



Project no. IEE/09/250661

Project acronym: ENNEREG

**Full title of the action:
ENNEREG - Regions paving the way for a Sustainable Energy Europe**

Intelligent Energy – Europe (IEE)

Type of action: Sustainable Energy Communities

Key action: Horizontal

**D3.2:
Guidelines for promotional activities**

Date: 30.9.2011

Issue: 1

Responsible for D3.2:

CRES

Website: www.regions2020.eu



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1. Introduction

This document corresponds to the Deliverable 3.2 of the ENNEREG Project and its purpose is to serve as a guide for promotional activities in the ENNEREG Regions. The promotional activities ensure the successful implementation of the project. ENNEREG project is a good exercise and will act as a best practice.

In this project, Promotional activities are the actions that regions can take, in order to promote sustainable energy development towards the EU 20-20-20 goal and beyond.

The main objective of these guidelines is to build a coordinated strategy for promoting the ENNEREG outputs to the regions. As it is a public deliverable of the project, it will be also used, as a whole or partially, by any region or organisation outside of the ENNEREG consortium that need guidance in promoting Sustainable Development and in raising awareness of the regional authorities.

Guidelines will facilitate and enrich the work of the partners, regarding the promotion of: The Sustainable Energy Action Plan, the Sustainable Energy Projects and The Covenant of Mayros Initiative, in their region and, in other regions, for replication.

Guidelines will not set numbers for achievement but will serve as a tool for revealing the real work done by the partners. In order to be functional, questionnaires were distributed to the regions and each case was taken into account. In the same way, partners will use this document as a free checklist and will adjust it to their real situation and opportunities of their region. The fulfilled templates are attached as ANNEX in this document.

The first Knowledge transfer workshop of the project, produced most of the material for this document. The main objective of this workshop was to produce guidelines for promotional activities. Especially partners discussed the planning and barriers of their work and through discussion and presentations, they succeeded in transferring the experience from one region to the other.

2. Guidelines for the regions

SWOT analysis

Finding the Strong and Weak points, the Opportunities and Threats of your region, it will lead to a successful and effective dissemination plan. After regional partners make the SWOT analysis for the region, then they may choose which strategy fits more to their region.

Then, actions priority and categorisation in short, medium and long term actions will help the region making accurate programming and grab the opportunities from the beginning.

Strong basis

When a National or a European project ends, sometimes the outputs are not used or become inactive. Promotional activities should try to build a strong regional basis for the actions in order to continue after the funding mechanism is in place. So a region, would better establish a promotional campaign that can support and run in the future, on its own resources.

Use the regional network

The more publicity you give to your actions the more chances you have to multiply them. And publicity should go through every available means.

Use forums, Press releases, Newsletters, e-mails through mailing lists to promote the regional actions. The network can be fed by itself spreading the ongoing activities in its various municipalities.

Usually if you use your network for your news distribution, then the news will be then distributed to other networks. A regional authority is very proud for its actions towards sustainability and wants to show that they are pioneers. It is also a key to establish more investments. So, the sustainable projects, the Sustainable Action Plans, the political involvement to Covenant of Mayors (CoM – www.eumayors.eu), will be circulated and promoted through the networks.

SEAP and Regional Business Plan

A Sustainable Energy Action Plan must take into account the Regional Business plan. In other words, it should take all the actions from the Regional Business Plan that target, directly or indirectly, the CO2 reduction, in short or long term. Those actions may be transferred directly to the SEAP or can be more easily enriched and discussed with the regional authority. And eventually the SEAP will not only be easier approved but also, have more chances to be implemented if it is in line with the Regional Business Plan.

A very characteristic example of this is the Wales SEAP, which due to the fact that it was based on Government strategies and policies, it was promoted widely throughout the region and supported by all key agencies and organisations.

Coordinated activities

Link with agencies, organisations, projects or even other regions and communities that have common goals. Share publicity and actions that focuses on regional authorities' awareness and changing energy behaviour of the people. Join your efforts in order to have multiplied effect and make a more efficient use of the resources. Search the deliverables of other initiatives, for example training the municipal staff or use toolboxes, booklets that are produced or search for guidelines how to organise energy days, tours, etc.

A good example of coordinated activities can be found at the ENNEREG project under the "Topic Cooperation" which consists of:

Identification and elaboration of Good Practice

Evaluation and cooperation SEP development

Forum for discussion of selected issues of common relevance and interest

Site visits to interesting projects

Agreeing on joint intervention at certain event(s)

Become member of a Network

The CoM initiative shows how effective can be a European Network. A region has a lot of advantages if it is member of a network that share common targets, use same methodology and find colleagues in the work towards Sustainability. The network gives motivation and courage.

Invite authorities' representatives

The participation of Regional and municipal authorities' representatives in your promotional activities may engage a more confident commitment in sustainable development, from their part. On the other hand, it gives them the prestige that their work is appreciated and promoted.

Try also to invite politicians to participate in a workshop, a working group or ask for a presentation or a speech for a website or a newsletter. They have their own channels of communication and as a result publicity increases and the Media focus on the event.

It is important to show to the politicians that their cooperation will give their region the leadership in the promotion of Sustainability. After all, it is the best opportunity to have a face to face discussion whereas it is so difficult to fix an appointment.

Find and present the tools

It is not obvious that local and /or regional authorities are aware of all the tools that exist and as a result, an activity such as a Sustainable Energy project, may be held off due to lack of resources for implementation. For example the ELENA facility may push a mayor to become a signatory of the Covenant of Mayors.

Find and present all the financial tools, support schemes, funding mechanisms either European or National. Show the technical solutions for data collection and training. Give guidance how to apply for such funds. Find also and list all the websites that help the municipalities and regions such as ECO regions or the Energy management standard EN16001.

Supporting the COM initiative

Even if a region is not a covenant coordinator, it may support the municipalities that are or want to become signatories of the COM. Regions may show that they can assist and support their municipalities either in training their staff, or provide data and calculations or help in organising events and awareness actions or give them the opportunity to implement their Action Plan and disseminate the results in the whole region.

The regional council would try to explore the possibilities to become a covenant coordinator. The realisation of this target would be the most efficient way to promote the COM initiative.

Try also to find the reason, if there is any, why a mayor is reluctant to sign. Is there a political reason or just lack of awareness.

Education

The ENNEREG project has 8 categories of Sustainable Energy Projects promotion. Education is one of them and it has been proved that this category is a precious dissemination activity.

An example belongs to the region of Madeira, where 450 people were reached across a range of ages, while “entertainment” was a key success factor. Another example is the Region of Kalmar/Blekinge where energy advisors in each municipality were trained with the aim of triggering self-motivation for more investment in energy measures.

Use the Web

The usage of web is the most effective and in parallel, cheap way to promote the regional actions. On the web there is plenty of space to present the Sustainable Projects in the optimum way or uploading the Sustainable Energy Action Plan. Portals or blogs offer the possibility for frequent updates especially for regions that wants to show progress activity.

Even if a region has its own web site, it is wise to participate also in other sites, by sending announcements for events, projects, news, etc. Promote your regional site by establish links on third party sites.

Web could be also used as a platform for sharing experience and results and for managing the events. Statistics from the visits of the web page will help the feedback and monitoring of the regional work.

Social networks can also be used as a way to promote and disseminate events and also campaigns of the region.

Direct cooperation

The direct cooperation of the regional stakeholders is always fruitful. The interaction reveals not only their visions but also their reservations. Obstacles and arguments are usually expressed and that gives the chance to the region to start discussions in order to clear the way towards its goals.

Try, either to initiate or participate in events, workshops, conferences, seminars, round table discussions, meetings etc.

Inside the regional network, there are professionals who have the knowledge and expertise to participate as speakers in the above events.

Take advantage of a wider promotion

Regional actions especially sustainable projects may take part in larger activities such as Energy days, photo exhibitions or tours. In that way they target an extended and wider audience and have the chance to be an example for replication. Collaboration among organisations reveals good chances for dissemination.

European Dimension events

It is wise that Regions give quite often a European dimension to the events. Either by taking advantage of European events or meetings that takes place in the area or by inviting other European regional stakeholders to take part. Managenergy events are a good example.

Another idea is to link the various events by arranging them the same day or by promoting a common message (p.e. My city is my model!) or through Virtual connections.

As an example – the first Energy Days in Pomerania Region (Poland) have been organized (under the wings of EC) . The event was also a perfect opportunity for the promotion of CoM and official signatory by first five mayors in the Region.

Remove the language barrier

The promotion of regional actions is often blocked if it is disseminated only in English. Regions would better produce their promotional material in their national language so that it reaches all the target groups of the region. Of course the “European level” strengthens the actions but on the other hand, leaflets, presentations, web sites etc. are more effective in a regional network when they “speak” the language of the network.

Replication

Replication programmes are promotional activities on their own. They also provide methodology for specific promotional activities. Try to participate in such programmes that are frequently included in the call of proposals from the European Commission or other National Initiatives.

Learn from the others

Regions can learn from one another. The usage of web platforms such as Regions 202020, may act as an inspiration for the regions, which can not only get but also transfer knowledge and experience. Regions can compare their projects or events, can make plans, as other similar regions, adopt and apply ideas and learn about the type of activities, others are promoting.

Be a pioneer!

A pioneer region is a region that can reach sustainability first. If it sets targets towards 202020 or even higher, if innovative and sustainable energy projects are planned or implemented then other regions will always follow and be attracted by that region. A pioneer region is the focal point and creates the competitiveness among regions.

Get Feedback

It is recommended that regions have to receive feedback for their promotional actions in order to find the impact, the level of effectiveness and then proceed to the fine tuning. That experience will also help the replication of projects.

3. Web sites

RES champions league: <http://www.res-league.eu/>

ManagEnergy events: http://managenergy.net/events?cat_id=1

OPEN DAYS: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2011/

EU Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW): <http://eusew.eu/index.php>

ECOSPEED - Climate Software Solutions: <http://www.ecospeed.ch/>

Convenant of Mayors: <http://www.eumayors.eu>