



EMPOWERING Project

LOCAL PUBLIC AUTHORITIES TO BUILD INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE ENERGY STRATEGIES

energy consumption

energy efficiency

energy efficiency

renewable energy

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Six regional development agencies, a region and two scientific partners, together with over 30 European municipal administrations, have worked to bridge the gap of skills and capabilities needed to plan measures in line with the European 2030 climate & energy framework and to achieve the new targets of the GHG emission, renewable energy consumption and energy efficiency.



OBJECTIVES

The goal of the EMPOWERING project was to strengthen local authorities in the definition and implementation of sustainable energy strategies and plans, promoting the exchange of experiences, innovative approaches and practices for the energy transition in European cities and regions.

The EMPOWERING project had a twofold strategy. On the one hand, to provide local authorities with the know-how, tools and methodologies necessary to develop new SECAPs and to update existing ones. On the other hand, it aimed to strengthen the capacity of regional authorities to develop innovative financial mechanisms capable of carrying out integrated energy sustainability actions, with the involvement also of private stakeholders.

PROJECT PHASES

The approach of the EMPOWERING project was that of supporting local administrations by providing them with the know-how, tools and methodologies necessary to develop new SECAPs and update existing ones. The project was structured in three main actions responding to specific project objectives:

- **TRANSNATIONAL LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE:** The aim of this phase was to strengthen the skills of policy makers and regional and local officials through the exchange of experiences with other involved administrations, providing them with the opportunity to learn possible effective energy solutions through direct participation in:
 - *Study Visits to learn about the best practices to reduce CO₂ emissions put in place by other local administrations;*
 - *international seminars and peer-to-peer exchange seminars.*
- **LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES:** This phase was aimed at increasing the skills of local administrations, providing them with knowledge and tools that were supportive for implementing and keeping their SECAP updated. In this



regard, a capacity building program was developed based on 6 basic modules whose contents were adapted and suited to the real needs of the participating administrations' territories.

To this end, the **LEB - Local Energy Boards** (local working groups on energy) have been created, which constitute a sort of "control room" for EMPOWERING activities in the area and which has seen the involvement of policy-makers and public officials of local and regional authorities, together with the main players in the energy sector. The Italian LEB, in particular, was composed of the representatives of the Municipalities of the Marche Region adhering to the Covenant of Mayors and who had already submitted a SEAP, the Municipalities interested in joining the Covenant of Mayors and the relevant stakeholders at regional level.

The objective of the LEB was to encourage a **shared process for developing new Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAP)**, in addition to updating those existing to the new European objectives for 2030, starting primarily from the understanding of the main needs of local administrations and creating a program to increase the skills of administrations and officials, specifically those related to local emergencies

The following actions were implemented in this phase:

- 7 interactive webinars;
- 26 capacity building workshops for local administrations willing to draw up the SECAP;
- 26 capacity building workshops for local administrations interested to update the SECAP;
- 12 capacity building workshops for regional representatives to study the innovative financial solutions.
- **SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES FOR THE UPDATE AND DRAWING UP OF THE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AND CLIMATE ACTION PLANS:** application of the knowledge acquired in the previous phases for developing local energy planning and promoting regional level innovative financial instruments.

PROJECT RESULTS

Main achievements of the project were:

- Drafting of **78 Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans**, [32 of which related to Municipalities in the Marche Region, developed within the European initiative of the Covenant of Mayors](#).
- Analysis and selection for the involved territories of the most interesting public and private financial instruments, whose selection criteria referred to replicability and effectiveness of energy efficiency and renewable energy production, i.e.:
 - **Thermal Account and Energy Performance Contracts (EPC)** for the retrofitting of air conditioning systems and production of domestic hot water in municipal public buildings.
 - **White certificates and Energy Performance Contracts (EPC)** for the retrofitting of public lighting systems.
 - **White certificates for energy efficiency investments in the industrial sector**.
- Joint development of an action plan for renewable energies by 11 municipalities of the Marche Region.
- Updating of the [Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan of the Municipalities of Ancona, Appignano, Ascoli Piceno, Cupramontana, Fermo, Grottazolina, Jesi, Macerata, Monte Giberto, Offida, Pesaro, Pollenza, San Benedetto del Tronto, Santa Maria Nuova, Senigallia, Urbino](#) for the part relating to mitigation actions.
- Support to the representatives from the involved regions' administrations in shaping their [energy vision by 2050](#).
- Training of over 300 local and regional public officials.
- Increase by 45% in the adhesion to the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy by the municipalities of the Marche Region.

To support administrations in creating their own Basic Emission Inventory as part of the EMPOWERING project, an Excel based "[EMPOWERING data collection template, BEI calculation and forecasting tool](#)" and a [methodological guideline](#) have been developed.

This tool allows to:

- Simplify the collection of data required by the BEI (Basic Emission Inventory which must be carried out both for the drafting of the SECAP and to monitor it over time).
- Calculate energy consumption and draw up the energy balance in accordance with the methods envisaged by the SECAP for the BEI.
- Calculate the impacts for mitigation actions to be included in the SECAP.
- Reduce complexity and specialist knowledge to minimize errors.



Among the main tools put in place by EMPOWERING there is also a **learning Platform**, based on the transnational platform launched by the **ClusterPoliSEE** project (financed by the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Program) which allows the use of a wide range of training materials (e-learning, webinar, best practices, case studies, etc.), made available as OER (open educational resources) in order to further contribute to the sharing of information and to the progress of the capacity building process.

This platform is structured in a way to train users and guide local administrations in the drafting of the SECAP through 6 sections containing numerous presentations and a tool for the self-assessment of skills.

Notably, the six training modules relate to:

- The first steps within the Covenant of Mayors and the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP): here you can find training material on the structure of the Action Plan; the phases for drafting or updating the SECAP, and also a general framework for groups of Municipalities that wish to jointly adhere to the Covenant of Mayors.
- Collection, analysis and recording of your SECAP data: describes how to build the Basic Emission Inventory.
- How to select the actions of your SECAP: this section helps to understand the methodology for selecting the mitigation actions to be included in the Action Plan and describes examples of integration of these actions with other municipal plans such as the Urban Plan for Sustainable Mobility.
- Awareness raising on sustainability in the Municipalities: contains training material on how to involve citizens and stakeholders within the actions of the Covenant of Mayors and how to understand the Covenant as a local policy tool.
- Ideas on financing actions to achieve SECAP objectives: this section provides a general overview of the funding opportunities for the implementation of the Plan's actions such as the POR FESR Funds, European funding, tax deductions or credit transfer, thermal account, as well as crowdfunding.
- Tips and examples of success for your SECAP: this section provides an *excursus* on some successful practices regarding possible actions to be included in the SECAP.



Acronym

EMPOWERING

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695944

Reference Programme

[HORIZON 2020](#)



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1.497.003,75

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2016

Start Year
2020

End Year
2020

Beneficiary headquarters

Via Gentile da Fabriano 9
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Region
Marche

Description

Marche, Italia / Andalusia, Spagna /
Regione Nord-Est, Romania / Regione
del Nord-Ungheria, Ungheria / Istria,
Croazia / Macedonia Centrale /Grecia