

1. Title: Network of Rural Areas aiming at Very High RE Rate – TARGET ACTION C
100% RE-NET

2. Objectives and problems to be solved

The aim of this project is to give the participating areas a strong impetus for achieving their goal of a 100% RES-based energy supply through solving a number of RTD problems they are facing, thereby improving the regional and EU-wide environmental, social and economic situation. First, visible results in these areas should motivate similar areas in Europe to follow their example.

The objective is to do R&D on the change of the energy system of rural areas into a sustainable one which is based on RES. The work focuses on some of the major missing links - technical, financial, social, structural, etc. - which oppose the straightforward use of local, renewable energy sources in these areas. Best practice of achieving high RES penetration levels in rural areas are developed. An internet-based Virtual 100% RE-NET with information, communication and benchmarking features are developed and tested.

3. Description of work

The activities of the RE-NET with 7 rural partner areas comprise 18 work packages (WP) which are structured in four groups:

1. Socio-economic research on strategies and impacts of rural 100% RES processes and RES integration covering all kinds of RES from a non-technical perspective (1 WP)
2. Specific technological research and demonstration on technological issues with short-term prospects for commercialisation and of particular immediate interest for the project partners in 5 of the 7 areas (6 research and 3 demonstration WP)
3. Inter-regional transfer and co-operation workshops including regional and EU-wide dissemination of project results (6 WP corresponding to 6 workshops)
4. Development and pilot operation of an internet platform, the Virtual 100% RE-NET for RE comprising information, communication, e-commerce and benchmarking features for communities and regions (2 WP)

The European added-value of the network approach consists notably in the mutual motivation to engage on the way to 100% RES supply or to continue on this way, the exchange of know-how, notably on the societal processes and strategies which can be used to progress towards 100% RES supply, the exchange of technological know-how which is developed in different areas in a complementary way, and the future exchange of RES installations (internal market for RES technology).

The workshops and the communication via the Virtual 100% RE-NET ensure intra-project communication and mutual optimisation of techniques and strategies. In order to optimise project management, a steering committee and an access restricted area in the Virtual 100% RE-NET, reserved to the project partners, will be established.

4. Expected results and exploitation plans

Expected results are notably: standardised RES system & service packages creating user confidence, 49 operating pilot/ demonstration systems for bio-gas, bio-fuels, bio-mass and PV, a strong impetus for accelerating the use of RES in the participating areas, guidelines for changing the energy system of rural areas to a 100% RES-based one, considering all kinds of RES of interest for rural areas, and an internet platform with information, communication, e-commerce and benchmarking features for communities and regions. Further development of the system & service packages and the internet platform to commercial products are envisaged.