



RURASU

Pieriki Anaptixiaki S.A., Greece

Summary

RURASU focused on energy problems of four rural areas (Pieria in Greece, Allgäu in Germany, South Ayr in United Kingdom, Cordillera Subbetica in Spain) aiming to support dispersed local actors like building designers, consumers, public authorities on the use of renewable energies and energy efficiency measures in the building stock.

The continuous support provided to local actors resulted in a broader use and implementation of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency techniques. Moreover, methodological guides were produced in simplified format, recommended to be adapted by other interest regions on establishing and operating rural Design Advice and Support Units (DASUs). The project concluded in the successful operation of four Design Advice and Support Units based in dispersed rural areas.

End-user area

- New buildings
- Refurbishment of buildings
- Transport and mobility
- Financial instruments
- Industry
- Legal initiatives (regulations, directives, etc)
- Planning issues
- Sustainable communities
- User behaviour
- Education
- Other

Target Audience

- Citizens
- Households
- Property owners
- Schools and universities
- Decision makers
- Local and regional authorities
- Transport companies
- Utilities
- ESCOs
- Architects and engineers
- Financial institutions
- Other

Technical

- Energy efficiency
- Heating
- Cooling
- Appliances
- Lighting
- CHP
- District Heating
- Solar energy
- Biomass
- Wind
- Geothermal
- Hydro power
- Other

Context

- The main problem that RURASU project had to confront was the lack of information of RES and energy efficiency subjects in specific rural areas of Europe. Professionals, system providers, local actors and other individuals of the dispersed rural areas had no contact with academic institutions and consultancy firms, and no experience of RES and energy efficiency. The establishment and operation of rural Design and Advice Support Units bridged this knowledge gap.
- RURASU focused on energy problems of each involved rural area (Pieria in Greece, Allgäu in Germany, South Ayr in United Kingdom, Cordillera Subbetica in Spain), aiming to support dispersed local actors like engineers, buildings designers, public authorities and consumers of the use of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency measures in the building stock. The support was continuous, throughout the project duration, and was achieved through the setting-up (in United Kingdom and Spain) and further development (in Greece and Germany) of Rural Design and Advice Support Units (DASUs). All four DASUs will continue to operate after the end of the project duration.



Objectives

The overall objective of the action was to provide energy management, energy conservation consultancy and services in rural areas. This objective was achieved fully through the proved establishment and operation of the four Design Advice and Support Units of RURASU project in the involved rural areas in the four predetermined countries. The specific objectives of the action in correlation to the achievements throughout the project duration are:

- The adaptation of already developed practical educational material and design tools for the local conditions that are suitable for use within the scope of the project.
- The organization of specific events for promoting use of RES in buildings among local actors.
- The assessment of the energy characteristics of each involved region's building stock.
- The training of professionals in techniques and high quality materials or systems.
- The training of energy auditors in accordance to the EC directive.
- The establishment of a Design and Advice Support Units Partner network, to spread experiences and information and providing renewable or low energy systems solutions.

Process

The required progress in the creation of the Design and Advice Support Unit partners' network, which has to combine and adapt scientific and technological knowledge with best engineering and architectural practice, has been achieved in each rural area. It was of vital importance for the success of RURASU to have established a two way transfer of knowledge and know-how. A successful example of this objective is the fact that the experience was transferred and adapted to the local conditions of each partner. All partners have adapted a Public Relations strategy plan, according to their needs and level of progress. Moreover, educational tools as the Information Acquisition Tool and leaflets have been created in order to support the educational objectives of the project.

The target audience was organised in three levels:

Local and Regional level: All potential clients of the four DASUs were benefited by their operation: Engineers, craftsmen, construction companies, building product enterprises, building managers & owners, local authorities.

National level: The methodological tools to set-up and operate DASUs in rural areas (comprising technical, administrative and financial aspects) were formulated in such a general way that it can easily be used in other regions of each country.

European level: The methodological tools to set-up and operate DASUs in rural areas (comprising technical, administrative and financial aspects) was formulated in such a general way that it can easily be used in other EU regions. The results were also disseminated broadly (4 different international conferences, central web-site of RURASU project).

The overall work was divided in the following nine work packages (WP):

- WP 1 - Systematization and exchange knowledge and experience
- WP 2 - Setting-up and further development of Rural Design and Advice Support Units in EU
- WP 3 - On-site Consultations in respect of the EC Building Directive
- WP 4 - Creating of a Rural Design and Advice Support Unit Partner Network
- WP 5 - Support of local Energy Management
- WP 6 - Media Work and Free Pre-Consultation Service
- WP 7 - Evaluation and Dissemination Strategy
- WP 8 - Common Dissemination Activities
- WP 9 - Management

No major scale problems were identified. The minor problems that were identified and their corrective action taken, leading to the solution of all them, were:

- The interim results of the work progress have shown that the implementation of the EC directive is by far not finalised in all countries. As it can not be foreseen when the national decrees will be implemented in Greece and Scotland, the consortium elaborated a contingency plan, which explains the planned activities in case the EPBD was not be implemented on time. The contingency plan ensured the rapid realisation of



the consultation activities, even without legal implementations of the EPBD. As the adaptation of the contingency plan has started on time, the specific WP and all the actions related to EPBD were accomplished on time.

- The convenience of having a common template for the database on public building stock has been an identified problem. It has been very difficult to unify four different criteria, one per country. A last and definitive version of this template was developed, given a set of main data, and a second set of optional data. The action has been finished.

Financial resources and partners

The total budget of the project was 1.095.000,00 €. The project was funded under “Intelligent Energy-Europe” Programme 2003-2006, with 50%. The remaining own funding was covered by each partner based on each one’s organisational framework.

For each area one local agency was involved in order to provide the required infrastructure and support at local level, while an academic institution or a consulting firm provided the required scientific support. In this way for each region the following national partnerships were formed:

- Pieria-Greece.
 - Pieriki Anaptixiaki S.A.(Pieriki)-project coordinator-local actor
 - Institute of Accelerating Systems & Applications (IASA)-contractor-scientific support
 - Aristotle University of Thessalonica (AUTh)-subcontractor-scientific support
- Allgäu-Germany.
 - Energie-& Umweltzentrum Allgäu gGmbH (eza!)-contractor-local actor
 - WIP KG (WIP)-contractor-scientific support
- Cordillera Subbética-Spain.
 - SODEAN S.A., subcontractor, local actor
 - University of Cadiz (UCA), contractor, scientific support
- South Ayr-Scotland.
 - South Ayrshire Council (SAC), subcontractor, local actor
 - University of Strathclyde (UoS), contractor, scientific support

Results

The main results of the project were:

- Operation of Design and Advice Support Units (DASUs) in the four rural involved areas.
- Creation of methodological tools for supporting the establishment or further development of rural based Design Advice and Support Units.
- Creation of Public Relation strategies for all involved areas and application of these strategies, including coalition with local media of the involved areas.
- Set up of Partners’ networks in each Design and Advice Support Unit (DASU) and training of the professionals involved.
- World Wide dissemination of deliverables and production of educational material in local languages focusing on specific categories of professionals and individuals.

A full study on Cost-Benefit Analysis for the rural DASUs was materialized by all partners, under the guidance and supervision of University of Strathclyde (Scotland-U.K.). It is estimated that one job is directly created for every £40,000 of investment, and another indirect job for every £70,000. (Investment is defined as expenditure for installation of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technologies – it only includes recorded installations undertaken with help of grant or loan schemes provided by the energy advice centre).

Regarding other non-quantifiable benefits, one of the most important of these is that the DASU is perceived by its users to be free, unbiased and independent.

Moreover, a quantifiable table of performance indicators was produced during the preparation of the project. All targets planned in the performance indicator table of the Grant Agreement were surpassed:



PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	PLANNED	ACHIEVED	DETAILS
number of audits:	50	61 (>100)	61 pre-consultations and on-site audits according to RURASU requirements (EPBD, contingency plan). More than 100 consultations on RES subjects.
brochures:	4	4	The distributed format of each Information Acquisition Tool
training courses:	2	9	eza!: 2, UCA: 2, UoS: 3, Pieriki: 2
twinning activities:	2	6	One in each meeting, 2 with the participation of local actors
databases:	2	2X4=8	
documents-leaflets:	10	44	Spain: 10, Scotland: 11, Germany: 13, Greece: 10
demonstration events:	2	14	eza!: 3, UCA: 4, UoS: 5, Pieriki: 2
announcements	6	>100	The target is surpassed
reports (incl. Phase reports):	18	27	15 deliverable reports, 7 final WP reports, 5 IEAA reports
action agendas-docs-studies:	4	9	1 Action Agenda, 8 studies of refurbishment
Information Acquisition Tool:	1	1+4	One full version, 4 local versions
Computer Tool:	1	4	One per each DASU at local language
Homepage:	1	1+4	Central and 4 regional
Publications in prof. magazines:	2	2	
Internet links:	2	3+3+1	3 to existing projects, 3 to web portals, 1 to ELARD newsletter
Presentations:	2	6+1	3 to launch project: Wels, Athens, Glasgow, 3 to promote final results: Sofia, Helsinki, Dubrovnik, 1 poster in the Energy Globe Awards Ceremony

Finally, an important issue that was achieved by RURASU project was the creation and the maintenance of existing workplaces.

Pieriki: One geotechnical was engaged for the initial required actions in the rural areas of Pieria. One RES engineer was engaged for supporting the actions of the RES subjects at local level on the RURASU-project. One PR expert was engaged as part time for the dissemination and organizing of events. One workplace was created for administrative and secretary actions (especially during events organizing).

Eza!: In the German DASU "eza!" there was no new workplace directly financed by the RURASU project, but five new workplace have been created within the project time by the rising response to the work of eza! – an effect of the RURASU project.

UCA: One full time work place was created for the newly founded Spanish DASU called "OFAER Subbética."
IASA: One full and three part time workplaces were created. Workplaces related to building construction work are not included to them.

WIP: Two working places were secured within the framework of RURASU project.

UoS: One job was created at the Scottish DASU to service the needs of the Rurasu project.

Lessons learned and repeatability

One of the major barriers to the successful implementation of energy efficiency measures is the poor knowledge about energy efficiency and expected benefits from this kind of actions (also from professionals). In the project RURASU the experiences from the successful established DASUs *Pieriki* and *eza!* were gathered to work out an Action Agenda for setup DASU:s in rural areas. Also a number of methodology guides were created. These produced materials (available at www.rurasu.info) were used in the project in order to help the establishment of DASUs in the rural areas of Spain and Scotland, and it will be available to anyone interested in establishing a DASU.

The project as itself has replication as an included action; the established DASUs in Greece and in Germany created the required methodology documentation for establishing a DASU in a rural area, which was adapted as a good practice by partners in Spain and in Scotland. The successful establishment and operation of the two new DASUs, proves the success of these methodological tools. One main target of the RURASU project was,

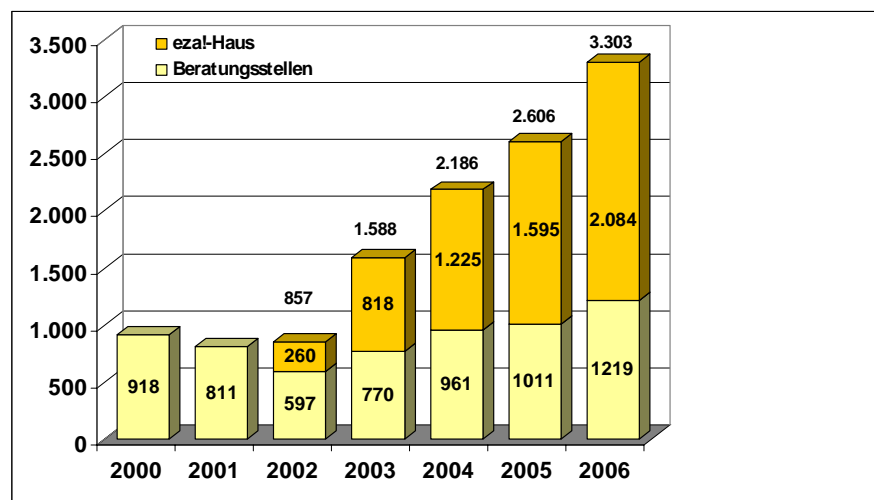


to systemize the experience of the German DASU eza! (and of the Greek DASU PIERIKI) and to transfer this knowledge to new DASUs in Spain and Scotland. With twinning activities and all the performed work in the different work packages, this target has been achieved with excellent results in Scotland and Spain. The main methodological tools were: "Action agenda for DASU set-up in rural areas" (comprising technical, administrative and financial aspects), "Report on the experiences of the existing DASUs in the rural environment in Germany and Greece" and "Report on the further development of DASU work in Greece and Germany".

Main lessons learnt emerging from RURASU project

Lesson A.

During the RURASU project a significant rise of the impact of eza! (German DASU) on the regional markets for building industries and renewable energy in buildings was achieved. It was obvious that a rising number of householders relied on the recommendations of eza!. Figure below shows the rising yearly numbers of initial consultations in the 40 offices of eza!.



At the same time a rising number of complains were sent to eza! To keep its outstanding positive image in the regional public opinion it was very important to react and to develop a strategy to ensure a high quality for both the businesses in the partner network and the energy advisers. After many discussions and an intensive discussion process together with the companies of the DASUs partner network it was stated that the only reliable control for quality is the satisfaction of the customers. To have an indication for the satisfaction of the customers and of the quality of the workmanship of the partner companies a new quality control system for the partner network and the energy advisers was developed and introduced.

Lesson B.

One important lesson learned is the importance of establishing a "corporate brand". All of the DASUs put together a marketing strategy and developed a "brand". It is clear that this helps establishing a strong organization and the Energy Agency is recognized throughout its local area for providing free, impartial, expert advices to households, businesses, schools and communities.

Lesson C.

Successfulness of the DASU operation is based on experience and relations within the focus area. PIERIKI (operator of the Greek DASU) is the most experienced organisation of rural development in the prefecture of Pieria. Through the implementation of programmes and projects from 1991 up to now, PIERIKI is identified by the local actors and the inhabitants of the rural areas as their "tool" for rural development. The vast number of rural oriented programmes and projects are interrelated, in a way that successful dissemination of new projects (as RURASU) was achieved. Moreover, PIERIKI through the already established DASU, offers energy consultations to all building construction projects under funding, and is responsible for auditing the implementation of the proposed measures. In that way successful implementation of the consultation is registered in order to be used in future dissemination activities.

**Contact for more information:**

Project Web Site: www.rurasu.info

Organisation / Agency: Pieriki Anaptixiaki S.A.-Local Development Agency

Main contact: Konstantinos Zapounidis

Address: 16th Oktobriou 17b, Katerini, 60100, GREECE

Tel: +30 2351027541

Fax: +30 2351025187

E-mail: pieriki@otenet.gr

Web Site: www.pieriki-anaptixiaki.gr

Printed reports or other literature available:

Title:

- The RURASU project ...bringing energy to rural areas
- Action Agenda for DASU set up in rural areas
- Methodological Guide on setting up and operation of a rural DASU
- Methodological Guide on further development of a rural DASU
- Information Acquisition Tool
- Educational Material List

All titles could be found on the project web-site and are free of charge.