

RES-e Regions

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WP 3 Summary Report

RhôneAlpénergie-Environnement

WP 3 – SUMMARY REPORT

1) Description and explanation of the role of municipalities

For most of the partners, municipalities play an important role in RES-e development and their commitment is necessary for several reasons:

- they represent big energy consumers and, what's more, they own numerous buildings and lands which can represent available space for RES-e plants
- it's part of their duty is to set the example for citizens: they can encourage demonstration projects and lead information campaigns on RES-e (seminars, leaflets, etc.). They can also take incentive measures such as proposing some additional subsidies for the citizens who have a RES-e project
- they are generally involved in permit procedures and have some responsibility in the projects' achievement. Nevertheless, Denmark seems to be quite an exception where most of the responsibilities are held at a national level and do not really imply municipalities. In Saarland as well, the commitment of municipalities is not really supported by the regional government.

Municipalities can influence the market by developing RES-e on their buildings or by buying green electricity. They can also have an incentive policy towards the citizens by proposing extra subsidies or by disseminating information on RES-e. In Rhône-Alpes, it was also observed that when a municipality develops a RES-e project, it triggers kind of a "snowballing effect" in the neighbouring municipalities. In any case, the municipalities' influence on the market will mainly depend on their enthusiasm for RES-e. By the moment, many municipalities are more focused on energy savings than on green electricity.

As regards the role of municipalities in permission procedures, it varies according to the region but, generally speaking, municipalities have little influence on the legislation. They have no influence on grid access procedures, which are under the responsibility of the electricity operator, but they sometimes play a role in spatial planning, building permits, and information on public lands (which is the case in Slovenia, Upper Austria and Saarland).

2) Summary of the way you encouraged them to have their own RESe strategy

There is a wide discrepancy between the regions of the project as regards the implementation of local strategies. Most of the time, municipalities care about an energy strategy but they do not define specific objectives. In Upper Austria, nearly 7 of 10 municipalities interviewed are involved in a local energy strategy even if targets are not often well defined. In Rhône-Alpes and Slovenia as well, some voluntary municipalities have designed a local energy plan with precise targets and a dedicated strategy. Denmark is a special case since the whole administration organisation has been recently revised, then, by

the moment, no municipality cared for a RES-e strategy. As for Götaland, municipalities feel more concerned by heating issues than by RES-e.

Depending on the regions, the partners supported municipalities by organizing seminars, site visits, by giving some advices on the planning and realization of RES-e plants or by implementing local support programmes.

Municipalities are more and more involved in RES-e projects where they are owners or investors (France, Austria) and the RES-e Regions project sometimes urged them to assess their RES-e resource.

The type of energy resource which is mostly encouraged depends first on the availability of the resource and on the added value for the economy. In Upper Austria, biomass, biogas and small hydro power are the most welcomed RES-e technologies. In many other regions, photovoltaic projects are mostly supported (Slovenia, Copenhagen, Saarland). In Rhône-Alpes, feed-in tariffs for PV, biogas, wind energy and small hydro have been recently increased but, by the moment, the strongest development concerns PV projects.

3) What are the main difficulties met by municipalities? Which solutions can be proposed?

The most frequent difficulties / or reasons of reluctance met by municipalities are the following:

- the financial implication: for most of the regions (Upper-Austria, Rhône-Alpes, Denmark, Slovenia), the development of RES projects represent a big financial investment for municipalities, which they can't always afford. There's also a lack in the national financial support. What's more, some municipalities don't agree to support technologies which are not competitive without financial support. The proposed solutions concern the increase of subsidies, the dissemination of information, the research of some other financial solutions (co-investment solutions, local collective investments by citizens, private investments on public buildings, etc.)
- the lack of awareness and know-how: many municipalities have not enough confidence and know-how on RES-e technologies. Therefore, it's necessary to keep on disseminating some information and trainings for municipalities, especially for those which have not yet been confronted to RES-e projects.
- the fear of uncomfortable consequences: in some municipalities, the smell from biogas plants or the visual intrusion of wind turbines can be sufficient reasons to refuse a RES-e project. This can be also accentuated by local opposition from citizens or associations. Then, it's necessary to have a dialogue with all the stakeholders of a project, so as to find the best solution for everybody. In other regions (Slovenia), there is no reluctance at all towards RES-e plants.
- the complexity of procedures: in Rhône-Alpes, some municipalities had a bad experience with long procedures for PV or small-hydro projects, consequently, some municipalities are now afraid of developing such projects

- the fact that municipalities play too many roles in the RES-e issues (Sweden): municipalities are concerned by RES-e project as authorities, responsible for the local policy, owners of buildings, etc., then they are faced to conflicting interests and can't answer to all the queries.
- The lack of motivated persons in the municipalities: in Saarland and sometimes in Rhône-Alpes, positive initiatives are taken by convinced members of the administrative body and do not come from the global policy of the municipality. It's important to spread the awareness of all the elected members of municipalities so that RES-e projects shall not be only undertaken by militant persons. Visits of RES fairs (such as the one in Wels) can be incentive measures to convince the elected representatives of a municipality in favour of renewable energies.

4) Best example of a municipality in your region as regards RES-e

Region	Best example
Upper-Austria	<p>Municipality of Antiesenhofen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - small Upper Austrian municipality with 1,100 inhabitants - electricity consumption: 3.7 Mio kWh, RES-e production: 2.5 Mio kWh - Biomass district heating plant (Biomass boiler, 1500 kW, 2250000 kWh) - Small scale hydro power plant Hinternberg (1 Francis turbine, 200 kW electric, 700000 kWh) - Small scale hydro power plant Bruckmühle (2 Francis turbines, 120 kW electric, 420000 kWh) - Combined heat and power plant for landfill gas and biogas (8-cylinder gas engine, 190 kW electric, 340 kW thermal, about 1330000 electric about 2380000 kWh thermal)
Götaland	<p>A good example is Borås Municipality which has, through their ownership in the local utility and waste management company, developed the RES-e situation in the community. Today they have a large scale biomass/waste CHP plant, district heating, district cooling and a large biogas plant for mainly vehicle fuel.</p>
Copenhagen	<p>The Copenhagen City has taken a good initiative to promote the use of solar energy in urban areas by giving substantial support to the new organization "SolarCity Copenhagen" for two years to establish. It is a member organization which on the longer term shall be financed by the members. The members are other municipalities, private companies, and individuals.</p>
Slovenia	<p>Ljubljana</p>
Saarland	<p>Ensdorf : this village won the competition, it invested in a big PV power plant. Nevertheless, there's a better example in the town of Heusweiler: they are just realising three plants on two primary schools and their own building yard with together 104 kW peak power from polycrystalline modules. In the near future they will also install more than 20 kW on 4 cemetery halls and a further primary school with thin layer amorphous PV</p>

	<p>modules. It has last longer as more technical collateral problems have to be solved. The final success is due especially to the engagement of the environmental officer.</p>
Rhône-Alpes	<p>Chambéry (Savoie) is a very dynamic city as regards RES-e. They have a strong incentive policy for PV projects : they already have a big PV plant on two water tanks of the city (120 kWp), some other PV plants on a high school building, on a primary school building and on the "House of energies". They fixed an objective of 8 Wp/inhab. in 2010. What's more, they are also developing a wood energy plant.</p>