



Renewable energy

How can regions develop successful strategies to promote renewable energy?

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POLICY PAPER

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Thematic capitalisation

Over the last seven years the INTERREG IVC programme has been enabling public institutions all over Europe – over 2000 in total – to ‘learn through cooperation’ across 204 different interregional projects aimed at improving regional policies.

In June 2012, the programme commissioned a team of thematic experts to analyse, benchmark, and capitalise on the wealth of knowledge generated by projects working on similar regional development issues. Altogether, 12 policy themes, ranging from innovation to the environment, have been covered. 12 reports are now available detailing the insights and lessons from this capitalisation process for the benefit of all regions across Europe.

This policy paper distils the essential findings of the report into a ‘ready-to-use’ tool to convince policymakers of not only the need for change, but exactly what change is required.

The benefits of renewable energies...

Renewable energy sources...

- Are available in every region and for free;
- Are secure on a long-term basis and do not need to be imported;
- Create jobs and economic benefits that are kept at regional and local level;
- Have a positive impact on the climate, environment and health.

A region that has invested in renewables will be able to benefit from its choices for decades to come, with the right support from regional development policies.

Renewables present many opportunities for regions and are already responsible for over 1.2 million jobs in the EU, with a turnover of €125 million. They create value at the regional level, as it is here that energy sources are available for harvesting, transforming, transporting and storing renewables. Decentralised generation of energy can concentrate benefits within regions and boost energy security, economic performance and social inclusion.

The multitude of renewable energy sources has brought about a complex landscape of innovative technologies and services, which require a better understanding by regional policy-makers. At the same time, this is also an opportunity for each region to develop its own specific energy mix focusing on its strengths and according to its regional availability of renewable energy sources.

Renewables and their specific regional benefits

Biomass	Highly flexible, can be transformed into heat, electricity, liquid fuels and biogas depending on technology; Raw materials widely available from forestry, agriculture and waste; Integrating biomass into energy supply chain will create sustainable jobs.
Geothermal	Used for heating and cooling in low enthalpy soils or by exploiting groundwater from deep underground, or used to generate electricity at a deeper level; Can be used in small and large scale systems to fit any regional setting; As an indigenous source, geothermal heating and cooling is available everywhere with benefits for all regions.
Hydropower	Differentiated between large (more than 10MW) and small (less than 10MW); One of the most cost-effective methods of generating electricity due to long life-span and low maintenance costs; Small hydropower potential should be tapped by refurbishing existing and abandoned plants, for quick regional impact.



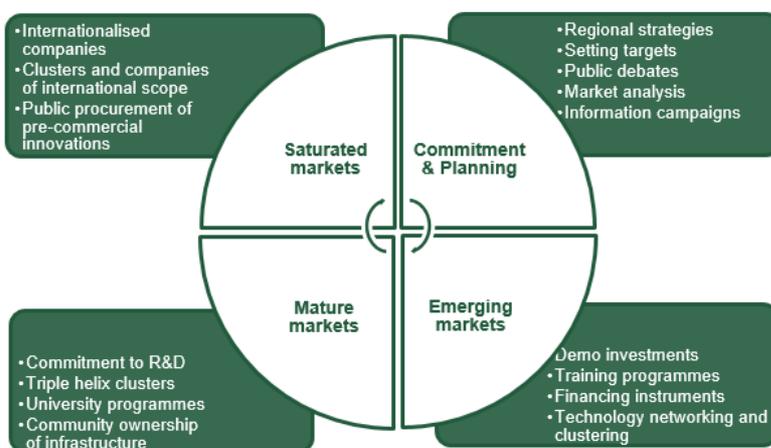
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Solar	Heat produced through solar thermal collectors, and electricity produced through concentrated solar power (CSP) and photovoltaic (PV); Greater integration into buildings, coupled with energy efficiency, has large potential for energy savings for residents; Solar thermal can be implemented throughout the continent, being both inexpensive and easy to install, with large job creation potential in installation and servicing.
Wind	Turbines can be situated on or off shore and are available in a variety of sizes; Huge opportunities for job creation in manufacturing, installation and service provision along the supply chain; Various ownership and management structures available, including co-operatives, to benefit local populations.

How to support them in your region?

The analysis of seven INTERREG IVC projects collaborating in the renewable energy sector has shown that the projects are beneficial for both experienced renewable energy regions that seek inspiration and learning regions that can get a head start by adapting policy schemes and approaches that have already been tried and tested. In this context, interregional cooperation plays a major role in accelerating the development of smart regional strategies and policies through the creation of synergies and economies of scale, the improvement of regional capacities and awareness and the demonstration of successful, local applications. On the RES Development Cycle, regions move from commitment and planning, to emerging and mature markets, before becoming saturated markets, which are export focused. Potential policies for each stage are highlighted below:



Recommendations for successful renewable energy strategies

- **Focus on regional strengths:** choose to focus on the renewable energy sources that have greatest potential in your region;
- **Have a long-term view:** set regional targets to show commitment; benchmark and monitor regional performance against targets;
- **Secure buy-in:** involve regional stakeholders and politicians in the planning process;
- **Tailor policy tools and instruments:** develop and implement regional policies that are suitable for the market maturity of your region;
- **Raise awareness:** organise communication campaigns and implement educational programmes;
- **Make the business case for renewables:** perform a cost-benefit analysis on a life cycle basis;
- **Secure investment:** create investment opportunities for citizens and tailor smart specialisation strategies and operational programmes towards sustainable energy priorities.

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This **one-day event** will showcase policy recommendations and lessons learnt resulting from the thematic analysis of the projects.

Thematic specialists and practitioners will present the knowledge acquired through interregional cooperation and discuss the latest policy trends and common challenges identified in European regions.

Interactive workshops and networking opportunities will allow those involved in policymaking to share ideas, get inspired and make new contacts for the future.

Whether you work for a local municipality, regional authority or national ministry; regional agency or European association...as long as you are involved in the policy process, you are welcome to come and share your experiences and leave with good practices you might like to try at home.

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