



RES market places – Creating Renewable Energy Market places for Investors and Regional Actors in Rural Areas

Gertec GmbH - Ingenieurgesellschaft, Germany

Summary

The aim of this EU-funded project is to set up regional 'virtual' market places (VMP, i.e. through web pages on the internet) for RES and EE within rural areas in the EU. These regional market places will promote the use of RES and EE measures in new construction projects and in the refurbishment of buildings. Based on existing networks, the project proposes to create virtual market places (VMPs) in which suppliers and potential end-users and / or investors come together to exchange experiences, and find solutions for the use of renewable energies and EE measures in their region. Various approaches to create such RES market places were tested in seven model regions located in Austria, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. The project started in January 2005 and will finish in September 2007.

End-user area

- New buildings
- Refurbishment of buildings
- Transport and mobility
- Financial instruments
- Industry
- Legal initiatives (regulations, directives, etc)
- Planning issues
- Sustainable communities
- User behaviour
- Education
- Other

Target Audience

- Citizens
- Households
- Property owners
- Schools and universities
- Decision makers
- Local and regional authorities
- Transport companies
- Utilities
- ESCOs
- Architects and engineers
- Financial institutions
- Other

Technical

- Energy efficiency
- Heating
- Cooling
- Appliances
- Lighting
- CHP
- District Heating
- Solar energy
- Biomass
- Wind
- Geothermal
- Hydro power
- Other

Context for the German Region

Gertec provides a consultation service as an engineering company to different local authorities on both a national and international level in the scope of climate protection. As a result Gertec enjoys a long-term cooperation with the region of Steinfurt, which is a rural area in the very north of North-Rhine Westphalia. The region of Steinfurt has 24 towns and municipalities with 440.000 inhabitants. The proportion of forests covers 13.8 % (24.900 ha) and agriculture covers 59 % (105.799 ha) within the region.

In recent years a wide range of RES and EE projects (e.g. campaign for refurbishment of private buildings, initiative for heating with wood pellets, biogas plants, network with funding of a non-profit-organisation) were implemented by the regional Local Agenda 21-Office.



Objectives for the German Region

The region of Steinfurt concentrates its objectives in the RES market places project to strengthen Energy Efficiency in new residential areas. Therefore the existing network in form of a non-profit association called "Haus im Glück" was used. The association was founded in November 2005 and includes representatives from all 24 towns and municipalities in the region of Steinfurt as well as other associations and consortia like regional banks or local craftsmen.

All 24 towns and municipalities were included in the project. Furthermore the activities which have been developed within the project were tested in four model communities (Greven, Ibbenbüren, Lengerich and Lotte) and could be implemented afterwards in the other municipalities in the region.

Process in the German Region

In the region of Steinfurt the important target groups are

- a) new house owners in new residential areas as end users,
- b) architects, energy consultants, banks/saving banks as multipliers,
- c) members of the administrative of the city council (department of town planning).

In order to gain a clear understanding of the needs of the defined target groups, different methods were taken:

Initially, employees within the administration of municipalities in Steinfurt were interviewed via telephone. They were asked about new building areas, the cost of land for construction as well as the extent of the demand from buyers.

Following this, some non-representative fieldwork was done. About 20 new house owners were interviewed personally. At the same time customer advisers in local banks were interviewed about their experiences and about their knowledge about the needs of the target group end-users.

The feedback from the interviews indicated that most of the new home owners are interested in RES and EE if it led to a reduction in the current costs, although they are wary of the fact that the investment costs for Renewable Energy systems could be higher than usual plants. The most important statement was that it was very important to be well informed before building a house. The demand for information is strong.

The following instruments were adopted to satisfy the needs of the target groups:

- a) VMP in form of an internet platform (with independent and local information), seminars (e.g. lectures to inform about new possibilities to built energy efficient houses), information material (e.g. flyer);
- b) Excursions (e.g. to new houses), seminars (e.g. how to use RES and EE in new houses), information material (e.g. conference documents);
- c) Seminars (e.g. how to establish RES and EE in new building areas), workshops (e.g. EE in new residential areas), information material (e.g. conference documents).

A very effective instrument to convince decision makers (e.g. owners of buildings or politicians) is to show successfully realized examples of the use of RES or of EE in their own region. These examples could be used for publication on the virtual market place on the internet, in brochures or for excursions.

Financial resources and partners in the German Region

The existing network in the region of Steinfurt in the form of a non-profit association called "Haus im Glück" was used. The association was founded in November 2005. Members include representatives from all 24 towns and municipalities in the region of Steinfurt and the district of Steinfurt. Members also include the district craftsmen association of Steinfurt, several craftsmen's guilds, local banks and the Chimney Sweep guild in the administrative district of Münster. All activities within the RES market places project were tested in four model municipalities (Greven, Ibbenbüren, Lengerich and Lotte) and could be implemented afterwards in the other municipalities in the region.



Results

On one hand the results of the VMP can be fixed on the number of visitors of the internet platform. The number of visitors has increased from 84 to 469 in only 7 months.

	2006				2007			
	September	Oktober	November	Dezember	Januar	Februar	März	April
Kreis Steinfurt	84	198	408	324	289	276	309	469

On the other hand the participants of different events (e.g. excursions, seminars and workshops) can be evaluated:

- private participants of seminars (110);
- members of the administrative (37);
- participants of architects (26).

The main focus of the local Agenda 21 in the region of Steinfurt could be EE in new residential areas. This should be noticed in a better way by decision makers from politics, administrative and associations.

Lessons learned and repeatability

The key factor for success for the RES market places project in the Region of Steinfurt was to focus directly on a well-defined target group and to work with four model municipalities.

The development of the regional VMP to include local information and selected product information for the requirement of the target group was also important.

Besides this real market places in terms of seminars and different information evenings were created. For architects excursions and seminars on the use of RES and EE in new building areas were developed. In-house-seminars for members within the administration of the model municipalities were also held. Different multipliers in the region of Steinfurt were involved in the context of the existing networks.

For the next regional market place we would change our approach regarding the dissemination activities to publicise the market place. Direct contact with new house owners in the new building areas as well as the involvement of service providers would be encouraged. We would aim to produce more specific marketing material (incl. VMP) for the target groups, from the start of the project.

Contact for more information:

Project Web Site: www.resmarketplaces.org

Virtual market place in Germany: www.hausimglueck.info

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Printed reports or other literature available:

Title: Manual of the project RES market places