



Final Highlights

7th Plenary Meeting (virtual via webinar sessions)

27th - 28th October 2020



Co-funded by the Horizon 2020 programme
of the European Union

Core Theme 1: RES Electricity

Guidance through Administrative Processes - Challenges and Solutions for Setting-Up Contact Points

According to Article 16 para. 1 of Directive (EU) 2018/2001 (RED II) Member States shall set up or designate one or more contact points, which shall, upon request by the applicant, guide through and facilitate the entire administrative process. In order to reduce complexity for project developers and increase efficiency and transparency applicants shall not be obliged to contact other administrative bodies in order to complete the permit-granting process, unless they prefer to do so.

The relevance of administrative and grid barriers for RES plants is increasing. Main obstacles are related to the complexity and duration of the administrative procedures as well as integration of RES in spatial and environmental planning. This session facilitated a best practice exchange and demonstrated how Member States put Article 16 paragraph 1 RED II into practice. Furthermore, it provided an overview of challenges Member States need to tackle in order to implement the provision. Some Member States have introduced simplified procedures for interventions on existing and new RES plants and also for the connected storage systems, based on the proportionality principle, and are striving for a greater uniformity in order to speed up and facilitate the authorisation procedures.

Local Acceptance for Renewable Energy Projects - Exchange on Best Practices

Member States face the issue of achieving public acceptance for renewable energy projects. Most commonly, they experience a broad “general” support for their RES policy, but encounter problems on the local level. In many cases, information is considered a key element for achieving public acceptance. RED II takes this into account and requires Member States to develop suitable information, awareness-raising, guidance or training programmes in order to effectively inform citizens, cf. Article 18 paragraph 6 RED II.

During this session, a RES project developer and representatives of Member States shared their experiences on issues faced when trying to achieve local acceptance and on possible solutions how to overcome them. In addition, a presentation on the empirical evidence on the issue of local acceptance was given. The session also gave Member States and representatives from the European Commission the opportunity to have an open discussion on possible solutions. Raising public acceptance may also be achieved by granting financial benefits for the local level. In this regard, a broad range of potential actions is possible. Project developers may e.g. support local projects or provide financial incentive to municipalities in whose territory the plant is located. Additional efforts are required to engage with local communities and communicate project details and benefits to communities in an open and transparent manner. Concerns of local residents must be pro-actively addressed, particularly those related to environmental impacts or to factors that can disturb them (e.g. noise). Local residents should also be invited to actively take part in the process.

Joint Session with Core Theme 2 on Energy System Integration Strategy



The Commission published its 'Powering a climate-neutral economy: An EU Strategy for Energy System Integration' in July 2020. It emphasizes the importance of taking an integrated approach to the transformation of the energy system to deliver on the EU 2030 energy and climate targets and 2050 climate neutrality goal of the EU Green Deal.

This Strategy sets out a vision for how to accelerate the transition towards a more integrated energy system - one that supports a climate neutral economy at the least cost across sectors – while strengthening energy security, protecting health and the environment, and promoting growth, innovation and global industrial leadership. The strategy also aims to improve the circularity of the energy system, with energy efficiency at its core, in order to decarbonize Europe. In line with the strategy, areas where an integrated approach to heat and electricity, including the integration of renewable gases can be used to decarbonize the energy system. The heating and cooling systems will be vital in the energy transition towards carbon neutrality by 2050. This session helped to raise awareness of, and discuss the policies to support, such system integration solutions within Member States taking into account how European level policies, on topics such as energy infrastructures, renewable energy, research and innovation, support and financing.

After a short presentation by a DG ENER representative on the importance of the Energy System Strategy for delivering climate neutrality and supporting a green economic recovery after COVID-19, a representative from Consentec presented a summary of study results conducted for Germany on energy system integration. The study looked at different strategies, namely direct electrification, renewable hydrogen and other renewable biofuels of non-biological origin (e-fuels) and highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy. Infrastructure is one of the main challenges for energy system integration, especially because there is a large lead time to install large-scale energy infrastructures therefore strong coordination, not only on EU level, but also on national, regional and local level will be needed.

These claims were supported by a representative from E3Modelling, who gave a presentation on deep decarbonization pathways and emphasized that disruptive changes are needed to transform the energy system. Disruptive changes include the reduction of energy demand in all sectors, behavioural changes in the way users use energy, changes in the production and nature of energy commodities, as well as capturing CO₂ emissions. The representative highlighted that sectoral integration is an intrinsic element of the energy system and that the next decade will play a crucial role for infrastructure, industrial development of immature technologies and the power sector restructuring. Domestic production of new, decarbonised fuels in the EU would bring tremendous gains in security of energy supply by reducing net imports from outside the EU considerably. Liquid and gaseous e-fuels would support the deep decarbonization of sectors that are hard to decarbonize (e.g. industry, transport).



Core Theme 2: RES Heat

Session 1: Renewable Energy Communities – Article 22 – District Approach

This session summarized and built-on the outcomes of the past two CT2 sessions on renewable energy communities from the RES PM in Brussels and the Joint CA Workshop in Barcelona. This session focused on the district approach to implementing policies to support the uptake of Renewable Energy Communities. A district scale RES approach allows for the optimisation of a wider area than an individual building approach. Therefore, members of the CA EPBD Core Themes on Zero Energy Buildings, Building Codes and Renovation Strategies of the CA EPBD also participated in the session in order to provide a holistic zero energy buildings / district viewpoint into the renewables session.

During the Session in Barcelona, DG ENER highlighted the importance of Art. 22 being used as a tool within the EU Green Deal's 'renovation wave' initiative to support the shift to renewable heating and cooling systems in buildings. This tool holds an important potential to help develop and upscale renovation programmes, by e.g. by aggregating building renovation projects within communities MS can unlock investment potentials and facilitate financing initiatives, this also allows for a more integrated approach in line with the EU recent energy system integration strategy (COM(2020) 299, 8.7.2020).

DG ENER presented the overview of the key principles of the Renovation Wave and the EU funding instruments allocated for the new strategy. It aims to double the annual energy renovation rate by 2030 and increase renovation depth, while creating 160,000 green jobs in construction and renovating 35 million building units. During the presentation, the importance of the lifecycle aspect of buildings and their interconnectedness were emphasized. To achieve its objectives, the strategy has to lead interventions in seven key areas and remove barriers from the market.

DG ENER also gave a presentation on renewable energy communities regulated by Article 22 of the RED Directive, which gives consumers a greater role in the energy transition. During the presentation it was highlighted that this article is a social concept rather than a technical one. The difference between the concept of citizen energy communities and renewable energy communities and the ways this concept aims to create an enabling framework and remove unjustified barriers was also emphasized.

The Öko-Institut provided participants with an overview of factors driving the deployment of renewable energy communities for the heating sector. Case studies from Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Scotland were presented. The presentation concluded with findings on the key enabling factors for renewable energy communities for heat: dedicated policy targets, financial support for investments, support schemes for feasibility studies, technical support and guidance, municipal planning, regulatory framework for district heating, pricing structure of fossil fuels and renewable alternatives and monitoring of progress and lessons learned.

RE + District Heating – Upcoming Comprehensive Assessments



The upcoming Comprehensive Assessments in the EED and RES are linked and are to be delivered in one assessment, by the 31st of December 2020. The aim of this session was to look at existing policies, explore options for implementing different types of policy to support the scale up of RE DH and to share and clarify any doubts regarding the requirements of the Comprehensive Assessments under Article 15(7) of REDII, Article 14 of EED and the revised EED Annex.

Under the EED, MS must assess the potentials for efficient district heating and cooling (including small-scale household projects), high-efficiency cogeneration and efficient individual heating technologies focusing on energy efficiency rather than the fuel mix. Under the RED II, MS must assess the potential of renewable and waste heat/cold sources for heating and cooling. Through the presentations by representatives from the European Commission as well as the Joint Research Centre (JRC), participants gained a better understanding of the main differences with the assessments undertaken in 2015 as well as the potential challenges associated with the different definitions in EED and RED II.

The session was conducted as a mapping exercise of the current DH policies and the work already undertaken by MS. Participants discussed potential policies and tools for implementing DH and how the Comprehensive Assessments can be used as a tool in the implementation process. During the discussions, participants stressed the importance of working together to come up with integrated solutions that maximize the cross benefits of interlinked issues.

Session 3: Renewable Cooling - Preparation of Delegated Act

Under Article 7(3) of RED II, paragraph five the Commission “shall adopt delegated acts to establish a methodology for calculating the quantity of renewable energy used for cooling and district cooling and amend Annex VII of RED II by 31 December 2021”. This session continued and built on the discussions held in May on the possible definition and calculation methodology for renewable cooling under Article 7(3) of RED II.

DG ENER presented the legislative basis for the technical study (ENER/C1/2018-493) and the preparation of the renewable cooling calculation methodology. The accounting methodology is needed to calculate the overall RES share under Article 7 (1) (b) and contribute to the calculation of indicative targets under Article 23 (1) and Article 24 (4) (a). Based on the methodology, cooling from individual cooling and district cooling will be calculated. A questionnaire was published on the current findings of the technical study. DG ENER emphasized the importance of the survey, which was circulated to CT2 participants and energy attachés, and urged CT2 participants to assist in ensuring a high response rate from MS. The results of the survey will clarify the remaining work on the suggested calculation methodology. The wider stakeholder consultation on the study is scheduled for 26 November 2020. The preliminary draft of the methodology is foreseen by the end of 2020 and Member State consultation will take place in early 2021. Participating Member States had the opportunity to provide direct feedback on the proposed calculation options and also present their national methodology if such is available or being prepared.

The latest results of the technical background analysis (by the external consultant in the framework of Commission study ENER/C1/2018-493) and the results of the survey on the statistical reporting possibilities for implementing the possible calculation options (conducted in June 2020 with the EUROSTAT Energy Statistics Working Group) were presented to participants. The system boundaries



and definitions used in the study were presented and clarified. In addition, the presentation provided an overview of existing cooling technologies on the market. The impacts, as well as benefits and costs of proposed definitions, were also introduced.

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Core Theme 3: Guarantees of Origin and Disclosure

Standardisation of GOs

According to RED II, there will need to be an updated official EN standard for GOs. Work on this issue is being done through national standardisation bodies. During the session, participants heard about the latest news and information on the standard from the convenor of the GO CEN standard as well as from national experts. At the end of the session, the participants also got the opportunity to ask questions and provide inputs in order to facilitate national implementation of RED II.

The EN standard update through the CEN process has to be finalized by July 2021. After that date, MS implementation has to be brought in line with the EN-standard (see Article 19 of the RES Directive). Therefore, it is of utmost importance that all MS make sure to look into (and if deemed necessary to feed into) the CEN-process in a timely manner. Participation in this process naturally goes through the regular procedures, involving national standardization bodies and their procedures and reaching out to all national stakeholders.

Consumer Information: Principles for faithfully accounting for losses and regulatory follow-up of other information

Energy conversion and/ or sector integration will become more important as the total share of RES will rise for all types of GOs. As this issue relates to both GO and consumer information, it seems timely to develop a set of generic rules that take into account energy losses when handling GOs (e.g. withdrawing and (re)issuing when converting biogas to heat) and calculating residual mix (e.g. lump reduction for heat losses in H/C network). Moreover, although regulators have an obligation to monitor the suppliers' use of the RES volume based on GOs, participants had the chance to share information about the regulatory follow up of the other information based on GOs (e.g. if suppliers claim that the energy is non-subsidized or is from domestic/national producers).



Core Theme 4: Biomass Mobilisation and Sustainability

Session 1: National bioenergy strategies and sustainability issues – RED II implementation update and potential impacts of the European Green Deal

During the webinar session, DG ENER gave an update on the RED II implementation as well as on the progress made on the European Green Deal, the new growth strategy of the European Commission. It was emphasized that citizens are at the core of the energy transition in support of transforming the EU's economy sustainably. The presentation highlighted three important milestones related to the Green Deal, such as the 2030 Climate Target Plan, the Energy system integration Strategy and 2030 Biodiversity Strategy. The 2030 Climate Target Plan raised the decarbonisation target to 55 % and set a higher renewable energy target. The use of biomass will remain significant, which will require a more sustainable deployment of bioenergy without negative impact on diversity, the utilization of untapped resources and the reasonable deployment of energy crops.

The three pillars of the System Integration Strategy provide a solid foundation for a climate natural energy system. Especially in sectors that are hard to decarbonize, the deployment of low carbon fuels, including hydrogen is crucial. Core Theme 4 participants were provided with an overview of the planned and required key actions toward 2030. The Biodiversity Strategy recognizes that sustainable bioenergy is a priority solution in climate change mitigation, along with wind and solar. The implementation of the RED II sustainability criteria is key to achieve this. In addition to the EU Forest Strategy, the Commission will develop guidelines on closer-to-nature forestry practices. The revised Renewable Energy Directive will be reviewed and the public consultation is ongoing. Participants were invited to take part in the process and feed into the discussions.

Two Member States namely the Netherlands and Denmark presented their national biomass sustainability frameworks. Participants learned about the Dutch sustainability framework, which is based on the recommendations of the Socio - Economic Council, and incorporates socio-economic criteria. The framework demonstrates the most efficient ways to utilize biomass as feedstock, given the limited resources and paves the way toward building up a high - quality use. The presentation on the Danish sustainability framework highlighted, which aspects of the strategy reach beyond the scope of the RED II and what are the reasons behind it. This framework is based on stricter criteria for biomass and sustainability than the RED II Directive and promotes alternatives to biomass for heat. Participants also had the chance to learn more about the Danish political agreement on sustainable criteria. Thereafter, specific questions about interpretation of the REDII were answered by DG ENER.



Core Theme 5: RES in Transport

Policy Updates and RED II Implementation

This webinar session looked at RED II implementation across EU Member States, progress towards existing targets and included a policy update from the European Commission (DG ENER). During the first part of the webinar, Core Theme 5 leader shared results from the participant survey, which was circulated in preparation for the webinar. The survey responses provided updates on some national policy, implementation of the revised Renewable Energy Directive (RED II), the overall impact of COVID-19 as well as general policies and data. The survey results showed that in many participating countries share of renewable fuels in transport is increasing and most countries are confident they will meet the 2020 target. Participating countries also discussed COVID-19 impact on fuel demand and the renewable fuel and transport sector.

Two Member States, namely France and Slovakia, presented on their national implementation of the RED II. France presented a draft law that is currently under discussion at the French Parliament that will include a number of new provisions, including for example the introduction of a mandate for aviation from 2022, lower cap for biofuels produced from soy, and new eligible products (renewable electricity, hydrogen in refineries). This led to some discussion about the nature of the aviation fuel mandate and measures differentiating between different crop-based biofuels. Slovakia presented on how national climate policies shape renewable energy policies and highlighted some of the existing challenges related to RED II implementation, including for example complex issues related to forest biomass.

A representative from DG ENER provided a short update on recent policy developments at EU level, focusing on the impact of the European Green Deal and the expected dates for the next steps. DG ENER gave an overview on upcoming delegated and implementing acts for REDII. The session ended with a lively and interactive discussion question and answer session related to the challenges of the RED II implementation.



European Commission: DG ENER Sessions

RES Financing Mechanism

The implementing regulation setting out the rules for the functioning of the new EU renewable energy financing mechanism was adopted on 15 September 2020. The mechanism shall be operational as of 1 January 2021. Member State can voluntarily participate in the mechanism as contributing or host countries in order to receive statistical benefits and cover a gap towards their 2020 baseline or their 2030 trajectory.

During this session, representatives from the European Commission gave a presentation on the design of the mechanism, the benefits for the Member States, the procedural aspects as well as the next steps in the implementation of the mechanism. The EU renewable energy financing mechanism is designed to support renewable energy projects by bringing together investors and project developers, improving the efficiency of investment, pooling resources and finding the right mix between public and private finance, and making it easier for EU countries to work together.

This new innovative mechanism pools the financial contribution from all EU countries and then allocated funding through a system of competitive tenders. The renewable energy resources financed via this mechanism will count towards the climate targets for renewable energy for all Member States participating in the particular project, whether as a host or contributing country. This counting method ensures that each new project contributes towards the renewable energy targets of all participating Member States. At the end of the session, the participants had the chance to pose questions for clarity to the DG ENER representatives, which resulted in a very lively discussion.

More information can be found on the dedicated page:

https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/renewable-energy/eu-renewable-energy-financing-mechanism_en

Notification to the Commission of Member State's Transposition Measures for RED II

The transposition deadline of RED II is 30 June 2021. By this date, Member States must notify to the European Commission the measures they have taken to transpose the directive. According to recent case-law from the EUCJ, when notifying such measures, Member States must indicate in a sufficiently clear and precise manner which provisions of national law transpose which provisions of the directive. To facilitate such notification, DG ENER has prepared a correlation table, of voluntary use, that allows MS to indicate which provisions of national law transpose which provisions of a directive in a clear and easy manner. After the presentation of the correlation table, a question and answer round was held to give participants the opportunities to clarify any open questions.

