

Introduction to Panel 3:

Local and regional activities

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Introduction

The implementation of energy policy requires actions at local level. More than 450 energy agencies and local organisations are active in the EU Member States, developing projects and assisting the regional and local administrations. The panel groups 17 papers and 5 posters, describing good practices having an innovative approach and which can demonstrate a significant success, according to agreed assessment criteria and objective tools.

The following specific aspects have been considered in the selection of the contributions: i) best ways to assist the local administrations in improving the energy performance of their premises and other technical installations, reducing also the public expenditure; ii) local action plans for Renewable energy sources development, with a high level of participation of local stakeholders (like for example the “Sustainable Energy Community” concept); iii) other means to enhance the Community leadership and the direct involvement of final users.

The panel structure

The presentations have been grouped in six sessions covering most of the desired aspects. The first session starts with Urban Energy Strategies, presented by three authors. The first is Rajat Gupta (3,122), from Oxford Brookes University, illustrating how Academia, Industry and City joined their effort in creating the energy scenarios of the City in various projections, stepped up until 2030 (-40% CO₂ emissions). The innovative aspect is that these scenarios are scientifically created on the basis of sound bottom-up information on the actual saving potential and renewable energy opportunities, and all data managed by a GIS tool. This means providing the city with a monitoring tool for the coming years, to verify the effective approaching to the targets.

The second scenario is from Upper Austria (Egger and Öhlinger, 3,076), where the regional energy agency has assisted the Administration in a wide action directed at reducing energy consumption in public buildings. The strategy includes, policy, financing, communication, advice, training: a full set of converging actions.

The last Urban Strategy is from Boulder, Colorado, from where Larry Kinney et al, Synertech Systems Corporation (3,253), will report the City initiative (in a situation of absence of federal commitment), initiated by a referendum where citizens supported with their vote a new urban policy addressed to greenhouse gas reduction.

The next group of presentations moves from strategies to single programmes, all implemented in schools, and having a singular similarity in approach. The first two try to exploit the appeal of solar energy to operate energy efficiency improvements and changes of user behaviour. The experiences are from Australia (Stacey Tabert, Central Queensland University, 3,136) and Germany (Kurt Berlo, Wuppertal Institut and Dieter Seifried, 3,335). The third one, presented by a British author (Peter Webber, Leicester Energy Agency et al., 3,219), but reporting results from the partners in a European Project, coming from four different countries, shows the potential of the new monitoring instruments and methods in inducing changes in energy consumption.

The obvious next step concerns communication, showing interesting new approaches to transmit suitable messages and reaching the target groups. The accent is not on the contents, but on the tools: we start with new media (TV and Internet, in The Netherlands but inspired by Norway), then pass to awards to Communities (Austria and Switzerland, then extended to five other EU States), and finally to the role, effectiveness and

efficiency (cost effectiveness) of the local energy advice centres in France. The contributions are from Henk Van Elburg of SenterNovem and Catelijne van de Moosdijk, The Netherlands (3,121), from Silke Mader and Andrea Leindl, Austrian Energy Agency (3,089), and Eliane Métreau and Kenya Tillerson, I.C.E., France (3,367).

Community participation (or leadership) is the theme of the next group of presentations. An example of the Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) approach opens the way. Starting from the EIE Work programme definition (SEC are local communities in which politicians, planners, developers, market actors and citizens actively cooperate to demonstrate and develop a high degree of decentralised energy supply, favouring renewable energies as sources, together with a conscientious application of energy efficiency measures in all end-use sectors), the authors (Hans Jacob Mydske, NEPAS and Kari Aamodt Espegren, Norway, 3,053) present the methods developed in the frame of a European project.

The second paper introduces a completely different approach: an economist's evaluation of the benefits in terms of jobs and economic output of some US programmes on demand side management (replacement of old appliances and improvements of the building's performance for climatisation). The authors (John Gardner and Lisa Skumatz, 3,315) apply improved estimation methods and get the result that the output is not always as good as expected (the cost for the campaign is not economically multiplied by the activities it generates), suggesting a more careful estimation of the non-energy impacts of the promotional campaigns. This contribution will surely open the discussion about experts of different background.

The last one of the group is from Joanne Wade, Impetus Consulting, et al UK (3,108), illustrating the evolution of the British Government policy towards the Local Authorities in the last decades. The perspective is extremely interesting also for non-British readers, as it opens new interpretative views on the future role of the local organisations operating in strict contact with public administrations.

Three local initiatives are then presented, having an effective combination of new technologies and sound planning. The first is the restructuring of the Oslo street lighting system, using the most advanced information and communication technologies (and proper energy efficient devices). The author (Tor Mjøs from Norconsult AS, 3,143) shows not only the technical details but also the interactions with the other aspects of urban policy, the emerging obstacles and the future perspectives at European level.

The second paper is from Peter Sattler and Martin Sampl, showing the Austrian programme for energy saving in industry (3,195). The focus is on new energy auditing and assessment tools, but achieved results and economic impacts are also described. As the work of energy agencies with the productive sector is in general much more difficult than with public organisations and citizens, the information looks very useful.

Finally, Alain Nadaï from CIRED and Olivier Labussière (3,013), France, describe a very controversial situation in his country, regarding the contrast between national centralisation and local autonomy, concerning the decision making on wind parks. The topic is so delicate and debated now in most European Countries, that this contribution, even if referred to a specific national debate, contains several lessons for all.

With the last two papers we have answers to extremely delicate questions: one is if the new financing tools for the lower income citizens in developing countries (microfinance) are suitable for renewable energy supply. The potential of this possibility is as big as is limited the available experience up to now. The authors (Maike Bunse of Triple Innova et al, Germany, 3,186) provide a long time expected overview of several initiatives in different developing countries, give a very objective evaluation, indicating pros and cons and alternative solutions. Both the renewable energy aspects and the microfinance ones are considered. This document is of essential importance for people interested in operating in the frame of the international co-operation with developing countries in the rural electrification and household energy supply field.

The last paper affords the problem of energy saving in buildings where the tenant and the owner cannot reach agreement on who pays and who benefits of energy retrofitting investments. Lloyd Woodford, of the Australia Government (3,343), presents a new programme, called Green Lease Schedule, providing a solution to this problem for commercial office buildings. The solution seems so obvious, after reading, that you ask yourself why it has not come to mind to all our governments. But the author provides also the many necessary tools (certification of buildings, energy management plan, monitoring, building management committee, dispute resolving,...) which clarify the complexity of the matter.

Five very good posters will be shown in this panel. In the corresponding short papers we find the description of local initiatives in Estonia (Antti Roose, University of Tartu, 3,222) and in various States – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovakia, and Hungary – under UNDP funding (Susan Legro, Eco Ltd – 3,127). In the former case the idea is to create a Renewable Energy Park, providing demonstration and information to the visitors. In the latter is a mixture of energy solutions for weak population layers (Roma communities, refugees,...), showing all the difficulties in implementing and assessing benefits of this delicate type of interventions.

Another experience has been developed by a US local utility (Delta-Montrose Electric Association, Colorado), is illustrated by Katherine Jonhson and Ed Thomas, Marketing Development Group (3,170), and has a peculiar characteristic: the "usual" distribution of compact fluorescent lamps is performed by local NGOs, which use this initiative to raise funding (charging an extra cost on the distributed lamp).

Nele Glienke, from the Fraunhofer Institute Systems and Innovation Research, Germany et al (3,123), explain how the local electric utilities in the country are preparing themselves to the emission trading scheme. It appears that Combined Heat and Power is a topic where they are well informed and interested in applying for emission trading purposes. This is not the case for renewables, where an enthusiasm on the possibility of utilisation corresponds to a very poor information on the actual possibilities in that frame.

Another USA contribution comes from Andy Coghlan, Alliance to save energy, Washington DC and Lisa Skumatz (3,320), evaluating the results of the Green Campus programme (raising awareness and produce energy saving in Universities). The results are quite controversial, but several lessons may be learned for future initiatives.