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Newsletter

Make your city a model in energy management!

Newsletter no.4 - September 2009

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MODEL celebrates its 2nd anniversary!



The fourth issue of the MODEL Newsletter celebrates the 2nd anniversary of the MODEL project. MODEL European and national coordinators, mayors and energy managers are 2 years older. What can they see when they look back and what new challenges are they facing now? Does the world-wide financial crisis influence the MODEL cities? Is there anything else that makes the battle against energy waste tough?

As a little reminder: MODEL is a European project focusing on a sustainable energy use in municipalities from the New Member States and Croatia. It is supported by the Intelligent Energy Europe programme and by ADEME, the French Energy Management Agency.

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Leaving the starting point far behind

Some time ago, only few municipalities in the EU new member states felt responsible for energy management on their territories. There was enough energy, it was cheap and it was rather a role of the State to take care about how energy will be produced, distributed and used.



Step by step, this perception has been changing in the minds of local decision makers and they start to take a new role of energy consumers, energy producers and suppliers, energy planners and developers, advisors and motivators very seriously. MODEL national coordinators have been encouraging the MODEL pilot cities for more than two years to make these steps bigger and faster. **Results?**

- **42 pilot cities** (instead of 34 foreseen!) from the new Member States and Croatia decided to join MODEL project. This decision was taken at the top decision level – by the mayors themselves!
- **14 pilot cities** defined their long-term objectives and adopted their municipal energy programmes and action plans following the [common framework methodology](#)
- **39 pilot cities** set up their energy management units and appointed the energy managers ([click here](#) to read the E-news no. 2)
- Nearly **100 energy managers** were trained
- **17 pilot cities** used the financial support and market mechanisms recommended in the [MODEL financial guide](#)
- **33 pilot cities** organised municipal intelligent energy days involving more than 55.000 citizens



- **30 cities** participated in the European [MODEL Awards 2008 competition](#)

MODEL helps the Covenant of Mayors signatories to achieve their goals



The European local authorities and their partners committed to sustainable local energy policy and the **Covenant of Mayors objectives** are invited to use tools, methodologies, good practices and experiences developed within the MODEL project. The **Common Framework Methodology** guiding municipalities in development of their municipal energy programmes and action plans, interactive **financial tool, guidelines and communication tools** facilitating the organisation of local energy days and others are the best suited for the needs of the Covenant signatories, in particular those from the new member states. All documents are available in 8 languages [here](#).

9 pilot cities signed up to the **Covenant of Mayors** initiative and **3 MODEL coordinators** became the official **Covenant Supporting Structures** : Energie-Cités (EU), EcoEnergy (BG), PNEC (PL).

Through the looking glass of the national coordinators



The main challenges of the national coordinators are to involve top decision makers, improve internal organisation in municipalities, enable them to set up their energy goals and develop action plans, use a diversity of financial tools to implement their sustainable energy projects and involve local actors and citizens in every action.

Taking over these challenges and new experiences gained allowed them to create and improve their relations with local authorities, their own human capacities and internal organisation, influence national legislation, integrate EU energy objectives at local level and much more. Here are their highlights!

Bulgaria – pushes the new energy efficiency law



On 14 November 2008 the new law (2nd energy efficiency law) came to operation. The **appointment of local energy managers and creation of energy management units is obligatory** in all local authorities. EcoEnergy experts participated in the expert working group. With the support of EcoEnergy two pilot municipalities (City of Dobrich and Lom) signed up to the Covenant of Mayors initiative. A long practice in providing full support to local authorities in the field of energy management, capacity building and development of local energy plans allowed EcoEnergy to become a **Covenant of Mayors Supporting Structure** in Bulgaria.

Croatia – local authorities become a new market



Since 2007, when Croatia became eligible for different EU programmes, Energy Institute Hrvoje Požar (EIHP) started to act as a national energy agency, however, it continued to deal mainly with businesses and industries. MODEL is the first institute's project dealing with local authorities which **opens them a new market**.

EIHP is also building bridges between local demand side and national supply side management as it deals with energy projects at all levels - local, regional and national.

Czech Republic – improves internal organization and motivates cities



Porsenna convinced local decision makers that strategic energy planning is more beneficial than short-term visions and an attractive practical **guide on energy management** developed for them definitely encouraged cities to act. In order to respond to the growing demand and attract new cities, Porsenna revised its internal organization and decided to set up a new division dealing uniquely with local energy consulting. A new project with objectives similar to MODEL was submitted to one of the national programmes.

Lithuania – supports Covenant signatories



Kaunas Regional Energy Agency (KREA) has been supporting Lithuanian cities in their **Covenant of Mayors commitments** through providing them with the latest information on the development of the initiative, organising meetings at national level and supporting cities in practical terms.

It brought 7 Lithuanian cities to the 1st Covenant of Mayors ceremony in February 2009 in Brussels.

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Latvia – new mayors overcome first barriers



A good structure of **Municipal Energy Programme** developed within the MODEL project convinced new municipality teams (including new mayors elected after municipal elections of 2009) about the necessity to implement such a programme in their place and overcome rapidly the main barriers such as shortage of qualified staff and lack of energy consumption data.

Poland – reinforces relations with its members and is grOWING



Polish Network Energie-Cités' Secretariat (PNEC) and the members of their network are getting to know each other better and better. Thanks to MODEL, PNEC **reinforced the contact with decision makers** and energy managers in the cities which was not always the case.

They receive more invitations to become a project partner in European and national projects than before and three more persons were hired to respond to new challenges.

Moreover, PNEC became the first Covenant of Mayors Supporting Structure in Poland!

Romania – one energy manager is not enough



MODEL is the first “practical exercise” developed within the Orase Energie Romania network (OER) showing the local authorities how to develop their energy programmes. For the first time three pilot cities involved citizens to Municipal Intelligent Energy Days (MIED) which would not have happened without MODEL project. The significant change happened in the cities' administrations – having realized the significant workload of an energy manager, **cities decided to create whole energy departments**.

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Slovenia – theoretical action plans turn to reality



“Theoretical” action plans (required by law in Slovenia) turn to the real action and municipalities make of sustainable energy development a number one priority. They realize that it’s a unique **economic opportunity** for their community. Involvement of citizens and the concept of MIED were integrated in their local strategies and the new EU energy projects.

The Operation Programme Regional Development (Structural funds) integrates the energy efficiency and renewable energy measures in rural areas.

Through the looking glass of the European coordinator



Energie-Cités gets know better new member states. As the MODEL coordinator reinforced its relations with the partners in the new Member States and improved its knowledge on local energy management, communication and networking in Central and Eastern Europe.

Two Energie-Cités members – municipalities Leicester and Kirklees (UK) – organised the study tour hosting participants from Bulgaria and Czech Republic. The outcomes of MODEL project such as common framework methodology, sustainable energy action plans, municipal intelligent energy days, and many others help cities to achieve more easily the objectives set up in the Covenant of Mayors initiative (Covenant of Mayors Office is coordinated by Energie-Cités and its partners).

The battle is not always easy...

Although the decision makers recognize the necessity to create the position of energy manager, sometimes they **do not support them sufficiently** in their everyday work or place them appropriately in the municipal hierarchy (e.g. they are not in direct relation with the mayor office). During the energy planning process they might find themselves quite “alone” in their position and as a result the decisions made by the council are not in line with the proposed measures.

Another phenomenon is the omnipresent **financial crisis**. Some municipalities claim that they will not be able to achieve their goals as a consequence of a lower budget allocated for 2010 and beyond. There is even a risk that all new and planned projects stop.

“Anti-crisis” Call of MODEL Partners to All Local Authorities

Do not stop your investments because of the financial crisis and difficult financial situation. The local economy needs new projects and new investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy. Building of the green economy will help to boost local development. Moreover, for most of the banks and financial institutions, local authorities are credible investors – take advantage of it!

New Structural Funds Rules Helping Cities Out of the Financial Crisis

As a response to the current crisis, the European Commission adopted in July 2009 new measures aimed at simplifying management rules for the Cohesion Policy. Local authorities aiming to improve their local energy management can finance:

- creation of green jobs and trainings (e.g. energy managers, technicians, architects, builders, advisory services...) financed under the European Social Fund can be financed 100% from the EU
- setting up of financial engineering instruments (urban funds, incentive schemes providing loans etc.)
- renovation or construction of housing for communities faced with social exclusion

More info on the [website of the EU](#)

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