

***Abstract of the Energy 4 Cohesion brochure:  
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency projects within Structural Funds in the context  
of the Lisbon Agenda***

The main focus during the upcoming programming period 2007-2013 of the Structural Funds lies on the Lisbon Criteria. This reflects the ambition of the EC to use all available programmes and means to reach greater sustainability, more employment and increased economic growth, targets that are embedded in the Lisbon Agenda.

Renewable Energy Sources can contribute to greater sustainability, more employment and increased economic growth. Thus, they are fully in compliance with the Lisbon Agenda. Moreover, they help increase the competitiveness of communities and regions, and foster cohesion. Serious commitment to Lisbon and to renewables should in theory lead to more Renewable Energy Sources projects in the regions of Europe with the help of Structural Funds. In practice, much more effort is needed.

The Energy 4 Cohesion project's objective is to prepare the ground for the extensive and efficient use of Structural Funds during 2007-2013 and beyond for the promotion of Renewable Energy Sources (RES) & Rational Use of Energy (RUE) measures in the less developed regions of Europe. During the upcoming funding period 2007-2013 60% of all fund money is earmarked for projects in the frame of the Lisbon Criteria. Energy 4 Cohesion identifies the best funding mechanisms and demonstrates best practice in eight selected target regions in Europe. With this approach Energy 4 Cohesion pays credit to the immense environmental, social and economic benefits renewable energy actions can bring to the rural regions of Europe.

The target regions are Zlín Region, Czech Republic, Poviát Nowa Sol, Poland, Limbazi Region, Latvia, Prefecture of Evros, Greece, Velký Krtíš, Slovak Republic, Saaremaa Region, Estonia, Kaunas Region, Lithuania, and Locride, Italy. The project formulates a joint methodology and eight individual action plans for the target regions, based on a comprehensive data acquisition and survey of the regions. The methodology guides local stakeholders in a step-by-step approach to a well-prepared Master Plan for applying Structural Fund money.

Energy 4 Cohesion contributes to the political process at the European, national and regional level in various ways. It has undertaken a complete survey of the current state of planning for Structural Funds at European level and in the eight Member States mentioned above for the upcoming funding period, scrutinised the suitability of the expected settings for renewable energy actions, and organised a dinner debate on the "Implementation of decentralised energy actions in rural areas & the role of European Structural Funding". This event, which was organised by European Renewable Energy Council (EREC) at Renewable Energy House in Brussels in October 2006, further stimulated the debate about the future of Structural Funds and other mechanisms, such as the Rural Development policy of the EU, and the role of such mechanisms in fostering rural development with the help of renewable energy projects.

Energy 4 Cohesion also prepared information on the requirements for Structural Funding. In order for a project to qualify for funding, several steps need to be taken by the project developer in order to be able to submit a project proposal. First of all, accordance of the project

idea with the priorities of the national Operational Programme(s) of the country is crucial. Has the project little or no relevance to a specific OP (in some cases there is only one country OP, in others, there exist several OPs), the project will not qualify. Secondly, the project size is a matter of concern. Thresholds have been specified in all countries, which must be met. However, complex bundles are often required because projects do not meet the investment size minimum (often above 3 Mio. Euro). A lowering of the threshold would be useful. Finally, access to equity funding becomes crucial at a later development stage, as well as the elaboration of publicity and political assistance.

The above information is not country specific. Every project developer must make sure that he/she understands the country-specific requirements, such as thresholds, Operational Programmes, and learn about the specificity of Calls - whether continued Calls or defined Calls within deadlines are the norm.

The full edition of the here summarised brochure can be downloaded at:

<http://www.e4c.org/4.0.html>

#### Relevant information sources:

EC Regional Policy – Inforegion website

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/index_en.htm)

ERDF: <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l60015.htm>

ESF: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/esf2000/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf2000/index_en.html)

Cohesion Fund: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/funds/procf/cf\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funds/procf/cf_en.htm)

New regulations for renewed Structural Funds and instruments 2007-2013

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/intronewreg10713\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/intronewreg10713_en.htm)

European map of eligible areas for Structural and Cohesion Funds

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/atlas/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/atlas/index_en.htm)