

Project idea name	APPROVE Bioenergy	
	Advancing Public Participation and stakeholder engagement fOr the improVEment of Bioenergy policies in Central Europe regions	
Organisation	Poliedra - Politecnico di Milano	
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Priority and specific objective	Priority axis 2: Cooperating on LOW CARBON strategies in Central Europe Specific objective 2.2: Improve territorial based low-carbon energy planning strategies and policies supporting climate change mitigation	
What is the aim of the project idea? (What are the issues, problems, opportunities you want to address?)	<p>Renewable Energy Sources (RES) contribute to sustainable development, protection of the environment and citizens' health, and climate change mitigation through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>However, Lengthy administrative procedures constitute a major barrier and are costly. One of the main challenge is related with the localization and permitting procedures for RES power plants, which has sometimes faced the opposition of local communities, resulting in a slower growth. While there is a great consensus in society that RES development is needed for a successful low-carbon transition, single development projects often face local opposition. This is related also to the local impacts of renewable energy infrastructures on the environment (e.g. landscape, land use, ecological connectivity, biodiversity).</p> <p>The proposal will focus on Bioenergy, in particular forest-based and non-food agriculture-based bioenergy. In line with the EU goals, bio-energy represents about two-thirds of the renewable energy production in the European Union and is one of the main energy sources contributing to fulfil the 20% objective with renewables for 2020.</p> <p>As regards bioenergy, a specific problem is related with the value chain of the biomass, from the point of view of the producers. For instance, the regional or national production of biomass (e.g., pellets) in some areas is insufficient compared with the local demand. Therefore, the involvement of stakeholders in the value-chain is needed to fill such gap.</p> <p>During the past years, many public authorities and proponents reshaped their approach towards engaging both organised stakeholders and the public. Experiences in different European regions show that stakeholder engagement in the early phases of the decision process may reduce conflicts and facilitate participation and public acceptance. Moreover, local citizen participation in renewable energy projects through renewable energy communities has resulted in substantial added value in terms of local acceptance of renewable energy and access to additional private capital. Ownership has been proven as a successful factor both as regards the local acceptance as well as the design of the project to the real needs of the area. This local involvement will be more crucial in a context of increasing renewable energy capacity in the future.</p> <p>While it might be unrealistic to gain the consensus of all actors involved (acceptance of final result), the rationale of stakeholder engagement is to foster people to accept the outcome of a dialogue and permitting process if they consider the procedure to be transparent, participatory and fair (acceptance of procedure).</p> <p>The project APPROVE bioenergy is framed within the Bioenergy Smart Specialization Strategy partnership (http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/bioenergy). Because bioenergy is a common priority of smart specialisation for several regions across EU, in 2016 the smart specialisation platform on energy has supported the creation of an interregional partnership for bioenergy and smart specialization.</p>	

	<p>This bioenergy partnership is led by the regions of Lapland (FI) and Castilla y Leon (ES) and engages the participation of other 14 regions committed to being frontrunners in developing forest-based as well as non-food agriculture-based bioenergy as the basis for sustainable regional growth. In line with the EU goals, bio-energy represents about two-thirds of the renewable energy production in the European Union and is one of the main energy sources contributing to fulfil the 20% objective with renewables for 2020.</p>
<p>What are the planned activities and expected results?</p>	<p>European Regions face many interrelated common challenges: demand for bioenergy, environmental sustainability, involvement of the value-chain stakeholder, and public opposition. The project will pursue a transnational dialogue to tackle such challenges in decision-making for regional energy planning, considering innovative spatial and socio-environmental assessment methods, stakeholder engagement and citizen participation.</p> <p>The project will involve partners from 5-6 different regional areas of Central Europe, that will cooperate for the development of a common set of tools. The public authorities involved in the project (partners as well as Associated Partners) will promote the application of such model in their respective areas.</p> <p>Expected activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of better spatial and socio-environmental assessment methods, stakeholder engagement and citizen participation; • implementation of pilots; • training tools and activities; • recommendations for policy instruments. <p>The following main project outputs are envisaged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transnational guidelines for the promotion of bioenergy on different scales (regional, municipal, single projects) incorporating alternative policy instruments such as regulatory incentives, collaborative management and business models built on participatory methods and shared responsibility; efficient public awareness raising and informal education tools; • Practical training material for regional and local authorities and project proponents; • Open innovation platforms for exploring new, creative and grassroots initiatives tackling collaborative / cooperatives practices; • Local/regional pilot actions implementing and maintaining bioenergy actions. Examples may concerns pilot activities and joint investments based on decentralized renewable solutions (e.g. wood chip or biogas CHP plants), second generation biofuels, produced mainly from lignocellulose biomass, residues or waste, ...
<p>Partners involved at this stage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poliedra - Politecnico di Milano (private no-profit research partner) (www.poliedra.polimi.it) • Zentrum fuer Soziale Innovation (ZSI) - (private no-profit research partner) (www.zsi.at/en) <p>The invitation to join the proposal is initially sent to all the Regions that participate to the S3 bioenergy partnership located in Central Europe area, and to regional and public authorities that participated to the Central Europe Conference in October in Berlin.</p> <p>Moreover, Regional Council of Lapland and EREN (Regional Energy Agency of Castilla y León), leader of the Bioenergy S3 Energy Partnership, are interested in collaborating and participating to the project (being outside the Central Europe programme area, the formal framework of their participation is to be defined).</p>
<p>Partners I am looking for</p>	<p>Public authorities at regional and local level</p>

An introduction to Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme 2014-2020 Call 3, SO 2.2

The Interreg Central Europe Programme (CEP) is a European Union funding programme that encourages transnational cooperation beyond borders in central Europe.

The **targeted call topic** of Call 3 is the following:

PRIORITY AXIS 2 - Cooperating on low carbon strategies in CENTRAL EUROPE

Specific objective 2.2: Improve territorial based low-carbon energy planning strategies and policies supporting climate change mitigation

Under SO 2.2, the Programme seeks for projects that improve capacities for territorially-based energy planning in central Europe. Enhanced cooperation will enable coordinated local and regional approaches to formulating and planning low-carbon energy strategies, which is key to the uptake of renewable energy measures.

Transnational cooperation shall help building new knowledge as well as exchanging existing knowledge and experiences between and within regions concerning the planning, financing and implementing of concrete actions to deliver sustainable energy measures. It aims to improve the capacity of the public sector and related entities, as a key starting point for mobilising investment for low-carbon measures at territorial level. Transnational cooperation will thereby contribute to triggering activities especially in regions with a lower usage of their renewable energy potentials. Furthermore, it will support the linking of approaches between the demand and supply sides, taking into account the quality and capacity of energy distribution grids. This shall be achieved through strengthening the knowledge and planning capacity of the public sector and related entities that facilitate the transition towards 'Sustainable Energy Regions'. The programme will support them in the development and implementation of innovative local and regional energy planning strategies leading to an enhanced use of endogenous renewable energy potentials in a balanced way and to a reduction of CO₂ emissions. This will in many cases also imply positive effects on air quality.

The main result envisaged can be summarised as: "Improved capacities of the public sector and related entities for territorially based low-carbon energy planning and policies in central European regions achieved through transnational cooperation".

The supported actions shall build on transnational cooperation for improving capacities of the public sector and related entities. This will enable them to develop integrated local and/or regional strategies and plans for a better use of endogenous renewable energy potentials and for improving regional energy performances. Actions supported shall combine demand and supply sides and focus on strategies, policies, tools and new solutions for the exploitation of renewable energy resources as well as for increased energy efficiency.

The implementation of pilot actions and exchanges of good practices will stimulate and trigger investment towards low-carbon development. Coordinated strategies for improved interconnections of energy networks will enable a better integration of renewable energy sources into the existing distribution networks and consequently open the opportunity for an increased production and use of renewable energy.

All the supported actions will clearly contribute to the improvement of capacity of the public sector and related entities for an increased and balanced use of endogenous renewable energy potentials and for an enhanced energy performance in central European regions. Moreover, they will contribute to the improvement of territorially based energy planning strategies and policies supporting climate change mitigation. It is to be emphasized that the programme will not support actions and/or pilot investments having a negative effect on the environment (e.g. hydropower plants affecting the ecological status of water bodies, emissions of biomass installations etc.).

Examples of actions supported within SO 2.2 are:

- Developing and implementing integrated territorial strategies and plans to increase the use of endogenous renewable energy potentials and to improve regional energy performance
- Designing and testing concepts and tools for the exploitation of endogenous renewable energy resources
- Developing and implementing territorial strategies to improve the energy management in both the public and the private sector (especially in SMEs)
- Developing demand-focused strategies and policies to reduce energy consumption (e.g. smart metering, distribution of smart consumer applications, etc.)
- Developing and testing solutions for improved interconnections and coordination of energy networks targeting the integration and use of renewable energy sources

Programme area

The programme area consists of all regions from Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as eight Länder from Germany (Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thüringen) and nine regions from Italy (Emilia-Romagna, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Lombardia, Piemonte, Provincia Autonoma Bolzano, Provincia Autonoma Trento, Valle d'Aosta, and Veneto).

Eligibility of partners

- National, regional and local public bodies;
- Private institutions, including private companies, having legal personality;
- International organizations acting under the national law of any CENTRAL EUROPE Member State or, with restrictions, under international law.

Budget

The planned budget size is approx. 2 million EUR with partner budgets ranging between 150.000 - 250.000 EUR. To be discussed with the partnership.

Partner budgets are subject to the roles and tasks undertaken during the project implementation. The project actions are broken down to work packages (WPs), the WPs to activities. Each WP and activity has a leader from the partnership, who is responsible for the coordination of the respective part of the project.

The following **co-financing rates** shall apply:

- Up to 85 % ERDF financing for applicants of Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia; 15% is to be provided as own contribution;
- Up to 80 % ERDF financing for applicants of Austria, Germany, Italy; 20% is to be provided as own contribution;
- Up to 80 % ERDF financing for applicants located in EU regions outside the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme area; 20% is to be provided as own contribution.

National public co-financing (state contribution) for the own contribution of partners is provided in some countries (e.g. Hungary, Italy). To find out what are the current co-financing rates in your country, please contact your National Contact Point (http://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/contact/Contact_Overview.html)

Eligible costs

- staff costs + office and administration (15% flat rate of staff costs) - cca. 50% of project budget
- travel and accommodation - cca. 10% of project budget
- external expertise - maximum cca. 30% of project budget
- equipment - maximum cca. 5% of project budget
- smaller infrastructure and works (in duly justified cases only) - maximum cca. 5% of project budget

The **reporting** process is based on 6 month long reporting periods and coordinated by the Lead Partner (each partner creates reports on national level, and based on them the LP prepares a joint progress report and payment request). **Reimbursement of costs** to the LP and project PPs is due only after the approval of the progress report by the Programme bodies (i.e. no advance payments are done by the programme, but partners have to prefinance their activities which are then paid back /according to the co-financing rates relevant for the given country/ by the Programme).

Schedule

Project duration: The planned project duration is 36 months with a start date in early 2019.

Deadline for submission: 25 January 2018

Administrative tasks

Partners are requested to submit a “**Partner and State Aid Declaration**” signed by the legal representative including a co-financing statement on own contribution.

In case internal authorization is required related to the own contribution, the relevant institutional (e.g. council) decision has to be made before the date of submission.