its unique physical geography that restricts its growth. Control over local media and productive activities in the hands of a small group of families contributed to precariousness, fostered clientelism and conditioned the population's access to jobs and resources.

That said, Cádiz has the particularity of still having two semi-public electricity companies (*Électrica de Cádiz* power distributor and supplier), of which the municipality owns 55%. Thanks to *Électrica Cádiz*, the local government is the main shareholder of the largest private-public electric company in the country, which has over 60,000 energy contracts.

Despite these advantages, public perception of *Électrica Cádiz* was not - and is still not - particularly positive. For a substantial part of the population, this company is “just as bad” as all the other electricity companies. Many people believe that its rates are more expensive than the ones of the large energy corporations, even though this is not true.

It is within this particular context that the new municipal government of Cádiz intends to promote a just energy transition.

## Design and Initiation

One of the new municipal government's main objectives is to take advantage of local energy resources, the port and the shipyards to promote an energy transition that serves as a driving force for a change in urban model and helps rebuild the city's social and productive fabric.

Its first action was to conduct an energy assessment internally (consumption, tools, actions, etc.). This initial diagnosis revealed an enormous lack of control over the consumption and expenditure of municipal energy supplies. It also brought light to a culture of rampant waste; the lack of maintenance, investment and expertise among municipal workers and public representatives; and the complete absence of the human and technological resources necessary for managing energy in public buildings efficiently.

What is the advantage, then, of having a semi-public energy company? First, the City uses the earnings made to pay for the energy supply for municipal buildings, public lighting and

traffic lights; the remaining profit ends up in the city's treasury. These revenues also allow the city to allocate substantial amounts to special emergency assistance and subsidizing part of low-income seniors' energy bills.

Moreover, thanks to the company's semi-public nature, the City's Social Affairs Department has been able to maintain direct and regular communication with *Électrica de Cádiz*, preventing thousands of people being cut off from the energy supply every year.

The four main lines of work the City of Cádiz for the energy transition are:

1. Savings, efficiency and renewables in public buildings.
2. The fight against energy poverty.
3. The promotion of a democratic energy transition.
4. The promotion of job creation related to energy.

The question was how to do all this in a way that involves the people of the city? How can the City put its energy policy into action? Without a plan up its sleeve, but armed with the desire to start working with the city's social and environmental organizations on energy issues, the city created two working groups on energy: The **Mesa contra la Pobreza Energética (the Roundtable to Fight against Energy Poverty)** and the **Mesa de Transición Energética de Cádiz (Roundtable on the Energy Transition in Cádiz)**.

## Implementation

To understand the new municipal administration's capacity for action and limitations better, one must take the political context into account. The new municipalist coalition formed a minority government. Also consider the shock it must have been for the representatives of the two ruling parties (PSOE and PP) and the local and regional elite they represent to see that Cádiz is being governed by a group of activists from various movements (Marea Verde, Marea Blanca, ecologists, trade unions, feminists and PAH) who do not have experience in institutional politics. The situation is not much better at the national level. The government of Cádiz is one of the so-called "governments of change", which places it permanently in the spotlight of the mass media.

In regards to energy policies, it is worth highlighting that Spain's regulatory framework strongly favours large energy corporations' dominance over the sector and makes it very difficult for new actors to enter the market. The country lacks a strategic plan for the energy transition and the progress made throughout the first decade of the 2000s was followed by huge setbacks only one decade later.

In October 2015, the municipal government unanimously approved in a City Council meeting the creation of a social subsidy to guarantee the access of vulnerable families to energy that is different from the State's programme. In the proposal approved, it was included that the subsidy would be designed by a roundtable open to the public. The **Roundtable on the Fight against Energy Poverty (MCPE)** was created for this purpose.

MCPE engaged in a participatory process to design the future ***Bono Social Gaditano*** (Gaditano social discount). The proposal was built thanks to the collaboration of groups and organisations that demanded its implementation and gave visibility to the problem of energy poverty in the city. These groups worked with organisations that had been helping families pay their energy bills (Caritas, Red Cross, Virgen de Valvanuz Foundation, Dora Reyes Foundation, Cardijn Association), as well as experts from the City's Social Affairs Department, political representatives from all parties (except the PP) and *Électrica de Cádiz* personnel.

Through this participatory process, criteria for access to the subsidy were defined, and participants agreed to make energy training a requirement for beneficiaries. It was also decided that instead of giving a 25% discount on the energy bill, as the state subsidy did, the Gaditano discount would offer a reduced rate on the amount of energy and power needed to enjoy a decent life. It would be based on each family's energy needs, which would be determined mainly by the number of individuals living in the home and the weather.

To accompany the proposed discount, a study on the energy needs of vulnerable families in Cádiz was carried out by the *Colegio de Ingenieros Técnicos de Cádiz* (College of Technical Engineers of Cádiz). Suggestions from a number of technical and legal reports were also included to ensure the proposal's technical and legal viability, after which it was taken back to the collectives for endorsement. Once endorsed, the discount proposal was submitted to a vote of the Board of Directors of *Électrica de Cádiz*.

## Results achieved and Evaluation

- Creation of the Roundtable on the fight against energy poverty (MCPE)
- Creation of the Roundtable on the Energy Transition in Cádiz (MTEC) as a permanent space of participation and collaboration for municipal specialists, environmental organisations, individuals, workers from the University of Cádiz and *Eléctrica de Cádiz*, and members of the *Som Energía* cooperative.
- Promotion of the conversion of *Eléctrica de Cádiz* into a 100% renewable energy supply company.

- Development of the “First social pulse on energy in the city of Cádiz” survey.
- Development of an “Energy Literacy” campaign.
- Celebration of Energy Culture Week with workshops, conferences and a local fair; and the beginning of reflection and debates on gender and energy.
- *Eléctrica de Cádiz* has improved the environmental rating of all its municipal building contracts and of 80% of the city’s families.
- *Eléctrica de Cádiz* has managed to win the contracts of two other municipalities in the province, taking them out of the hands of companies belonging to the oligopoly. This was possible thanks to the inclusion of the requirement of 100% certified renewable electricity in the tender documents.
- The “Social pulse on energy” survey, the conversion of *Eléctrica de Cádiz* into a 100% renewable energy supply company, the energy literacy workshops and the fight for the Gaditano discount are all taking the energy model debate to the street and to local institutions.

## Political Strategies

Unlike the Roundtable on the Fight against Energy Poverty (MCPE), which was created for a specific purpose and a fixed amount of time, the Roundtable on the Energy Transition in Cádiz (MTEC) was created as a permanent space for participation and collaboration. Open to organisations, citizens and companies, the MTEC meets every two weeks to develop actions and proposals to promote changes to the city’s energy model. Municipal specialists, environmental organisations, individuals, employees of the University of Cádiz and *Eléctrica de Cádiz* and members of the *Som Energía* cooperative participate on a somewhat regular basis.

The MTEC was created in November 2015, during the first conferences on the energy transition in the city. It operates in a horizontal manner, based on consensus, and its purpose is to elaborate proposals on actions to be undertaken by either the City Council or the group of participants. This roundtable has launched several projects: the conversion of the *Eléctrica de Cádiz* supply company to 100% renewable energy sources; the elaboration of the “Taking the first social pulse on energy in the City of Cádiz” survey; a “Popular energy literacy”

campaign is being developed; Energy Culture Week was celebrated with workshops, conferences and a local fair; and reflections and debates on gender and energy have begun.

With the change in energy label, *Eléctrica de Cádiz* has improved the environmental ratings of all of its municipal building contracts and 80% of the families in the city. Thanks to its commercialization of green energy, *Eléctrica de Cádiz* managed to win the energy supply contracts of two other municipalities in the province, previously in the hands of the oligopoly companies. This was possible thanks to the inclusion of the requirement of 100% certified renewable electricity in the tender documents.

“Social pulse on energy in the City of Cádiz” was the first survey conducted in the city (and, for the record, in the Spanish State) on what citizens in a municipality know about the most basic energy-related issues. It surveyed people on how much of their energy bill they understood, what energy model they wanted for their city and country, and what steps towards energy efficiency their municipality should take.

The “Social pulse on energy” survey, the transformation of *Eléctrica de Cádiz* into a 100% renewable energy supply company, the energy literacy workshops and the fight for the Gaditano discount are all taking the energy model debate to the street and to local institutions. People are now questioning the current model and demanding change. What is more, political pressure for a more sustainable and renewable urban model is creating the first positive spillovers in the area of employment.

## Related legislations

The Gaditano discount is expected to guarantee access to an energy supply to over 2,000 families a year. The funds for this assistance will come from a voluntary donation of the profits of the *Eléctrica de Cádiz* energy distribution company, which is prohibited by law from varying its rates.

Parallel to the Gaditano discount rate, the City Council has launched an Emergency Plan against Energy Poverty. This plan requires all municipal social workers to participate in at least one training workshop on energy savings and the optimisation of an electrical bill. Also, through a job creation programme (Plan +30-30), 15 unemployed individuals are being trained as energy consultants for homes and small businesses. Half of them will work for the city for 9 months advising, training and accompanying families experiencing energy poverty.

## Lessons learned

Even though access to energy is necessary for the enjoyment of a decent life, it is not recognized as a human right, nor does its recognition seem to be any government's priority. This is a road we must take. On a global scale, we know that the energy transition has already begun. Nonetheless, this is happening within a framework that puts the profits of only a few corporations before the interests of the social majorities.

We are aware that on the road towards a renewable energy model, the changes produced may deepen current social inequalities and exacerbate the environmental crisis, or on the contrary, increase people's capacity for resilience. After 30 years of scientific evidence on climate change, and despite the little progress made by the majority of countries, we believe that cities play a key role in this process.

The energy transition may be the cornerstone of an eco-social change that will allow us to meet the challenges of the future. Or, on the contrary, we can continue to feed the current consumerist, ecocidal model that will lead us to collapse. If we want to overturn this model, we need to build new democratic institutions that allow us to prioritize the needs of the people and reclaim our sovereignty, which are now in the hands of oligopolies sick with greed. A change in power relations regarding energy is urgent, and we understand that a just energy transition will only be possible if we succeed in involving citizens on a mass scale. That is why in Cádiz, we have started with the people.

Despite the efforts and small, yet great, achievements of the last two years, we are aware that the city's future is uncertain. No one can assure us that the next government will not be neoliberal and will not reverse the present strategy or even sell the electricity companies. Even so, the steps already taken are grounds for optimism. The most powerful energy is the human kind, and in Cádiz, we are sowing the seeds of an energy transition in the hearts of our neighbours.

**EXTRA INFO****Supporting documents**

**<http://transicionenergeticacadiz.es/>**

**<https://www.diariobahiadecadiz.com/noticias/cadiz/electrica-de-cadiz-se-convierte-en-la-mayor-comercializadora-nacional-por-numero-de-usuarios-que-vende-energia-100-renovable/>**

**<http://transparencia.cadiz.es/da-comienzo-ifef-curso-asesores-energeticos-vivienda-pequeno-comercio-personas-desempleadas/>**

**<http://www.electricadecadiz.es/>**