



Newsletter n°1

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KEY DATA

- Project reference: RENREN 0624R2
- Total budget: 2.16 M€
- ERDF contribution: 1.65 M€
- Duration of the project: January 2010 – December 2012 (36 months)
- Project partners: 14 partners
- Lead partner: Schleswig-Holstein/Germany

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ALL ABOUT THE RENREN PROJECT

“RENREN”, the Renewable Energy REgions Network, is investigating how regional governments can help accelerate a shift towards renewable energy and so support EU aspirations for a greener, cleaner energy future. At the launch conference of RENREN in Kiel, Germany, on 28th April, 14 project partners debated how they and other regions could play their part in global climate action and a securer energy supply. The conference attracted around 130 people.

Regions will play a huge part in helping the EU and its member states achieve their 2020 renewable energy targets as well as wider EU objectives on energy. The ambitious EU energy agenda is based on the three pillars of energy security, competitiveness and sustainability. A minimum increase of 20% in renewable energy generation compared to energy consumption by 2020 is one key element of this. Renewable energy is one of the fastest growing sectors, it is also one which has significant job creation potential. Independence from energy imports has also become a crucial goal of EU energy policy.



➤ Partners from across Europe are involved in RENREN. Some regions are already well ahead in the renewable energy stakes but, for others, renewable development is only starting to gain momentum. RENREN will examine how the challenges vary according to where regions sit on this trajectory.

➤ The project will look at enabling conditions that help or hinder renewable expansion, focusing on finance, strategic planning, consents, innovation and jobs. Since the key technologies being deployed in Europe are diverse, the network will consider how they apply to different technology families:

- Wind, ocean, hydropower;
- Geothermal, biomass;
- Solar thermal, PV.

RENREN BACKGROUND

RENREN grew out of a collaboration of 6 core regions that wanted to play their part in global climate action and security of energy supply. They were seeking to improve regional policy-making to nurture renewable energy sources (RES). They signed a Charter to this effect in April 2007. To develop an EU-wide partnership and spread the learning benefits of RENREN further, it was decided in 2008 that new members should be approached and funding sought via INTERREG IVC to optimally coordinate RENREN exchanges.

By late January 2010, the project application drawn up by the RENREN consortium was approved by the INTERREG IVC Monitoring Committee.

Access to the text of the Charter [click here](#).





RENREN STARTING POINT: SURVEY ON THE STATUS QUO

A questionnaire was sent out to partners in order to find out about the prevailing conditions affecting the renewable energy sector in each region as well as the penetration of different types of renewables to date. All project partners responded within the first six months of the project. We also wanted to find out about the partners' different levels of knowledge and expertise in the field of RES policies and the issues that affect the development of renewables. We expected to gather information about what the partners, with the help of other stakeholders, had already put in place to move the sector forward (targets, regulations, guidelines, grants, and so on) and any progress in terms of bringing on renewable energy so far.

The partners were requested to answer more than 50 questions focusing on issues such as renewable energy's share in production and consumption, expected future developments, national, regional and local regulations relevant to the energy sector in each region, or governmental incentives to promote the production and consumption of renewable energy.

The results revealed more similarities than differences across the partners even though they have different national and regional regulatory frameworks, a range of levels of experience in developing renewables, and varying degrees of renewable energy penetration to date.

The information gathered served as a useful starting point for the first workshop in Kiel, Germany, on April 29th-30th. The questionnaire confirmed that, in general, the partners expect to learn how best to promote RES, foster knowledge transfer, enhance their network(s), and to gain a better technical understanding of renewables.

Here is an overview of other main results – part 1.

General contributions in the RENREN project by region:

- ✓ Some regions have developed detailed concepts, plans, and strategies on RES.
- ✓ All "expert regions" want to share their expertise in the project.
- ✓ Most regions believe they have some useful knowledge to offer on RES, even in areas where they don't consider themselves "expert".

All interest are keen to **learn from others**, particularly on:

- ✓ financing, subsidies, investment, management of resources,
- ✓ handling legal restrictions and environmental restrictions,
- ✓ networking with research institutions,
- ✓ technical aspects of individual RES,
- ✓ garnering support from the public.





RENREN STARTING POINT: SURVEY ON THE STATUS QUO (II)

Here it is an overview of the main results – part 2:

Present status of RES in the regions in 2008 and 2009:

Basic data and information / Organisation of work

- ✓ RES share of entire energy consumption varies from 1% to 64%
- ✓ Organisation of work: The number of staff per government administration varies from 3 to 25. Some regions do not have a separate lead department. All regions are supported by public/private agencies at regional, national & local level.

Instruments: legal and fiscal framework

- ✓ Some regions have legal instruments aimed at supporting the expansion of RES.
- ✓ Half of the regions have competencies in licensing individual facilities and/or infrastructure.
- ✓ Some regions develop legally non-binding guidelines to help decision-making.
- ✓ Most regions have fiscal instruments to support RES.
- ✓ Almost across the board, national level legal & fiscal instruments support RES, such as subsidies or reduced taxes.

Instruments: education and infrastructure: Most regions:

- ✓ see a high impact of RES on the economy and the labour market and a high potential for development. The number of skilled staff differs,
- ✓ support RES in their educational system,
- ✓ offer some kind of vocational training, such as seminars or training courses,
- ✓ host facilities like RES research centres or start-up centres,
- ✓ have RES cluster (-like) structures, at least in specific RES sectors.

Communication: stakeholders and general public

- ✓ Most important stakeholders are energy producers, energy distributors and suppliers, R&D & the general public.
- ✓ Half of the regions do not run any public campaigns; the other regions inform the public via media such as websites, press conferences, articles, interviews.
- ✓ All regions are satisfied about how stakeholders inform the public about the development of RES.

Major bottlenecks to RES development are:

- ✓ administrative and political problems, such as local tax policy, national/legal framework,
- ✓ a lack of public acceptance of wind power plants,
- ✓ high investments for and insurance of RES power plants,
- ✓ technical problems, such as energy storage or grid capacity,
- ✓ environmental groups.

To **overcome these bottlenecks** it is suggested that more cooperation, a common legislative basis and more funding is needed.





RENREN WORKING STRUCTURE

RENREN project content is organized around three working groups (WGs), each with a focus on a particular technology family. The groups investigate these technologies in workshops once every six months with reference to four sets of “enabling conditions” (see below). From this, work packages are agreed and the members of the three groups draw up their findings in reports and presentations which are then delivered at their next workshop.

In addition, eight on-site visits will provide opportunities to exchange expertise and explore specific RES matters in-depth during the project. These, like the biannual workshops will be hosted and arranged by individual project partners. The working groups (WG) cover all major RES types:

WG 1: Wind, ocean, hydropower – chaired by Wales, WG leader (deputy leader: Schleswig-Holstein)

WG 2: Geothermal, biomass – chaired by Jämtland, WG leader (deputy leader: Westfjords)

WG 3: Solarthermal, photovoltaic – chaired by Navarra, WG leader (deputy leader: Cyprus)

These are considered with reference to a range of cross-cutting conditions that enable or hinder the growth of renewables. The partners decided to approach these systematically by dividing them up into four categories. The four categories of enabling conditions are explored in turn over the course of the workshops – they are:

- Strategic planning for RES at regional level
- Permits and compliance
- Fostering job market development, RDT & innovation
- Finance and incentives.

A **Monitoring Group (MG)** ensures the overall coordination of the RENREN project, meeting at least twice a year in the margins of the biannual workshops. Strategic decisions are taken by a **Steering Committee (SC)**, where everyone is represented by an appropriate decision-maker.



Contacts:

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BROAD ATTENDANCE AT RENREN LAUNCH CONFERENCE

The official launch conference of the RENREN project on 28 April 2010 in Kiel (Germany), hosted and organised by Schleswig-Holstein, attracted around 130 attendees from partner regions as well as from the host region. The good turnout clearly indicated a high degree of interest in the topic and motivation to be involved in supporting the roll-out of renewable energy and in combating climate change. The conference was followed by the first RENREN workshop.



"We are proud to lead this European project. Schleswig-Holstein will bring its experience in the field of wind energy as well as biomass," **Jost de Jager**, Schleswig-Holstein's Minister of Science, Economic Affairs and Transport, said in his opening speech. He welcomed the strong political backing by RENREN partners. This was demonstrated by the attendance of political representatives, who actively contributed to the conference debates. Further keynote speeches were given by **Eva Gerhards** (EU Commission, Member of the cabinet of Commissioner Oettinger) and **Dörte Fouquet** (Director of EREF – European Renewable Energy Federation). **Günther Oettinger**, EU Commissioner for Energy addressed the Conference in a video message.

"The development of renewable energies in the coming years is of great importance for European regions: the renewable energy sector has the potential to drive sustainable growth... I am strongly convinced that this project will serve as a model for similar, future projects. Of course, I eagerly await your final results and I wish you every success for the progress of the project."

Günther Oettinger, EU Commissioner for Energy, quoted from his [video message to RENREN Launch Conference](#)



Statements by partner region representatives were followed by a presentation from Prof Ulf Hahne, University of Kassel (Germany), on "100% renewable energy regions – some lessons from German experience". This led into a moderated panel debate on "The EU's renewable energy target: Regions' pivotal role". This set the scene for thematic work in RENREN workshop 1 on "Strategic Planning" and preparation for workshop 2 on "Permits and Consents" over the following days.

RENREN Charter signed. The RENREN Charter was the starting point of the RENREN network co-operation and was signed by six regions and small states in April 2007 in Brussels, in the presence of Mr Andris Piebalgs, EU Commissioner for Energy. It set out the commitment of signatories to facilitating exchange of experience and knowledge with a view to enhanced promotion of renewable energies at regional level across Europe. Since the current INTERREG funded project marks the second phase of RENREN network co-operation, the RENREN Charter is still open for new partners to sign. During the Launch Conference on 29 April 2010 this

[RENREN charter](#) was signed by new project partners in a ceremonial session.



For more information on the RENREN Launch Conference (including speeches, presentations) please [click here](#)

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RENREN PROJECT WORKSHOP 1 (KIEL, 29-30 APRIL 2010)

The real work started in Kiel with a focus on “Strategic Planning for RES at regional level” at the first RENREN project workshop on 29-30 April 2010. Based on the lead-in of the previous day’s Launch Conference, as well as a preliminary analysis of answers to a project partner survey weeks before, the workshop investigated “bottlenecks & best practice”.

Participants put heads together in three smaller groups to get to down to the detail, starting joint work on specific RES technology families. At the end of the workshops, all partners agreed on a number of themes to further explore in joint papers and presentations in the months to come.

“We expect to learn a lot from each other over the next three years. The aim is to identify policy choices to improve regional frameworks for renewable energy expansion. We’ll explore how the regions can influence the enabling conditions for renewables, and how these can be fine-tuned to support different technologies, such as wind, biomass or solar,” Mr Wolfgang Schulz, the project coordinator from Lead Partner, stated in his opening address to the Workshop. He also welcomed the fact that all project partners managed to be present even though the Icelandic volcano eruptions caused serious flight schedule problems across Europe.

Furthermore, presentations by project managers Ms Karin Maatje on [MORE4NRG](#) and Ms Helle Knudsen on [LoCaRe](#) outlined how RENREN can cooperate with other thematically related INTERREG-funded projects.

The work package on “Strategic Planning for RES at regional level” drawn up by all partners in Kiel covered 19 selected items ranging from grid development to regional energy plans. Exploration of this theme, RENREN’s first major subject, will be completed at the second set of RENREN workshops in Pamplona (Navarra/Spain) on 4-5 November 2010. As input to these, the three RENREN working groups will deliver the reports they have put together identifying bottlenecks, best practice examples and suggesting policy recommendations.

For more information on the “Strategic Planning” work package, please [click here](#) .



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1ST ON-SITE VISIT: SOLAR ENERGY, HOSTED BY PAYS DE LA LOIRE

Through a series of thematic on-site visits – eight during the whole of RENREN project – experts from partner regions will have the chance to assess the transferability of projects as best practice, as well as the transferability of regional policy strategies. Each of the on-site visits will focus on one particular RES type and be hosted by a RENREN partner region. The first visit was arranged by the Pays de la Loire Region on 16-18 June 2010 and focused on solar energy.

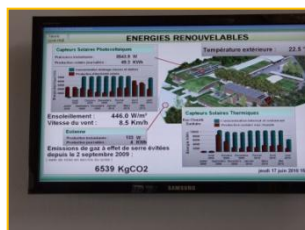
In her welcoming speech, **Emmanuelle BOUCHAUD**, Pays de la Loire Region Vice-President in charge of energy, underlined the region's commitment to expanding the use of renewable energy and co-operating with others on good practice. She expressed her satisfaction that the RENREN project brought together both regional and European levels, particularly relevant actors in the field of renewable energy. Creating a very constructive and powerful momentum at both levels, the RENREN project fits in well with her region's policy approaches since 2004, recently strengthened with a new term of office.

A presentation on Pays de la Loire's strategy to support energy management and on the development of renewable energy was followed by a number of meetings and debates with researchers, manufacturers and people in charge of technology transfer and energy management. This included a visit to the Beaulieu shopping mall in NANTES. On the roof of the mall, one of the largest urban-based photovoltaic farms in FRANCE was built by the NANTES Metropolitan Area ("NANTES Métropole") in 2009.

The partners also visited Tabarly secondary school. Built with environmentally friendly materials, energy management tools, and integrating renewable energy and user-involvement, it is fast becoming a role model for all new building projects. The school combines new energy technologies as well as an interesting energy mix. The school's photovoltaic membranes can produce as much as 24000 KW/year.

The Abalone company's head office at St HERBLAIN was presented as being the first energy positive building in the wide West of FRANCE. By combining energy efficiency and sustainable development its objective – in the long run – is to be disconnected from the national electricity grid, thus becoming self-sufficient.

The partners were also given a presentation by the company Systovi, which has entered the challenging solar sector. This company's presentation (state of the art development, testing and manufacturing) provoked a discussion on the role of public institutions in supporting such techniques.



The presentations and case studies discussed during this first RENREN on-site visit were very well-received by partners' representatives. The findings will be taken on board at respective workshops. For a full report, please [click here](#).

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European Union
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RENREN RESPONDS TO 10-YEAR EU ENERGY STRATEGY

RENREN responded to the recent EU Commission consultation, a first step in mapping out an Energy Strategy for Europe 2011-2020. In the response the RENREN ad-hoc working group highlighted these key issues for Europe (full response, see link below).

- **Basing decarbonisation of the energy system on renewables and energy efficiency as an ultimate goal.** This is key in addressing climate change as well as wider sustainability objectives.
- **Enhancing multi-level collaboration to deliver decarbonisation on the ground.** Regions have particular potential in driving the agenda because of their local knowledge, their role in facilitating research and business infrastructure and in attracting investment in renewable energy.
- **Harnessing the wider benefits of EU climate and energy goals for the economy and society at large.** This includes the potential to address the issues of energy affordability, fuel poverty, job-creation.
- **Taking a strategic approach to bottlenecks holding up greater penetration of renewable energy.** In particular, attention needs to be paid to providing support for grid development offshore and between areas offering significant natural energy resources (such as for solar around the Mediterranean basin). More European guidance on environmental matters could also greatly aid planning.
- **Better orienting structural funds to aid the attainment of EU goals on climate change, energy efficiency and renewables.**
- **Giving greater impetus to large-scale renewables offering immense potential but where facilitating conditions have been lacking to improve their prospects.** In particular offshore wind, marine energy and solar (particularly concentrating solar power) suffer from this and a strategic European approach is essential.
- **Continuing initiatives to encourage cities and regions to develop integrated solutions in their areas to meet renewable energy, waste management and sustainable transport needs.** Such initiatives are the building blocks that will lead to wider action.
- **Gaining credibility in international climate change negotiations by showing evidence of progress and concerted action at all EU levels.**

To see the full response [click here](#).

For more information on the “Strategic Planning” work package, please [click here](#).





RENREN-HOMEPAGE

The project homepage gives you a good overview of which regions are involved in RENREN and what the project is all about.



An interactive map provides you with quick information about which regions are experts or learning partners for each different renewable energy form. Both the regions and the renewable energy types being investigated are described in a comparative way, which gives you the sense of how landscape characteristics and energy generation are connected. There is also a search engine that helps you find the information you are interested in as quickly as possible. Or use the contact information to make a query. Past and future project activities are displayed in external and internal events. (Specific information for the partners is accessible by logging on). The site contains information on agendas and outcomes from the project conferences, workshops and on-site visits. We also flag up other sibling renewable energy projects under "Links". For more information [click here](#)

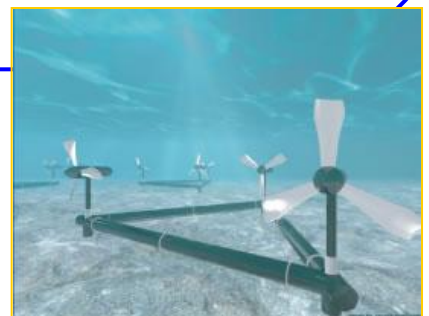
Contact: Björn Nilsson, Jämtland County Council, bjorn.nilsson@jll.se

WALES: ERDF CASH FOR TIDAL POWER PLAN

A £572,000 European grant is to help fund a study to examine if electricity can be generated from the tides off the West Wales coast. The funding boost to the £1.4m project, which is being partly-backed by private shareholders, was announced by Environment Minister Jane Davidson.

A feasibility study to develop "DeltaStream technology" is now set to be launched which will assess the suitability of a site in West Wales for tidal stream testing. The Welsh Assembly Government is offering £572,000 towards the project using money from the European Regional Development Fund. Tidal Energy Limited (TEL), the company behind the technology, will carry out site surveys, environmental assessments and design work at the proposed demonstration site at Ramsey Sound, Pembrokeshire. The demonstration project will last for 12 months and electricity will be supplied to the nearby residents of St Davids. Jane Davidson, Wales' Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing, said: "Developing renewable technologies is vital if we are to drive forward Wales' ambitions to become a more sustainable nation and meet our energy targets."

Source: <http://www.insidermedia.com/insider/wales/36940-erdf-cash-tidal-power-plan>



NEXT EVENTS

SECOND THEMATIC ON-SITE VISIT ON “WIND ENERGY” TO KIEL AND HUSUM

Schleswig-Holstein represents one of Europe’s pioneering wind energy regions. Mostly based on on-shore as well as off-shore wind energy, the Schleswig-Holstein Land Government aims to generate a 100% share of RES compared to electricity consumption. The world’s biggest wind energy fair “Husum WindEnergy” is held here biennially.

Against this background Schleswig-Holstein hosted and arranged the second RENREN on-site visit which was open to experts from all partner regions. The aim of this was to exchange expertise with major actors and stakeholders from Schleswig-Holstein as well as present some of the particular strengths and solutions applied. In addition, a visit to this year’s fair “Husum WindEnergy 2010” was arranged.

For the agenda of second thematic on-site visit and other information please [click here](#)

For more information on the “Husum WindEnergy 2010” fair, please [visit website](#)

Contact: Wolfgang Schulz, Schleswig-Holstein Land Government (wolfgang.schulz@wimi.landsh.de)

SECOND WORKSHOP & ON-SITE VISIT IN NAVARRA

The second RENREN workshop on the topic of “permits and compliance” and an on-site-visit on solar and wind energy will take place from 3–5 November in Pamplona (Navarra, Spain).

More info [click here](#).

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OTHER EVENTS

“EXPOBIOENERGIA 10”. Valladolid (Spain), 27 -29 October 2010.

More info: <http://www.expobioenergia.com>



European Union

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RENREN PARTNERS REGIONS

For more information, click on the map. Here you can find additional information on each partner – including individual fact sheets on RES by region.



Editorial note: The RENREN newsletter is edited on behalf of the RENREN project consortium by EREN, the Regional Energy Agency of Castilla y León (Spain) - Ente Regional de la Energía de Castilla y León (eren@jcy.es) assisted by the Welsh Assembly Government. The newsletter will be published twice per year. This **newsletter issue 1** covers the project's first period from January to June 2010. The next issue will be published by the end of 2010.



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