



**Biomass energy register  
for sustainable site development for  
European regions**

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BEn

**Biomass energy register for sustainable site development  
for European region (BEn)**  
Intelligent Energy – Europe (IEE)

Horizontal action: Bio Business Initiative

**Deliverable D2.2: Guidelines for successful establishment  
of networks**

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## 1. Introduction

The ambition of the BEn project is to strengthen local communities in the efficient use of biomass resources for sustainable energy supply. The specific objectives of the project are:

- To create and develop self-sustainable local bio-energy networks, involving the relevant actors the bio-energy development sector
- to set up an energy register, including data on biomass availability and energy sinks, as starting point for integrated bioenergy planning in the participating regions
- to develop strategic energy master plans in model European regions, in close collaboration with the local bioenergy networks
- to create an agreement with local actors in each region on bioenergy actions that have to be financed and implemented by local stakeholders
- promote BEn methodology and results, in particular towards decision makers and relevant actors from other regions which can replicate the methodology and adopt integrated bio-energy planning

One of the key elements for bioenergy actions is creation and establishment as well as, monitoring and maintenance of bio-energy networks in the regions. Networks constitute local bodies responsible for planning, decisions and actions to be taken up on local scale. Establishing strong cooperative links on local scale facilitate and secure long-standing process of biomass use on local scale.

The guidance presented is aimed at facilitating the process of regional cooperation towards the efficient use of biomass for energy production by local communities. It is significant that the conditions of regional cooperation differ depending on the local situation, state of biomass supply chain development, and the legal and economic conditions. The guidelines highlight the most important and common issues to be taken into account when fostering regional cooperation. Guidelines were prepared on the basis of existing experience on local cooperation in BEn model regions: Emscher Lippe (Germany), North-East England (Great Britain), Umbria (Italy), Pojezierze Gostynińskie (Poland). Furthermore, contacts were made with other biomass networks and EU projects in form of interviews carried out and questionnaires distributed to project/regional leaders. The information gathered was structured according to the basic networking aspects.

## 2. Why to cooperate?

### 2.1. Biomass network role in sustainable local development

- Define the reason to start the process of cooperation and recognise the local needs. Organise meeting(s) (informal, formal) with potentially interested stakeholders. It is important to have in mind who should be involved, and their reason for participation. A

SWOT analysis with the participation of local partners can be used to help determine the level of engagement of local stakeholders.

- Define together with regional partners the vision/goals to be achieved through cooperation: regional strategic management, fostering trust, stimulating investment, sharing examples, technology transfer, integrating policies on a local level, strengthening competences. Is there a political dimension – lobbying for better national policies?
- The local use of biomass for energetic purposes is especially effective when it is developed on local level by farmers, representatives of local administration and business, etc to fulfil their needs.

- Good reasons for cooperation to be pursued:
- Strong needs for socio-economic development based on biomass for energy utilisation (e.g.: Guessing and Mureck communities in Austria)
- Improving image of the region as rural tourism region e.g.: Gostynin Lakes example
- Political agenda combined with economical attractiveness and awareness of biomass solutions values (e.g.: Emscher Lippe)
- Strengthening of local capacities and effectiveness for biomass actions

- Think about concrete actions to be fulfilled and focus your actions on results.

## 2.2. Network identity

- Guarantee continuity of actions. Consider cooperation as a culture and social added value. Develop trust, revise available perspectives and establish aims.
- Identify already taken actions in the region; determine who is cooperating on what issues. Use personal contacts, media information and internet to gather information. Do these activities cover the issues you are interested in? If possible, think about coordination of the activities or facilitating the exchange of knowledge between them.

Stowarzyszenie Gmin Turystycznych Pojezierza Gostynińskiego (The Gostynin Lakes District Association) as voluntary agreement of local communes is an example of long cooperation starting from 90-ties of 20th century and focusing on key local issues (rural tourism, culture, environmental protection, development and infrastructure). Through its trustful and recognised work in the local society it provides a strong relationship, mutual understanding, trust, stimuli and recognition of the common actions including bioenergy. At the same time it well integrates key sustainability issues. More information:

[www.pojezierzegostyninskie.pl](http://www.pojezierzegostyninskie.pl):

- Network should be well recognised by decision makers and society through good representation and efficient communication.
- Recognise common interest through wide discussion with local partners e.g. brain storming. Identify shared values, potential conflicts and areas of mutual understanding.

### 2.3. Areas of cooperation

- Define areas of regional cooperation. SWOT analysis is recommended (key topics to be discussed and worked on during the process). Define boundary conditions and dimensions for regional biomass energy development (e.g. preparation of master plan for regional development, definition, which renewable energy issues are relevant: infrastructure development, biomass energy logistics).

### 2.4. Dimensions of cooperation

- Define at which level of cooperation you can meet the goals (local, regional, national, international). Look for appropriate partners and seek cooperation with other networks operating at different levels.
- Clearly define the network function in the context of current management practices in the region.

Community Renewable Energy Network CoRE helps to identify possible partners with whom CoRE can develop community based renewable energy systems. The CoRE Network is open to all actors. In addition to the website it holds quarterly meetings to:

1. Share information and expertise.
2. Identify shared problems and tackle them
3. Provide a voice for the CoRE sector making representations to Government, Agencies, Policy Bodies and others
4. Bring interested individuals together to form their own companies

More information: <http://www.corecoop.net/>

## 3. Who should be involved and how?

### 3.1. Key actors

- Identify relevant groups of interest and organisations representing them. Consider business, NGOs and community-based organisations, administration, competence centers, biomass providers, their responsibilities and roles. Let them express their needs and expectations. Make the list of stakeholders in collaboration with your partners.

Baltic Biomass Network (BBN) manages regional networks involving planning authorities, investors and operators of bioenergy plants, biomass producers and economic development authorities. These groups evaluated regional models based on GIS scenarios, promote further investment, and work together in increasing competence in planning sustainable use of resources in order to better meet Baltic Sea Region targets for bio-energy development. More information <http://balticbiomass.com>. The BBN Handbook "Planning regional bioenergy resource use" is available at the webpage: <http://balticbiomass.com/daten/downloads/BBN-Handbook-internet%20version.pdf>. The project was finalised in 2007, but some of the partners continue the cooperation. Warmia and Mazury Energy Agency was established to support bio-energy initiatives in the Polish region. This is also a good example of the continuation of bio-energy oriented activities within different projects. More information: [www.wmae.pl](http://www.wmae.pl)

- Include appropriate competences in the network. Develop/involve a regional competence center as the provider of knowledge and facilitator of actions. Involve scientific institutions and business organisations.
- Use the potential of well-developed networks of experts from practice with strong assistance of professionals and scientists.
- Remember that personal engagement of actors in network's activity is crucial.
- Consider different levels of actors' engagement in network's activities. Always bear in mind that external partners are of high importance. Involve them (government, banks, funds, administrative bodies etc.) as observers, who can offer support for undertaking regional activities.

Foundation for the Development of Polish Agriculture (FDPA) supports the sustainable development of rural areas, in particular entrepreneurship and the creation of off-farm jobs. The mission of the foundation is carried out through micro loans and investment grants for creating and developing small enterprises in rural areas, local development programs, publications, studies and socio-economic reports which reflect the condition of Polish rural areas. More information: <http://www.fdpa.org.pl>.

### 3.2. Representation of interests

- The most successful activities come from discussing various perspectives and values. Completeness and balanced structure of the key stakeholders is essential.
- Take into account good representation of market opportunities.
- Involve strong strategic players who can support networking but with a representative arena for discussion and decision making.
- Think about the relations between partners/groups or networks (conflict/mutual interest, various perspectives).

- Potential conflicts in mutual cooperation:
- Competitive biomass uses (large scale/small scale installations)
- Problem of land use changes
- Environmental conflicts – intensification of wood production vs. biodiversity
- Public/private interests
- Competences between different technologies and applications

### 3.3. Leadership

- Choose in a clear and transparent procedure a partner recognisable in the community as a leader with potential to lead the cooperation (competences, recognition, accountability). NGOs, administration or specially established organisations: e.g. public agencies are especially suitable for this.

### 3.4. Inclusiveness

- Remember that developing the cooperation is a gradual process. Provide the opportunity to include during the process new partners, new ideas, problems and fields of cooperation. Welcome and support new members. Define step by step who is missing according to the needs and goals of cooperation.

The European Centre for Renewable Energy (EEE), Güssing, acts as an umbrella organisation for all energy-related activities in the Region. The EEE develops lasting regional and community-based concepts for energy conservation and for the renewable energy development. The EEE co-founded the Eco Energy Land - a place of visits and study tours. <http://www.eee-info.net/cms/>

## 4. How to organise and manage the network?

### 4.1. Network structure

- Network structure should reflect the needs and goals of regional cooperation.
- Consider coordinator role, subgroups, planning body, e.g. smaller planning team if the network is large, advisory board e.g. competence centre.
- It is advisable to divide the network into subgroups focused on particular sectors (biogas, biomass heating, cogeneration, financing and logistic aspects or oriented towards meeting particular goals (investments).
- Consider various approaches to network establishment (informal organisation, formal body, legal entity) depending on the aims and activities defined.

Regional Agency in Emscher Lippe is a public private partnership (funded by local governments) responsible for managing actions on regional scale, It is engaged in providing public services for local communities concerning energy efficiency and use of renewable resources. As supporting organisation it facilitates and manages a flexible network of actors within the region and the contacts to relevant external actors from outside. More information: <http://www.emscher-lippe.de/cms/index.php?id=startseite>.

### 4.2. Management of network activities

- Start the network activity with understanding each other, recognising problems to be tackled, support the free articulation of partners' needs and expectations.
- Clearly define manner the responsibilities/let the partners frame their involvement and responsibility to each other. Avoid misleading signals concerning for example investment opportunities. Particularly with regard to the participation of private firms, technological offers. Be clear about cooperation possibilities and ambitions.
- It is good to formulate and accept a basic strategy or road map for action which can be verified accordingly.
- Provide documentation of network activities, records, sheet/manual for new network members, short and clear reports published on the internet website.

- Fully recognise the external conditions for biomass energy schemes and network activity, including national, European support schemes, legal conditions and existing organizations – make periodical overviews and disseminate them.
- Distribute particular tasks to partners or the organised groups – use their potential and existing possibilities of network organisation. Partners have their own resources, possibilities and experience that can be shared in organising the network – for example dissemination activities, organisation of meetings, events, communication of networks.

Lower Saxony – Bioenergy Village Jühnde. The feeling of self-efficiency was strengthened by the process of involvement and decision-making with planner, economist, administration and citizens. The foundation of a cooperative as an operating entity allowed equal participation in decision making. More information:

[http://www.esteem-tool.eu/fileadmin/esteem-tool/docs/CASE\\_6\\_def.pdf](http://www.esteem-tool.eu/fileadmin/esteem-tool/docs/CASE_6_def.pdf)

#### 4.3. Awareness, communication and language

- Use plain language – various experts use their own jargon especially in meetings and common communications. Avoid academic attitude.
- Encourage personal contacts, exchange of experience, knowledge sharing. It is recommended to use face-to-face ways of communication.

Emscher Lippe region networking is an example how direct personal contacts between various actors in the region such as the land owners, managers of public utilities, facilitated the communication by highly competent staff and strengthened through information and promotion campaigns are essential in achieving concrete results. More information:

<http://www.emscher-lippe.de/cms/index.php?id=startseite>

- Provide access to good examples (publications, www), references – window for knowledge, secure expert availability.
- Perform activities (e.g. seminars, workshops) aimed at raising awareness of the society in the context of regional sustainability and biomass utilisation for energy purposes.
- Communicate with children and young people. These target groups are of big importance in increasing of social awareness on ecology and bio-energy.

Mazovian Energy Agency (MAE) is developing educational programs which concern energy savings, changes in unsustainable consumer patterns as well as climate change problems. The first project: „Interactive lessons on renewable energy sources” was finished on December 2010. Within the project 486 children from primary and secondary school attended lessons which used different forms of education (lecture, animated film on energy savings, discussion, quiz, plastic competition). The idea of organising these lessons was to stimulate ecological sensitivity amongst young people. More information about MAE:

<http://www.mae.com.pl/english-version.html>.

#### 4.4. Legal, financial aspects

- There are various possibilities to organize the financing of networking. They depend on national/regional conditions. Formal establishment of the network can facilitate the actions through access to funding. The network should strive for carrying out permanent activities in the region. This is not necessary when one of the partners can play the role as organiser. For example local agencies or competence centers with public funding can take this role. Secure funding schemes for cooperation appropriately to the time frame and goals to be fulfilled. Continuity and robustness of the cooperation activity is important.

#### 4.5. Network evaluation

- Evaluation of network cooperation and its activities is needed. The most important is the evaluation of the whole cooperation made by the network members with their satisfaction expressed (questionnaire). Evaluation of the events and particular activities is also recommended. The results should stimulate concrete changes.
- Look for good cooperation examples – in your country or abroad. The collected experience can serve as a benchmark for efficiency, good ideas and methods.
- Identify and disseminate success and failure stories (publications, reviews).

### 5. How to cooperate?

#### 5.1. Tools and approaches

- Choose the methods of work appropriate to the network role (meetings, discussion panels, seminars).
- Plan activities – clear plan and rationale for the actions.
- Hold regular meetings defined by clear objectives, agenda and reports. It is good to have feedback from the discussion.
- Preparation of strategic documents is advisable when more formal cooperation is established. Logo, web page and promoting materials are recommended.
- Refer to existing stakeholder information and consultation process.

Social Acceptance of Renewable energy Lower Saxony – Create Acceptance project experience: People in Jühnde and southern Lower Saxony were already ambitious to advance to Renewable Energy at the moment of starting close cooperation towards building energy-self-sufficient communities. Innovation could be linked to the traditional use of renewable energy in a step by step approach. Visit to demonstration projects (best practices) was described as one of the key activities to motivate and convince people of the technological approach. More information:

[http://www.esteem-tool.eu/fileadmin/esteem-tool/docs/CASE\\_6\\_def.pdf](http://www.esteem-tool.eu/fileadmin/esteem-tool/docs/CASE_6_def.pdf)

- Identify, establish and develop good demonstrative cases of biomass conversion into energy in the region and in Europe. There are many European and national examples of

success stories to be considered valuable for the region (e.g. good examples are available on The ManagEnergy website, which offers databases on case studies and good practices as well as a directory of energy agencies).

- Integrate various events in order to minimise number of meetings.
- Consider linking the cooperation with other local/regional sustainability topics – organisations, activities, policies. Identify them together with regional partners.

## 5.2. Support activities

- Organisation of campaigns, site visits, conferences, events and local initiatives tours, demonstrations of technologies (for example: marketing) is recommended. They should be carefully planned corresponding to the needs expressed by the partners.

NEWHeat was a business support programme funded by One NorthEast which gave free, independent and expert advice on whether biomass could be used to provide heat or electricity. Program was managed by Rural Development Initiatives Ltd, a not-for-profit company. The project supported more than 300 businesses across the North East, and also organised the UK's first Woodfuel Expo, Ignition09 and served to showcase the great strides that are being made in the North East. Ongoing handholding support to businesses continued from March 2009 to September 2009 to assist businesses beyond the initial feasibility study stage. More information:

<http://www.northwoods.org.uk/about-northwoods>.

- Initiate joint support actions of the partners – realisation of common projects i.e. helping in applying for investment project funding.
- Provide support to the decision making processes taking place in the region, such as selection of technological options, preparation of documentations (environmental assessment report, prefeasibility and feasibility studies, technical projects, public outreach, marketing) through guidelines, reference cases, contacts to firms and persons, contact point, training activities.
- Organise collective activities with the participation of the society – competitions, various social events (picnic) to integrate the network with the local/regional stakeholders.

## 5.3. Knowledge management

- Use skills available in the network to analyse community needs, development patterns, habits and life styles. If necessary involve specialists, advisors or hire external services. Using of formal analysis and planning tools is recommended (e.g. ESTEEM toolbox to manage new energy projects aimed to help projects implementing innovative new energy technologies to deal with societal acceptance issues)
- Establish supporting tools for knowledge transfer, exchange of information, e.g. webpage. Collect and store references materials: guidelines, contacts easily accessed by the general public.

3X20 regional cluster in Silesia Poland is an example of knowledge capacity building on regional scale. Cluster comprises local administration, local universities, consulting firms, technology providers. It aims at facilitating knowledge development and providing competences, ideas, renewable energy models and solutions, postgraduate education, consulting and political power through courses seminars, workshop and conferences. More information: <http://www.klaster3x20.pl/>

#### 5.4. Communication

- Communicate network results and information about network activities to wide local audience. Use effective communication tools (website, poster, fairs, e-mail newsletters).
- Use clear arguments in communication with the partners and wide public – energetic biomass utilization in many aspects gives rise to controverse attitudes and doubts.
- Look for feedback from the local community (questionnaire, personal interaction during meetings and events).
- Media coverage is essential in dissemination and information.
- Recognise common people e.g. employees and citizens as a good channel of communication.

Lessons learned from Lower Saxony: Success in terms of technical and organisational implementation - could be ensured by integrative persons (promoters) with a high level of trust (key person was the Mayor of Jühnde). Using events like festivals and contests (with children) help to disseminate the project ideas 'in a positive and emotional context'. Households already connected to the new grid should get a visible 'label' to stir up some competition between neighbours (social marketing). A constant exchange and communication with the local and regional media is of high importance. In addition, word-of-mouth information is the base for the distribution of 'trusted' information. More information: [http://www.esteem-tool.eu/fileadmin/esteem-tool/docs/CASE\\_6\\_def.pdf](http://www.esteem-tool.eu/fileadmin/esteem-tool/docs/CASE_6_def.pdf)

## 6. References (Good practice examples)

Name of organisation	www page
Kompetenzzentrum HessenRohstoffe HeRo	<a href="http://www.hero-hessen.de">http://www.hero-hessen.de</a>
Klaster 3*20	<a href="http://klaster3x20.pl">http://klaster3x20.pl</a>
ABS Klaster	<a href="http://www.abs-klaster.wroc.pl">http://www.abs-klaster.wroc.pl</a>
Waste Centre Denmark	<a href="http://www.wasteinfo.dk">http://www.wasteinfo.dk</a>
The North Sea Bio Energy	<a href="http://www.northseabioenergy.org">http://www.northseabioenergy.org</a>
Biomass Forum	<a href="mailto:ben.mclaughlin@onenortheast.co.uk">ben.mclaughlin@onenortheast.co.uk</a>
NREG	<a href="mailto:rmachen@northumberland.gov.uk">rmachen@northumberland.gov.uk</a>
CoRE (Community Renewable Energy Ltd)	<a href="http://www.corecoop.net/">http://www.corecoop.net/</a> <a href="mailto:ross@core.coop">ross@core.coop</a>
NEWFuels	<a href="mailto:john.farquhar@northwoods.org.uk">john.farquhar@northwoods.org.uk</a>
The Polish Chamber of Biomass	<a href="http://www.biomasa.org.pl">http://www.biomasa.org.pl</a>

NETBIOCOF Integrated European Network for Biomass Co-firing	<a href="http://www.netbiocof.net">http://www.netbiocof.net</a>
ManagEnergy	<a href="http://www.managenergy.net/">http://www.managenergy.net/</a>
ESTEEM	<a href="http://www.esteem-tool.eu/case-studies">www.esteem-tool.eu/case-studies</a>
The South Styrian Cooperative for Energy and Protein Production (SEEG) Mureck	<a href="http://www.seeg.at">www.seeg.at</a>
EC Baltic renewable Energy Centre (EC BREC)	<a href="http://www.managenergy.net">http://www.managenergy.net</a>
Mazovian Energy Agency (MAE)	<a href="http://www.mae.com.pl">http://www.mae.com.pl</a>
The Baltic Biomass Network	<a href="http://balticbiomass.com">http://balticbiomass.com</a>
Warmia and Mazury Energy Agency (WMAE) Sp. z.o.o.	<a href="http://www.wmae.pl">http://www.wmae.pl</a>