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A project for the improvement of renewable energy policies



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NEWSLETTER #04

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APPROVE aims at supporting the development of Renewable Energy Sources (RES) with promoting **awareness raising, capacity building, effective public participation and stakeholder engagement.**

The project is now approaching the end of **PHASE 1**, based on interregional cooperation and exchange of experience, with the ultimate goal to develop regional **action plans** for the improvement of the **operational programmes financed by EU Structural Funds** as regards the promotion of RES.

PHASE 2 will see the implementation and monitoring of the action plans, and the assessment and dissemination of the results.



GOOD PRACTICES IDENTIFIED

The Report on good practices, published on the APPROVE website in December 2019, includes cases identified by the regional partners in which their institutions were actively involved (as promoters, financers or implementers) and cases that took place in their region, but in which their institutions were not directly involved. The evident variability in number and type of good practices proposed reflect the regional diversity as regard RES development, as seen in the previous Report on gaps, needs and challenges. As expected in the construction of the partnership, the differences are driving the exchange process, where less advanced regions are having high opportunities of benefit, while also the most advanced regions are learning on specific aspects.

In addition to such set of good practices, the advisory partner identified some other cases, not related to the territorial partner areas, to complement their variety and point out possible areas of improvement not already covered.

The good practices are a good opportunity for an effective cross-fertilization starting from different perspectives and states of the art, and are valuable when addressing similar challenges.

The good practices identified have been classified in the following types.

Participatory approaches in planning and permitting procedures	Participatory approaches promote the active involvement of private and institutional stakeholders in the process of problem identification, analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Such approaches seek to influence planning and permitting processes, with the aim of increasing social acceptance at the planning/permitting stages, while also attempting to improve the process itself.
Financial participation of communities and citizens	Direct financial participation is to be found where citizens/communities are shareholders or members, for instance through energy cooperatives. Indirect financial participation means that citizens do not directly participate with the profits or losses of the operating company/co-operative, but rather indirectly through loans, bonds and/or crowd investing.
Measures promoting regional co-benefits	Practices that seek to promote a fairer distribution of costs and benefits of renewable energy production, in particular considering local stakeholders. Measures may include for instance the distribution at local level of revenues or tax cuts related the construction of RES plants and the realization of public facilities by RES developers.
Building of agreements/ institutional structures	Such measures promote the establishment or development of institutional initiatives that may act in different ways and functions. Key examples include voluntary agreements, industry self-commitments, services of planning/consulting/ advice, provision of neutral information, mediating conflicts, comprehensive and neutral advisory and technical assistance services for citizens, municipalities and developers.
Knowledge / Capacity building	Some practices aim at improving the level of <i>knowledge</i> on RES, for instance gathering and processing data on energy consumption and production, and sharing produced data with local authorities and the general public through effective communication channels. Other practices include <i>capacity building</i> measures, for instance envisaging specific guidelines and training programs targeted to civil servants (eg, for managing appropriate RES funding procedures) and potential proponents of RES plants (eg, for successfully participating in ERDF calls).
Education	Practices that promote education on RES, in particular among citizens and students.
Expositions / Fairs	Events, such as expositions and fairs, organized by companies involved in the RES sector to showcase and demonstrate their latest products and services, recruit new employees, and meet with industry partners and clients.
RES implementations as showcases	Good practices showcasing the design and implementation of RES projects that have a particular demonstration value in the local context, with the aim to transfer know how and knowledge among local stakeholders and citizens.

All categories, in variable measure, imply an effect of **awareness raising**, providing information on renewables in general and pointing out benefits at the local level (eg, energy autonomy of the region) as well as at the global level (eg, reduction of GHG emissions), thus creating a positive cultural environment.



THE FOURTH APPROVE INTERREGIONAL WORKSHOP - POSTPONED

Following Valladolid, the fourth APPROVE interregional workshop was planned in Normandy. The Normandy Region would have been happy to welcome all the partners and stakeholders for a great work and friendly time from the 21th to the 23th of April. The partners had planned a lot of sharing. Unfortunately, an unexpected guest changed our plans. The kind of guest that nobody wants to have anything to do with. In coordination with the Normandy Region, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, considering the transport restrictions and the health of all as the primary concern, the Lapland Region as APPROVE's lead partner decided to cancel the meeting. However, the experience exchange process continues. The interregional workshop will be held **online** on the 15th of June and will focus on good practices from Normandy and on the presentation and discussion of the preliminary Regional Action Plans that the project partners are preparing in collaboration with their regional stakeholder groups and the managing authorities of the ERDF operational programmes.

We hope that our good practices will spread all over Europe and make benefits for citizens, public authorities and project holders... when all this pandemic will be over 😊



This aisle won't see the APPROVE partners walking in #COVID-19 / stay safe
Aisle of the Abbaye aux Dames at Caen (Normandy Regional Council)

PRELIMINARY ACTION PLANS IN PROGRESS

The APPROVE territorial partners have been sharing with the lead partner and the advisory partner the progress made in the definition of their action plans, which aim at improving their ERDF operational programmes. Various and interesting potential actions are under study. Here is a preliminary list of possible actions being developed.

Lapland

New call for biogas projects, adopting new communication and assessment tools

Local energy forecasting to municipalities

Epirus

New call for photovoltaic panels on bus stations roofs, public buildings, parking shades, e-chargers

Investments for public biogas districts

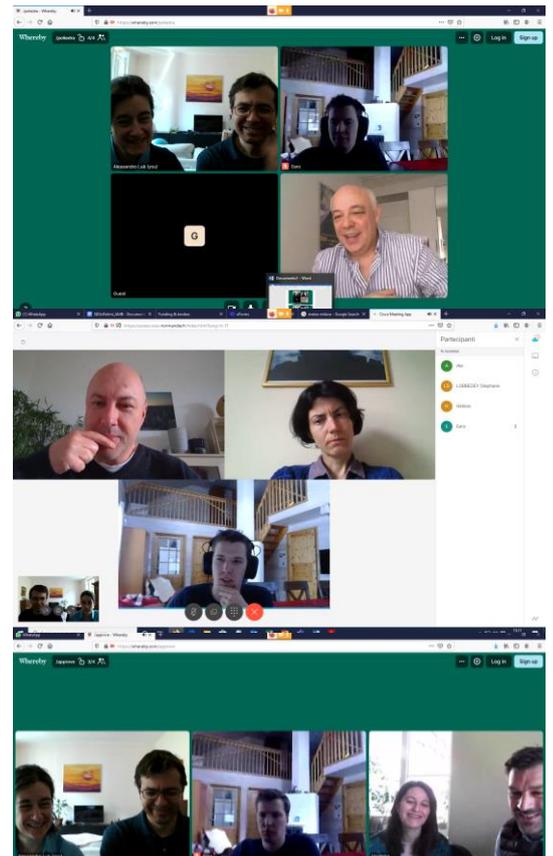
Normandy

Development and implementation of a Normandy "Citizen Energy Plan"

Improved biogas projects eligibility criteria and charter/protocol about the projects' environmental and participatory aspects

Castilla y León

Call for RES projects involving: crowdfunding / cooperatives / rural communities / education and dissemination



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NEWS FROM THE PROJECT

- On the 12th of March, the **Normandy Region** held a regional stakeholder group meeting in Caen, with the participation of twelve people. The agenda was mainly focused on the first results of the study "Analysis, identification of tools and actions, recommendations for the development of participatory and citizen projects" led by the 7vents cooperative in association with Enercoop, and on the first step of the Normandy actions plan. This study is commissioned by the Normandy Region in the framework of APPROVE.



The presentation provided an opportunity for an update on what is done in Normandy regarding participatory and citizens' projects. Even if a good practice on Plaine Sud Energie citizens' solar project has been included in the APPROVE good practices, it appears clearly that Normandy is late in such field when compared with other French regions. The Normandy Region discussed with the regional stakeholders about the structure and progress of the APPROVE action plan, how to prepare it and its calendar. Stephane Lobbedey shared his first ideas of actions to be included in the plan. The stakeholders agreed on this proposal. Beside that points, attendees talked on a further case to be uploaded in the good practices page of the APPROVE website.

- On the 13th of May the **Epirus Region** held a regional stakeholder group meeting through video conference. The meeting mainly focused on the actions concerning the installation and promotion of photovoltaic projects to be included in the regional action plan for the improvement of the current ERDF Operational Programme. The participating stakeholders were mechanical engineers specialized in photovoltaic applications from the Alesco group. The participants analysed good practices on photovoltaic projects from Normandy and discussed their transferability in Epirus. The stakeholders provided key information regarding permits procedures, legislative aspects and technical aspects, shaping a clearer picture on the applicability of this projects and the potential difficulties that might be encountered.



- On the 29th of May, the Epirus and Normandy Regions held a **bilateral meeting**. On the agenda: get more information about some good practices, focus on how to transfer them, discuss issues related to the development of the regional actions plans.

- Some APPROVE partners attended the workshop "Biogas from organic wastes" offered by the Interreg Europe **Policy Learning Platform** on the 15th of May. We learned about the ways in which public authorities can support the development of this renewable energy sector which can help them solving also their waste management challenges. The webinar recording can be found [here](#).



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