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## A project for the improvement of renewable energy policies



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NEWSLETTER #02

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APPROVE aims at supporting the development of Renewable Energy Sources (RES) with promoting **awareness raising, capacity building, effective public participation and stakeholder engagement.**

The project is structured in two phases:

**PHASE 1** (2,5 years) – the activities focus on interregional cooperation and exchange of experience, with the ultimate goal to develop regional **action plans** for the improvement of the **operational programmes financed by EU Structural Funds** as regards the promotion of RES, also addressing regional innovation strategies for smart specialisation

**PHASE 2** (2 years) – the implementation of the action plans will be monitored and the results will be assessed and disseminated



## THE SECOND APPROVE INTERREGIONAL WORKSHOP

On April 2, the second interregional workshop was held in **Ioannina**, capital of Epirus.

Each territorial partner presented an overview about the regional situation as regards RES development and policies.

The discussion concerned also the main barriers to the development of RES, the identification of aspects that should be improved and the degree of interest in the different forms of renewables.

Based on a presentation by the advisory partner Poliedra and the lead partner Lapland, the partners shared also the criteria and work programme for the next project activity concerning the **identification of regional good practices**.

This is an essential part of the exchange of experience that will lead to the elaboration of the Regional Action Plans.



The good practices will be selected applying the following criteria:

- ✓ **Initiatives that can help improving regional policies for the promotion of renewable energy sources, working on participation and engagement / awareness raising / capacity building**
- ✓ **Evidence of success in reaching the objective of overcoming existing barriers (lack of awareness/lack of expertise/public opposition)**
- ✓ **Cases discussed with the regional stakeholder groups**
- ✓ **Transferability to other European regions**

The interesting **site visits** organised by the Region of Epirus included a poultry farm and the recently built waste treatment plant that serves the entire region. In both cases, biogas is produced and is used for electric generation.



*Liapatis poultry farm and biogas plant*



*Municipal solid waste treatment plant*



*The Lake Hotel*

## REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER GROUP MEETINGS

Each territorial partner has identified a group of regional stakeholders to be involved throughout the life of the project. During regional stakeholder group meetings, the APPROVE partners, together with the stakeholders that have participated in the international exchange, transfer its outcomes to a wider audience and gain new local knowledge and input. The APPROVE partners promote the active involvement and learning of key stakeholders not only because they are fundamental for the development of a shared and effective action plan, but also because this will guarantee a good governance and shape the future of RES promotion also beyond APPROVE.

Strengthening cooperation between Lappish energy projects and the presentation of ERDF funding opportunities was the key goal for the stakeholder meeting organised by the **Regional Council of Lapland** (FI) on 7/5/2019 in Rovaniemi.

The event gathered twenty participants from around the region representing schools, civil servants and other interested stakeholders.

The presentation of multiple biogas projects around the region shows that the potential of rural areas to develop local energy infrastructure is being taken seriously as a tool for regional development around Lapland.

There are still two rounds of calls remaining in this programming period, the next of which ends on 2/10/2019. Funding opportunities are still available, especially for projects supporting climate action. A key area in regional strategies is specifically the decarbonisation of heating. This would require the fast reduction of oil heating and switching to renewable energies such as wood, solar energy and wind power.

The **Region of Epirus** (GR) organised a meeting on 18/3/2019, with the participation of the Director of Environment and Spatial Planning, the ROP Managing Authority, the Vice President of the Technical Chamber of Greece - department of Epirus, a manager of the municipal solid waste treatment plant. private companies (design & construction, bioenergy, photovoltaic installer).

After an informative introduction about the project, the stakeholders discussed about their role in the project and about the room for improvements in energy policies.



The regional staff presented the results of the first APPROVE interregional workshop held in Rovaniemi (FI) and the site visits to local RES plants and facilities.

The participating stakeholders showed a great interest about those cases, asking about their energy efficiency issues, the financial instruments used for the investments, the possibility of implementing similar practices in Epirus.

Finally, the participants were informed about the next steps of APPROVE and about the chance to present some good practices to other partners.

The **Normandy Regional Council** (FR) organised two meetings (30/11/2018, 22/5/2019). About twenty people participated in both meetings, gathering a variety of organisations from energy unions to local communities, representatives of the government (DREAL - the Regional Direction for Environment, Energy Transition and Land Use Planning), energy operators (GRDF, ENGIE) and associations.

The first meeting allowed a joint identification of the constraints slowing the renewable energy projects in Normandy and a general reflexion about the need to improve the projects communication as well as the involvement of the general public, stakeholders, and local elected officials in the implementation and governance of the projects.

The second meeting aimed at identifying good practices fostering the acceptability of renewable energy projects. As a result of the diversity of the stakeholder group, the examined practices ranged from financing instruments (e.g. crowd-funding) to regional policies or events. In this way, five good practices have been identified, discussed and validated by the participants, to be shared with the partnership during next semester. In addition to the meetings, other stakeholders have showed their interest for APPROVE and intend to propose more good practices.



## COMING SOON

- The analyses developed during the second semester of the project are presented in the **Report on gaps, needs and challenges**. The report provides quantitative data and qualitative remarks about the regional situations as regards renewable energy sources development and policies, with a focus on public participation and stakeholder engagement.
- APPROVE is one of the co-organisers of the session "Speed up the energy transition by raising social acceptance", which will take place on 19/6/2019 during the **EU Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) Policy Conference** in Brussels. The session targets policy makers (local, national, European), NGOs, business, academia, civil society and community initiatives, and it will offer a platform to different stakeholders to discuss how to bring on board all Europeans as active drivers for change in the energy landscape. For more information please visit the [conference website](#).
- Some APPROVE partners will attend the workshop "Financial Instruments for the Low-Carbon Economy" offered by the Interreg Europe **Policy Learning Platform** on 20/6/2019. We will hear about the ways in which public authorities can encourage private investment by using public funds to create financial instruments that can leverage private investment and overcome market failures. For more information please visit the event [webpage](#).
- The **next interregional workshop**, which will take place in Castilla y León in September, will focus on the presentation and discussion of the regional good practices that could be transferred within the project. The site visits will include the EXPOBIOMASA Fair in Valladolid.



APPROVE addresses 4 operational programmes financed by EU Structural Funds:

- ✓ **Sustainable growth and jobs 2014 2020 - Finland's Structural Funds Programme**
- ✓ **Regional Operational Program of Epirus 2014-2020**
- ✓ **Regional Operational Programme Investment for Growth and Jobs Haute-Normandie 2014/2020**
- ✓ **ERDF Operational Programme Castilla y León**

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