



Press release

Start-up strategy concluded: how dena is supporting start-ups in the energy industry

The German government is setting about improving framework conditions for business start-ups by implementing a strategy for the start-up sector. Two projects from the German Energy Agency (Deutsche Energie-Agentur, dena) are a part of this start-up strategy – which means the start-up scene in Germany is being promoted at one of the highest levels.

Berlin, 29 July 2022 Start-ups are often the drivers of innovation and new technologies. This same is also true of the energy transition. In order to tap this potential, the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Protection (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz, BMWK) developed a comprehensive start-up strategy that was passed by the cabinet last Wednesday. The goal of the strategy is to enhance the start-up ecosystem in Germany and Europe and thereby improve the conditions for start-ups. In order to accomplish this, the BMWK is bundling a wide range of measures and projects, which include the Start-up Energy Transition (SET) Hub and dena's Future Energy Lab (FEL) in Berlin.

Philipp Richard, Director, Digital Technologies & Start-up Ecosystem at dena: 'Start-ups are often sources of ideas and drivers of development for transforming the energy system. Establishing these start-ups is therefore of particular significance for the economy and society. However, when establishing a new start-up, it's not all just about financing; the top priority is helping the start-up get well-orientated in general. Thanks to our SET Hub and FEL, we as the German Energy Agency can be of assistance in this matter via our information and coaching services and our networking capabilities. We help start-ups recognise regulatory obstacles early so that they can constantly develop their business models and do so using "smart" concepts and technology. I call this approach "disruption and evolution". This not only secures their potential for scaling, but it improves their financing conditions, too.'

SET Hub offers guidance for energy start-ups

Since 2020, dena has been using its SET Hub to assist start-ups in developing their innovative business models and solutions for the energy transition. As a result, over 100 start-up teams were able to be coached on the German energy system's regulatory framework conditions. This was done in seven regional workshops and in virtual meetings called **SET Academies**. Thirty promising start-ups were provided assistance via **SET Mentoring**, a personalised consultation programme which lasts several weeks. Apart from that, the programme also offers a strong network of start-up teams and partners: the **SET Network**. The programme was expanded at the beginning of 2022 by adding the **SET Think Tank** and **SET Pilots** modules. The SET Think Tank module pursues the goal of including start-ups in consultation processes and discussions on further developing the regulatory framework. In the SET Pilots module, four pilot projects are being undertaken that use technological developments to promote the digitalisation of the energy transition.



The Future Energy Lab: testing digital technologies for the energy industry

In 2020, dena created a space for creativity near the Tiergarten metro station in the centre of Berlin, in which both the digital and energy economies convene: the Future Energy Lab (FEL). This space contains common rooms and workstations where entrepreneurs exchange information and ideas with specialists and major industry players in order to further develop their project ideas and business models. In addition, the pilot project laboratory uses digital technology such as blockchain, AI or smart meters to test new technologies and regulatory approaches under real-life conditions. Ten projects have already been commenced and will continue to be developed. Among them are projects concerning AI in the power distribution network, the decentralised use of renewable energies in energy communities and utilising algorithms to make intelligent use of energy producers and predictions about heat requirements.

‘Entrepreneurial spirit and innovation are critical factors for achieving climate goals. With SET Hub and FEL as part of the government’s start-up strategy, we can support business start-ups in future in a way that is even more target-oriented,’ notes Philipp Richard.

For more information on the Start Up Energy Transition Hub, visit <https://www.set-hub.de/>

For more information on the Future Energy Lab, visit <https://future-energy-lab.de/>

About dena

The German Energy Agency (dena) is a centre of excellence for the applied energy transition and climate protection. Dena studies the challenges of building a climate-neutral society and supports the German government in achieving its energy and climate policy objectives. Since its founding in 2000, dena has worked to develop and implement solutions and bring together national and international partners from politics, industry, the scientific community and all parts of society. Dena is a project enterprise and a public company owned by the German federal government. Dena’s shareholders are the Federal Republic of Germany and the KfW Group. Additional information is available at <https://www.dena.de/en/home/>.

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