

Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe – Energy Efficiency

The Challenge

In Western Balkan countries energy continues to be wasted on large scale and this is harming the region's economic competitiveness, social stability, and environment. Aiming to join the EU, the countries are responsible for incorporating the corresponding elements of the EU *acquis* into their own legislation. Furthermore, as signatories of the Energy Community Treaty, South-East European (SEE) countries are responsible for the implementation of the energy chapter of the EU *acquis* and reduction of energy consumption in energy-related sectors. This process poses many challenges for the region. These are further exacerbated by the responsibilities arising under the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) regarding greenhouse gas emissions reduction, which almost all western Balkans countries declared as part of the Paris Agreement implementation. Therefore, all Western Balkan countries face same or similar challenges in meeting the climate and sustainable use of energy objectives.

Our Approach

The Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe – Energy Efficiency (ORF-EE) promotes regional cooperation among stakeholders with the capacity to drive the process of reform in the energy and climate protection sector, thereby contributing to achieving the national energy efficiency and

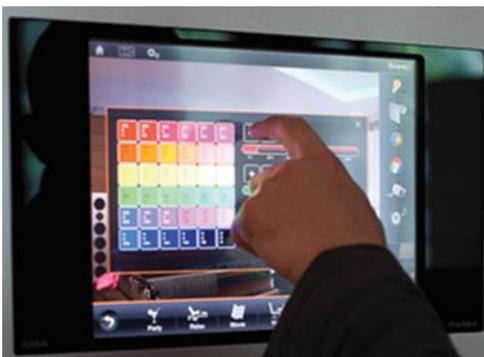
climate protection targets in Western Balkan countries. The

Project name	Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe – Energy Efficiency (ORF-EE)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Countries	EU Accession countries in South-East Europe
Lead executing agency	Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)
Duration	2008 – 2020
Project value	19.74 million Euros (incl. 1.98 million Euros EU co-funding)

project focuses on using the potentials arising from the similarities South-East European countries have in common, culturally, structurally, and development challenges wise, which offers great potential for building and sharing relevant expertise in and through regional networks.

Goal

The goal of the ORF-EE is to support energy and climate relevant political and civil society actors, through networks in South-East Europe, in implementing required EU regulations. Regional networks supported by the ORF-EE share their experiences on implementation of energy efficiency and climate protection measures independently and are empowered to address issues of common interest. In doing so they contribute towards awareness raising on the topics and more effective sector policy making in their countries.



Left to right:
Monitoring Energy Consumption; Covenant of
Mayors Ceremony, European Parliament

Results

The ORF-EE helped establish the Network of Energy Efficient Capital Cities in South-East Europe, comprised of the capital cities of Zagreb, Sarajevo, Podgorica, Skopje and Tirana. The German *model city* of Freiburg im Breisgau supports the network.

Furthermore, ORF-EE helped partner cities join the European Covenant of Mayors initiative, establish energy management structures and it supported the development of Sustainable Energy Action Plans.

Through the Initiative for Public Dialogue on Sustainable Use of Energy in SEE, the Network of Schools of Political Studies in South-East Europe, supported by the project, helped strengthen the political will in the region pursuing reform processes in the energy sector in Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. As a result of these efforts public hearings of parliamentary committees (Parliamentary Consultative Hearings) responsible for energy efficiency were held for the first time in the partner countries.

The ORF-EE also supported the development and monitoring of partner countries' National Energy Efficiency Action Plans implementation, which are mandatory across the EU. This process was further strengthened through the introduction of a monitoring system that enables effective creation of national energy efficiency policies and support programs, which in turn make possible a more precise assessment of policy's direct energy saving impacts. The support provided is complemented by an online based software program - Monitoring and Verification Platform (MVP) for calculating energy savings and CO₂ reductions, achieved through energy efficiency measures. The system has been handed over to Western Balkan partner countries. Croatia integrated it as a compulsory instrument in its national regulations. ORF-EE's most recent efforts refer to the introduction of the MVP tool on municipal level in SEE partner countries. This will complement MVP's use on national level, helping improve communication between the different administrative levels for more effective sector policy making.

The ORF-EE furthermore works on strengthening the capacities of ministries and agencies in the region, responsible for energy efficiency and climate protection, including the local level and civil society organizations, in establishing regulatory and institutional conditions for implementation of climate-relevant EU directives and regulations. At the same time SEE parliamentarians act in securing the necessary political will for sector reforms.

Extending its reform and development efforts, the ORF-EE also focuses on sustainable urban mobility solutions in the region, integrating a comprehensive climate change mitigation approach that is based on the EU Energy Strategy 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and Goal 13 (Climate Action). Efforts, among others, include provision of support in developing Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans, Roadmaps, implementation of urban transportation Smart-Models (E.g. bike and car sharing), as well as P2P, mentoring, etc. Activities also include capacity development of SEE parliamentarians on sustainable urban mobility.

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