



Citizens engagement on carbon reduction in Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi

Regional action plan (RAP)

Energy Agency of Podravje – Institution for Sustainable Energy Use

October 2021

CONTENTS:

1	SUMMARY	2
2	INTRODUCTION	3
2.1	EU and national strategy	3
2.2	Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi Local Energy Policy	4
2.3	INTENSIFY project and learning through good practices	5
3	GENERAL INFORMATION	6
4	POLICY CONTEXT	6
4.1	Regional development policy instrument	7
5	REGIONAL ACTION PLAN.....	7
6	DETAILS OF THE ACTIONS ENVISAGED	8
7	COSTS AND FUNDING SOURCES.....	14
8	SUSTAINABILITY OF RAP ACTIONS.....	14
9	REGIONAL AND NATIONAL IMPACT OF RAP IMPLEMENTATION	15
10	APPROVAL OF RAP.....	16



1 SUMMARY

Due to the history and lack of human resources especially smaller municipalities have not developed many actions to involve citizens in decision making processes not even in developing and implementing certain activities and action plans. They are mainly done with top-down approach. But bottom-up approach and engaging the people is one of the most important issue when talking about sustainable energy measures. Energy cannot be saved without end users=citizens. They have to understand the measures, agree on them and implement. Without cooperation and engagement not the whole potential of CO₂ emission could be reduced.

Citizens should be strongly involved in planning of different activities to understand them better, to propose other solutions or give new ideas to prepare realistic and implementable action plans. The citizens should “own” the measures to be motivated to implement them. For local governments the main challenge is how to involve, engage and motivate them.

In 2022, Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi will prepare new Local energy and climate concept with very ambitious goals. The concept has to include also different activities and tools for strongly engaging the citizens in the implementation phase to be able to achieve maximum saving potential. Especially behavioural changes need specific methods and tools to be successful. Municipality Radlje ob Dravi and ENERGAP invited also 3 other municipalities in the region to cooperate as well and upgrade their energy policies with stronger citizens engagement (Municipality of Ruše, Lovrenc na Pohorju and Ribnica na Pohorju). Through Intensify project with the exchange of experiences and knowledge the municipalities and energy agency has learn how to work in the field of strong engagement of citizens.

2 INTRODUCTION

Local authorities do not have the legal authority to regulate the emissions of local stakeholders or the moral authority to impose behavioural change. Addressing energy issues and climate change is the result of a common vision and combined efforts of public authorities, local decision makers and citizens. Long-term carbon reduction could be achieved by developing a kind of vision or roadmap through participatory and engagement processes. Active stakeholder engagement is the key for long term carbon reduction. On the one hand regions and municipalities are committed by international treaty to achieve ambitious carbon reduction targets. But public authorities cannot do this alone.

The purpose of Regional Action Plan is to develop citizens-engagement mechanisms and implement active stakeholder and citizens-involvement activities in order to exceed regional and EU targets for carbon reduction. By adopting new Sustainable Energy and Climate Action plan Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi will intensify the involvement of citizens and communities, to promote:

- a vision for the long-term sustainable energy system
- carbon-responsible behaviour

2.1 EU and national strategy

EUROPE STRATEGY

The EU energy and climate strategies and plans set out the EU's ambitious programme for boosting growth and jobs over the coming years. As well as helping Europe to recover from the COVID crisis it outlines policies designed to create smart, sustainable and inclusive growth with high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion, underpinned by seven flagship initiatives. All initiatives are based on the bottom-up approach and see a strong community engagement as a vital part to move towards economic growth and jobs. Structured and strategic dialogue remains the cornerstone of the partnership what is also pointed in EU Green Deal.

NATIONAL/REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR SMART SPECIALISATION (RIS3)

Slovene Smart Specialisation Strategy includes Smart Cities and Communities as one of the most important field for sustainable development. It includes also the digitalisation of the stakeholder's involvement for achieving ambitious goals.

The objective of RIS3 is to improve governance and to get stakeholders more closely involved. RIS3 encourages all stakeholders to unite under a shared vision. It links small, medium-sized and large firms, encourages multi-level governance and helps to build creative and social capital within the community. Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi is the partner of Sustainable Cities and Villages Platform developed by University of Maribor.



2.2 Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi Local Energy Policy



In 2022, Energap and Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi will prepare new Local energy and climate concept with very ambitious goals. In the preparatory phase the municipality will try to actively involve many stakeholders which will make the concept more realistic and feasible. The concept should also include different activities and tools to strongly involve citizens in the implementation phase in order to maximize savings potential. In particular behavioural change needs specific methods and tools to succeed.

Over the years it has become clear that citizens need more information and support to understand and implement carbon reduction measures.

With the Intensify project Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi, together with Energy agency of Podravje and stakeholders met and examined a number of good practices in the field of citizen engagement.



2.3 INTENSIFY project and learning through good practices



The INTENSIFY project innovatively addresses a key challenge for European cities and regions: how to encourage citizens and communities to achieve more carbon reduction.

Identified learning needs:

- How to motivate different target groups to cooperate in Climate policy planning and implementing?
- Are energy communities well accepted, how to explain citizens the community investments, are pilot projects needed?
- How to start Digital Social Platform - DSP, which experts are needed? What are the preconditions for establishing a DSP? What are the costs of planning, development, installation and operation of DSP?

Within the INTENSIFY project 3 project partners and their examples of good practices were selected, through which the learning process was carried out. According to the learning needs identified above, Energap made various virtual study visits and got acquainted with different projects. The most important good practices that influenced the development of Action 1 are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Selected examples of good practice

Country or project partner	Examples of good practice by project partner	Number of good practice by project partner
Almada	PLAC - Local Climate Stakeholders Platform	GP1
Milton Keynes	CAPE Digital Social Platform	GP 1
	POWER Project Digital Social Platform	GP7
	Citizens Interest Board	GP 4
Cork	Cork Environmental Forum	GP14

Cooperation with project partners was significantly marked by the epidemic situation. Therefore, the presentations of good practices were virtual. The first study visit was organized by Almada, who presented their digital social platform PLAC and how they approached to the development of the actions from a different perspective. Milton Keynes, on the other hand, prepared a second study visit on how they set up their digital social platforms CAPE and POWER. They stressed the importance of regularly updating and maintaining platforms to keep them active and interesting to people. The Citizens Interest Bord was composed of a small group of people, instead of a large one, as they opted for quality not quantity. At the last webinar Cork presented the Cork Environmental Forum which deals with promoting and maintaining active environmental awareness levels.

3 GENERAL INFORMATION

Project:	INTENSIFY - More Carbon Reduction through Intense Community Engagement
Partner organisation(s) concerned:	Energy Agency of Podravje – Institution for Sustainable Energy Use
Country:	Slovenia
NUTS2 region:	Eastern Slovenia
Contact person:	Dr. Vlasta KRME LJ, Director
Email address:	vlasta.krmelj@energap.si
Phone number:	+386 2 234 23 60 +386 31 334 376

4 POLICY CONTEXT

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument**

Name of the policy instrument(s) addressed:

Local energy concept of Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi (Sustainable Energy Action Plan)
Working Field 5: Informed and active citizens (community)

4.1 Regional development policy instrument

Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi and its Municipal Council adopted Local energy concept in 2012 and updated it in 2018. Its main aim is to reduce CO₂ emissions through energy efficiency, more renewable energy sources and sustainable transport.

It has 5 working fields:

1. Sustainable governance
2. Energy efficiency and use of renewable energies in buildings
3. Sustainable solutions in transport
4. Modern public lighting
5. Informed and active citizens (community)

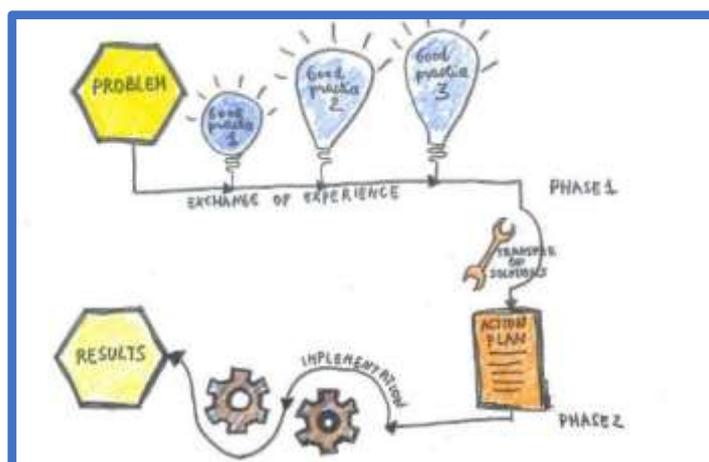
Working field 5 has 2 main activities: Information, education and counselling services for citizens and motivation and engagement of citizens to work in the field of sustainable energy. Thematic objective 5 needs to be improved in order to identify methods and tools for the active involvement of different target groups of citizens in planning and implementing the actions. It needs to be redeveloped into a participatory and engaging approach with activities so that citizens are active stakeholders in planning and implementation of all CO₂ reduction related activities. Solutions must also include also modern ICT technologies and instruments as well as some basic face to face measures by which citizens can challenge engagements.

5 REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

The regional action plan aims to develop citizen involvement mechanisms and implement active stakeholder and citizen involvement activities in order to exceed regional and EU carbon reduction targets. By adopting new Sustainable Energy and Climate Action plan Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi will intensify the involvement of citizens and communities in order to promote:

- a vision for the long-term sustainable energy system (to provide information, education and counselling services for citizens)
- carbon-responsible behaviour (motivate and involve citizens to address sustainable energy issues)





Picture 1: What is an action plan? (Source: Webinar on designing action plans, Interreg Europe)

6 DETAILS OF THE ACTIONS ENVISAGED

ACTION 1: “Active citizen” by creating a “One stop shop” service for citizens of the Municipality Radlje ob Dravi. It will include two parts: acting “in person” and through the Digital social platform (DSP) all with the single goal of promoting carbon-responsible behaviour and investment among citizens and reducing the municipality’s carbon footprint.

(All actions can be carried out in person or via Zoom – it depends on the COVID situation)

Energap and Municipality Radlje ob Dravi have designed a RAP action with 2 sub-actions. The action was designed in a way that citizens get as much assistance and information as possible in one place or in “One stop shop - OSS” both online and/or physically (Picture 3).

The first step is to establish a network of engaged citizens, who are willing to participate in a common goal. Citizens should be motivated to cooperate with municipality as they will benefit from it.

The second step is to set up physical OSS and online OSS as a DSP on the existing municipal website. Both will reach wider range of citizens. As in most Slovene municipalities, the number of old people in Radlje ob Dravi is higher than the number of young people. Live OSS would cover the older population who are not skilled working online and online OSS would cover the younger generations.



Picture 2: ONE- STOP-SHOP (Source: <https://energy-cities.eu/>)

It will not only be possible to obtain information and advice in the OSS together with calculations and cost-benefit analysis, but it will also be possible to borrow some instruments free of charge. The instruments will be available in a Carbon reduction suitcase (tool kit in Picture 4). This would be the first case of its kind in Slovenia. Citizens will be able to borrow it to try to detect losses and irregularities in their homes. After returning the suitcase to OSS, advisor will be able to explain to the citizen in detail the energy situation of his home on the basis of the measured data.



Picture 3: Carbon reduction suitcase

The main objective of the whole RAP is to support citizens with good advice on how to plan and implement carbon reduction actions in their homes including cost benefit analysis and to help find financial resources such as subsidies.

MAIN BENEFICIARIES OF ACTIONS

- Citizens in individual and multiapartment buildings,
- different organized groups such as associations of the elderly, workers or farmers' organisations.

RELEVANCE TO THE PROJECT

RAP action was developed as a result of learning from other partners through study visits and capacity building workshops.

Study Visits



PLAC - Local Climate Stakeholders Platform has helped Energap decide to create an Online OSS by communicating through a variety of existing tools where people can get all the information they need in one place but in the comfort of their homes. During the establishment process of the PLAC ALMADA created community of stakeholders and citizens with the common goal of reducing Almada's GHG emissions. Through the learning process, Energap found that the DSP is just a tool to help establish a community and not a community of people itself. Therefore, Energap also decided to first attract people with various existing tools (municipal website, Facebook, Instagram, e-mail and various other already existing media), methods and communications that would suit them best, instead of set up a complex technical social digital platform immediately.

Milton Keynes CAPE Digital Social Platform and POWER Project Digital Social Platform helped Energap to find a way how to develop Online OSS as a digital social platform including tools, framework and existing strategies. They pointed out, that it is important to regularly update and maintain platforms, to be active and interesting to the people.

Citizens Interest Bord (CIB) was made up of a small rather than a larger group of people, as they opted for quality rather than quantity. The invitation to the CIB workshop where also sent on social networks and to all the environmental and neighbourhood groups by e-mail. Based on this Energap decided to include, in addition to the Online OSS, also a personal OSS for citizens of Municipality Radlje ob Dravi, where people can get all the information they need in one place.



Cork Environmental Forum is a good practice model of an organisation which adheres to the local features of UNCED Agenda 21, supported by both local authorities in Cork and the Department of the Environment. Cork has attracted people to be a part of the Environmental Forum with a variety of activities, themed events, workshops, a network of volunteers, with a various of promotional materials, prizes and various tips. Energap found this approach very good and will use some of these methods in implementing their actions, such as organizing various activities in the OSS office, the possibility of calculating the Cost benefit analyses - CBA, filling out the ECO Fund application ...

Capacity-building events:



Capacity building event 1

Each partner had to prepare 5 mint Pecha Kucha presentation “What is the story of my RAP”. According to the rules, presentations were not allowed to contain text, but only images. Based on this presentation, it is obvious how important the visual aspect and time are to people. This can be achieved by sharing different images and materials via Online OSS or DSP. People don’t want to waste time on long descriptions and listen to a lot of content, so they need to be attracted to online tools that are fast and have everything they need in one place.

Capacity-building event 2

Second capacity-building event focused on RAP improvements. Partners were arranged in pairs, two partners for one question. Prior to capacity-building Energap (Slovenia) and EAA (Germany) discussed the preassign question “How much does my RAP reflect the INTENSIFY objective?” Throughout the discussion, the EAA partner gave some examples of how they attract municipal communities to participate in Germany and sent useful links. Based on this discussion Step A 1.1. was formed.

Capacity-building event 3: “Beyond the RAPs”

Capacity-building event 3 was attended by all partners and some stakeholders. Two experts presented examples of good practice in their countries and discussion took place between INTENSIFY partners. Through all these activities, a decision was made on the importance of establishing an OSS, it was pointed out that building trust increases people’s willingness to cooperate. People will see that the municipality and Energap want to help them and start to trust and also cooperate more with the municipality.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

ACTION 1.1. “An active citizen” One stop shop for citizens of Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi in person

People are social beings and need to interact with each other, so this action will focus on setting up a physical one stop shop located in the municipal building. It will provide citizens **with free of charge** information and advice including independent advice on home energy renovation (cost benefit analyzes) and recommendations of measures and financing options such as subsidies from the National Eco Fund (Picture 5).

The Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi is a smaller rural municipality with about 6.100 inhabitants among which the elderly population prevails. OSS would be of great help for senior citizens, because it will be a place where people can get all the information in one place. People prefer to talk face-to-face, but OSS service may also be available over the phone or OSS adviser may visit their home after an appointment.



EKO SKLAD
SLOVENSKI OKOLJSKI
JAVNI SKLAD



 Citizens	 Private sector	 Public
--	---	--

Slovenian Environmental Public Fund (Eco Fund) is a public (state) owned fund specialised in providing grants and soft loans to the citizens, public and private sector to encourage eco-investments.
Eco Fund's main goal is to help Slovenia achieving national environmental goals in the field of RES and RUE.

Picture 4: Eco Fund (Source: www.ekosklad.si)

In the one-stop-shop they will advise on optimal energy renovation works to citizens. The municipality will promote the services in all municipal info points and local news.

At the OSS the professionals will advise and develop individual's energy renovation plan. He or she will provide information on existing loans, incentives and grants (Eco Fund).

The OSS will not offer its own financial product but will help homeowners to access very generous and comprehensive subsidies from the Slovenian Environmental Public Fund (Eco Fund).

The OSS will encourage citizens to share the key project data such as energy consumption before and after renovation, type of intervention, investment size, financing schemes used, etc. These data will feed a database used by the municipality to calculate energy and emissions savings from the housing sector.

ACTIVITIES

One stop shop for citizens of Municipality Radlje ob Dravi in person will be achieved by the following steps:

1. Establishment of one-stop-shop in the municipal building.
2. Preparation of the place and equip it with energy and climate related information materials in paper, posters and roll ups.
3. Agreement with energy advisors that they will initially work for 2 hours twice a month at the beginning and if necessary, also once a week or even more.
4. Running the OSS and monitor the number of visits by people interested, renovation plans prepared, measures implemented and savings achieved.

At OSS, people will be able to borrow a "Carbon reduction suitcase" – a toolkit with instruments for detecting energy losses – electricity meter, infrared camera and thermometer free of charge. The case will also contain instructions and brief tips, as well as short clips to help people use certain devices. With the help of the tool citizens will be able to identify problems or detect home conditions, implement measures, check and see savings in their house. Citizens who would borrow the tool will be able to report about their actions and reductions at home via online or physical OSS. The toolkit will have supporting paper and electronic learning materials (videos).

ACTION 1.2. "An active citizen" One stop shop as Digital social platform (DSP)

The establishment of the OSS as a DSP with communication through various existing tools is essentially for citizen engagement, next to the establishment of the OSS in physical form. The online OSS DSP will be accessible from the homepage of the municipality's website. OSS DSP users will be able to receive individual advice on energy renovation, free cost benefit analyzes and all information on ECO FUND grants. To promote OSS different communication tools and channels will be used. DSP will contain an online tool for a quick scanning of people's buildings, short videos on various topics in the field of home renovation (about materials, work, installers, ...). A special section for questions and answers about energy renovation will be prepared and maintained to inform citizens.

ACTION 1 EXECUTION TIMEFRAME AND PROGRESS INDICATORS

All actions are possible to be implemented in person or via virtual meeting tools – it depends on the COVID situation.

ACTIVITIES	DELIVERY DATE	PROGRES INDICATORS S
ACTION 1: “An active citizen” by establishing a “One stop shop” service for citizens of Municipality Radlje ob Dravi. It will include two parts: acting “in person” and through Digital social platform (DSP) all with the single goal to promoting carbon-responsible behaviour and investment among citizens and reducing the municipality’s carbon footprint.		
A 1.1. “An active citizen” One stop shop for citizens of Municipality Radlje ob Dravi in person		
Establishment of one-stop-shop	December 2021	Description and working roles
Preparation of the place	January 2022	Place prepared
Agreement with energy advisors	February 2022	Agreements
Start working	March 2022	Number of people visited, renovation plane prepared, measures implemented
Using Carbon reduction suitcase	From March 2022	Number of users, list of detections and proposed measures
A 1.2. “An active citizen” One stop shop as Digital social platform (DSP)		
Start with the development of DSP	From November 2021	
Running a DSP	From January 2022	Number of visitors, materials and tools uploaded
A special section for questions and answers prepared and maintained	From March 2022	

7 COSTS AND FUNDING SOURCES

This action will be financed (around 15.000 EUR) by Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi.

8 SUSTAINABILITY OF RAP ACTIONS

In 2022, Energap and Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi will prepare new Local energy and climate concept with very ambitious goals. In new Local energy and climate action plan (concept) which will be adopted by Municipal Council in 2022 they will introduce a new policy within the INTENSIFY developed approach. In the area of information and education activities and engagement of citizens for greater

carbon reduction bottom-up activities for active involvement of different target groups of citizens will be included. One of these will be “One stop shop”. With such support it will be able to work even after the completion of Intensify project.

9 REGIONAL AND NATIONAL IMPACT OF RAP IMPLEMENTATION

One of the main goals of Intensify project in Slovenia was the inclusion of smaller municipalities in the region. The neighbouring municipalities of Ruše, Lovrenc na Pohorju and Ribnica na Pohorju will be involved in the RAP implementation. They will monitor the success of “One stop shop” in Municipality of Radlje ob Dravi. If the results are positive, they will establish similar system also in their municipalities.

10 APPROVAL OF RAP

Date:

NOVEMBER 2021

Name of the organisation:

MUNICIPALITY OF RADLJE OB DRAVI

Name:

MAG. ALAN BUKOVNIK

Position:

MAYOR

Stamp and signature:

