Finding appropriate funding for sustainable energy and climate projects is a real challenge for local and regional authorities. They often lack the staff, technical skills and face heavy administrative burden. In this new publication, you will find out some of the most recent and innovative projects FEDARENE’s member regions and energy agencies have been working on to accelerate and finance Europe’s Energy Transition at local and regional level:

- **REGEA (HR)** is connecting investors and owners of buildings with suitable rooftops through their innovative digital investment platform to promote solar energy and sustainable practices;

- In 2019, ÖÖ Energiesparverband (AT) organised the International Clean Energy Challenge which brought together young professionals and partner companies for a cutting-edge event of collaborative innovation;

- Through the LIFE BE REEL project, the Wallonia region (BE) involves local actors and citizens in the implementation of its regional renovation strategy;

- Developed in 2019 by the Oeste Regional Energy Agency – Oeste Sustentável (PT), the OesteLED streetlighting ESCO project is the biggest LED streetlighting project ever launched in Portugal, and one of the biggest in the world.

All projects are featured in our 2020 Sustainable Regions in Action brochure published in January 2020.
In 2019, the North-West Croatia Regional Energy Agency (REGEA) launched an initiative to create an innovative digital investment platform in collaboration with SAP, a multinational corporation that makes enterprise software to manage business operations and customer relations used by over 150-million cloud users. The main goal of the platform is to connect investors and owners of buildings with suitable rooftops, who are also electricity buyers. The platform defines contractual relationships in a secure and transparent manner and enables the aggregation of many single projects into investment packages. The concept works regardless of borders – investment packages can be matched with projects from different countries.

Ultimately, the platform would provide investment opportunities for large institutional investors, such as pension and investment funds and also directly for citizens. The goal of the project is to apply all the benefits of digital technology and the 21st century way of thinking into the sustainable energy world. The investment value of the first projects to be listed will be higher than 1.5 million Euros, and it is expected that by the end of 2019, the investment portfolio of the platform would exceed 20 million Euros. The platform currently only focuses on solar energy (photovoltaic power plants). However, at a later stage, it will be also used for other projects which have the potential to generate income or financial savings.

One of the projects financed through this investment platform has been the installation of a photovoltaic system on the General hospital Zabok rooftop – an innovative example of cooperation between public and private body where the private entity is responsible for assembly of PV modules and for delivering electrical energy to the hospital for nine years. The hospital, during contractual commitment with a private partner, already has a 10% lower cost for the amount of kWh the PV system produces but, after nine years of contract, the PV system will be under their ownership and they will have almost 500.000 kWh of free electrical energy. The installed capacity of PV's is 470 kW and the investment is 250,000 Euros.

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The International Clean Energy Challenge, organised from 22-26 July 2019 in Upper Austria by the OÖ Energiesparverband (ESV), brought together 64 highly-qualified young professionals from more than 30 countries and 11 partner companies for a cutting-edge event of collaborative innovation (picture on page 31).

The ESV, the regional energy agency of Upper Austria, supports energy technology companies in increasing competitiveness and market leadership in the context of the Cleantech-Cluster (CTC), a network of 250 businesses in Upper Austria. Acting on this ambition, the ESV came up with a novel event that encouraged creative thinking and problem-solving.

In diversified and interdisciplinary teams, 64 bright young minds (under 33 years old) from all over the world tackled real-life challenges presented by the partner companies to improve their products are services or create new ones. Topics addressed energy efficiency and renewable energy in industry, buildings, e-mobility and more. Each of the teams was assigned to a specific company challenge, typically consisting of a service, concept or market that the partner organisation is keen on developing or expanding. Decentralised energy generation, decarbonised energy systems and digital solutions were key themes.

Over the course of the event, they were guided through a dynamic and structured innovation process. Company representatives were present and offered support and professional coaching. As the grand finale, the groups presented their solutions to a jury of management-level representatives and symbolic awards were granted.

This original new concept attracted strong interest. 200 high-potential candidates from 43 countries applied. The selected participants consisted mostly of young professionals working in businesses, industry, energy agencies, associations, public bodies and research institutions and some students in advanced education. They came from a diversity of educational backgrounds including engineering, economy, architecture, business administration, chemistry, mathematics, law, political science and more. Representatives from 4 FEDARENE members (Paris Region Energy Agency, Alba Local Energy Agency, 3 Counties Energy Agency and Severn Wye Energy Agency) and a FEDARENE employee were among the participants.

The event was a great success and highlighted how driving the energy transition and doing business can go hand-in-hand. By helping the companies develop comprehensive solutions and new business models, the ESV contributed to making the clean energy transition reality within their organisations, Upper Austria and beyond.

“It was a pretty cool event – from start to finish! Everyone involved benefited from this amazing experience, including myself.” – Christiane Egger, Deputy Director of the ESV and initiator of the event.

More information about the event can be found online at www.wsed.at/de/programm/international-clean-energy-challenge.

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Wallonia participates in the Be REEL Project, which is a LIFE integrated project in which different partners work to implement the Belgian regions of Flemish and Walloon long term renovation strategies for buildings, essentially the residential buildings.

First Step
The municipalities will first accompany the citizens/manager of public housing in the use of the Quickscan tool. This tool will make possible an initial, quick assessment of the housing and of the potential energy savings, without the need of a professional. - The Quickscan tool will be tested by the municipalities over a sample of at least 1,000 households for which short-term renovation works are planned.

Second Step
The municipalities will select approval auditors to realize “roadmaps” in 300 buildings. The “roadmap” tool enables to visualize both the potential of a housing unit relative to the overall objective described in the Walloon strategy (label A) and the improvement trajectory of the energy efficiency of this unit. It will also provide a first estimate of investments and co-benefits in terms of improving comfort (thermal, visual, acoustic) and health.

Third Step
The 300 projects being the subject of a “roadmap” will be invited to submit an application for support of works based on the “roadmap” taking up the details of the proposed works and based on the applications received and the selection criteria, 100 units at most are selected by the municipalities. Citizens will be accompanied by an auditor for the realization of the renovations and for the monitoring of the energy consumption before and after works.

All the data collected during the project (Quickscans, roadmaps, monitoring) will be filed on the Database relative to the Building Passport – Energy component. The municipalities will carry out a survey of the property owners in order to obtain their opinions on the relevance of these tools, their strengths, and their weaknesses. A closing seminar will be organized to highlight the results of the pilot action through concrete feedback resulting from the practical field. The municipalities that have participated in the action will be invited to submit their feedback.

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Developed in 2019 by the Oeste Regional Energy Agency – Oeste Sustentável, the OesteLED streetlighting ESCO project was implemented in 12 municipalities who constitute an Intermunicipal Community, a NUT III region in Portugal, with a population of approximately 365 000 inhabitants. It is the biggest LED streetlighting project ever launched in Portugal, and one of the biggest in the world.

The project was characterised by the replacement of 68,487 high pressure sodium luminaires with LED lighting technology with an overall estimated 84% reduction in the streetlight electricity consumption in the region.

Supported by a financing model based on an ESCO energy contract, the project is a result of approximately 12,5 Million EUR investment over a 12 year contract. The contract enables an annual 3,4 Million EUR in energy savings where 58,85% is kept for the beneficiaries, the 12 municipalities who were free of any capital investment. The investment benefited from the large critical mass due to the big extent of the project which on the other side ensured a high luminous efficacy requirements; these circumstances shaped the appropriate conditions for an improved feasibility of the project, fact that resulted in better and more attractive conditions for potential investors and for more competitiveness.

On the technical perspective, the technological risk was minimised by the compliance of streetlighting standards, also other national references as well as those recognised by the current streetlight management and maintenance municipal concession.

This scenario resulted in large energy savings and therefore more space and more capacity to distribute a higher percentage of savings as a benefit to municipalities. In fact, the 58,85% distributed to municipalities was the biggest percentage of savings ever signed on an ESCO contract in Portugal. The average in Portugal has been around 30%.

This project, represents a major stepping stone in the outlook of energy performance contracting in Portugal, once that, for the first time it enabled a cooperation between several municipalities for a common investment in a ESCO model and established 12 independent concerted contracts for 12 Local Authorities.

Its immense environmental benefits avoid each year around 10 000 ton of GHG emissions contributing enormously for the Covenant of Mayors’ targets.

It was an important step towards the Sustainable Energy Transition in the Oeste Region in Portugal.

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Pictures: lighting before (High Pressure Sodium) and after (LED) © OesteSustentável
THANKS TO ALL OUR MEMBERS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION!

More information? Feel free to contact the concerned member directly by using the contact information provided in the article or contact us at fedarene@fedarene.org