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A project for the improvement of renewable energy policies



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NEWSLETTER #05

November 2020

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

Due to covid-19, **PHASE 1** of the project, based on interregional cooperation and exchange of experience, will take some more time, 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.

lead partner



advisory partner



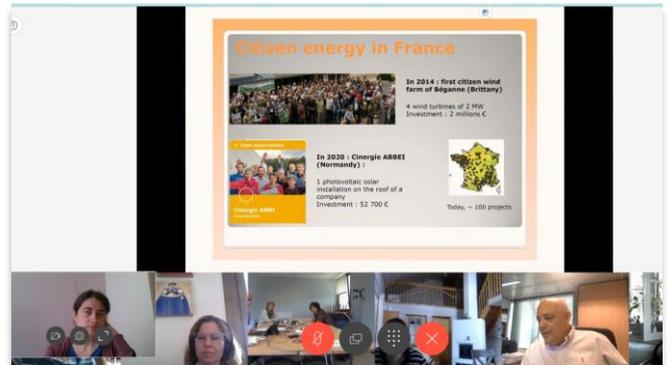
THE FOURTH APPROVE INTERREGIONAL WORKSHOP

On June 15, the fourth APPROVE interregional workshop was a great occasion for the project partners and some of their regional stakeholders to share more good practices and to update each other about the progress of the preliminary action plans. Since in the original work programme the workshop should have had place in Normandy instead that online, a particular focus was reserved to the presentation and discussion of experiences from there.

In the first part of the workshop, each territorial partner presented the main elements of the preliminary regional action plan in progress, explaining which specific aspects of the interregional exchange of experience done so far was inspiring and supporting the definition of the actions.

The second part of the workshop included four presentations (slides available on our website).

- The 7 Vents Cooperative presented ([slides](#)) the freshly released [study](#) commissioned by the Normandy Region within APPROVE "Analysis, identification of tools and actions, recommendations for the development of participatory and citizen-led renewable energy projects in Normandy".
- The social enterprise Plaine Sud Energies presented ([slides](#)) a crowdfunding and citizen-focused renewable energy project. The APPROVE project partners were told how citizens have managed their projects from the idea to the actual photovoltaic production from the technical, financial and governance points of view.
- The Normandy Region presented ([slides](#)) the Normandy Biogas Production Plan and its technical committee for project appraisal which is a key point of the environment set up in order to facilitate the biogas projects development.
- EREN presented ([slides](#)) the case of the district heating using biomass in the Junta de Castilla y León headquarter, an exemplary facility for boosting the use of biomass in public buildings showing the Regional government's commitment to renewable energy. The investment has been financed at 50% by the ERDF.



APPROVE GOOD PRACTICES IN THE POLICY LEARNING PLATFORM DATABASE

So far, the following eight good practices proposed by the APPROVE partners have been included in the Interreg Europe PLP database [Good practices from Interreg projects and beyond](#). Log into [My Interreg Europe](#) to see the full expert opinion on these cases proposed by our project for the promotion of renewable energy!

- ✓ [From Stump to Boiler, Bioenergy educational environment](#)
 - ✓ [Crowdfunding for an onshore wind farm project in Normandy](#)
 - ✓ [ORECAN \(Normandy's Regional Observatory for Energy, Climate and Air\)](#)
 - ✓ [Joint development of wind farm projects](#)
 - ✓ [Normandy Biogas Production Plan – technical committee for project appraisal](#)
 - ✓ [An innovate public-private partnership consortium for a biomass power plant](#)
 - ✓ [Tax cuts for a wind farm expansion](#)
 - ✓ [Wind energy service unit and quality label in Thuringia](#)
- "a good example of a training course which can create new jobs and opportunities as well as contributing towards regional energy goals"*
- "an excellent example of pooling resources to create a common support service for multiple municipalities"*
- "the basic lesson is valid and of interest to policy makers, in regions keen to attract new renewable biomass capacity and its great employment creation potential"*
- "an interesting practice for building community support"*

PRELIMINARY REGIONAL ACTION PLANS

The APPROVE territorial partners have been working on the definition of their preliminary action plans, which aim at improving their ERDF operational programmes and further regional policy instruments. Here is an overview.

Lapland

The Regional Council of Lapland and its stakeholders (including representatives from energy educational establishments, the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, and ProAgria Lapland which organises the work of the Arctic Smart Rural Communities Cluster) propose three actions.

The first is about creating a **monitoring system**, inspired by the Normandy regional observatory for climate, energy and air, for the region's district heating plants, mapping their energy sources and climate impact. This monitoring will feed into a new regional strategy that is used as a requirement in future ERDF calls.

A second action, the lessons learned from a Castilla y León good practice on public-private partnership consortium was used in the **pre-consultation process** for the ERDF 2021-2027 Finnish Operational Programme. Some of the proposals were included in the final draft sent for consultation by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.

The last action concerns the finding a potential **funding source** for a project on a biogas network at farms across Lapland thanks to an APPROVE meeting.

Epirus

The Region of Epirus focuses on promoting the installation of **photovoltaic panels and their integration with e-chargers** through a modification of a call of the current ROP, with the intent to improve the ERDF funds absorption and to attract more beneficiaries.

This action is accompanied by a **capacity building and awareness raising initiative** about the contents of the call towards potential beneficiaries, inspired by good practices seen in APPROVE.

The Region is also considering to introduce investments for public biogas districts in the next ROP.

Normandy

Thanks to the work done with APPROVE partners and regional stakeholders, including National state services, local authorities, energy unions, Caen University, associations and clusters (e.g. Normandy Energies, ATMO Normandy, Normandy Biomass, 7 Vents cooperative, Enercoop, ...) and companies (e.g. ENGIE), Normandy Region has decided to focus on two actions.

The first action, concerning **improved biogas projects eligibility criteria and a charter/protocol** about the projects' environmental and participatory aspects, aims at improving the quality and social acceptability of biogas projects.

The second, which is based also on the study mentioned at page 2, is a more transversal action for the promotion of a better **involvement of citizens** in the energy transition.

Castilla y León

Following the reduction of ERDF funds not allocated to covid19-related measures in the ERDF ROP 2021-2027 (the policy instrument initially addressed), EREN has reviewed the original draft action plan, working in particular on the introduction of the involvement of local communities as a priority / assessment criteria in the Spanish ERDF O.T.4 Low carbon economy and in the ERDF ROP 2021-2027.

The **promotion of renewable energy local communities for rural areas**, particularly inspired by the Normandy good practices about **crowdfunding and cooperatives** and by the Lapland good practice on **rural communities**, will be also introduced in the "Climate change and energy transition law" of Castilla y León and in the update of the "Regional strategy for renewable thermal energy".

The exchange of experience among regions will continue in the next months. The fifth APPROVE interregional workshop will include peer review activities where each partner will ask for advice to the other partners and their stakeholders on specific issues or aspects that need to be improved in their action plans.

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NEWS FROM THE PROJECT

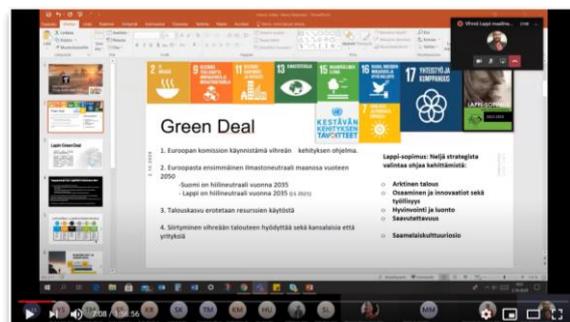
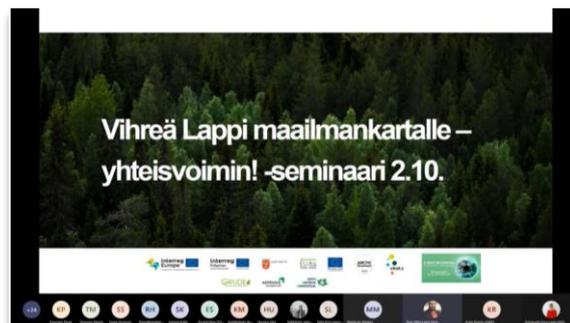
- On the 2nd of October the Regional Council of Lapland organized the dissemination event **Green Lapland, together!** ([Vihreä Lappi maailmankartalle – yhteisvoimin! -seminaari](#)).

The event was an official part of the EU Green Week and saw the participation of high-level representatives including County Governor, several heads of local municipalities and vice-chair Markku Markkula from the European Committee of the Regions, among others. E-conference enabled participants to join safely from all over the large region.

Regionally important projects that are fostering transition towards low-carbon society jointly participated in the organization of the event. The APPROVE project made significant contributions to the preparation of the event, mainly because i) most of the emissions in Lapland are from energy sector, ii) APPROVE has been active since the early stage in fostering the Green Deal in Lapland.

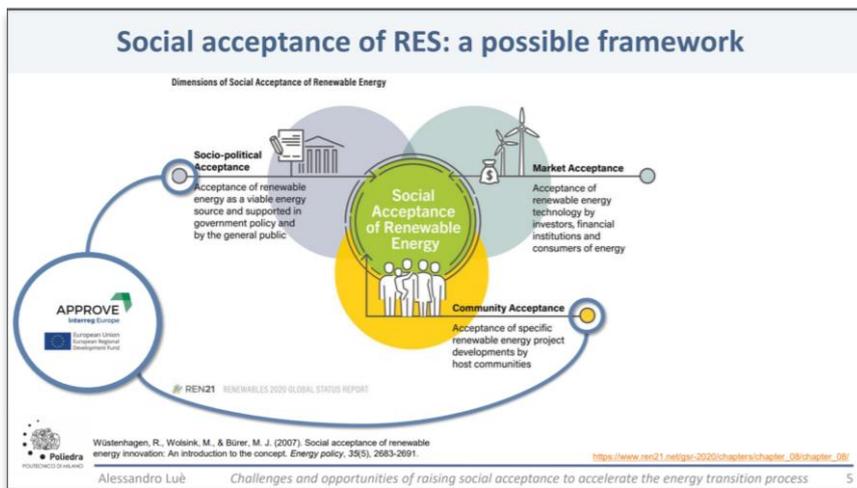
The event included a set of workshop inspired by the thematic priorities of the European Green Deal. APPROVE organized the popular "Clean Energy" workshop, led by Project Manager Eero Purontaus. Coordinator Juhon Kähkönen held a keynote "The energy sectors CO2 emissions and Just Transition in Lapland".

Based on the feedback from the conference, it seems clear that the event was able to increase awareness, by sharing best practices on how to empower local communities towards a green transition.



- On the 21st of October Alessandro Luè, researcher at Poliedra, advisory partner in APPROVE, gave the keynote speech [Challenges and opportunities of raising social acceptance to accelerate the energy transition process](#) during the workshop "From Innovation to Acceptance: Challenges and Potentials of a Sustainable Energy Transition", organized by the University Alliance for Sustainability - Freie Universität Berlin.

He illustrated APPROVE and the lesson learned from the inter-regional cooperation, presented according to the dimensions of *socio-political acceptance* and *community acceptance*, using as a reference the framework introduced by the [Renewables 2020 Global Status Report](#).



- As a sign of the increasing interest of the Castilla y León public administrations in promoting energy communities, on the 30th of November EREN, in collaboration with Energetica.coop, organises an online **dissemination workshop on energy cooperatives** open to the public ([agenda](#)).



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