



Northern Periphery and
Arctic Programme
2014–2020



EUROPEAN UNION

Investing in your future
European Regional Development Fund

Policy Influencer Programme

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What is the RECENT Policy Influencer Programme?

The RECENT project aims to increase energy knowledge in rural communities, and help them to have more resilient and energy efficient public infrastructure capable of handling climate change related risks.

Many stakeholders living and working in the project region want to contribute to policy change where it impacts or prohibits evolution. These stakeholders may be small community non governmental organisations looking to improve assets for local communities or large Government departments trying to improve regional development opportunities. Policy can take many forms from changes to legislation, regulations, resource & asset allocation to decisions about whose voices to include in debates or what evidence to base decisions on.

RECENT aims at supporting communities in the NPA area by a Policy Influencer Programme to give them a voice to influence mid- and long-term policy making. Beyond, RECENT wants to support decision makers on all level to improve policies related to energy, water and sustainable community planning. The RECENT approach is two-fold:

1. Capacity building for communities on the policy process and on advocacy by a knowledge exchange programmes, with workshops, best practice guidelines and templates to improve the stock of organisational knowledge.
2. Information campaign for decision makers on all level based on project findings. We will produce positioning papers, explaining the findings of the project in the context of potential policy refinement or change. This work will be achieved by means of road shows and events in the regional policy-making centres, ending in Brussels itself where the transnational policy-makers will be engaged.

There will be one common Policy Influencer Programme focusing on joint challenges of all involved regions and a transnational approach. Each region will work on its own specific objectives and its specific regional / local circumstances in the framework of the common Policy Influencer Programme.

RECENT problem description

The NPA area is characterised by a high quality but fragile natural environments. The 5 partner countries are some of the top regions of the world as regards the amount and quality of water. While water is abundant, to provide water services in these regions is energy intensive. Local communities in the Programme area face impacts of major global trends, such as climate change impacts, European policy development and rapid economic changes.

The RECENT partners in a joint workshop have identified the following barriers for communities to develop sustainable energy&water services:

- Lack of trust which also leads to difficulties to think and implement innovations
- Lack of skills, information and awareness
- Legislation and regulations are complicated and sometimes contradictory
- Short term planning is dominating, e.g. in form of short time pay back demand
- Entire economy based on growths and fossil fuel – difficult to overcome on local level
- Harsh and cold climate with high energy demand
- Aging infrastructure with high investment needs
- Increasing housing area per person, more single households
- Support schemes are tailored often for large-scale operations or individual households. The ‘community scale’ in between, such as schemes run by local authorities, schools, cooperatives and community groups, has been overlooked.
- Urbanization as well as an aging population with different needs leading to less tax money available for support schemes and capacity building

In summary: The RECENT communities are small, remote, and face challenges by depopulation and brain-drain as well as a general lack of resources and capacities. To become less vulnerable and more resilient, communities need to:

- develop new fields of business and income, not least by using renewable sources of energy within public infrastructure and by focus on demand management as well as co-management of resources;
- increase knowledge and skills by capacity building and building networks;
- Implementation long-term strategic policies and measures.

However, the scale of the challenges faced is often beyond the scope of the individual communities to cope with on their own, and requires

- **a wide range of competences and expertise;**
- **Policy support by an efficient Multi-Level-Governance approach**



RECENT Stakeholder Analysis

All RECENT partners implemented a Stakeholder Analysis to identify key stakeholders. There are significant commonalities which are summarized in the following table. Categorisation of how much effort of interaction is required has been done from the view of the RECENT team and the pilot communities which are eager to become more resilient and energy independent. It is obvious, that local and regional stakeholders for communities are key and a link to both the national and the European level.

<p>A</p> <p>Minimal effort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - International media & newsletters - Experts on EU level - National customer networks - International business networks 	<p>B</p> <p>Keep informed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional offices of national authorities - Regional NGOs - Costumer networks - International networks - Municipal networks) - National media - Consults, consulting companies - Network of Energy Agencies - Websites, social media - National business networks and branch organisations
<p>C</p> <p>Keep satisfied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional offices for EU programmes - Regional funding programs - Participants at seminars & other events - Regional media - Experts from relevant companies - Special interest magazines - Experts from international partners - National funding bodies - Relevant national authorities 	<p>D</p> <p>Key Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local authorities in the region - Regional authorities - Regional Energy Agency and similar organisations - (Regional) Universities - Regional branch organisations & business networks - Regional education and training programs, teachers and multipliers



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Policy Analysis

Based on the joint expert workshop in Jokkmokk, March 2016

In 2008, the so-called EU '20-20-20' climate and energy package has been adopted. It committed the EU to increase its share of energy consumed from renewable resources to 20%; reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20%; and increase energy efficiency by 20% - all by 2020. In this context, local and regional authorities were encouraged to contribute to these objectives by developing their own targets and strategies locally. In many cases, local and regional authorities are dependent on communities and other types of initiatives to reach their targets. With an increase in the number of approaches involving different levels of government, the problem of overall coherence arose. MLG aims to support public authorities to achieve more coherencies between these different approaches.

For the RECENT area, the following policy challenges could be identified:

- Europe is relatively heterogeneous, too big for a One Size fits all policy. EU policies are relatively broad and much depends on national implementation what makes joint work across countries more complicated.
- EU policy making is seen to be far away and difficult to understand and to influence; more information about EU policies needed for local decision.
- Linking command and control mechanism to policies in a clear and transparent way which also is accessible and understandable for small communities.
- Matching policies with new technical solutions and demands.

Key RECENT Policy Recommendation: Multi-Level-Governance approach

Communities in the NPA area are facing specific challenges. To overcome barriers in the implementation of truly sustainable energy & water services, an integrated resource governance across environmental structures should be pursued. This requires communication across administrative boundaries. By this, significant technical, ecological and social potential can be tapped to reach European environmental, energy and climate targets. A MLG approach will deliver win-win results for all levels.

“Multi-Level Governance means coordinated action by the European Union, the Member States and Local and Regional authorities, based on partnership...to create and implement EU policies. It leads to responsibility being shared between the different tiers of government.”

The Committee of the Regions, 2009 White Paper

A MLG approach can achieve multiple benefits, helping to¹:

- Ensure coherency between local and regional plans: a collaborative process can help to integrate plans and policies at regional and local levels (for greater efficiency)
- Develop clear and consistent visions: sharing knowledge and ideas between authorities can enable ambitious and realistic visions to be created. Proper attention is paid to local realities, alongside the strategic needs (helping to achieve targets)
- Establish more favourable financing mechanisms: partnering up with other authorities can create more secure and stable conditions to attract investment
- Communicate more effectively: defining objectives collaboratively ensures that messages are harmonised between stakeholders (avoiding confusion)
- Establish consistent monitoring and reporting tools or reporting structures, to ensure plans are monitored more coherently between the local and regional levels
- Share expertise, skills and knowledge: this can fill important skills gaps in the planning process and facilitate the spread of good practices and innovative actions;
- Resources, skills and techniques can be pooled: through joint-working different skills, planning techniques and resources can be combined to make limited resources go further, taking advantage of economies of scale, for instance through joint procurement or to access a specific energy planning tool. This can save time and ease workloads as the regional and local authorities 'share the load'
- Agree clear roles and relationships: this can create better ownership for actions
- Better manage resource conflict: collaborative working facilitates the link between spatial and sustainable energy planning processes. This can support the development of climate-friendly spatial planning procedures

This leads to actions that are more visible, effective, coherent, and less costly.

Key RECENT activities within the Policy Influencer Programme

- Awareness raising and Capacity Building for communities in the project region
- Providing decision makers across all levels and all parties with concrete results and facts (policy paper) based on the project and as concrete as possible.
- Liaise with other projects to join forces and avoid duplication
- Identify key stakeholders and encourage them to become Champions and Leaders
- Provide guidance on successful MLG models and encourage to work on MLG

Part of the Policy Influencer Programme are 5 workshops (1 in each partner country) and the final conference in Brussel to influence policy and to give communities a voice.

¹ www.coopenergy.eu