



RES-e Regions

WP 3

RES-e in Upper Austrian Municipalities

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RES-e in Upper Austrian municipalities

1 Background

Upper Austria comprises 445 municipalities, most of them are small villages located in rural areas. A brief analysis of the special situation and needs of municipalities in relation to RES-e was carried out. 10 municipalities were selected and interviewed about their opinion on RES-e production and consumption and on their views which kind of practical support they would find useful.

2 Selected Municipalities

The following municipalities were selected representing a mix of different types of municipalities of different size (5 smaller (up to 3,000 inhabitants) and 5 larger municipalities), of different structure (4 agricultural, 3 touristic and 3 industrialised) and with different developed RES-e activities (1 low, 5 medium, 4 high):

Municipality	Interview partner	Size		Structure			RES + RES-e activities		
		small*	larger	agricult.	tourist.	indust.	low	medium	high
Katsdorf	Mr Lehner, mayor	X		X					X
Freistadt	Mr. Stöglehner, local councillor		X		X				X
Altheim	Mr. Pernecker, head of the administration		X		X			X	
Antiesenhofen	Mr. Gangl, mayor	X		X					X
Munderfing	Mr. Moser, head of the administration	X			X		X		
Julbach	Mr. Wöss, local councillor	X		X				X	
Wels	Mr. Ströher, administrative officer		X			X		X	
Perg	Mr. Naderer, head of the administration		X			X		X	
Kronstorf	Mr. Kolarik, local councillor		X			X	X		
Neukirchen	Mr. Wimmer, mayor	X		X					X
Selection result		5	5	4	3	3	2	4	4
* up to 3000 inhabitants									

3 Interviews

The selected municipality representatives were informed about the project and were asked by telephone the following questions:

1. What is your personal opinion on renewable energy sources?

2. What is your personal opinion about electricity from renewable energy sources?
How do you see the different RES-e technologies?
 - wind power
 - photovoltaic
 - biogas
 - biomass CHP
 - small hydro power
 - (geothermal)
3. How much should the share of RES-e be increased in the coming year in our region?
4. Are you interested in RES-e in your municipality?
Have you made any assessment of the energy situation and the potentials for RES-e?
Do you have any local energy plan or similar activities?
If yes, do you have any specific targets for RES or even RES-e?
5. Do you have any RES-e installations in your municipality?
If yes, which ones? Is the municipality directly involved in any of these installations?
If no, what do you think why not?
Would you be in favour of a RES-e installation? If yes, which technology?
Are there any installations planned in the future that you know of?
6. Have you ever thought about purchasing green electricity for the public buildings in your region?
7. What do you think is the opinion of the citizens of your municipality about RES-e plants?
Positive/indifferent/negative?
8. Where do you see the biggest obstacles in RES-e market development?
 - Financially?
 - In the administrative procedures?
 - Grid access?
 - Public opposition?
 - Something else?
9. Which kind of support in the field of RES-e plants would you like to have?

4 Summary of the main results

- The opinion on RES and RES-e in general is very positive, increased utilisation of RES is very much welcomed. Each person interviewed said that he would be in principle very much interested in RES-e generation in the municipality. However, when asked about the individual RES-e technologies, the picture is slightly different and there is no unrestricted approval. Especially with wind energy there is the fear that it might cause opposition and some municipalities are afraid of visual intrusion of the landscape.
- The most welcomed RES-e technologies are biomass, biogas and small hydro power. The main argument in favour of these technologies is the local availability of resources and the added value for the local economy (income for farmers, etc.).

- Although 7 of 10 municipalities either have a local energy strategy (or carry out similar activities) or are involved in the energy strategy of the district, the targets set – if any – are very often vague and they have forgotten what they were.
- The awareness of RES and RES-e installations in the municipality is quite high: 6 municipalities have already RES-e plants where the municipality is owner or at least involved, all of them are know RES-e installation in their village, some of them are operated by private persons.
- Although in principle every municipality is in favour of new RES-e plants - preferable technologies are biomass, biogas, small hydro power and PV - only 2 of them are presently planning concrete sites.
- Half of them consider (or have already considered) to change the electricity supplier and switch to a more ecological suppliers who deliver electricity from RES-e.
- When asked about their perception of the opinion of the citizens on RES-e, all of them think that people have mainly a positive attitude on RES-e.
- As the main barriers for RES-e are considered: financial implications followed by lack of awareness, information and know-how. The main hurdle is seen in financing the plants which is named by 8 of 10 municipalities.
- The support measures needed most are information and consultancy which is stated by every interviewed person.

5 Conclusions

RES and RES-e have a very positive image in Upper Austrian municipalities and the general awareness is quite high. The experiences with existing plants (either owned by municipalities or citizens) are very good and RES-e is a topic of discussion in the municipality.

Although most of the interviewed municipalities have a kind of energy strategy or carry out similar activities, very often political commitment and RES-e targets are missing. Perhaps this is also a reason, why the discrepancy between "awareness and action" is quite high – meaning that all of them are aware of the RES-e option and would like to have more RES-e plants in the village but on the other hand only 2 of them are presently planning RES-e plants.

The interviews showed also a clear need for more information and energy advice.

In a separate study, all Upper Austrian municipalities were asked, whether there was any opposition concerning their local RES-e plants. 79% said that there was no opposition, the

remaining 21% had mainly problems with smell of biogas plants followed by opposition of neighbours and noise intrusion (or the fear of it).