

St. Eustatius: Roadmap to a Smart Energy System

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Authors: Lucija Rakocevic (Th!nk E), Mojtaba Eliasi (Th!nk E)

Reviewer: Martina Cannata (3E)

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<https://clean-energy-islands.ec.europa.eu> | info@euislands.eu

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List of Acronyms

AMI	Advanced Metering Infrastructure
BES islands	Bonaire, St. Eustatius, Saba islands
BESS	Battery Energy Storage Solution
DSM	Demand-Side Management
GIS	Geographic Information System
PV	Photovoltaic
RE	Renewable Energy
RES	Renewable Energy Sources

1. Introduction

The Dutch Caribbean islands of Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba (together, the BES islands) have been selected to be part of the Clean Energy for EU Islands (CE4EUI) initiative as one of 30 islands/island groups that hold a vision of achieving 100% renewable energy systems by 2030. To achieve such an ambitious goal, the BES islands are developing several different activities in the electricity sector.

In the period between 2024 and 2026, the CE4EUI secretariat supported the BES islands with activities related to smart electricity systems (SES), electrification of mobility, and integration of decentralised renewable energy. The island transition team of the island of St. Eustatius is composed of the utility STUCO and the Public Entity of St. Eustatius.

This report provides a roadmap for the island of St. Eustatius to achieve 100% renewable energy by 2030. The report is structured as follows. The first section highlights the current state of the energy system of the island. The second section provides an overview of the island's goals and barriers to reaching them based on the information provided by the transition team. The third section provides concrete priorities based on the goals. The fourth section provides the relevant context within which the actions should be achieved, including financing options. The fifth section defines the specific actions needed to achieve goals and priorities; these form St. Eustatius' roadmap. Finally, the report concludes with recommendations to guide the transition team in the next steps.

1.1. Energy System in St. Eustatius

St. Eustatius' current share of electricity generated from RES is 55%, coming from three PV+BESS hybrid power plants, the last of which started operation in 2024. Planning is ongoing for a possible additional one. To increase such renewable share, smart infrastructure has been deemed crucial. For this reason, a detailed [overview of the development of smart energy systems in the BES islands has been developed and is available on the CE4EUI website](#).

1.2. Pathway to 100% Renewable Energy by 2030

Achieving 100% renewable electricity on St. Eustatius requires three key strategies working in tandem: (1) ongoing expansion of renewable energy sources through the deployment of a Phase 4 hybrid power plant, including additional solar PV and BESS; (2) demand-side management and flexible grid operation enhanced by advanced metering infrastructure, dynamic tariffs, smart EV charging coordination, water/energy joint optimization, and demand response programs; and (3) establishing green baseload generation to cover the remaining 20% of baseload, allowing STUCO to shut off diesel generators during standard operations entirely. This third strategy involves complementary renewable capacity— or expanded battery storage with solar oversizing—to ensure reliable power during nighttime hours and cloudy days when solar PV is less effective. This will eliminate the need to import diesel fuel and enable 100% renewable electricity. Diesel generators will be kept as cold reserves for emergencies like hurricanes or extended outages. However, combining expanded RES infrastructure, demand flexibility, and green baseload capacity can achieve zero diesel use during normal operations by 2030.

2. Goals

St. Eustatius' vision is to reach full decarbonisation of the electricity sector by 2030. The goal of 100% renewable electricity generation by 2030 heavily relies on the deployment of smart infrastructure and can be broken down into the following short-, medium-, and long-term goals, defined as follows in alignment with the CE4EUI initiative's objectives:

- Short-term: 2025-2026
- Mid-term: 2026-2028
- Long-term: 2028-2030

Short-term goals for reaching the vision are:

- **Further decrease of non-revenue electricity**, through implementation of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) and identification of easy fixes. Non-revenue electricity of St. Eustatius is on the same level as that of other Caribbean islands. However, improvements are still needed.
- **Improved security and quality of supply**, through analysis and forecasting based on the additional data that AMI provides. AMI data are expected to provide trends, help predict challenges and allow for faster or even remote solutions once they are registered.

Medium-term goals for reaching the vision are:

- **Improved resilience of the electricity grid** in light of climate change. Resilience improvements come from improved asset management and more efficient operation of the electricity system.
- **Increased involvement of end-users** in the decarbonised electricity system through overall increased transparency and informed decision making, demand side management and decentralised generation.
- **Increase decarbonisation of the electricity sector** through the implementation of additional hybrid power plants based on PV and BESS.

Long-term goals for reaching the vision are:

- **Establish a fully functional and resilient smart grid system.** Complete integration of all smart grid components with comprehensive data analytics capabilities for system optimisation.
- **Develop a mature ecosystem for electrified mobility.** Fully integrate EV infrastructure with the smart grid, potentially including vehicle-to-grid capabilities.
- **Enable active participation of consumers in the energy system.** Through energy communities, prosumer models, and advanced demand-side management.
- **Ensure system interoperability and cybersecurity.** Guarantee that all components of the smart energy system work together seamlessly and securely.
- **Expand research and innovation activities.** Develop St. Eustatius as a testbed for innovative energy solutions appropriate for small island systems, particularly focusing on the coexistence of food security and renewable energy installations.

3. Priorities

When it comes to implementing the smart energy system on St. Eustatius, the following priorities are identified in the short, medium, and long term.

Short-term priorities:

- Low and medium voltage network monitoring, control and management.
- Implementation of GIS and AMI system for the electricity system.

Medium-term priorities:

- Active monitoring of energy consumption by customers, enabled by AMI.
- Improved tariffs to foster a decrease in curtailment of RE generation.
- Flexible connection agreements with customers in line with the European Commission Electricity Market Directive¹. Flexible connection agreements allow customers to connect to the grid with flexible injection or extraction capacity depending on the grid's needs. Currently, there is a fixed connection limitation of up to 13kVA. Above this limit, special permission is needed.
- Electrification of the mobility sector, which requires stable integration of EVs and other electrified mobility into the electricity grid.

Long-term priorities:

- Analysis of the trends and forecasting based on the data acquired through AMI.
- Ensuring cyber security.
- Interoperability of various digital and smart technologies used within the smart grid.

4. Context

4.1. Financing

The utility company has limited resources to finance the foreseen measures. Therefore, potential funding and financing opportunities from national and European funds, as well as investment and development banks, are assessed here. Ideally, bundling projects either based on the topic or in synergy with other Dutch Caribbean or Caribbean islands could provide a pipeline of viable smart grid projects. Main financing opportunities at the EU level are published on the secretariat's website.² Each opportunity is detailed based on the source administration, delivery method, applicants, objectives, link, and budget, if applicable or available.

4.1.1. Funding options

In addition to the financing opportunities listed in section 4 of this report, it is advised to look into options for bundling projects for financing under the following programmes:

- St. Eustatius Solar Park Expansion - A co-investment between the **Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs** and STUCO, which has already demonstrated success in previous phases, with approximately Euro10 million in total funding.

¹ Electricity Market Directive 2024/1797 ([Link](#))

² <https://clean-energy-islands.ec.europa.eu/assistance/financing-corner/finance-opportunities>

- **SDE++ for Caribbean Netherlands** - Since 2022, the Dutch government has made the Stimulation of Sustainable Energy Production and Climate Transition (SDE++) scheme available for the BES Islands. This is a major development as it opens the Netherlands' primary renewable energy subsidy program to St. Eustatius.
- The Dutch government has created a customised **guarantee program** to encourage financing for sound businesses. Guarantee programs assist businesses that lack sufficient collateral in obtaining funding. In contrast to the Netherlands, businesses from the agricultural and fishing industries can also participate in the guarantee program.³
- **NDICI** (Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument) - This is an EU funding instrument that St. Eustatius is eligible for, specifically for thematic actions and rapid response interventions related to development and cooperation.
- **European Development Fund (EDF) Program** - EU funding allocated explicitly to St. Eustatius for an increase in grid resilience.
- **Caribbean Regional MIP** - The newest EU regional funding program (2021-2027) that can apply to St. Eustatius.
- **Green Overseas (GO) Program** - EU funding specifically targeting sustainable energy in Overseas Countries and Territories, such as St. Eustatius.
- **TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange)** - A rapid-deployment EU instrument providing short-term expertise and peer-learning opportunities from EU Member States' public administrations to support policy development and implementation.
- **Erasmus+** - The EU's flagship funding program for education, training, and youth development that St. Eustatius can leverage to build local expertise in renewable energy through exchanges, partnerships, and capacity-building projects.
- **DOAG Intra-regional Envelope** - A dedicated EU funding allocation for Overseas Countries and Territories that enables St. Eustatius to develop closer ties and collaborative projects with neighbouring countries, outermost regions, and regional organisations to support its energy transition goals.
- **ELENA – European Local ENergy Assistance** - ELENA is particularly valuable as it requires projects above €30M, which makes it ideal for bundling multiple roadmap actions into a comprehensive energy transition program. The 90% technical assistance coverage would help St. Eustatius develop the entire roadmap with proper planning and feasibility studies.
- **NESOI European Islands Facility** - This is the most directly relevant funding source as it's specifically designed for island energy transitions. The ability to receive both direct funding (€60K) and technical assistance (€60K) makes it suitable for planning many of the roadmap actions. The island-specific focus means NESOI understands St. Eustatius' unique challenges.

4.1.2. Strategic Funding Recommendations for St. Eustatius Roadmap

Based on the funding-action matches, we give the following strategic recommendations for St. Eustatius:

³ <https://windpower.nl.com/2023/05/18/the-netherlands-promotes-energy-change-in-curacao-aruba-sint-maarten-and-caribbean/>

1. **Prioritise Island-specific funding.** NESOI is the most directly relevant funding source for St. Eustatius as it specifically targets EU islands. Its combination of technical assistance and direct funding makes it ideal for implementing the roadmap.
2. **Bundle actions for ELENA.** Consider bundling multiple roadmap actions to reach the €30M investment threshold required for ELENA. The high technical assistance coverage (90%) could significantly reduce project development costs.
3. **Phased approach:**
 - **Short-term actions:** Focus on EEEF and NESOI for initial planning and technical assistance.
 - **Medium-term actions:** Pursue LIFE Clean Energy Transition, InvestEU, and Cohesion Fund.
 - **Long-term actions:** Target Horizon Europe and JPI Urban Europe for the more innovative aspects.
4. **Combine multiple sources.** Use technical assistance funds to prepare projects, then secure implementation funding from other sources like EEEF, Cohesion Fund, and ERDF.
5. **Leverage innovative financing.** For specific actions, consider innovative financing mechanisms like citizen cooperatives for the hybrid power plant and on-bill financing for customer-side AMI implementation.
6. **Regional collaboration.** Partner with other Caribbean islands through Interreg Europe to share knowledge and create larger, more attractive project portfolios.
7. **Public-private partnerships.** Use Energy Performance Contracting to implement energy efficiency measures with minimal upfront public investment, particularly for smart streetlighting and AMI.

4.2. Regulatory and policy framework

The successful implementation of the roadmap relies on the existence of a supporting policy and regulatory framework. Currently, St. Eustatius has foreseen updates to the Energy policy. Sustainability is one of the key guiding principles that the energy policy is developed and built on, and therefore entails a broad outlook on energy, effectively contributing to the island's sustainable development. On the one hand, there is the aim to make electricity supply more sustainable, reliable and affordable. On the other hand, there is the aim of enhancing sustainable growth and the labour market within the tourism sector, the main economic activity of the island. For the latter, some aspects are expected to be put in more focus, such as:

- The unique heritage that St. Eustatius has to offer.
- The beautiful historical core of the island's town and landscape.
- Excellent diving sites.
- Unique terrestrial flora and fauna.
- Favourable geographical position among the Caribbean islands.
- Coexistence and collaboration of food security and renewable energy.

Accordingly, land use policies will need to balance agricultural needs with renewable energy installations, and regulatory frameworks may need to address dual-use scenarios (like agrivoltaics). The policy framework might need to explicitly address how renewable energy projects will be

developed while protecting agricultural land and food security interests. This could include zoning regulations, incentives for integrated systems, or impact assessment requirements.

5. Roadmap to Smart Grid Implementation on St. Eustatius

**** Success Depends On:** Continued public entity’s commitment, STUCOs fleet electrification leadership; STUCO's technical capacity building and operational readiness; Active community participation in V2G programs; Strategic partnerships with regional and international stakeholders; Adequate financing from Dutch government and European funding sources; Coordination with ongoing CE4EUI Technical Assistance.

No.	Action	Description	Timeline	Financing	Remarks
Short-term – Improved monitoring and control of the grid					
1	GIS of electricity meters	Mapping of the electricity meters in GIS	2025	European Energy Efficiency Fund (EEEF): Digital infrastructure and smart grid projects align perfectly with EEEF's focus on energy efficiency in public sector utilities.	
2	AMI	Implementation of AMI for both electricity and water systems. Foreseen functionalities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote reads • Remote connect/disconnect • Evaluation of Non-Revenue Energy (NRE), reconciling billed vs consumed from the transformer level • Electricity voltage monitoring • Water leak detection • Water pressure monitoring • Tamper monitoring • Outage detection (electricity and water) • Identification of energy import and peak • Identification of peak demand/load for electricity and water 	2025-2026	<p>European Energy Efficiency Fund (EEEF): Digital infrastructure and smart grid projects align perfectly with EEEF's focus on energy efficiency in public sector utilities.</p> <p>Revolving Loan Funds: These infrastructure projects can generate clear cost savings that would allow for repayment of initial investments, making them ideal for revolving loan fund financing, which requires demonstrable returns.</p> <p>Energy Performance Contracting: These actions offer measurable energy efficiency improvements that could be implemented through performance contracts with ESCOs, who would guarantee energy savings from AMI, smart streetlighting, and time-of-use tariff implementation.</p>	Business model already prepared.
3	Smart streetlighting	Smart streetlighting with grid quality monitoring and management. Could be implemented together with the AMI.	2025-2026	<p>European Energy Efficiency Fund (EEEF): Digital infrastructure and smart grid projects align perfectly with EEEF's focus on energy efficiency in public sector utilities.</p> <p>Interreg Europe: These actions would benefit from knowledge exchange with other regions that have implemented similar solutions. Interreg's emphasis on sharing solutions across regions would help St. Eustatius learn from best practices in smart streetlighting, time-of-use tariffs, and customer engagement models from other European islands or regions.</p> <p>Crowdfunding: Smart streetlighting offers visible public benefits that could attract community crowdfunding support, while customer involvement initiatives often succeed with crowdfunding as they directly engage citizens.</p> <p>Revolving Loan Funds: These infrastructure projects can generate clear cost savings that would allow for repayment of initial investments, making them ideal for revolving loan fund financing, which requires demonstrable returns.</p> <p>Energy Performance Contracting: These actions offer measurable energy efficiency improvements that could be implemented through performance contracts with ESCOs, who would guarantee energy savings from AMI, smart streetlighting, and time-of-use tariff implementation.</p>	

<p>4 EV roll-out⁴</p>	<p>A strategic roll-out of high-power fast-charging infrastructure, beginning with 2X150kW stations that can be expanded with additional charging points as demand grows. Given the low voltage requirements of the charging stations, separate transformers have been ordered for this purpose.</p> <p>To enhance user experience, a dedicated mobile application with integrated public Wi-Fi access will be developed, which will provide real-time information on charging station availability, pricing, and optimal charging times aligned with peak renewable energy generation to balance the grid.</p>	<p>2025 - 2026</p>	<p>ELENA – European Local Energy Assistance: ELENA specifically mentions innovative urban transport as a focus area, making the EV infrastructure development highly eligible.</p> <p>Cohesion Fund: The EV roll-out and hybrid power plant directly contribute to reducing economic and social differences while supporting environmental objectives, making them suitable for Cohesion Fund support, which targets trans-European networks and environmental projects.</p>	<p>STUCO is in the process of deploying two level 3 charging stations. STUCO is also developing a network of private charging stations that can serve as flexible power management resources for grid operators. The intention is to develop incentives that increase the use of RES while limiting RES curtailment.</p> <p>Comprehensive regulations need to be developed to address critical aspects, including cybersecurity protocols, standardised communication interfaces, and remote monitoring and control capabilities.</p>
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Medium-term – Increased decarbonisation and electrification

<p>5 Implementation of time-of-use tariff</p>	<p>A time-of-use tariff can be implemented once the AMI system is in place. The goal of the tariff is to foster consumption at the time when local renewable generation is available and decrease curtailment.</p>	<p>2027</p>	<p>LIFE Clean Energy Transition: These medium- to long-term actions focus on policy framework, citizen involvement, and market barrier removal, aligning with LIFE's mission to facilitate transition to energy-efficient, renewable-based economies.</p> <p>Energy Performance Contracting: These actions offer measurable energy efficiency improvements that could be implemented through performance contracts with ESCOs, who would guarantee the energy savings from AMI, smart streetlighting, and time-of-use tariff implementation.</p>	
<p>6 Integration of new hybrid power plant – phase 4</p>	<p>Implementation of the new large-scale hybrid power plant with PV and BESS system.</p>	<p>2027-2028</p>	<p>European Energy Efficiency Fund (EEEF): Small-scale renewable energy projects fall within EEEF's target range of €5-25M, making this a good fit for the hybrid PV+BESS plant implementation.</p> <p>LIFE Clean Energy Transition: These medium- to long-term actions focus on policy framework, citizen involvement, and market barrier removal, aligning with LIFE's mission to facilitate transition to energy-efficient, renewable-based economies.</p> <p>Horizon Europe: The more innovative research-oriented actions involving demand-side management, forecasting, and customer engagement align with Horizon Europe's research and innovation focus. This could fund the development of new methodologies and systems.</p> <p>InvestEU Fund: These larger capital-intensive projects that have clear economic viability could benefit from InvestEU's financing solutions. The hybrid power plant and demand-side management systems represent bankable investments.</p> <p>Cohesion Fund: The EV roll-out and hybrid power plant directly contribute to reducing economic and social differences while supporting environmental objectives,</p>	

⁴ Collaboration opportunities with Arroba as (a role model)

			<p>making them suitable for Cohesion Fund support, which targets trans-European networks and environmental projects.</p> <p>Citizen Cooperatives: The hybrid power plant could be partially owned by citizens through a cooperative model, while active customer involvement aligns perfectly with the cooperative governance structure that emphasises citizen participation in energy decision-making.</p> <p>Green Municipal Bonds: The hybrid power plant and demand-side management system represent larger infrastructure investments with clear environmental benefits, making them suitable for green bond financing, which requires projects with demonstrable positive environmental impacts.</p>	
7 Integration of EV charging infrastructure	<p>Integrate EV charging infrastructure in the electricity grid to enable the electrification of mobility. Implement a smart grid for charging infrastructure:</p> <p>7.1 Establish cybersecurity framework by using encryption and authentication mechanisms 7.2 Deploy data analytics platform to gather, process, and evaluate large amount of real-time data for predictive maintenance and optimised resource allocation 7.3 Implement grid resilience system by monitoring grid's health and performance to detect faults, fluctuations in demand or unexpected events 7.4 Configure metering and transparent billing for a fair and equitable billing for users 7.5 Activate ToU pricing & DR to reduce peak demand 7.6 Deploy energy optimization for an optimised distribution with Energy and Distribution Management Systems.</p>	2028-2029	<p>InvestEU Fund: These larger capital-intensive projects that have clear economic viability could benefit from InvestEU's financing solutions. The hybrid power plant and demand-side management systems represent bankable investments.</p> <p>Revolving Loan Funds: These infrastructure projects can generate clear cost savings that would allow for repayment of initial investments, making them ideal for revolving loan fund financing, which requires demonstrable returns.</p>	Technical dependencies are Actions 2 (AMI), 4 (EV roll-out), and 5 (Time-of-use tariff).

Long term – Improved flexibility and management of all system assets

8 DSM of flexible assets	<p>Implementation of DSM through flexible connection agreements, allowing for the connection of flexible assets, but also improved control in case of grid congestion.</p>	2028-2030	<p>LIFE Clean Energy Transition: These medium- to long-term actions focus on policy framework, citizen involvement, and market barrier removal, aligning with LIFE's mission to facilitate transition to energy-efficient, renewable-based economies.</p> <p>European Social Fund Plus (ESF+): These customer involvement and capacity mapping actions have significant human capital and skills development components, making them suitable for ESF+, which focuses on investing in people and skills for the energy transition.</p> <p>Green Municipal Bonds: The hybrid power plant and demand-side management system represent larger infrastructure investments with clear environmental benefits, making them suitable for green bond financing, which requires projects with demonstrable positive environmental impacts.</p> <p>Soft Loans and Guarantees: These smaller-scale infrastructure and customer engagement initiatives could benefit from below-market financing terms, particularly if</p>	
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			targeted at improving energy access and efficiency for residential customers.	
9 Active involvement of customers in the electricity system	Providing customers with options for monitoring and improving the management of their own consumption and generation through a module from the utility company.	2030	<p>European Social Fund Plus (ESF+): These customer involvement and capacity mapping actions have significant human capital and skills development components, making them suitable for ESF+, which focuses on investing in people and skills for the energy transition.</p> <p>Citizen Cooperatives: The hybrid power plant could be partially owned by citizens through a cooperative model, while active customer involvement aligns perfectly with the cooperative governance structure that emphasises citizen participation in energy decision-making.</p> <p>Soft Loans and Guarantees: These smaller-scale infrastructure and customer engagement initiatives could benefit from below-market financing terms, particularly if targeted at improving energy access and efficiency for residential customers.</p>	
10 Capacity map is regularly updated and publicly available	Provide regularly updated capacity maps for the potential connection of distributed renewable energy by customers and of higher consumers, such as EV chargers.	2030	<p>LIFE Clean Energy Transition: These medium- to long-term actions focus on policy framework, citizen involvement, and market barrier removal, aligning with LIFE's mission to facilitate transition to energy-efficient, renewable-based economies.</p> <p>Horizon Europe: The more innovative research-oriented actions involving demand-side management, forecasting, and customer engagement align with Horizon Europe's research and innovation focus. This could fund the development of new methodologies and systems.</p> <p>JPI Urban Europe: These actions involve forecasting, consumption analysis, and active citizen involvement, which align with JPI Urban Europe's focus on transnational research addressing urban sustainability challenges. St. Eustatius could partner with research institutions to develop innovative approaches to energy management and user engagement.</p>	
11 Improved forecast of consumption and dispatch	Use available large data on consumption and generation for improved forecasting tools and improved balancing and dispatch.	2028-2030	<p>Horizon Europe: The more innovative research-oriented actions involving demand-side management, forecasting, and customer engagement align with Horizon Europe's research and innovation focus. This could fund the development of new methodologies and systems.</p> <p>JPI Urban Europe: These actions involve forecasting, consumption analysis, and active citizen involvement, which align with JPI Urban Europe's focus on transnational research addressing urban sustainability challenges. St. Eustatius could partner with research institutions to develop innovative approaches to energy management and user engagement.</p>	

6. Next steps

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** The island transition team, which includes STUCO and the Public Entity St Eustatius, would benefit from a detailed stakeholder analysis that incorporates private sector entities, community organisations, and educational institutions to support implementation.
- **Risk Assessment:** A dedicated risk assessment, along with specific performance indicators and benchmarks, would strengthen the roadmap.
- **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** The roadmap would benefit from a more detailed economic analysis of each action, including estimated costs, expected returns, and economic co-benefits.