

Funding program “SolarInvest”

Subject:	Financing Instrument (Factsheet D3.1)
Description:	Funding program “SolarInvest”
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Summary description of the instrument

Region: Thuringia, Germany (A-Region)

Partners involved: Project Partner, experts, regional stakeholder

Short description of the measure: Development of a concept for revision of the existing funding program “Solar Invest” has been developed.

Initial situation

Currently existing national funding programs for district heating with renewable energies such as solar thermal are really good and comprehensive. Especially due to the KfW-funding program “Erneuerbare Energien Premium” (“renewable energies premium”) as well as the program “Wärmenetze 4.0” (“district heating 4.0”) funding for solar thermal plants and district heating grids is available. According to the revision of the “Kraft-Wärme-Kopplungs-Gesetz” (“Combined Heat and Power Law”), also applications for surcharges for the implementation of solar thermal plants within heating systems can be made. Regional funding programs might complement with these national funding and financing opportunities, especially with low threshold for initialisation of projects.

With “Solar Invest” a funding program dealing with solar energy is available in Thuringia already since 2016. Focus of this program has been amongst investments in thermal and electrical energy storages the topic of photovoltaics. Special attention was given on the one hand to projects, where tenants operate their own photovoltaic plant and profit from this operation model (“Mieterstrom” or “tenant power”) and on the other hand to projects of citizen cooperatives. In 2018, financial resources of 4.68 Mio Euros have been available, which have been retrieved basically for investments in photovoltaic plants. For 2019 financial resources of 4.75 Mio Euros will be available.



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Cornerstones of the existing funding program “Solar Invest” are the following:

- Applications might be made by natural persons, municipalities and their in-house operating units, administration units, community-owned companies, small and medium sized enterprises, housing cooperatives, citizen cooperatives, ...
- Funding is for investments in photovoltaic plants for self-sufficiency or direct supply as well as photovoltaic plants with energy storages. Funding is furthermore for new or replacement investments in electrical or thermal energy storages (warm water, cold water, power-to-heat plants).
- Systems for investments in thermal energy storages need to have a solar fraction of 60%
- Funding for investments is up to 40%, non-repayable grant, maximum amount is 100.000,00 Euro

According to the possibility of application for investments in thermal energy storages this funding program is of interest for the implementation of solar thermal.

Objectives

According to the development of the Thuringian Climate Law, the Integrated Energy and Climate Strategy as well as the Regional Heat Strategy, which will highlight the importance of renewable heating, funding for heat supply with renewable energies will get expanded. For this reason, within the SDHp2m-project a concept for revision of this existing funding program “Solar Invest” has been elaborated. Focus is on intensifying investments in solar thermal plants on the one hand and in renewable district heating projects on the other hand due to funding.

Measures and actions

In the course of the development of the concepts for revision first there was an intense analysis of the initial situation. Therefore, existing regional and national funding programs have been listed and evaluated according to their subjects, target groups, amount of funding and funding conditions.

Furthermore, an analysis of the regional framework conditions as well as project development processes have been taken into account.

Target groups have been addressed and queried concerning different implementation cases for SDH. Also within discussions with project partner subjects, target groups and funding conditions for extension of the existing funding program could have been identified. In addition, results from working session could have been used for the development of the concept for revision.



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Barriers and opportunities

With “Solar Invest” a comprehensive funding program concerning the implementation of solar energy within the existing energy supply system exists in Thuringia, which complements with other regional and national funding programs that support investments in solar thermal plants and district heating grids with renewable energies. Possible intersections of the funding program “Solar Invest” with other funding programs had to be discussed intensely. Still, different interesting approaches for supporting renewable and solar district heating projects exist.

Results

A draft of a concept for revision of the program “Solar Invest” could have been developed within the framework of SDHp2m. This concept aims at funding for advice service concerning renewable energies for heating. Furthermore, investments in thermal energy storages that are connected with district heating project should be taken into account for funding. It is under discussion to establish funding for house connections as well. Public relation activities should receive funding to increase amount of house connections to a district heating grid with renewable energies. With regard to the implementation of solar thermal plants into multiple dwellings, costs for maintenance of existing solar thermal plants should receive funding as well as development of concepts for business models and feasibility studies for new plants

The revision of the funding program “Solar Invest” concerning renewable energies for heating and district heating has been agreed. Still, realization of the revision needs to be discussed in detail. Furthermore, there needs to be an intersection with the recently published funding program concerning investments in district heating grids in municipalities with less than 10.000 inhabitants of the Thuringian Ministry of Infrastructure and Agriculture.

Lessons learned

The concept for revision of the program “Solar Invest” needs to receive a final audit. No final results are available until now. The concept has been developed with regard to intense feedback from stakeholders and project partners and will complement with other national and regional funding programs.



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