

TRANSNATIONAL REPORT ON CAPACITY BUILDING IN EACH PARTICIPATING HUC

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Content

1. Introduction	3
2. Evaluation of the deployment desk meetings	4
2.1. Austria	4
2.2. Slovenia	5
2.3. Croatia	5
2.4. Italy	7
2.5. German	7
3. Conclusion	9



1. Introduction

In course of the Store4HUC project, in each participating country a so called “deployment desk” was established, which was composed of representatives and relevant stakeholders as well as selected players whose support was needed for the implementation of the pilot systems. These meetings have been the main interface between the project and the local/regional/national stakeholders and have served as a knowledge transfer vehicle for the other work packages. Due to the deployment desk meetings, the stakeholders were actively involved in the project and an ongoing exchange of knowledge was ensured.

In every city/region (Weiz/Austria, Cuneo/Italy, Lendava/Slovenia, Bračak/Croatia, and Germany) at least four deployment meetings have been carried out. The meetings have been organised over the whole project duration and every deployment desk had its own content related focus depending on the particular pilots and local context:

- The first deployment desk meetings took place in every participating country between June and September 2019. The main target of the meetings was to bring together all so far envisaged relevant stakeholders, present the pilot planning to them, receive their initial feedback and agree on the next steps related to pilot deployment as well as their involvement. The content-related focus was on the identification of challenges, needs and opportunities on Energy Management Systems (EMS) and energy storage planning. (read more in D.T 1.1.2)
- The second deployment desk meetings took place between December 2019 and October 2020. The focus of these meeting was on the pilot execution and on the assessment of the action plans for further steps. (read more in D.T 1.1.3 & D.T 1.2.5)
- The third deployment desk meetings were carried out about two years after the project start. At least two different thematic areas have been discussed with the participants. The first one consists of questions about the possible upscaling of the project results and the second one was about the tools, which have been developed within the Store4HUC project. Therefore, in some countries, the third deployment desk meeting was carried out together with the stakeholder training (read more in D.T 1.1.4 & D.T3.3.3).
- The fourth and last deployment desk meetings were carried out close to the end of the project in the first month of 2022 and were mainly dedicated to discussing the transfer and the sustainability of the pilot results. (read more in D.T 1.1.5)

Within the deployment desk meetings and its connected events, more than 100 stakeholders have been involved in the project. Due to Covid-19, some meetings had to be postponed or carried out online or under special circumstances, but at the end all meetings could take place. In Austria, Slovenia, Croatia and Italy the deployment desk meetings have been a very useful instrument to enable an ongoing exchange between the project team and the external stakeholders during all phases of the project. Only in Germany, the organisation of the deployment desk has been a bit difficult as there was no project pilot in this country.



2. Evaluation of the deployment desk meetings

In course of the last deployment desk meetings, the participants and the organisers of the national deployment desk meetings have been asked to summarize their experiences with the deployment desk meetings in a short statement (how was it, lessons learned, proposals for improvements, etc.). These statements are collected in the following chapters.

2.1. Austria

The deployment desk meetings with the Austrian stakeholders have been very productive at any time. Due to the meetings, the stakeholders could actively be involved in each step of the project and could be encouraged to bring in their experiences into the meetings and thereby also into the implementation process.

The work with this group was quite engaged, the members were active and open for new decisions and new ideas. It can be stated also for future projects, that it really makes sense to create a group of relevant stakeholders and meet with them regularly. This was very helpful for all steps of a project.

The participants of the Austrian deployment desk have been a broad mix of stakeholders from different organisations:

- members of the municipality
- technicians
- energy experts
- energy planning organisation and
- regional experts as well as research organisations.

This composition enabled a perfect setting for the implementation of the storage at the historical place in Weiz.

The Austrian project teams has organised four deployment desk meetings and also had several meetings in between, to ensure that everyone was fully updated about the implementation process. Very good feedback from the deployment desk members could be received, as shown below.

Statements of Austrian deployment desk members:

Hannes Schinagl - General manager of the biomass district heating network Weizberg:

“For me, the deployment desk meetings were really good organised, and the topics were great, each time we met, we came a step forward. The group was good selected, and everyone was motivated to build this storage.”

Josef Hochegger - Wood chips producer:

“The meetings were very helpful for the project, every person who was involved in the implementation of the storage was actively involved and part of the deployment desk.”

Gottfried Heinz - Major of Thannhausen:

“The project Store4HUC was a great project for our region and very important for the biomass district heating Weizberg. The organisation of these deployment desk meetings was very important for the implementation of the storage.”



2.2. Slovenia

The group of stakeholders identified has included quite diverse organisations, but unfortunately and in reality, representatives of all organizations were not able to attend all the meetings. Based on this, the debates were sometimes not appropriate or holistic. Nevertheless, other stakeholders often attended the meetings, especially when the implementation of the pilot investment was in the centre of discussions.

The municipality of Lendava was very active in the meetings. Fully integrated in meetings, agreements and diligent participation in the implementation of the investment have been consequently performed.

Due to the epidemic situation the organisation of meetings was difficult.

For further implementations, we suggest that additional geothermal experts and energy distributors are included, as they are crucial in the implementation. They were included, but only indirectly or through telephone conversations or through official correspondence. It is difficult to persuade representatives of such organizations to get involved due to other obligations.

Here are some lessons learned and suggestions for further improvements in stakeholder involvement:

- To meet more often;
- Always moderate the meetings and prepare the guiding questions which facilitate to come to expected meeting outcomes by keeping the focus on discussions;
- Invite different stakeholders and try to ensure the hybrid meetings (physical and online) if otherwise is not possible.

Statements of Slovenian deployment desk members:

Janez Magyar - Mayor of Lendava municipality:

“Meeting stakeholders as part of regular meetings is a great idea and I am very happy to have been able to attend them sometimes, as we exchanged ideas and views on the implementation part of the pilot investment. The Lead Partner also informed us about other matters concerning the project administration. I am also pleased with the ideas that were born for the future and our further investments in other public buildings.”

Bojan Vogrinčič - Local energy agency Pomurje:

“Given that we were the initiator of the pilot idea and also the developer of various studies, I am glad that the implementation of the pilot ended perfectly. All this would not be possible without the agreements we reached at the stakeholder meetings, so I welcome any kind of stakeholder gathering and debate, as this leads to greater commitment and professionalism in the implementation of the investment.”

2.3. Croatia

Representatives of the Krapina-Zagorje County, Ministry of Culture - Conservation Office in Krapina, Croatian electricity distribution system operator (HEP-ODS), Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning, Zagorje Development Agency (ZARA), Croatian Association of Historic Towns (HUPG) and representatives of project partners University of Zagreb Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (UNIZGFER, PP9) and North-West Croatia Regional Energy Agency (REGEA, PP8) were closely involved from the beginning of the Store4HUC project.

The stakeholders especially liked the fact of having the opportunity to be actively involved in the implementation of the project and the way they were approached, which is confirmed by anonymous feedback on distributed questionnaires shared after the meeting. All four deployment desk meetings



were very constructive, productive and the participants were satisfied with the content and the knowledge they received. Recommendations for future activities regarding the integration of renewable energy sources and renovation of architectural heritage buildings comprise:

- It is necessary to raise the awareness of decision makers about the importance of the renovation of buildings under cultural heritage and the implementation of renewable energy sources, use of energy storages and energy management systems,
- It is necessary to raise the level of knowledge about the importance of using energy storage systems, energy management systems and the use of renewable energy sources,
- It is necessary to create a legal framework for the restoration of buildings under cultural heritage and simplify procedures for the installation of energy storage systems, energy management systems and use of RES,
- It is necessary to legally define the possibility of installing renewable energy sources on the roofs of buildings that are under cultural heritage in such a way that such installation does not affect the visual identity of the building,
- The Law on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage needs to be adapted to the time of European energy transition to facilitate the procedures for the installation of renewable energy sources in such localities.

Most stakeholders also participate in the process of issuing permits for the installation of storage systems and photovoltaic systems in the county, and this is the first of such projects in this part of Croatia. Given that this is the first pilot in this part of Croatia, stakeholders gained the necessary skill and knowledge. This will allow all processes to be shorter in the future when implementing similar projects. As Krapina-Zagorje County is rich in cultural heritage that needs to be restored and put into operation, this pilot project can pave the way for the sustainable restoration of such cultural and historical sites.

Stakeholders recognized the Bračak Manor as an excellent example of how-to energy refurbish a cultural heritage building in accordance with best energy efficiency practices and use of renewable energy sources, and they agree that the practice should be replicated to other HUC buildings. Krapina-Zagorje County is rich in historical urban sites, old castles, and manors that have the status of cultural property. Most of these facilities are in poor condition and the use of energy storage systems and energy management systems should be considered when renovating them. Also, photovoltaic systems should be used to generate electricity to create efficient energy communities based on renewable energy sharing. Energy renovation of old buildings that are under cultural protection plays an important role in the energy transition and reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. Such a practice should be replicated throughout the Republic of Croatia.

Statements of Croatian deployment desk members:

Željko Kolar - Prefect of Krapina-Zagorje County (the county in which the pilot project is located):

“This project is a good example of how to work on historically protected buildings. The Bračak pilot project should serve as an innovative good-practice example over the next years and as a model for simplified technical and economic implementation in cultural heritage and may lead as lighthouse pilot to a significant increase in the proportion of renewable energy sources in historic urban centers in Krapina-Zagorje county.”



Dunja Babić - Croatian Association of Historic Towns:

“For me the deployment desk meetings were very fruitful and well organized. With this project all target groups in Croatia will benefit from future renovations of historical urban sites because they will have the best example of which technology is most cost-effective.”

2.4. Italy

In Italy, the organization of the deployment desk meetings was done by Environment Park and the City of Cuneo together in order to reach a wider audience and to involve different kinds of stakeholders. Two out of four deployment desk meetings were organized in conjunction with other relevant EU projects, as cross-fertilization events: the reason for that was the opportunity to have a larger and more diverse audience and share experiences and knowledge from different points of view.

The first and last meetings represented the main focal points of the project, while the two other ones organized during the implementation of the project were more oriented on the pilot action in Cuneo and on the tools developed by Store4HUC project.

Overall, it has been agreed how important it is to involve stakeholders in such a project because the discussions around it raised interesting topics to discuss and brought the topic of storages and their integration in historical urban centres at the attention of many different organizations.

Even though the pilot action in Cuneo has been a particular and small-scale one, interesting reflections arose around it on Renewable Energy Communities, on the national legislation, and related adaptation needed for improving the spread of such technologies and represented a good starting point for a fruitful future collaboration among the stakeholders for new projects to be established.

Statements of Italian deployment desk members:

Claudio Cavallotto - Technical Secondary School “Vallauri” professor:

“Within the classes of the “Energy” section of our school, the study of storages and their use is now part of the education programme. The tools presented will be very useful because the students are currently working on real energy efficiency projects: we would like to continue the collaboration with the two partners in order to consolidate the network.”

Manuela Rosso - Engineer at the City of Cuneo Technical Department:

“I’ve only participated in the last stakeholder meeting because I’m new at the City of Cuneo but I found the overall project very interesting and very innovative. It is important that us, as Cuneo Administration, start planning our city with a more sustainable approach and step-by-step convert our facilities and buildings to a greener energy. The pilot action on the sloping elevator is a good starting point indeed.”

Silvio de Nigris - Public Officer at the Sustainable Energy Department, Regione Piemonte:

“Think global, act local: specific and local actions can provide a good basis of experimentation necessary for the future implementation of other projects, also through the involvement of stakeholders and citizens.”

2.5. Germany

Due to the reason, that there was no own pilot in Germany, the organisation of the German deployment desk meetings has been a bit difficult.

Of the original 5 deployment desk members sought at the beginning of the project, only 2 remained committed until the end of the project. One representative from a city that had been involved with monument protection for many years was able to bring in historic preservation issues to the first



deployment desk. She was no longer interested in the subsequent deployment desks, which dealt more with technical issues related to installations. A city representative has resigned due to the Corona virus. One representative from an energy agency has resigned during the project period when his office was dissolved, and the energy agency was completely re-established with a new concept and new staff. Two of the three lost contacts were replaced by newly acquired city representatives.

Without having a pilot installation of its own nearby, it is difficult to find people interested in the Store4HUC project. The topic of energy storage is met with interest in general, less the implementation of specific installations abroad. It was possible to generate interest in the tools developed in Store4HUC. The use of the Autarky Rate Tool in the state of Hessen (from which 2 of the 4 deployment desk members were still involved till the end of the project) is hindered by the fact that in Hessen, with the Solar Roof Cadastre, tools are available that perform similar simulation results like the Store4HUC Autarky Rate Tool. The Hessian municipalities are required to promote this and therefore are reluctant using the Autarky Rate Tool. Nevertheless, the Autarky Rate Tool will be promoted by the city of Worms.

An obstacle to the use of the Store4HUC EMS tools is that the participating municipalities do not provide energy advice themselves but have contracted external specialists to advise interested residents on their behalf. The municipalities then pay for the working hours required. Tests of the EMS tools by the specialists from the energy management department of the city of Nuremberg showed results that were very similar with or without energy storage. Regarding the Autarky Rate Tool, there is no need for a city that pursues the goal of installing as much PV systems as possible. Therefore, the only remaining option is to directly address municipalities outside of areas where already calculation tools are in place and to use common channels for promotion such as newsletters and social media.



3. Conclusion

In all countries, where pilot actions were carried out, the deployment desk meetings have been a very helpful instrument to ensure the efficient implementation of the pilots, from the planning phase until the commissioning and monitoring. The most important achievement of the deployment desk meetings was to bring together all relevant institutions and organizations at local level in regular intervals, to give them an update of the latest proceedings and discuss the next steps as well as other relevant issues. By establishing the stakeholder deployment desks, the project team could ensure, that the main local actors have been integrated and properly involved in the whole project process. With this instrument, the project team could reach the relevant players to share the knowledge and transfer it to other external audiences that are not part of the inner circle.

Even if it was sometimes difficult to organize the deployment desk meetings because of the COVID-19 situation, it was confirmed by almost all participants that such events are quite relevant to be organised for the stakeholders to remain informed about the project progress and to have the possibility to be actively involved in the project as also for the project team to be able to get feedback and valuable inputs from the stakeholders.

Only in Germany the organisation of the deployment desk meetings was a bit difficult, as there was no own pilot in Germany and therefore a lack of stakeholders interested in attending at the deployment desk meetings. Therefore, the concept of the Germany deployment desk meetings was adopted after the first meeting and was combined with other events, which were used to share the latest news of the project, which have been discussed at the other deployment desk meetings. The outcome of the other deployment desk meetings has been shared with the German stakeholders via the Climate Alliance network.