

**Renewable
energy**



**Why reinvent the wheel?
Capitalising on regional policy
achievements in promoting
renewable energy**



October 2013



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Published by the Joint Technical Secretariat of the INTERREG IVC Programme 2007-2013

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Editing: Richard Conlin, Paul Webster

Design and printing: ESN – European Service Network

Printed in October 2013

Photo credits: cover © Marafona, Shutterstock

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Why reinvent the wheel? Capitalising on regional policy achievements in promoting renewable energy

Renewable energies present many new challenges but also opportunities for regional policymakers. In this context, the interregional cooperation programme, INTERREG IVC, has recently published the results of an important policy analysis, one in a series of 12, each focusing on a different policy theme. This brochure offers just a brief preview of what you can find in the report on 'Renewable energy', which details a raft of tried-and-tested good practices and offers timely evidence-based policy recommendations.

Renewable energy: an emerging policy challenge

Europe is striving to increase the share of renewable energies in its energy mix. The success of this strategy depends on the full mobilisation of regional and local governments.

Renewable Energy Sources (RES) are unlimited, free and most have very low operating costs. Renewable energy production is also CO₂ neutral, making it the energy form of choice for climate-conscious policymakers.

What's more, a raft of long-term benefits will come from investing in local energy production, including: new business opportunities (renewables have to be harvested, transformed, transported and stored); sustainable local employment that is immune to globalisation; and a cleaner environment. Renewable energy should therefore be a prime focus for regional development policies.

“Without regional involvement, the EU 20/20/20 targets will fail. Results are essentially achieved at a local level, where people live.”

Thomas Engelke, RENREN project





Renewable energy: obstacles at the regional level

Experience shows however that regional and local governments face multiple obstacles when promoting renewable energy. These include:

- Insufficient information and awareness, which are required to understand the full costs of fossil fuels and the benefits of renewables;
- Public resistance and a NIMBY ('Not-in-my-back-yard') syndrome regarding new technologies, and certain renewables;
- The lengthy timeframe involved in switching from a centralised to a decentralised energy system.

...and, in a perspective of interregional cooperation, policy transfer comes with its own challenges:

- The direct transfer of good practices is difficult, as they are often context-specific, but good practices can always serve as inspiration.





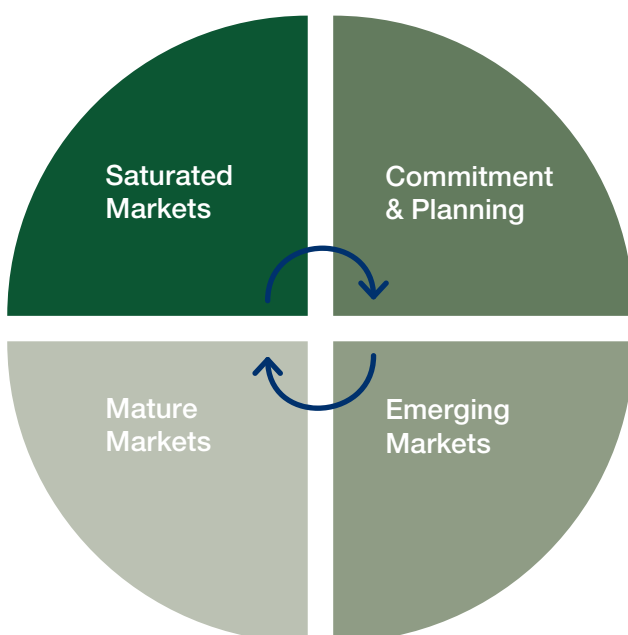
Meeting the challenges: good practices from INTERREG IVC

The INTERREG IVC capitalisation study focused on seven projects and their 212 good practices. Its findings will be of interest for advanced as well as learning regions looking to develop renewable energies.

Regions must build on existing strengths and by seeking inspiration from policies that have been tried-and-tested elsewhere they can progress more quickly. In the perspective of policy transfer, a four stage RES development cycle (Fig. 1) was used in the report to classify good practices with the aim of enabling practitioners to judge their appropriateness for their own region more easily.

Most regions involved in the INTERREG IVC programme are actually in the 'Emerging Markets' stage of market maturity for renewable energies, but good practices are available in all the development stages, and therefore for all regions, regardless of whether they have been implementing renewables policies for thirty years, or are just getting started. An overview of the technological fields covered by the practices can be found in Figure 2. Some of these practices are identified here:

Figure 1: The RES development cycle



Commitment and planning

Regional RES strategy and policy, RENREN project

Marine energy is a relatively untapped energy source, with technology still in the development stages. The Welsh government (UK) is seeking to capitalise on the future opportunities of the sector and has produced a planning document, 'Wales: A Low Carbon Revolution', which sets a target of 4GW of energy from marine sources by 2025. Current policy focuses on exploration, zoning and licensing, designing planning processes and compiling data. The planning exercise has created working relationships between stakeholders and has established a framework for the growth of the industry.

Emerging Markets

Institutional support, More4NRG project

In Romania, the Maramures Energy Management Agency helps local authorities to formulate strategies and policies for RES development, as well as for environmental education. The Agency was created with the assistance of the Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) programme, using finance from the European Commission and the Maramures County Council. The Agency will initiate five renewable energy projects, certify 15 public buildings for energy efficiency, sign six cooperation agreements with external partners, and create an inventory of energy consumption and production to assist in developing future projects and an energy master plan.

Mature Markets

Strong commitment to R&D, BIO.EN.AREA project

Teagasc is the Irish national authority that provides research, training, and advisory services to agriculture and food industries, as well as to rural communities. Its research at Oak Park focuses on growing bioenergy crops, harvesting and logistics. Energy crops are grown onsite allowing for testing on all phases of crop growth, as well as in relation to agronomical issues such as weed control, bio-remediation, and crop nutrition. Research also



looks into conversion of crops into biofuels and pellets, respecting quality and combustion criteria. Teagasc's Forestry Unit advises landowners and forestry industries. Researchers have developed a variety of services to spread good practice and communicate research results.

Mature Markets

University programmes, More4NRG project

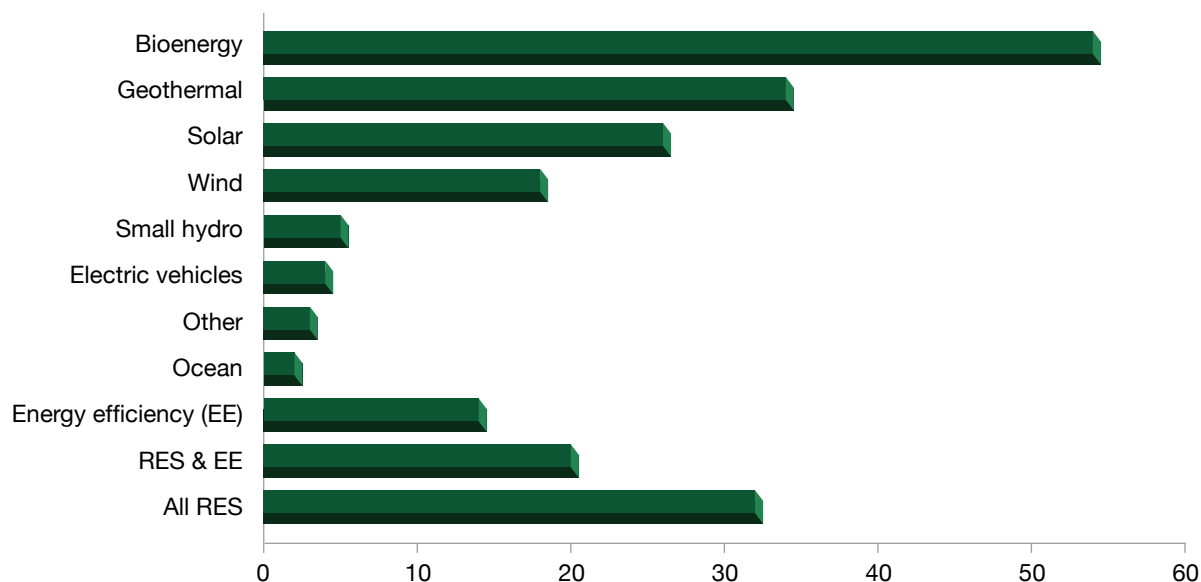
In 2007, five universities in the Lazio region in Italy introduced courses dedicated to renewable energy sources and energy efficiency after signing an agreement with the regional authority. The courses are available to students in a wide range of disciplines so as to widen the reach of knowledge on the subject, including to non-scientific students. At one university, passing an exam on sustainable energy is a prerequisite for a degree, regardless of the field of study. Extending access to RES education brings in other areas important to the growth of sustainable energy, such as law, economics, and social sciences. The five universities have also created e-learning platforms, websites and training materials, and have installed a photovoltaic plant for demonstration purposes.

Saturated Markets

Clusters of international scope, Regions4GreenGrowth project

Noord-Brabant has invested in knowledge infrastructure and innovation activities to create an internationally competitive solar industry. The Dutch province identified regional strengths in solar technology and then worked with stakeholders to support the industry. A cluster working on thin film solar photovoltaic technology was created by combining four separate research and development institutes. A regional innovation scheme, operated by a regional development agency, supports the commercial exploitation of the research produced within the cluster by supporting start-ups. The cluster and business support services together contribute to the goals set out in Noord-Brabant's 2010-2020 roadmap, which encompasses a variety of energy themes.

Figure 2: Good practices identified by technology field





Discover more about current renewable energy policy

The INTERREG IVC ‘Renewable Energy’ capitalisation report has been produced with regional policymakers in mind. The full report provides them with a wide-ranging review of the best practices that have been or are being shared and transferred within European regions in the field of renewable energies. It will be a valuable source of information for regional policymakers who wish to develop renewables in their regions. The report will also be of interest to national authorities, journalists, and professionals in the field looking to better understand the challenges and opportunities of developing renewables at regional level.

Readers will find the following in the full report:

- An overview of the state-of-the-art in renewable energy technologies;
- A review of European, national and regional policy frameworks;
- A portfolio of policy measures that are described in terms of their stage in the RES development cycle, thereby enabling policymakers to more easily identify the policies that firstly, are best suited to the development stage of renewables technology they wish to invest in, and secondly, in view of European priorities for 2014-2020 period, are consistent with smart specialisation.

The shift towards renewable energy is a true energy revolution. This total system change requires a strategic approach and long-term political commitment in order to trigger the necessary investments. Regions engaging in this change process need to keep in mind that it may take 30 years before they can be considered a renewable energy region.

The report provides specific recommendations for individual INTERREG IVC projects as well as broader recommendations stemming from the thematic analysis, and which can be presented under the following categories:

- Thematic recommendations for policymakers

In particular, regions in the ‘Emerging Market’ development stage need to base their strategies and action plans for renewables on existing strengths. Regional development policies that are vital to the development of a successful RES market include: capacity building and training along the value chain; engagement of all stakeholders, from residents to business owners; simplification of planning and permitting procedures; the creation of a sound science and innovation infrastructure; and, access to finance, for example, through community schemes.

- Strategic recommendations for future territorial cooperation

The existing knowledge of renewable practices at regional level should be actively managed, promoted and enriched, including by collecting regional renewable energy statistics. New ways of accelerating the implementation of ready-to-adapt policy practices should be explored.

Download the full report from: www.interreg4c.eu/capitalisation

INTERREG IVC Thematic Capitalisation



Innovation systems



Innovation capacity of SMEs



Eco-innovation



Creative industries



Entrepreneurship



E-government services



Demographic change



Rural development



Climate change



Energy efficiency



Renewable energy



Sustainable transport

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.

In their presentation of the wide range of innovative good practices and policies improved by the projects, the reports offer a timely inventory of up-to-date evidence and experience to help regional authorities and interested stakeholders introduce or develop their regional policies. Policymakers and practitioners at all levels – regional, national and European – will find theme-specific recommendations tailored to them.

This brochure is a preview of the full-length report in the field of renewable energies.

The Interregional Cooperation Programme INTERREG IVC, financed by the European Union's Regional Development Fund, helps Regions of Europe work together to share experience and good practice in the areas of innovation, the knowledge economy, the environment and risk prevention. EUR 302 million was granted for project funding but, more than that, a wealth of knowledge and potential solutions are also on hand for regional policy makers.



www.interreg4c.eu