



## First round of Cross-Cut Visits - Ireland



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## Introduction

The exchange of experiences is the key factor in the learning process of AgroRES. This intense work of identifying and sharing best practices through permanent cooperation will project objectives and produce the intended outputs and results.

These exchanges among partners are an interregional learning process. The typical activities supported under interregional cooperation projects are activities such as seminars, workshops, site visits, staff exchanges and peer reviews. The learning process is based on the identification, analysis and exchange of knowledge and practices in the policy tackled by the project.

Interregional cooperation projects need to analyse the experiences and/or practices exchanged within the projects and disseminate the most interesting findings.

## Frist round Cross-Cut Visit – Sligo, Ireland

Due to the Covid pandemic, some activities were delayed until the situation improved, and in this case, the consortium that forms the AgroRES Project proposed to delay this activity until semester 5 instead of holding it during semester 2 or 3.

In this framework, the first round of Cross-Cut visits took place in Sligo (Ireland) on October 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> 2021. It was organised by Project Partner 7 – IT Sligo.

The First Round of Cross Cut Visits was divided into two-stage. The first was held on Tuesday when each partner had the possibility to visit a pig & poultry farm with a Biomass heating system and a 1MW AD plant operating in Co. Roscommon.

The second stage was composed of a briefing of a Community Solar Farm in development and a workshop on Action Plan where partners, stakeholders, experts, and professionals in the energy field attended.

## Agenda

### 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021

9:00	<i>Meet point at IT Sligo, main reception.</i>
9:15	<i>Travel to site and technical visit 1: Dempsey pig &amp; poultry SSRH, biomass boiler installation.</i>
13:00	<i>Lunch – Durkin’s Restaurant, Ballaghaderreen</i>
14:00	<i>Travel to site and technical visit 2: Biocore AD plant, 2MW central AD plant.</i>
19:00	<i>Project Dinner – Sligo.</i>

### 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021

9:00	<i>Briefing from Lisduff Community Solar PV farm. Workshop Meeting in Clayton Hotel, Pegasus Room, Sligo. Partners &amp; Stakeholders</i>
13:00	<i>Lunch – Clayton Hotel</i>
14:00	<i>Steering Committee Meeting in Clayton Hotel Conference Room, Sligo.</i>

## Technical Visits

On the first day, the technical visits meeting took place. Partners visited the pig & poultry farm with a Biomass heating system in the morning and after that the biogas plant in the afternoon.

The Site technical visit 1 was a pig & poultry farm with Biomass heating system. This receives a tariff for renewable heat from the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (SSRH), which was identified as a scheme of Good Practice. This is the first poultry farm to have the biomass heating system operational in this scheme and so have good experience on the challenges. This project replaced an oil heating system with a wood chip biomass system:

- 2 x 150kW biomass boilers with 10,000 litre buffer tank supplying the total heating needs for the poultry houses
- Wood chip supplied by McCauley Wood Fuels
- SSRH provides an operational grant of C.€23K per year which greatly reduces the wood chip fuel costs for the farm

The pig & poultry sheds also utilise Solar PV which were supported through the Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme (TAMS). Partners were also shown the family run seaweed product business making farm feed & nutrition products <https://sealac.ie/>. This business is also working to install biomass heating for drying purposes.



*Figure 1. Partners at Dempsey Poultry Biomass Heating System*

The Site technical visit 2 was a 1MWe AD plant operating in Co. Roscommon. The plant accepts various waste streams from local water treatment plants, food & farm waste and produces organic fertiliser. The biogas output is currently used for on-site process and drying, with the electricity generated and exported to the electricity grid – supported by a Renewable Electricity Feed-In Tariff (REFIT).

Annual outputs at the plant:

- C.20,000 tonnes of waste materials treated
- C. 18,000 tonnes of organic fertiliser produced
- C. 7,000 MWh renewable electricity generated

There are expansion plans to double the plant size and to upgrade to biomethane to gas grid injection.

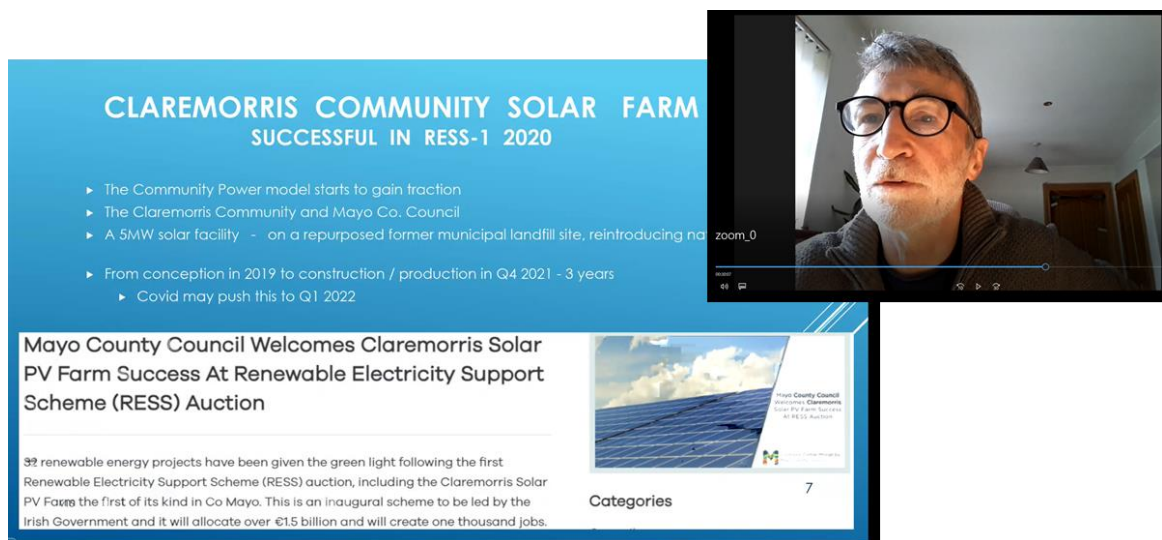


*Figure 2. Partners at Biocore AD Plant*

The following day, on Wednesday 27 November, partners start the day with a briefing about a Community Solar Farm in development.

This project was identified as a Good Practice and is one of the first projects to be successful in getting the tariff from the new Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS). The briefing was provided by Community Power which have been helping local community projects for over a decade.

The RESS is still in its early stages and operates on an auction basis. The 2<sup>nd</sup> auction is taking place in Q3 2022.



**Figure 3. Community Energy Briefing**



## Workshop on Action Plan.

After the briefing on community energy, an Interregional Workshop on Action Plan took place. Both national and international partners and stakeholders learned about what is an Action Plan and how they should elaborate it.

The first part of this workshop account with the presentation of the Head of International Projects Area from AGENEX, Rachel Tully, who explain to all consortium the different points of an Action Plan. Firstly, she reminded the definition of an action plan.

According to the Programme Manual (section 4.1) it is a document – produced by each region - providing details on how the lessons learnt from the cooperation will be implemented in order to improve the policy instrument addressed within the region.

It specifies the nature of the actions to be implemented, their timeframe, the stakeholders involved, the costs and funding sources.

Its concrete measures come from the interregional exchange of experience and must be implemented during phase 2 of the project.

Once the definition was remembered, the workshop continued explaining the template available in Interreg Policy Platform for its elaboration and after that AGENEX provided some advices and recommendations to get an appropriate Action Plan.

### Recommendations:

- Use project and partners logos.
- Use language convenient for partners and stakeholders.
- If not English, make a comprehensive summary in English.
- If possible, get it endorsed.
- Be clear and precise.
  - Linked to the PI – Implementation-related actions – One or two is enough
  - Cover all sections in the template – Endorsed by the MA
- Ensure a clear link with the project learning activities.
  - Ensure inspiration is coming from the project cooperation
- Make it useful for your region.



- Adapted to the needs of each region to offer solutions
- Get inspiration from others.
  - Over 800 Action Plans available on project websites (all 1st and 2nd call projects) [www.interregeurope/acronym/library](http://www.interregeurope/acronym/library)

And at the end of this first section of this workshop, AGENEX made a summary of the conclusion to develop an Action Plan:

- Includes all features indicated in the template.
- Clearly links each action to the project activities.
- Ensures the nature of each action is precisely defined.
- Focuses on implementation related actions.
- It is endorsed (by stakeholders and / or policy-responsible body).

Once the action plan was explained, each partner had the opportunity to explain their first ideas and how this will influence their policy instruments or if they will have to switch to a new one.

### **PP 1 – Extremadura Energy Agency, AGENEX.**

Policy Instrument: *ROP FEDER 2014-2020 Extremadura-Investment Priority 4.2 Promotion of Energy Efficiency and renewable energy.*

New Policy Instrument: *Extremadura Integrated Energy and Climate Plan - PEIEC 2021-2030.*

Action 1: Create within the new one-stop-shop a specific line for the promotion of renewable energies in the rural sector, focusing on the development of new energy communities.

Action 2: Develop a change in the regulations that allow the use of crop fields together with photovoltaic solar installations.

### **PP 2 - Lubelskie Voivodeship.**

New Policy Instrument: *Strategy for Development of the Lubelskie Voivodeship till 2030.*

Action 1: Amendment of the Development Strategy for the Lubelskie Voivodeship 2014-2020 (with a 2030 perspective) by introducing bottom-up initiatives like community energy groups investing in renewable energy.

### **PP 3 – Devon County Council.**

Policy Instrument: *Devon County Council (DCC) Climate Change Strategy and Energy Policy.*

- Action 1: Synthetic Power Purchase Agreements. It will enable DCC to secure local, community-owned renewables and develop some new Financial instruments securing the minimum price for generated electricity.
- Action 2: Slurry Pit Gas Collection: Capture of waste gas providing energy and income to farm and Trial of retrofit approach.

### **PP 5 - Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency.**

New Policy Instrument: *Regional Operational Programme ERDF 2021-2027.*

- Action 1: The Bucharest action plan will include single action, aimed at improving the level of awareness among potential users of such green energy regarding the benefits of using renewable sources for implementing agricultural activities.

### **PP 6 – ARSIAL.**

Policy Instrument: *Regional Operational Programme ERDF 2014-2020. Priority Axis 4 " Sustainable energy and mobility".*

- Action 1: To support regional policy in the promotion of energy communities. Creating a One-Stop-Shop.

### **PP 7 & PP 8 - Institute of Technology, Sligo & Northern & Western Regional Assembly.**

New Policy Instrument: *Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) 2020-2032.*

- Action 1: Renewable Energy training for Farm Advisors.
- Action 2: Support Farmer participation in the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS).

Finally, after their presentation, all the attendees, partners and stakeholders, started with the activities included in the workshop:

Activity 1: In this activity, each partner had to resolve some questions related to their actions:

- Problem clearly identified
- Action improves the situation
- MA commits to implement it
- How many stakeholders are required?
- How long will the implementation take?
- Is any funding required to implement it?

Activity 2: In this, the partners had to indicate how each action is linked to the AgroRES project. The link should come from the lesson learned during the life of the project in phase 1:

- Regional Self-Assessment
- Good Practices
- Interregional events
- Workshops
- Interregional study visits
- Policy Learning Platform

Activity 3: Finally, they all had to verify a checklist and identify whether their actions or their Action Plan, in general, was valid, according to the Interreg Europe criteria.

- Background problem
- Required solutions
- How to implement them
- Key actors needed
- What funds are required
- Timeframe
- Monitor and measure the solution

## Steering Committee 5.

Finally, at the last meeting of the event, partners held the 5<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee of AgroRES Project, in this case, partners had the opportunity to celebrate in person.

This meeting aimed to make a review of the current Progress Report and the new work plan.

### Progress Report 4.

Regarding the financial review, some partners have already started to recover part of the budget from other semesters. In this PR, more than 90% of the estimated budget has been declared and the project partners have spent around 72% of the total budget.

In relation to the Technical Progress Report, LP emphasized explaining how project partners should report on their progress in the Action Plan in iOLF platform.

After reviewing Progress Report 4, AGENEX reminded the following activities from the last two semesters, with the aim of developing a proper action plan.

### Regional self-assessment.

This activity is delayed by some partners and they should have finished it during the third semester. Partners must send their RSA document with a piece of news of their document to upload it on the AgroRES website.

- PP2-LV: need to finish with the RSA and send the news.
- PP3-DCC: need to send the news.
- PP4-RCNK: need to finish with the RSA and send the news.
- PP5-ADRBI: need to finish with the RSA and send the news.
- PP7 & 8-IT Sligo & NWRA: need to send the news.

### Interregional Events.

Concerning the upcoming interregional meeting, LP reminded the following events:

- November 30 & December 1: IE in Finland. Technical visits.

- January or February: Progress Meeting (online).
- February/March or April: IE4 in UK or Romania.
- June: IE5 UK or Romania.

### **Local Stakeholder Meeting.**

Related the LSM, partners have to organise a local meeting per semester, and must upload their information to AgroRES Google Drive (Photos, attendees list, summary of the event, etc...).

### **Interregional Event 2 – Technical visits.**

At the end of the event, RCNK had the opportunity to explain the agenda of the following Interregional Event, that due to the Covid pandemic, partners had been able to organise an online event, but the study visits were delayed and as the situation is getting better, project partners will meet again next 30<sup>th</sup> November and 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

At the end of the event, RCNK had the opportunity to explain the agenda of the next Interregional Event, that due to the Covid pandemic, partners had only been able to organize an online event, and the study visits were delayed, but as the situation has improved, the project partners will meet again on November 30 and December 1, 2021.