

Regional Action Plan

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Agency Ae3R Ploiesti-Prahova



Table of content

I. General information

II. Policy context

III. Details of the actions envisaged

Action 1: Update existing SEAPs with lessons learnt from interregional cooperation in regards to community energy

1. Background and lessons learnt
2. Action 1 activities
3. Players involved
4. Timeframe
5. Costs
6. Funding sources
7. Performance indicators



I. General information

Project: Community owned and led energy for security climate change and employment (COALESCCE)

Partner organisation 4: Agentia pentru Eficienta Energetica si Energii Regenerabile (Ae3R)

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): -

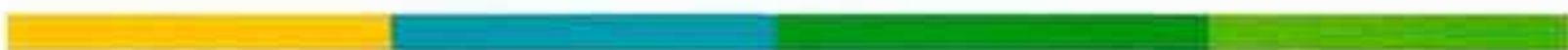
Country: ROMANIA

NUTS2 region: Sud - Muntenia

Contact person: Mr Catalin CSASZAR

email address: catalin.csaszar@ae3r-ploiesti.ro

phone number: : +40244515454



II. Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed: Prahova County Sustainable Development Plan 2014-2020 Energy Study, Strategic Measures and associated Action Plan

II.1 Introduction

Prahova County is located in the South-Central area of Romania and has a surface of **4,716 km²**, which represents approximate 2% of the country surface.

Prahova County is managed by County Council made of 37 councillors, elected for 4 years. The County Council is led by a president and 2 vice presidents, also elected for 4 years. The territorial Government representative is the prefect.

From the point of view of **administrative organization**, the Prahova County has 2 cities (Ploiesti – the capital and Campina), 12 towns and 90 communes with 406 villages, Prahova being the county with the greatest number of cities and towns in Romania (14).

Prahova County is part of the Development Region Sud Muntenia besides other 6 counties.

The Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Agency “AE3R Ploiesti-Prahova”:

www.ae3r-ploiesti.ro

The employees of AE3R Ploiesti - Prahova Agency are trained and authorized to provide Energy Performance Certificates for buildings. The Agency inspected a large part of the public buildings in Prahova County, providing energy audits or energy performance certificates as appropriate and technical expertise for refurbishment or attracting funds to implement the recommended energy efficiency measures.

Our organisation were particularly interested in working on the project to explore opportunities around 2 themes:-

1. Providing the necessary tools and expertise needed for the local communities to become aware of their potential and emerge as leading actors in the development of sustainable energy action plans and in the implementation of measures that will trigger short chains of production, investments in energy efficiency and small local renewable energy production, while providing increased energy security in their area;
2. means to identify appropriate business and financing models to trigger the involvement of local communities, public authorities and private investors in common renewable energy production and energy efficiency projects.

And more specifically:-

1. How can the local energy plans be improved to support the establishment of “community energy” groups and projects?

2. How to encourage the community to get involved in renewable energy and energy efficiency projects?
3. How can the private and public sectors promote and invest in the energy security of the local communities?
4. How can we develop sustainable business and financing models engaging community groups and private/public partnerships?

We are happy that through our involvement in the COALESCCE project we have been able to satisfy our needs in identifying the following actions as we move into Phase 2 of the project lifecycle.

III. Details of the actions envisaged

Action 1: Update existing SEAPs with lessons learnt from interregional cooperation in regards to community energy

1. Background and lessons learnt

Romania benefits from a strong national energy strategy supported by national and regional operational programmes each with its own financing opportunities which in turn give the public authorities the flexibility required in implementing their local/regional projects, as long as those are part of the actions envisaged in their local/regional SEAPs.

At regional level, Ae3R Ploiesti-Prahova” developed Prahova County Sustainable Development Plan 2012-2020 Energy Study, Strategic Measures and Associated Action Plan during 2011, the implementation of the policy at a regional level falls to the Prahova County Council, a founding member of the agency. Ae3R is committed to keep it updated, while the Management Board acts as a consultative body.

The COALESCCE project provided a wealth of information and best practice examples (as seen in detail on page 6) from various regions on what challenges they face and how they tackle those challenges to support a strong energy community development in their area. While certain barriers are similar, the unique legislative framework and financing opportunities of each region requires a specific approach in regards to tackling those barriers.

One of the most important lessons we came across during the various peer reviews was the importance of a bottom-up approach when dealing with the energy issues, involving the local community and stakeholders, providing the required technical expertise where needed to support the correct assessment of their needs and finding solutions to implement projects tailored to the local conditions.

Ae3R involved early in the first phase of the COALESCCE project various regional stakeholders which form the Agency’s Management Board such as Prahova County Council, Ploiesti Municipality, Veolia Energy Prahova, Petroleum and Gas University Ploiesti, Urlati Municipality, Mizil Municipality to name a few. Urlati and Mizil were particularly interested in the COALESCCE project since while they recently developed their own SEAPs, they have further ambitions to update them and include more from the

lessons learnt and expertise gathered from the project. These local ambitions are key to influence the regional action plan as acknowledged by the representatives of Prahova County Council presents at these meetings, which is one of the founding members of the Agency along with Ploiesti Municipality. While some of these stakeholders participated actively in the peer reviews and workshops organized during the first phase, Ae3R updated them all on the development of the COALESCCE project through trimestrial meetings, semestrial project newsletters and online media.

A key step of the COALESCCE project was the peer review in Prahova during 16 – 20 April 2018 when a team of experts and project partners was busy trying to answer the questions we raised:

- 1) How can the local energy plans be improved to support the establishment of “community energy” groups and projects?
- 2) How to encourage the community to get involved in renewable energy and energy efficiency projects?
- 3) How can the private and public sectors promote and invest in the energy security of the local communities?
- 4) How can we develop sustainable business and financing models engaging community groups and private/public partnerships?

and to achieve the outcomes we expected from the peer review:

- 1) Working ideas on how to trigger the involvement of community groups, public authorities and businesses in the development and implementation of local and regional energy action plans and measures.
- 2) Recommendations on possible means of financing local community energy projects.

The team provided some valuable feedback and recommendations on two main themes: Communication and Finances using a SWOT analysis based on the presentations, interviews, questions and site visits.

The recommendations below were supported by a plethora of best practice examples:

Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a toolkit to engage citizens in community energy schemes (e.g. for retrofit of blocks of flats) • Utilise the “Green Light” centre to provide resources for citizens wanting to develop community energy schemes • More involvement of energy agency in community engagement • Ploiesti SEAP should include community energy as a tool for delivering objectives • Identify existing community groups
Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration community energy project(s) led by the local authority with shares made available to local citizens, delivered with local companies – maybe EU funded? • Develop new funding models to target citizens and existing community groups

The best practice examples gave our stakeholders a new understanding on where community energy



stands in different regions and how they can involve citizens in this process. Based on their feedback we selected a few of them which are showcased below.

Bioenergy Villages - Engagement Guideline

More than 180 bioenergy villages with citizens engagement are implemented in Germany. In order to use this knowledge and experience a practical guideline based on the information and expertise of local stakeholders has been developed. The guideline is freely available and can be used as an information basis and as a manual for stakeholders. Every group of community energy has their individual solution and approach nevertheless the procedure to form a group is very similar. The Guideline helps to prevent common mistakes and supports groups to find their path to create a community energy group. It contains practical information, legal information, best practice examples as well as further information for consulting and expertise. Through the guideline community energy groups can be supported especially at the initial phase.

https://mediathek.fnr.de/media/downloadable/files/samples/b/i/bioenergiedoerfer_2014.pdf

Oldham community energy finance model

Oldham is one of the poorest areas of Greater Manchester. The council is a 'co-operative council' and wanted the benefits of renewable energy to be shared with the residents. The council conducted feasibility studies on schools and a community centre for PV installation. Local members of the community were invited to collaborate on the project. Three people came forward to help, bringing a range of business and environmental activism skills. The study identified five schools and a community centre that were feasible for community-owned energy. A type of co-operative known as a Community Benefit Society was formed and they signed roof-top leases at zero rent. The group, called Oldham Community Power, offered shares. They raised some money, and borrowed a low interest loan from the council to meet the FIT deadline and install the PV panels. Once local people could see the PV panels on the roofs, they bought shares in the organisation, and over half of the cost of the scheme was paid for by local people who receive an annual interest payment on their shares. See:

<http://oldhamcommunitypower.org.uk/>

ESCOs investing in communities in flats in Spain

ESCO investment in multi-family buildings has helped them to realise energy efficiency savings in communities where residents do not have the money to invest up-front in energy efficiency measures. The ESCO carries out an audit to see what measures will be possible and financially viable. The company makes the investment and signs a contract with the community for between 5 – 10 years depending on the scheme. Residents normally continue to pay the usual energy costs, with the difference going to the ESCO, this then pays off the investment. Once the cost has been recovered by the ESCO the measures then belong to the community the residents then benefit fully from the energy efficiency cost savings. For more information contact German Rumbo.

Solar PV on tenement blocks in Sofia

Sofia is the capital city of Bulgaria and is very densely populated. The population is occupying mainly multi-level blocks of flats more than 90% of which are privately owned.

The PV system was installed on the roof of 15 level blocks of flats in Geo Milev District in Sofia. The building was constructed in 2010 – 2012 under the so called law on housing cooperatives which the shareholders (members) the right of use to their own dwellings in the society's property (right of residence). Housing cooperatives may also conduct activities associated with the right of residence.

Upon completion of the construction, a certain amount of money remained in the housing cooperative, which according to the law could only be used for the building. A decision was taken to invest in solar PV on the roof, which would generate income to the whole block. "The housing cooperative invested EURO 72 000 in this project," says Anton Jeleu, Chairman of the Board of the Cooperative. It is worth buying and installing 120 solar panels with a total power of 28.2 KWp. At the time the investment was realised the expected paid back period was 6 years based on the tariffs. However, due to an almost 50% reduction in preferential tariffs for solar installations of this scale currently this period is extended to 10 years.

Despite this fact the benefit for the housing cooperative is that the FIT payments provide income to maintain common areas and green grounds around the apartment block. This creates a better living environment and a good quality residential area, i.e. contributes positively to making places better for people and increased house value.

2. Action 1 activities

The Management Board of Ae3R Ploiesti-Prahova consists of 7 stakeholders from public and private sector: 2 public authorities (Prahova County Council and Ploiesti Municipality), 1 public company, 3 private companies and 1 energy expert (private person). They followed the COALESCCE project during its entire duration, being informed of the activities and the results, they were involved in the Prahova Peer Review, but also in several external activities and provided valuable expertise to a successful implementation of the project in Prahova County. They also act as a consultative body in regards to the policy instrument.

During the Management Board meeting, Ae3R presented the results of the discussions with the municipalities, the suggestions for improvement and the continuous technical support for the Urlati and Mizil Municipalities ambition to update their existing SEAPs, use the lessons and best practice examples learnt during the first phase of the COALESCCE project in regards to the involvement of stakeholders and citizens into community energy projects and adapt them to the local needs. Prahova County Council representative present during the meeting acknowledged the innovative development in these municipalities, commended them for their efforts and endorsed the proposed updates as a natural development to strengthen the links between local, regional and national strategies.

Ae3R will take the following steps to deliver the action and influence the regional planning:

- a) Ae3R will organize a meeting between Prahova County Council, Urlati Municipality and Mizil Municipality with the participation of other relevant stakeholders (such as University, Electricity Company, private companies, representatives of the citizens etc.) to ensure the projects are viable, adapted to the local needs of the communities, do involve the required stakeholders to be successful and are linked to the regional energy strategy;
- b) Ae3R will conduct a communication campaign with the support of municipalities to involve the necessary stakeholders, foster networking, discuss the SEAP changes and receive feedback;
- c) Ae3R will organize a workshop with the support of the University and private sector for the technical and financial staff of Urlati and Mizil municipalities to assess the barriers, provide solutions and to prepare the projects they will implement;
- d) Ae3R will provide technical expertise for the whole duration of the action implementation with

- energy assessment studies, energy audits, energy performance certificates etc. where relevant;
- e) Ae3R will monitor the results achieved and propose corrective measures where necessary.

3. Players involved

The stakeholders envisioned to be involved in this action are shown below:

1. Ae3R Ploiesti-Prahova as a COALESCCE partner.
2. Prahova County Council
3. Urlati Municipality
4. Mizil Municipality
5. Representatives of the citizens
6. Petroleum and Gas University Ploiesti
7. Local Public Companies
8. Private Companies

4. Timeframe

a) meeting between Prahova County Council, Urlati Municipality and Mizil Municipality with the participation of other relevant stakeholders	In the first semester of phase 2
b) communication campaign with the support of municipalities to involve the necessary stakeholders	In the second semester of phase 2
c) organize a workshop with the support of the University and private sector for the technical and financial staff of Urlati and Mizil municipalities	In the second semester of phase 2
d) technical expertise for the whole duration of the action implementation	For the whole duration of phase 2
e) monitor the results achieved and propose corrective measures	For the whole duration of phase 2

5. Costs

Ae3R will devote working hours to ensure the implementation of the activities in this action which will mainly comprise of organizing various meetings, workshops and campaign, but also providing the technical expertise where required. It is not envisaged that there will be any significant costs associated with this action other than the provision of existing staff time.

These costs will come from the core budget of AE3R.

6. Funding sources

Ae3R or the municipalities/stakeholders where applicable will provide room space and equipment for presentations during meetings/workshop. Ae3R will use their own car for site visits where necessary. Ae3R will make use of online media network to reach out to as many stakeholders as possible (through LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and own website). In some case the Phase 2 budget of the COALESCCE project will provide some of the budget.

7. Performance indicators

The targets to be monitored in the second phase for COALESCCE project in order to reach the strategic objective of this Action Plan, Action 1:

- a) meetings with involved actors and stakeholders: 2;
- b) initiate the update of the SEAPs of Urlati and Mizil Municipalities: 2.

Risk Assessment				
Type of risk	Low	Medium	High	Preventive Measures
Finding the necessary funding for the projects part of the updated SEAPs		X		Along the national funding programmes assess the possibility to use private ESCOs like in Germany/Spain, lending public roofs like in UK to ensure projects in the SEAPs are implemented.
Capacity building of the stakeholders	X			Involve enthusiast citizens and the municipalities in the campaign to target the required stakeholders.
Low quality of projects in the assessment, design, preparation or implementation phase	X			Involve a wide array of expertise from academic sector (University), public sector (experienced companies and staff) and private sector (extensive RES and EE experience) to deliver high quality projects.



BOGDAN POTLOGIA
DIRECTOR

