



SUPPORT
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Support Local Governments in Low Carbon Strategies

SUPPORT is a project under the European Commission's Programme for Interregional cooperation Interreg Europe.

The project's total budget is 1.898.731,00 Euro. SUPPORT tackles the difficulties encountered by many cities and towns of partner regions in the implementation of sustainable energy policies, and helps local governments by improving the coordination of energy policy instruments and promoting a more effective use of funding.

How to make more effective the investments in Energy efficiency, starting from public stock?

On January, 9 and 10, 2017 at Palazzo Valentini, the Metropolitan City of Rome Capital organized two days of studies and expertise in occasion of the SUPPORT kick-off meeting. Eleven partners participated coming from nine European countries (Croatia, Italy, Bulgaria, Malta, Greece, Romania, Germany, Spain and Sweden).

Energy efficiency in buildings encompasses a number of aspects of environmental, economic and social progress, accountability of the use of resources, less waste production and work opportunities. The aim of the project is to help local governments, research agencies and public and private stakeholders to gather and share solutions for more integrated policies and investment plans in the retrofitting of public buildings, which today are hampered by a lack of coordination and difficulties in getting and using financial resources, among them the ERD funds.



**IRENA – Istrian Regional
Energy Agency Ltd.**

Rudarska 1,52220 Labin

Nikola Petric

Nikola.Petric@irena-istra.hr

+385 523 525 54



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Kick off meeting - Rome

Context and challenges

Many cities and towns encounter difficulties in implementing sustainable energy policies in their territories. With the Covenant of Mayors, more than 5200 municipalities have submitted a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), but the monitoring process highlights that progress in implementing actions is much slower than foreseen, particularly those related to energy efficiency, starting from investments on administrations' own building stock.

Scarce effectiveness of funded actions is among others due to a lack of "critical mass" to render the project interesting for ESCOs, scarcely qualified human resources and inadequate funding to implement energy actions, lack of integration and and not sufficiently specified actions in the SEAPs.

How does SUPPORT address these challenges?

SUPPORT combines different kinds of interregional learning activities, to foster exchange among partners and between partners and stakeholders.

Sharing knowledge and transferring best practices should help local governments to identify and overtake the barriers for the use of ERD funds and to implement integrated Action plans to improve the performance of their energy policy instruments and the spending of Structural Funds in their regions.

SUPPORT works to improve coordination among smaller local authorities, in order to provide the necessary critical mass for attracting private actors for energy efficiency projects.



Project Tasks and Objectives

The overall objective of SUPPORT is improving the operational quality of the ERDF funds directed towards local administrations, for integrated strategies for CO2 abatement, with particular attention to the reduction of the implementation gap of energy efficiency measures, and empowering Local Authorities to make optimal use of ERDF funds for integrated sustainable energy strategies and actions, e.g. in the context of voluntary commitments, like the Covenant of Mayors.

To reach this aim, SUPPORT's sub-objectives are:

- **Identify** together with the stakeholder groups, the barriers for the use of ERDF funds and for planning and implementing integrated sustainable energy plans and measures, enhancing knowledge of local and regional energy targets, and increasing information about ERDF opportunities and procedures.
- **Identify** current practices of use of the policy instrument and collect and review good practices of using ERDF funds as part of the financial strategy for Local Authorities for implementing sustainable energy measures.
- **Develop** and/or improve the existing data collection methods and tools, in order to provide a sound basis for the definition of the Action Plans.
- **Support** the decision-making bodies of the partners and the managing authorities in the implementation and improvement of ERDF programmes, and reinforce the coordination and support role of the actors/stakeholders of regional relevance.
- **Build** capacity for local Authorities to use ERDF funds for implementing integrated sustainable energy plans and measures, and improve the local decision making, policy monitoring, and procurement process.
- **Foster** the involvement of private subjects in the implementation of energy related actions.
- **Facilitate** the coordination among smaller local authorities, in order to provide the necessary "critical mass" (project aggregation) for attracting private actors (ESCOs) for energy efficiency projects.



”How to involve stakeholders: local kick-off meetings and workshops”

Croatia: 1st regional workshop

On June 13th, IRENA and CEI have organized their 1st regional workshop in Rovinj. The workshop was aimed at improving the coordination of energy policies instruments and at making more efficient use of potential models for energy efficiency measures and use of energy from renewable sources. Special focus was placed on defining possibilities for the development of common actions plans for smaller communities and to promote models of cooperation that are required in order to remove the obstacles related to the lack of resources, both in terms of financial and human potentials. The workshop with more than 30 participants was primarily intended staff of regional and local governments, more specifically, for employees of those entities primarily responsible for the development of energy strategies and plans such as Action plans for energy efficiency measures.



There are 10 cities and 31 municipalities in the Istrian Region. It was decided that the best way to proceed in the development of a regional action plan would be to involve all local governments in order to define, in cooperation with them, a common methodology for the development of local action plans that can be then the basis for a regional action plan, making use of the methodology and the data acquired. Representatives of all 10 cities and of LAG of eastern Istria were present at 1st regional workshop in Rovinj. Several obstacles common to all local communities were identified, from lack of information and transparency related to calls for funding, inadequate evaluation procedures, fragmentation of resources and need for cooperation between neighboring communities in applying for large scale projects. IRENA will act as technical support for the local governments in order to create methodologically compatible documents that reflect the empirical situation and can be realistically used for fostering the implementation of new projects.

Energy Agency for Southwest Sweden, first semester meeting

During phase 1 (semester 1) the Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden carried out various meetings with local stakeholders, concerning the draft for the Regional background paper. The issue was regional and municipal energy statistics. During the last years the municipalities in the region have, in varying degrees, compiled energy statistics for different areas or objects connected to these documents. In order to collect relevant issues for the regional background analysis, partners and stakeholders discussed the current status of goals and steering documents as well as available data from local, regional and national organisations.



There was also a discussion about current presentations from statistics on different levels. What emerged is that there is a lack of internal communication in some organization between technicians and the person in charge of the reports and assessment of the energy- and climate objectives. There is a lack of common systems for how to develop and follow up objectives - exchange of experience between different real – estate owners and EE/RES -projects should be developed. The main role of ESS and partners will consist in looking into how CO2-emissions for different sectors can be compiled and presented, and how new milestones should be developed so that available statistics e.g. from from the Central Statistics Office can be used for follow-up.

Sweden, ESS: The Support open event

12th May 2017 – An open event for the public with focus on climate-smart lifestyles was held on May 12. In connection with this, the region’s Energy and Climate Advisor was invited to a workshop.



After lunch they were available for the public for all possible questions about energy efficiency and climate -smart solutions. The main attraction during the day was Björn Ferry, Swedish king of biathlon and Heidi Andersson, world champion in arm wrestling, who talked about their climate-friendly lifestyle.

Towards regional background analysis: the online stakeholder survey

As an important tool for the Regional Back ground Analysis, a basic document and starting point of the project the Metropolitan City of Rome Capital together with Climate Alliance

Italy designed and put online a questionnaire. It targeted the different stakeholders groups (Demand – public authorities, supply – Escos, financiers, etc boosters (universities, NGO, etc) to get a first-hand impression of their perception of the legal framework, material and financial conditions of retrofitting in public buildings. The evaluation of the answers is under way and will be presented in the next newsletter.

”How to involve stakeholders: local kick-off meetings and workshops”

Regional Kick-Off Meeting in Rhineland-Palatinate

The Energy Agency of Rhineland-Palatinate held one of the regional kick-off meetings of the project SUPPORT at the Environmental office of the City of Mainz on April 25th. The kick-off meeting was part of a network-meeting of climate change and energy managers that work for local authorities in the Rhineland-Palatinate region of Rheinhessen-Nahe. The climate change and energy managers were very interested in working on the development of the action plan to optimize the ERDF-programme in Rhineland-Palatinate. The stakeholders had detailed questions about the programme. Some already applied for funding without success and others are not sure if planned actions are eligible for ERDF funding. It was agreed that the communication of the ERDF application and project selection procedures are not clear and potential beneficiaries don't know about the application criteria of the programme, like minimum investment or the possibility of joint applications. It is not clear from the available documents.



The SUPPORT project will collect the needed information and forward it to the climate change and energy managers. The climate change and energy managers showed great interest in the topic of SUPPORT. They already have implemented energy efficiency projects in the authorities they represent. Still there are projects that face problems to get ERDF funding. Especially LED interior lighting for increasing the energy efficiency in public buildings was mentioned. National funding for these kinds of projects exist, it has short payback times and in the first quarter of 2017 the Ministry of Environment of Rhineland-Palatinate announced additional funding opportunities in this area.

FAMP (Andalusia) 1st regional seminar

During its first regional seminar FAMP (Andalusian Federation of Municipalities and Provinces) presented the existing legal framework for energy efficiency at the European, national, local and regional level, with an overview of different policies, plans and programs existing at the state and local level and the regulations in force at those levels.

The first results obtained in the survey were the basis for describing the main barriers encountered when implementing energy efficiency policies and plans: lack of awareness and some reluctance towards changes, lack of political commitment, of financial resources, of awareness and of knowledge on the part of technicians regarding the possibility of implementing plans.



On the other hand, they also detected excessive bureaucratization, the fact that energy efficiency is not a priority at the local level and the need to improve existing legislation in this area, the lack of the figure of the energy manager, the fact that the collaboration of the owners is decisive in the result of the projects.

In conclusion, the stakeholders highlighted the need to improve public awareness of energy efficiency and climate change, which, coupled with the existence of aid and its mandatory nature, would improve energy efficiency at the local level as well as the fact that one of the benefits that the investments in this matter contribute is related to the cost savings and the increase of the awareness.

Alba Local Energy Agency

LEA organised the regional kick-off meeting in Alba Iulia on May 11 2017. On May 27, the Agency organised its first Regional Workshop there. The event was attended by 23 stakeholders discussing the various aspects of energy efficient projects, difficulties in financing and implementing them as well as their benefits for the local communities.

The Workshop was preceded by a press conference held at the same location which was an opportunity for the press to get the pulse on the topic from different sides (demand, supply).

During the event special attention was given to the interactive approach where it was sought to find possibilities and enhance cooperation among local authorities, institutions, companies to overcome difficulties related to lack of necessary resources.

The working groups identified the existing difficulties, starting from the need of national strategies and programmes A second point was the necessity to mobilize private financing for energy efficiency works in the public sector.



There are numerous other challenges in Romania when it comes to energy planning and implementation at the local level: scarce financial resources for EE works, lack of motivated and experienced staff of local authorities, lack of institutional commitment to sustained long-term sustainable measures, gap in the organisational structure in the municipalities (no dedicated energy departments), lack of relevant energy data. The creation and up-date of databases is a prime necessity. The event ended with representatives reassuring their engagement regarding the cooperation within the framework of the SUPPORT project.

”How to involve stakeholders: local kick-off meetings and workshops”

BSMEPA

On June 28, 2017 the Bulgarian SME Promotion Agency (BSMEPA) organized the first regional workshop of the SUPPORT project. It was held on the premises of the Agency and focused on sharing information and ideas about the project and the energy strategy and policies of the Republic of Bulgaria until 2020. Between the 19 participants were representatives of regional energy efficiency agencies, municipalities and private companies, provided valuable inputs into the project activities to improve financial instruments and policies for energy efficiency in buildings.

All participants of the Stakeholder Group presented themselves and were introduced to the Regional Background Paper and the Action Plan for Bulgaria that are presently being elaborated.

The discussion which followed the presentation of the planned activities in Phase I of SUPPORT included the role of DG “European Funds for Competitiveness” with the Ministry of Economy as a Managing Authority of the Operational Programme “Innovation and Competitiveness” for the period 2014 - 2020 (OPIC).

The participants agreed that the desired and expected effect of the targeted support for improving energy efficiency and environmental



performance in the economy can only be achieved through joint implementation of measures to introduce energy efficient technologies and productions for effective use of resources in the companies.

National authorities agreed to participate in the review of the Regional Background Analysis with comments on policies, good practices and barriers to be overcome.

The representatives of The Association of Bulgarian Energy Agencies (ABEA), which is a non-government organization, expressed their interest to participate in the SG and to provide data from the municipalities they work with.

Metropolitan City of Capital Rome, regional meeting

After the first regional stakeholders’ meeting, held in May, the Metropolitan City of Rome Capital, met for a second time with regional and national actors in energy efficiency and sustainability policies, during first regional workshop, on July, 13th. The discussion concentrated on two main themes: the context analysis and the actual implementation of energy policies at regional and metropolitan level, and a good practices overview (at national, regional, European level) regarding EE projects on public buildings.



The workshop brought out first empirical elements for the context study: the national Environmental authority gave an overview of financial instruments dedicated to implement the national energy strategy, both connected to international objectives (POI Energy 2007-2013, Kyoto protocol) and national incentives for CO2 reduction.

The regional authority illustrated the POR-FESR (2014-2020) framework, Euro 59 mln total, aimed at the efficiency of the regional building stock as well as the promotion of SECAPs. Ideas that came out on how to integrate actions for greater effectiveness and involvement of private investors were among others: quality and technological innovation of funded projects, research and enterprises subjects’ cooperation, deeper knowledge of background data, monitoring system of implementation phases, coordinating municipalities involved in action plans (SE(C) APS). The regional strategy is based on “territorial governance”, aiming to connect different interventions into a global strategy (smart buildings, bio-buildings, circular economy, agriculture, mobility) for achieving fixed goals. Climate Alliance Italy, SUPPORT advisory partner, gave its technical support and presented some best practices at the European level. The online survey recently launched was a basic instrument for stakeholders’ consultation, functional to the context analysis phase in every partners’ region.

1° LSG Meeting of ANATOLIKI S.A. (Greece)

On May 4, 2017, ANATOLIKI S.A organized the 1st Local Support Group (LSG) meeting in the Regional Council Room of the Region of Central Macedonia (RCM) in Thessaloniki, Greece. More than 22 stakeholders participated, representing the Region of Central Macedonia (including one Vice Regional Director), ten municipalities of the region (one mayor, representatives from municipal councils, from the Departments of Planning, Technical, Infrastructure and Finance), from the Central Macedonia Regional Union of Municipalities and from Private Stakeholder Associations pertinent to energy efficiency of buildings (the Hellenic Federation of Photovoltaic Electricity Producers and the Hellenic Association of Photovoltaic Roofs).



It must be added that all participating municipalities have already submitted their SEAPs (some have also delivered their monitoring report) and the Region of Central Macedonia has recently awarded a tender for the survey of all its building, including their energy auditing and certification, with respective proposals for refurbishment. An active discussion took place, in which the participants illustrated the progress with their SEAPS, the correlation between policies and implementation, good practices and their pertinent projects in the field of energy efficiency (EE) of buildings.

All the public stakeholders are in the process of implementing energy efficiency actions in their buildings and the private sector is quite interested in providing technical support to fulfill this purpose. The online questionnaire is expected to provide guidance in these efforts.

Toward RBA and Action Plans: how to build best practices

Toward RBA and Action Plans: how to build best practices

The overall objective of SUPPORT is improving the use of Structural Funds to implement local energy plans like SEAPs, the Sustainable Energy Action Plans adopted within the Covenant of Majors.

To reach this aim great relevance is given to good practices promoting ideas and suitable instruments for a more effective use of structural funds, especially when these good practices have an effect on local energy plans and succeed in overcoming financial, information and administrative barriers. The final aim is to identify good practices that can be exported in other countries through suitable Action Plans.

Elements that will not be missing in SUPPORT action plans (second phase) are related to overcoming barriers: knowledge of available tools, context analysis, complete energy audits, procedural difficulties reduction, support innovation and technical quality of projects, economic benefits and positive returns for ESCOs and enterprises. In this way, good practices are meant to show how to attract private funds, for example through project financing, as was the case with the Metropolitan City of Rome, that had 250 photovoltaic systems installed in secondary schools, a relevant part of its total stock)

Collecting good practices: the MCCR Experience

The Metropolitan City of Rome, within the project "Province of Kyoto", implemented a stock of photovoltaic plants made up of 250 plants built on the rooftop of 200 school complexes; 96 out of 200 plants were realized with its own funds (54 plants received incentives of the "Energy Bill" lasting 20 years). The total power of the 96 PV plants is equal to 810 KWp. The other 155 power plants were realized from 2010 till 2013, through a project financing scheme whose financial plan provided that part of the economic benefits derived from the produced energy was intended for the private investor in order to cover construction costs.

A private investment of 9 million euros was realized to install the PV plants, for a total installed power equal to 2152 KWp.

Nowadays the whole PV plants stock of the Metropolitan City amounts to almost 3 MWp installed (2972 KWp), for an annual energy production of 3704 MWh, sufficient to render around 1850 families energy self-sufficient and corresponding to an oil saving equal to 750 TEP / year.

Currently the management and maintenance of all PV plants have been unified and will last 20 years. The Metropolitan City, in agreement with the private investor, will shortly provide a system for monitoring all the plants in order to check their effectiveness over time and will receive periodically from the investor all the production reports of the entire photovoltaic park.

Photovoltaic plant on the rooftop of the Scientific High School "Piazzini", Morlupo, 19.8 KWp.



MCCR photovoltaic plants

Environmental benefits in 1 year

- ✓ 205 interested buildings, 196 of these schools
- ✓ Total MWh installed: 2,97
- ✓ + 100.000 students served by solar energy (61%)



1266 equivalent families



1815 T of CO2 Avoided



639 Tep Energy saved



3,5 KWh energy produced

| Country | Partner | Territorial Context |
|----------------|---|---|
| Croatia | IRENA Istrian Regional Energy Agency Ltd  Center for Monitoring Business Activities in the Energy Sector and Investment  | To save 20% of primary energy consumption by 2020, one of the challenges that Croatia is facing is to increase EE in buildings, with public buildings assuming an exemplary role. Buildings have the largest share of final energy consumption, with average energy consumption around 200 kWh/m ² . More cooperation, targetable objectives and tailored investments, are the guidelines for a more effective spending of ERDF funds for EE. |
| Italy | Metropolitan City of Capital Rome  Climate Alliance Italy  | Within Action 4.1.1 of the Regional 2014-2020 ERDF OP, Lazio Region is aiming at retrofitting 600 public buildings annually reducing energy consumption by 10.000 MWh and CO ₂ emissions by 6000 tons. The public housing stock of the Metropolitan City of Rome (MCR) amounts to 400 buildings of which 330 are secondary school complexes. It has set itself the objective to save 25% of the schools' annual energy costs (more than 12 million euro). The aim is to involve stakeholders and local administrations in defining and coordinating PAES in the metropolitan region, for a long-term, consistent use of the ERDF funds. |
| Malta | Gozo Regional Committee Gozo Development Agency (GDA)  | Malta's energy needs are satisfied nearly exclusively by fossil fuel. The low penetration of RES (4,7% in 2014) despite good solar and wind potentials and of energy efficiency to lower energy demand need to be better understood. Good practices need to be analysed, barriers and obstacles identified and overcome. |
| Romania | Alba Local Energy Agency ALEA  | The assessment of energy domain developed ten years ago in Alba County showed a low energy efficiency level in building sector but also in public utilities, in transport and in tertiary sector. Alba County Council decided to assume a strong policy for energy sustainability, but a significant gap is manifest between energy policies setup at local and regional level and the implementation of EM and SEAPs measures. Involving stakeholders, attract private funds for EE projects, exchange experience and create energy managers will help ALEA to bring more effective results. |
| Sweden | Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden  | By today, local Energy Plans, have low or no investment budgets allocated in the overall municipal financial planning. The available funds have to be used strategically to improve that situation and give energy efficiency measures in public buildings a better standing. One way is to take up the energy efficiency actions the local authorities foresee in their SEAPs and other Local Energy Plans and tailor the calls for funding through the policy instrument to provide financial support to who is ready to act. |
| Spain | Andalusian Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (F.A.M.P.)  | Although the 2007-2013 period showed good results in RES, it did not really lead to concrete energy efficiency actions, but mainly set the basis through energy audits: 2014-2020 is the period to direct the attention to energy efficiency in order to use renewable energy in a rational way. The new Energy Efficiency Action Plan (EEAP) starts from this premise of a large patrimony of energy efficiency potential and available data and planning and seeks ways to allow local governments to implement actions, mostly contained in their SEAPs, in a difficult economic situation and with restricted budgets. |
| Bulgary | Bulgarian Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Agency  | The progress in the energy efficiency policy in Bulgaria was rather low in the 2007-2013 period. In Bulgaria the SME sector contributes significantly to the formation of the profile of the Bulgarian economy as the highest resource and energy intensive economy per unit of output among the economies of the EU. In order to improve the territorial situation, different business multipliers should be involved to find common solutions for promoting private and public investments in low energy consuming technologies and energy efficiency measures. |
| Greece | Anatoliki S.A Development Agency of Eastern Thessaloniki's Local Authorities  | The reduction of conventional energy consumption through the implementation of consumption reduction programs and increasing energy efficiency is a priority set by the Region of Central Macedonia. There is wide space for further improvements in EE, since 78% of buildings in the RCM were built before 1985. It is expected that the good lessons learnt in this project by the stakeholders will serve for the elaboration of an effective Renovation Action Plan which will greatly reinforce the actions towards lowering greenhouse gas emissions. |
| Germany | Energy Agency of Rhineland-Palatinate  | According to the national goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2020 with 1990 as base year and at least by 90% until 2050, the Climate Protection Act of Rhineland Palatinate calls for the following overall activities: fostering energy efficiency in all sectors in the county; Increasing the use of energy from local RES Ensuring a performant energy management through capacity building to save energy (especially in public issues). Difficulties such as limited access to funding, insufficient energy-related skills of technical staff in local authorities, difficulty in accessing energy consumption data make it complicated to deliver the concrete solutions outlined and to further improve the current energy status quo towards a more decentralized energy supply based on renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy saving. |