



*Sharing solutions for
better regional policies*

DOSSIER

4th Interregional Event in Waterford, Ireland

2nd & 3rd July 2019



Picture by Southern Regional Assembly

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Introduction

Interregional learning and exchange of experiences are at the heart of the Interreg Europe programme. The FIRESPO project develops this approach through Interregional Events. There are seven Interregional Events (IE) scheduled during phase 1 of the project. The first Interregional Event was the kick-off meeting and took place in Badajoz , Spain in July 2018. The second Interregional Event was held in Lublin, Poland in January 2019. The third Interregional Event was held in Split, Croatia in May 2019. The fourth Interregional Event was held in Waterford, Ireland in July 2019. It was hosted by the Southern Regional Assembly.

“FIRESPO seeks to boost regionally-specialized and decentralized Renewable Energy Private Investment by introducing improvements in the management of Operational Programmes (OPs) which will tackle the financial barriers that are currently hindering investment in the RES sector. “

Summary

Delegates from the six project partner countries – Ireland, Spain, Germany, Croatia, Latvia and Poland – assembled in Waterford on the 2nd and 3rd of July 2019 for a series of workshops and project visits examining different approaches to supporting greater private investment in Renewable Energy. Hosted by the Southern Regional Assembly, this was the fourth Interregional Event of the Interreg Europe project – FIRESPOLE – that seeks to boost regionally-specialized and decentralized Renewable Energy private investment through shared best practice and innovation.

The Metropolitan Mayor of Waterford, Cllr. Breda Brennan, welcomed the delegates to Waterford and stressed the importance of sharing good practice in renewable energy investment across member states.

Delegates included representatives of national and regional government departments, local authorities, energy agencies, funding agencies, renewable energy technology providers and private investors.

The Director of the Southern Regional Assembly, David Kelly, also welcomed delegates and referred to the publication in June 2019 of the Irish Government's Climate Action Plan 2019 which includes ambitious renewable energy targets for 2030 and sets out plans on how to close the gap on where Ireland needs to be by 2030. He referred also to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region published by the Southern Regional Assembly in December 2018.

“The draft RSES includes specific objectives around Renewable Energy. This is where projects such as FIRESPOLE have an important role to play. By sharing good practice in renewable energy investment, we can maximise the return on investment from both public and private investment in renewable energy generation and storage within our region”.

On the morning of the first day of the event, the project Steering Committee met and focused on progress reports, project finances, communications and planning. In the afternoon, there was a study visit to a company that takes organic waste from agriculture, industry and municipal authorities and uses it to generate green energy (biogas, electricity, heat) and nutrient-rich soil amendment products (compost).

The second day of the meeting (3rd July) began with a workshop at which partners presented the conclusions of their regional self-assessments. This lead into a discussion on the Regional Action Plans to be developed by each of the project partners. A second study visit took place in the afternoon, this time to Flahavans, a food manufacturing plant in Kilmacthomas, County Waterford, that produces between 60% and 70% of its energy needs from its own renewable sources, including on-site hydro, biomass, wind and solar PV installations.

Agenda

FIRESPOLE – IRELAND **Financial Instruments for Renewable Energy Investment**

Waterford – Tuesday 2nd and Wednesday 3rd July 2019

| Tuesday, 2nd July 2019 Steering Committee Meeting & Study Visit I Meeting Venue: Southern Regional Assembly, Assembly House, O'Connell Street, Waterford | | Wednesday, 3rd July 2019 Interregional Learning Workshop & Study Visit II Meeting Venue: Southern Regional Assembly, Assembly House, O'Connell Street, Waterford | |
|--|---|--|---|
| 9:30 – 09:45 | Welcome and Introduction Southern Regional Assembly | 09:30 – 13:00 | Interregional Learning Workshop Southern Regional Assembly |
| 09:45 – 13:00 | Steering Committee meeting Project general information Communication Project Report | | Presentation of regional self-Assessments. Guidelines for Regional Action Plans |
| 13:00 – 14:30 | Lunch | 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch |
| 14:30 – 15:00 | Travel to Portlaw, Co. Waterford | 14:00 – 14:30 | Travel to Kilmacthomas, Co. Waterford |
| 15:00 – 16:30 | Study Visit, Co. Waterford Anaerobic Digestion Plant (Renewable Biogas) | 14:30 – 16:30 | Study Visit, Co. Waterford Wind, Solar, Biomass and Hydro installations with export to grid at Food Manufacturing Plant |
| 16:30 – 17:00 | Travel to Waterford City | 16:30 – 17:00 | Travel to Waterford City |
| 18:30 – 19:30 | City Centre Walk – Waterford Viking Triangle (optional) Meeting point: Bishops Palace | | |
| 19:30 | Dinner: McLeary's Restaurant 122 Parade Quay, Waterford | 19:30 | Dinner: Momo Restaurant 47 Patrick St, Waterford |

Steering Committee Meeting

The technical review opened with a general review of activities due in Semester 1, 3 and 3 followed by more detailed discussion on best practices, regional self-assessments, stakeholder activities and Interregional Events. Next, the lead partner provided some tips on drafting the regional action plans. This was followed by a review of project finances and an update on project communications. Finally, the partners reviewed next steps.



Study visit I – Ormonde Organics, Portlaw, County Waterford

Anaerobic Digestion Plant (Renewable Biogas)

Partners and stakeholders visited Ormonde Organics, a local company that takes organic waste from agriculture, industry and municipal authorities and uses it to generate green energy (biogas, electricity, heat) and nutrient-rich soil amendment products (compost).



Ormonde Organics is financed through equity investment with income generated from waste disposal fees, sale of nutrient-rich soil amendment products and the export of surplus electricity from their combined heat and power plant to the national grid.

Visitors heard about the challenges of securing loan finance and the importance of equity investment for a biomass facility dealing with variable inputs and price fluctuation. They also heard about the frustrations of renewable energy investors in dealing with capacity constraints imposed by limited access to both the electricity grid and the gas network.

A subsidiary of Ormonde Organics, Ormonde Upgrading Limited, is a partner in an Interreg NWE project - RegEnergy - Renewable Energy Regions that aims to overcome barriers in renewable biogas distribution and promote the transition to green gas from the rural virtual supply chain.

Stakeholder Workshop

On the morning of the second day, each project partner presented a summary of the findings of their Regional Self Assessments. Partners and stakeholders then divided into groups and workshopped ideas around the development of regional action plans for their own regions. The aim was to integrate some of the interregional learning that has taken place already through the sharing of good practices and the regional self-assessments. The group met again in plenary session and reported back on their discussions.



Study visit II – Flahavans, Kilmacthomas, County Waterford

Wind, solar, biomass and hydro installations for self-consumption and export to grid at food manufacturing plant

On the afternoon of the second day, the study visit was to Flahavans in Kilmacthomas, County Waterford. Flahavans, a family business has been producing oats since 1785 and has a strong commitment to sustainable production. They estimate that somewhere between 60% and 70% of their energy demand is being met from their own renewable sources through on-site hydro, biomass, wind and solar PV installations. Flahavans purchase the balance of their energy needs from renewable energy electricity providers so that they can ensure that their full energy needs are met through renewables.

The visitors were given a warm Waterford welcome by John, James and Ellen Flahavan who provided a tour of the renewable energy installations on-site and shared the story of seven generations of Flahavans. It is a stunning location to visit and it was made all the more enjoyable by the welcome we received and the warm sunny day we chose to visit. The visitors were impressed by the commitment shown by Flahavans to sustainability and the use of renewable energy.

Flahavans is a very good example of RES private investment by Autoproducers - large energy users that mainly produce power for their own use but can also export surplus power to the national grid.

The driving force behind the move to renewables has been the business owner, John Flahavan, who is passionate about the environmental and economic benefits of renewable energy to his business.



Caption : John Flahavan explains how they burn the waste barley husks in a biofuel boiler to provide meet the heat demand in the manufacturing plant and offices.



Caption : John, James and Ellen Flahavan welcomed visitors from Ireland, Spain, Germany, Croatia, Latvia and Poland to Flahavans, Kilmacthomas, County Waterford for a tour of the on-site renewable energy installations as part of an event hosted by the Southern Regional Assembly.
Photo credit: John Power

Media

On 12th July 2019, the regional newspaper, the Dungarvan Observer, published a news article about the visit, see below.

Renewable Energy Investment event in Waterford

DELEGATES from six European countries, Ireland, Spain, Germany, Croatia, Latvia and Poland, assembled in Waterford recently for a series of workshops and project visits examining different approaches to supporting greater private investment in Renewable Energy. Hosted by the Southern Regional Assembly, the event forms part of an Interreg Europe project – FIRESPOL – that seeks to boost regionally-specialized and decentralized Renewable Energy private investment through shared best practice and innovation.

The Metropolitan Mayor of Waterford, Cllr. Breda Brennan, welcomed the delegates to Waterford and stressed the importance of sharing good practice in renewable energy investment across member states.

Delegates included representatives of national and regional government departments, local authorities, energy agencies, funding agencies, renewable energy technology providers and private investors.

The Director of the Southern Regional Assembly, David Kelly, referred to the publication in June 2019 of the Government's Climate Action Plan 2019 which includes ambitious renewable energy targets for 2030 and sets out plans on how to close the gap on where we need to be by 2030. He referred also to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region published by the Southern Regional Assembly in December 2018.

"The draft RSES includes specific objectives around Renewable Energy. This is where projects such as FIRESPOL have an important role to play. By sharing good practice in renewable energy investment, we can maximise the return on investment from both public and private investment in renewable energy generation and storage within our region".

A highlight of the event was a project visit to Flahavans in Kilmacthomas, County Waterford. Flahavans, a family business has been producing oats since 1785 and has a strong commitment to sustainable production. They estimate that between 60% and 70% of their energy demand is being met from their own renewable energy sources, including on-site hydro, biomass, wind and solar PV installations.

The visitors were given a warm Waterford welcome by John, James and Ellen Flahavan who provided a tour of the renewable energy installations on-site and shared the story of seven generations of Flahavans.

"Flahavans is a very good example of RES private invest-

ment by Autoproducers – large energy users that mainly produce power for their own use but may also export surplus power to the national grid", explains Enda Hogan, Southern Regional Assembly. "It is also a stunning location to visit and it was made all the more enjoyable by the welcome we received. Our visitors were fascinated with and hugely encouraged by the commitment shown by Flahavans to sustainability and the use of renewable energy".

The next stage of the project is for each project partner to examine the shared good practices and to develop action plans for their own regions that can integrate some of the lessons learned. The Southern Regional Assembly will work with local, regional and national stakeholders to progress this action plan for the Southern Region.

The FIRESPOL project is co-financed by the European Union from the European Regional Development Fund under the Interreg Europe Programme. Further information about the FIRESPOL project is available on the Southern Regional Assembly website at www.southernassembly.ie