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Save the date! 1st EMPOWERING Transnational Seminar 4th of April 2017, Athens



On the 4th of April 2017, the EMPOWERING consortium, will organize the 1st Transnational seminar (TNS), hosted at the premises of the Commercial and Industrial Chamber of Athens. The event is part of the Transnational Exchange Programme developed at project level.

The event will enable participants to obtain detailed descriptions of the experience gained by the promoters of 4 best practices identified at European level. The speakers will share the mechanism, support tools, success factors and lessons learned regarding the implementation of their cases, with the Local Energy Board (LEB) representatives from the 6 regions, impacted by the project.

Proposed by the project partners and prioritized by LEB members, the best practices envisaged by the Transnational Seminar are:

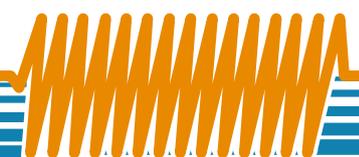
- Växjö, the Greenest City of Europe
- Rhônalpénergie Environnement Region Auvergne Rhone Alpes
- Project SINFONIA, representing the cases of Innsbrück and Bolzano
- Climate Neutral City Gent

The discussions will tackle criticalities in implementation with an additional focus on land use planning measures, such as: commitment, procedures, plans, interventions, etc. focusing on the urban/territorial management and aimed at energy sustainability; urban/neighbourhood energy planning; energy standards zoning; public lighting; management of urban services; participated planning for sustainable development; urban planning to satisfy housing, mobility and consumption needs in an energy-efficient way; infrastructures that increase territories' energy su-

fficiency; modes of transport and the use public space for the future; encouraging short supply chains; etc.

The topic envisages the impact of urban planning decisions on energy use, both in terms of resources and emissions, at peri-urban, urban and district levels. This involves limiting urban sprawl, densifying constructions around service and transport hubs, building heat networks, avoiding the construction of new infrastructures, building a pedestrian path network and integrating energy issues in planning permission.

Also in the framework of the Transnational Exchange Programme the project consortium as well as the invited LEB members will visit the Municipality of Agios Dimitrios. This Municipality is located in Attica region and joined the Covenant of Mayors in 2009. The study visit aims to enhance the share of knowledge between the stakeholders on the "green" urban management strategies developed and in specific, the energy efficiency measures regarding the eco-driving and smart metering that the local authority implemented in the framework of its Sustainable Energy Action Plan.



Empowering's LEB in the Region of Central Macedonia

Within the Empowering project at the RCM was created a LEB, composed by twelve municipalities and three stakeholders.

Concerning the procedures of creating the local LEB, at the beginning were used the criteria setted by the programme. However, in practice it was unable to be found any municipalities that could address the criteria, so it was decided to expand them and to create the LEB according mostly to the interest of the municipalities. Thus, emerged the LEB that is composed of the municipalities of Naousa, Oreokastro, Pidnas-Kolindros, Polygyros, Kassandra, Sithonia, Pella, Edessa, Kalamaria, Neapoli-Sikeon, Pavlos Melas and Pileas-Hortiatis. In addition the above mentioned LEB supple-

mented by stakeholder's group: the Development Agency of Eastern Thessaloniki's Local Authorities, the Center for Research and Technology Hellas and the Thessaloniki's Integrated Transport Authority.

The first LEB set-up event was organized by the Region of Central Macedonia in the framework of EMPOWERING project, on 8th of February 2017. All the participants were fully satisfied from the results of the event. The representatives of the municipalities exposed their problems, potentials and crucial technical and economical issues concerning the adoption and implementation of an integrated sustainable development strategy at their region.

Further more during the event the municipalities were informed about the Covenant of Mayors, some municipalities were decided to enter in. A discuss about the questionnaires that must be filled in also was held.

Concerning the near future the RCM LEB's members expect impatiently the sub-contracting

that the Region of Central Macedonia is going to undertake, in order to support them to SEAP updating and new SEAP drafting and adoption procedures. Moreover RCM is decided to implement some actions in order to activate other influential local stakeholders and/or authorities.



LEB set up in the Region of Istria

The Local Energy Board (LEB) was set up in the Istrian Development Agency in order to promote the exchange of information and experiences on integrated energy, sustainable urban mobility, land use planning and innovative financing solutions, on 30th January 2017.

Currently, the Local Energy Board set up in the Region of Istria comprises of the representatives of the Region of Istria, seven Istrian municipalities: Labin, Novigrad, Pazin, Poreč, Pula, Rovinj and Vodnjan, as well as the public stakeholder Parentium Ltd.

The assessment of capacity building needs and good practices by each LEB member has started. From which the best practices and projects of the region could be established as examples to other regions.

The Local Energy Board (LEB) set up in Region of Istria is the first step of moving towards the main objective of the project, that is,

empowering local and regional authorities (policy makers and public officers) of region to shape sustainable energy policies and plans coherent with the European climate and energy policies and in synergy with the Covenant of Mayors initiative.

Thanks to their participation to Empowering the Municipalities involved in the project intend to promote and update the Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC) model, making Local Communities the drivers for regional sustainable development through the coordination and support of Regional Authorities and Development Agencies.

The adhesion and active participation of Municipalities to the European initiative «Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy» will pave the ground towards increasing energy efficiency, mainstreaming climate change into regional development policies.

LEB set-up in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County

The inaugural meeting of the Local Energy Board of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County was held on 21st December 2016. The meeting took place in the Assembly Room of the County Hall in Miskolc. Altogether 12 settlements expressed their willingness to join the initiative in the County in order to deliver sustainable energy plans for their communities. Apart from 7 settlements –namely Ózd, Tokaj, Szerencs, Nyékládháza, Hernádnémeti, Bükkzentkereszt, Bükkaranyos– that have formed a Sustainable Energy Community earlier, 5 new settlements –Encs, Tolcsva, Böcs, Kistokaj and Bükkábrány– became members of the Local Energy Board in the region.

The Event was opened by Mr. Dezső Török, President of the Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County Council. He referred to the importance of the support that is given to the Municipalities through EMPOWERING project. After the opening speech the importance of sustainable energy manage-

ment at the municipalities was discussed. Mrs. Adrienne Buday-Malik representative of the National Covenant Coordinator (ÉMI Nonprofit Ltd.) introduced the new initiative for Climate&Energy, including objectives, benefits and practical information for the signatories.

It was followed by a review of the workplan –transnational exchange and capacity building activities– to be completed by the Energy Board.

At the end of the meeting a signing ceremony took place. The representatives of the Municipalities signed the Agreement of the Local Energy Board, acknowledging the objectives, regulations of the Board and commitments and tasks of the members.

Following the inaugural meeting the most relevant stakeholders will be defined by the Board members who will be invited to join and become a member.

The Local Energy Board of the Marche region

The Local Energy Board of the Marche region is composed of 31 Municipalities. A first group –Ancona, Appignano, Ascoli Piceno, Fabriano, Fermo, Jesi, Macerata, Monte Giberto, Offida, Pesaro, Pollenza, San Paolo di Jesi, Santa Maria Nuova, Senigallia and Urbino– already members of the Covenant of Mayors, will engage a process to update their Sustainable Energy Action Plans. At the same EMPOWERING will offer support to 5 Municipalities - Altidona, Campofilone, Fano, San Severino Marche, San Benedetto del Tronto - that will adhere for the first time the Covenant of Mayors Initiative and will develop their new Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAPs). Moreover, a group of 11 smaller Municipalities -

Castellbellino, Castelplanio, Cupramontana, Maiolati Spontini, Mergo, Montecarotto, Monte Roberto, Poggio San Marcello, Rosora, Serra San Quirico and Staffolo - will join forces and will test the possibility to build up a joint SECAP for the overall area, thus reinforcing a collaborative approach for the governance of energy policy.

SVIM confirms its role in the promotion of a sustainable development of the Marche region, through a continuous support to cooperation between local and regional authorities. The first meetings of the Local Energy Board has clearly put in evidence the importance of coordination and integration between the relevant actors for achieving am-

bitious goals in terms of energy and climate change adaptation. In the next period further actions will be implemented to engage other crucial stakeholders - regional universities, as well as main private sectors players - that will increase the opportunities to realize and implement effective projects for energy sustainability.



The Andalusian LEB begins its activity

In Andalusia, the Local Energy Board (LEB) was formalized on November 29th, with the attendance of eight of the ten participating municipalities and three of the four regional stakeholders.

The LEB is a participatory body formed in each region in order to promote and guarantee the exchange of information and experiences between the territories.

The Local Energy Board in Andalusia has the participation of 10 municipalities, actively involved in policies and measures of energy efficiency and sustainable mobility, which are fundamental axes of the project. These municipalities are: Arahal, Armilla, La Palma del Condado, Puebla de Cazalla, La Rinconada, Montilla, Morón de la Frontera, Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo, Salobreña and Sanlúcar la Mayor.

In addition, regional agents are added to the Local Energy Board

whose contribution will be fundamental to guide the training actions that are programmed and developed in the next phase of the project.

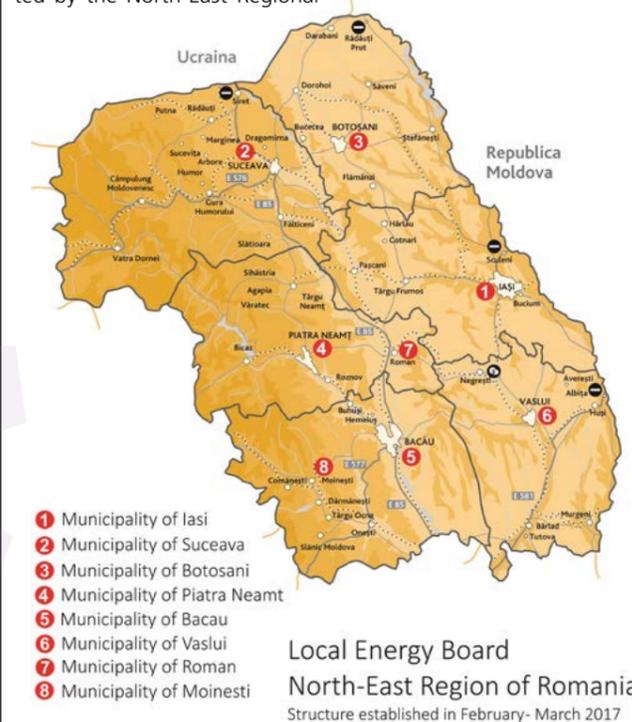
During the meeting, the e-Questionnaire for the assessment of capacity building needs and good practices was presented, to be filled by each LEB member. It will provide an analysis of the best practices or projects in the region and it also will identify the main needs to improve skills and to overcome the administrative and technical barriers faced by public agents in enforcement measures and strategies to reduce GHG emissions and to combat climate change.

The next milestone of the project is to identify the training needs and best practices of each region, to initiate the transnational exchange learning experiences and the strengthening local skills. The transnational activities begin next 4th of April in Athens and they will extend along 2017.

LEB set up in North-East Region of Romania

The Local Energy Board of the North-East Region was established in February-March 2017, by the consensus of Municipalities of: Bacau, Botosani, Iasi, Moinești, Piatra Neamt, Roman Suceava and Vaslui, coordinated by the North-East Regional

Development Agency. Members will meet in April 2017 to discuss the results of the Capacity Building Need Assessment Questionnaire and to identify the best solutions to fill the gaps identified at regional level.



1st Peer to Peer Exchange - Modeling Innovative Financial Instruments for Sustainable Energy

On 5 October 2016, our first Peer-to-Peer Exchange Seminar took place in Seville (ES) hosted by the Andalusian Agency for Environment and Water. Stakeholders from energy agencies, presidents of Regions and mayors, came together to get familiar with innovative financial instruments and discuss difficulties, but also ideas for exploiting sustainable energy.

The seminar was structured around four experts' interventions: Valerio Micalé, from CPI (UK), an international organization working to improve energy and climate policies, with specific focus on finance. He spoke about barriers affecting investors' ability to invest in new technologies. Effie Korma, Center for Renewable Energy Sources and Saving (EL). She presented their innovative projects for the promotion and market penetra-

tion of new energy technologies. Silvia Marsili, Artigiancassa (IT), bringing the example of a financial intermediary managing a regional fund providing low interest loans for energy efficiency and mobility. Javier Ordóñez, Agenex-Extremadura Energy Agency (ES), presenting the projects Finerpol and Rehabilitate, aimed at promoting investments for sustainable energy.

The cases presented were the inspiration to involve participants into a round table discussion that highlighted how innovative financial tools vary within the EU, from design as well as implementation point of view. Developing capacity within local/regional administration vs. externalizing financial tools, was a main topic. We learned that Extremadura keeps capacity building and awareness within its own energy agency, that

is also responsible for designing financial schemes. On the other side, Marche Region decided that a commercial bank is a better choice for implementing a large public fund for energy efficiency. The case of Goteborg (SE) - and its green bonds - was also mentioned, as example of extreme autonomy and activism in designing and delivering innovative financial tools.

Another issue discussed was the

need of finance vs. the need of technical (or customized) assistance. Regions committed to very tight deficits highlighted an evident need for finance: often investments are not possible due to deficit targets, even if they would allow large public savings. But it also emerged that the financial mix available in EU is covering more than the actual demand: the problem is rather the lack of institutional capacity and the missing change agents.



Partners



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