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Changing energy use from the bottom up

In the battle to move society toward use of renewable energy sources, the regional level is the front line. CEP-REC develops Regional Energy Concepts, tools that support development of renewable energy at the regional level, where change matters. CEP-REC undertook pilots that help individual regions create their own concepts and assisted regional actors in exchanging best practices.

The challenge of maintaining affordable energy in plentiful supply is one of the greatest tests Europe has to face. That is why the European Council in 2007 adopted ambitious energy and climate change objectives for 2020, including a 20 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and 20 percent increases in energy efficiency and use of renewable energy. While some Member States are on the right path to achieve these targets, others lag far behind. But the answers cannot come only from the state-level, especially because renewable energy is produced in small amounts for consumption in the immediate area, and

energy efficiency is often achieved house-by-house. The CEP-REC project was created with the understanding that a regional approach is vital to meeting European energy targets. The project's 15 partners – including ministries, energy agencies and regional development agencies from all CENTRAL EUROPE countries – elaborate tools supporting the development of renewable energy at the regional level. The partners worked in nine pilot regions, providing each with a regional energy concept that included an assessment of the current situation and a strategy for the future.

With CEP-REC, we not only received an energy measurement for the deep understanding of the situation in our region, we are now able to promote and control our region's switch to renewable energies.

Gebhard Kaiser,
District Administrator of Oberallgaeu County and
Chairman of the Allgaeu Corporation, Germany

Common standards for a transnational strategy

Because the energy produced by renewable resources varies widely in the pilot regions, and local experiences also differ, it was essential to define some common standards. Toward this end, in each region there is an analysis of the present energy demand and supplies, as well as potential analyses of energy savings and renewable energies. With this basic knowledge, every region starts its own discussion of how to move towards a higher utilisation of renewable energy sources. The discussions include regional stakeholders and are supported by regional officials, and their goal is broad acceptance of renewable energies. Competitions are held in the pilot regions to give awards to the most innovative initiatives aimed at changing energy usage. All this work not only allows stakeholders to exchange best practices, it also produces a wealth of information on renewable energy that the partners use to develop a joint, transnational strategy for increasing use of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency.

Pilot regions become role models

CEP-REC is more than just a project undertaken by nine regions - the idea is to assist many regions on their path towards a better level of energy efficiency and a renewable energy supply. To make sure this happens, CEP-REC project partners are pairing off and working in tandem with other regions. The tools they develop and the standards they establish are offered via the internet to interested stakeholders. And an autumn 2014 conference in Munich was set with the goal of showcasing the results, including those initiatives that won competitions in the pilot regions.

9
Regional energy concepts developed in pilot regions

20
Percentage of renewable energy sources listed under the EU's targets for the year 2020

1 703
Megatons of oil equivalent consumed in the EU in 2009

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