Sustainable energy for competitive tourist accommodation
RELACS Project Basics

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This report is addressed to hotel and tourist accommodation managers, as well as to hotel associations throughout Europe. Its main goal is to provide a report of the activities implemented during the project RELACS’ lifetime, and to inspire action among all the other tourist accommodation premises looking to reduce their energy needs and carbon footprint, to improve room comfort and to gain visibility as environmental-friendly enterprises.

RELACS’ activities have been implemented in very different climatic areas, from Sweden to Greece and Hungary to Portugal, involving tourist accommodation premises which differ in size and typical use. All this showed that addressing energy consumption can be a win-win strategy, while investing in sustainable energy brings advantages in terms of lower operating costs, higher business efficiency and competitiveness, increased guests’ well-being and a greener hotel image.

The document is written using non-technical language. Nonetheless, the compilers wish to provide detailed information, examples and good practices for hoteliers.

The report is divided into five main chapters. First of all a short description of the RELACS project, outlining its main goals and activities. The reasons why to consider energy issues in accommodation facilities are highlighted.

Energy (and cost) saving potential through energy efficiency measures are shown, along with concrete examples of works undertaken within the project. A set of project services and tools were designed and customized according to regional features and needs.

The last chapter reports on the main project results, and invites tourist accommodation owners and managers to take action towards sustainable energy through a list of tips and recommendations. Finally, on the back cover a list may be found of the regional partner organizations.

The authors hope that the information in this report will persuade hotel managers to seek support in defining a focused action plan and other tourist accommodation providers to see the benefits of orienting some of their efforts towards reducing energy costs and encourage them to take up energy saving and make renewable energy investments, be it for the good of the environment, the comfort of their guests and for their own benefit.

Our warm thanks go to all the project partners for their efforts and motivation and of course to all the accommodation managers in the RELACS Network making the transition towards sustainability real.

*The project coordinators*
What is RELACS all about?

As Europe remains the world’s top tourist destination and the tourist sector is without doubt an energy-intensive segment, the main question we had in mind when designing the project was *how can we assist tourist accommodation services to reduce their carbon footprint?*

There is a great deal of evidence available about the tourist accommodation sector’s relevant energy-saving potential and being at the same time a strategic sector for incubating sustainable solutions. There may be several reasons for this:

- Year after year the set of services provided to guests tends to increase; hence accommodation premises have a natural growing trend in terms of energy consumption.
- Energy expenses are a component of fixed costs and affect overall competitiveness.
- Energy-saving measures may positively impact guests’ comfort (e.g. low-temperature floor heating provides a comfortable perception of warmth; wall insulation reduces temperature fluctuations throughout the whole building envelope).
- On the other hand, the number of sustainability-aware tourists is rapidly increasing; as a consequence, marketing and promotional tools tend to include sustainability aspects more and more.
- Sustainability is a territorial phenomenon which involves and networks many local actors (e.g. traditional produce and sustainable food value chain, soft mobility solutions, recovery and promotion of the territory).
- Tourist accommodation plays a crucial role, explaining and unveiling the territory to visitors and tourists.

Furthermore, tourist accommodation suffers from a number of critical issues:

- In small family-run businesses, the hotel manager has to afford energy management without appropriate technical support; this may affect decision processes.
- Energy improvement investments are often subject to the contextual availability of bank loans and/or financing.
- Small businesses have a low propensity to rely on existing environmental certification schemes, which are perceived as too demanding in terms of bureaucracy.

The main goals of the RELACS project were:

- To design a concerted frame of activities to assist hotel managers in decision-making process,
- To provide unbiased information about possible sustainable energy measures and solutions,
- And, above all, to promote the energy audit as the core of the decision-making process.

“We will use our environmental progress for marketing, expand the environmental work and keep our guests updated about our sustainable work... The goal is to learn, expand and earn money of tourist business”

Malin Ericsson, Ödevata Fiskecamp, Sweden
The project operated in 10 different European regions: Upper Styria in Austria, the Black Sea Bourgas district in Bulgaria, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in Germany, the Prefectures of Thessaloniki & Chalkidiki in Greece, the Lake Balaton resort area in Hungary, the neighbouring provinces of Modena and Reggio Emilia in Italy, the Almada Municipality in Portugal, Aragon in Spain, the South-East region in Sweden and the Brecon Beacons, Cotswolds, Forest of Dean and Wye Valley in United Kingdom.

About 5,000 tourist accommodations had some degree of interaction with the project activities, while over 200 were directly involved in the Network. 25% primary energy saving was the goal to reach for tourist accommodations looking to reduce their carbon footprint and run for the RELACS Prize.

An assessment of potential energy conservation in southern European hotels revealed that there is a 25-30% energy-saving potential, especially in hotels with high annual energy consumption.

Furthermore, due to the financial crisis, hotel owners are more concerned about implementing effective energy saving measures in their hotels and/or investing in valuable renewable energy technologies.

As mentioned above, consumers tend more and more to consider the environmental efforts of the company when selecting products and services. The 2009 Eurobarometer Survey on the attitudes of Europeans towards tourism outlined that 42% of citizens seek eco-friendly accommodation. Additionally, in the 2011 Working Paper on Tourism by the University of Lucerne for the World Tourism Forum, it is stressed that the number of so-called ‘sustainability aware’ tourists is rapidly increasing. In fact, 22% of the survey respondents stated that sustainability is among the top three influencing factors while booking vacations.
10 different European Regions

5000 accommodation reached

212 accommodations directly involved

25% real energy savings

RELACS - June 2013
Why should you consider energy related issues?

Here are our **top five reasons**: 

1. **Reduce energy costs.** Many measures, especially those relating to saving energy, actually save money and can therefore increase competitiveness.

2. **Visualize your efforts and improve your image.** Promote your ‘green’ efforts to increasing numbers of environmentally responsible consumers. Marketing your green credentials will attract a wider range of visitors, including those who are looking for companies taking important steps towards sustainability and who have made a commitment to improving their environmental impact.

3. **Improve consumer services and enhance the perception of comfort and satisfaction.** Many measures, such as the provision of walking and cycling opportunities, add value to the visitors’ experience.

4. **Improve your management approach and system.** Use eco-labelling schemes to capitalize on your energy-saving accomplishments and increase your bookings.

5. **Create an attractive environment to which your guests will want to return.** Improved energy efficiency is conducive to a more comfortable environment.

“We appreciated from RELACS the involvement of the consumers-guests of accommodations, since they also learn from the good practices they can experience in accommodations and bring them home... we think the so called “green economy” is a strong opportunity for overcoming the economic crisis. RELACS was useful since it allowed accommodations to save energy and take care of our territories, so much important for the well being of the tourist sector as well”.

Ms Renza Barani, Federconsumatori, Italy
25% energy savings: yes, you can!

The 25% primary energy reduction goal through sustainable energy measures – although in line with many European programmes (e.g. Green Building Programme) – was an ambitious one. Through real case studies, the RELACS project has shown that not only is this objective affordable, but also that it is often possible to go beyond it: the three winners of the European RELACS awards achieved results in the range of 30% in their primary energy savings!

Each country involved in the project assigned a prize to the accommodation of its own regional network delivering the best results in terms of energy, CO₂ and costs savings. Then the three that achieved the most significant savings were also awarded European prizes in Berlin during the ITB Fair on 8th March 2013.

The following is a description of the 10 national RELACS prize-winning accommodation services, showing support provided and their related results.

“RELACS showed that some hotels do take action and others become motivated to follow them.”

Mr. Kai Retzlaff, Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Rostock, Germany
The Greek RELACS winner: SONIA VILLAGE HOTEL

Project context
The ‘Sonia Village’ hotel is a family-owned resort built in 1999, located directly on the seafront between the first two peninsulas of the vacation district of Chalkidiki. It is a summer destination with twelve buildings accommodating 140 recently renovated rooms.

Measures
The hotel has applied extensive energy efficiency measures. It plans to implement further measures in the near future and to install RESs providing both thermal and electric energy.

More specifically, the hotel implemented the following energy-saving measures:

1. Solar thermal systems for domestic hot water.
2. Replacement of previous A/C split-type units without inverter, with class A+++ new units (with inverter).
3. Replacement of all incandescent light bulbs with new long-lasting energy efficient fluorescent ‘pl’ type.
4. Replacement of old boilers with new high efficiency ones.
5. Installation of 20 kW nominal power photovoltaic panels for electric power generation (to be completed by the end of 2013).

Results in pills

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary energy saving</td>
<td>13 TOE/yr (38.7%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO\textsubscript{2} avoided</td>
<td>54.76 tCO\textsubscript{2}/yr (22%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost savings/year</td>
<td>33,670 EURO</td>
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The Austrian RELACS winner: GASTHOF BRÄUER WEISSKIRCHEN, STYRIA

Project context
The ‘Brauer’ guesthouse hotel is located in Weiβkirchen in Styria. This traditional guesthouse was refurbished to the state of the art in terms of energy efficiency, and today gives great importance to sustainability and ecology. In fact, a holistic energy analysis of the building was carried out and, as rooms are mostly furnished with wooden furniture in rural style, the refurbishment process was performed with natural renewable resources. The most widely used materials were wood, stone, bricks and cellulose fibre materials for insulation.

Measures
1. Installation of 39 m² solar thermal system providing domestic hot water to hotel rooms.
2. Renewal of heating control system throughout the building.
3. Replacement of existing windows with new old-style windows featuring thermal insulation glazing.
4. Insulation of rooftop and externals walls. Insulation was performed with environmentally friendly cellulose materials for the upper storey and stone wool for outside walls, keeping with the traditional appearance of the structure.

Results in pills

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<tr>
<td>Primary energy saving</td>
<td>5.63 TOE/yr (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO₂ avoided</td>
<td>65.4 tCO₂/yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost savings/year</td>
<td>5,000 EURO</td>
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“I’ve had intentions about the renovation of the guesthouse for a long time. It was the systematic approach of the RELACS project, the goal of a sustainable improvement that appealed to me. Sustainable energy definitely complements our tradition of hospitality!”

Mr Joachim Eibensteiner, owner of the Guest House Bräuer, Austria
The Spanish RELACS winner:
HOTEL SICILIA SPA

Project context
The Balneario Sicilia is located in Jaraba, province of Zaragoza, 125 km from Zaragoza and 200 km from Madrid, near the Monasterio de Piedra.

Measures
In 2012 the hotel management undertook energy efficiency measures on the heating and cooling systems.

1. The major improvement consisted in switching fuel from oil to natural gas via a liquefied natural gas plant and a 80 m³ reservoir. The new fuel allows for more efficient heating.

2. The Spa Hotel Sicilia has seven boilers for hot water and heating system installations. All burners were replaced to suit natural gas.

3. The hot water system was fully insulated to reduce energy loss. Moreover, counters were installed at different points to monitor energy heat demand for greater control.

4. The LNG plant was proportioned with a view to installing a cogeneration engine which will provide the Spa Hotel with heat and electric power. This project is expected to be developed over the year 2013.

5. Energy-saving measures were also carried out on lighting systems, with the installation of presence detectors in all common areas.

“RELACs has been really useful… the main reason is the cost saving that the implementation of the identified measures led to. Another positive fact is that the measures implemented have increased guests’ comfort. […] We consider that these kinds of action not only contribute to decreasing our environmental impact, but also they help to differentiate us on the market and we hope our clients appreciate our efforts when choosing a hotel in which to stay.”

Mr José Manuel Sicilia, owner of the Hotel Spa Sicilia, Spain

Results in pills

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<tr>
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<th>126.56 TOE/yr (28%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary energy saving</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO₂ avoided</td>
<td>441 tCO₂/yr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost savings/year</td>
<td>77,000 EURO</td>
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The Italian RELACS winner: HOTEL CORTE VECCHIA

Project context
The ‘Corte Vecchia’ hotel is located in San Prospero in the province of Modena, Italy. Its premises are the result of the painstaking refurbishment of two old farm buildings where the manor house and the barn were. In ancient times, oxen and horses rested in the court area between periods of ploughing and sowing. The renovation managed to retain the original character of the buildings.

Measures
During the summer of 2012 the heating and cooling systems were renovated.

1. The old systems were replaced with an electric chiller-heat pump (63 kW nominal power) for cooling, and two condensation boilers for heating (54.4 kW nominal power each).
2. Installation of a central control system.
3. To maximize system efficiency, a 1,000 litre hot water storage tank was installed.
4. Tank and piping system were properly insulated.
5. Finally, despite the shock from the severe earthquakes of May 2012 and the consequent drop in terms of reservations, the hotel management ensures they will stick to planned actions and proceed in the near future with further roof insulation of one building.

“The choice to invest around 50,000 Euro in energy efficiency measures was a winner... not only have we provided advantages to the environment but also to our wallets! Despite the earthquake, we are planning to further insulate the building of the roof soon.”

Alessandro Bruscagin, Hotel Manager Corte Vecchia, Italy

Results in pills

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<tr>
<td>Primary energy saving</td>
<td>4.48 TOE/yr = 52,102 kWh/yr (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO₂ avoided</td>
<td>14.89 tCO₂/yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost savings/year</td>
<td>About 2,500 EURO/yr</td>
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The German RELACS winner: LANDHOTEL RITTMEISTER

Project context
The ‘Rittmeister’ country hotel is located in Rostock in a building which dates back to 1910. The hotel has been operative since 2003. With a view to its planned building extension and the construction of a new wellness area (approx. 40m²), the hotel manager asked for a revision of its energy concept focusing on the recovery of waste heat, CHP generation, PV and energy efficiency measures.

Measures
The new energy concept foresees the following measures which the hotel is currently working on:
1. Refrigerating system with waste heat recovery: three refrigerating systems will be centralised in order to use the waste heat to heat the process water and the swimming pool, yet to be constructed.
2. Use of the higher heating value of the gas furnace for hotel and restaurant.
3. Regulation on demand for the building services (ventilation and pumps in hotel and restaurant)
4. Photovoltaic system, probably 25 kW
The measures will be implemented during 2013.

Results in pills

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<tr>
<td>Primary energy saving</td>
<td>6.53 TOE/yr (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO₂ avoided</td>
<td>26.8 tCO₂/yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost savings/year</td>
<td>7,935 EURO</td>
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</table>
The Hungarian RELACS winner:
LUTHERAN CONFERENCE AND MISSION HOME (BALATONSZÁRSZÓ)

Project context
The Lutheran Conference and Mission Home in Balatonszarszo was constructed in the 1930s. Major renovations and expansions were made in 2004, which resulted the creation of a modern hotel and conference centre. Today, the hotel is able to host 84 guests at one time.

Measures
A complex set of actions were implemented from autumn 2010 to spring 2011; meaning the following measures were undertaken:
1. solar collector system: 80% of the hot water demand is produced by a 40m² solar collector system. Pellet boilers cover the remaining part.
2. Pellet boilers: two 45 kW power Herz furnaces, operated automatically
3. Solar photovoltaic system.
4. Wall-cooling system: the circulating liquid is cooled naturally by the well that can be found on the location.
5. Energy efficient LED lighting.
6. Time control switches.
7. Building management system.

Furthermore, relevant measures in water and waste management were taken:
8. selective waste collection, recycling and efficiency improvements.
9. Water-saving equipment: water-aerators are positioned on the taps, and the showers are also water-saving.
10. Rain water collection and use, for toilets and garden watering.

Results in pills

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<tr>
<td><strong>Primary energy saving</strong></td>
<td>3.73 TOE/yr (17%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CO₂ avoided</strong></td>
<td>18.347 tCO₂ (34%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cost savings/year</strong></td>
<td>5,300 EURO</td>
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“The RELACS project has strengthened our belief that we started moving on the right direction. Over the last year and a half, since the end of the investment on renewables, we have managed to achieve 1.5 million HUF (acc. 5.300 EUR) in energy savings.”

Szabolcs Végh, Director Lutheran Conference and Mission Home, Hungary
The Portuguese RELACS winner: LEISURE CENTRE SÃO JOÃO DA CAPARICA

Project context
Leisure Centre of Sao Joao da Caparica is an housing unit with similar functionality to that of a youth hostel in Costa da Caparica.

Measures
Following previous work, more focused on the building envelope evaluation, the management showed a strong commitment to reducing gas and water consumption. Although no major investments in renewables were made, they are on the way and synergies with the municipality have been set up (the municipality partially owns and manages the housing unit).

1. In cooperation with the municipality and with AGENEAL’s cooperation, water reduction devices were added to all faucets
2. Alongside the other actions foreseen, the main investment for this unit is the installation of solar panels for water heating.

Results in pills

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<td>Primary energy saving</td>
<td>1.2 TOE/yr = 52,102 kWh/yr</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO₂ avoided</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost savings/year</td>
<td>1,938 EURO</td>
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The Swedish RELACS winner:
LUNDEGÅRDS CAMPING LEKLADAN

Project context
Lundegårds Camping is a large campsite with a wide choice of spacious camping plots and 50-100 cabins of different size. The camp site is situated on the island of Oland, in the northern municipality of Borgholm.

Measures
1. A new playhouse was built at the campsite; opened in June 2012, it is called ‘Skrattkammaron’. The playhouse is built as entertainment for children and to raise the standard of the campsite. The playhouse has a heated area of nearly 1,000 m² and has climbing, playing and adventure tools especially for children aged up to 12-13 years old. The building has not been up and running a full year so the total yearly energy consumption is not known yet, but the estimation of the energy balance are given below.
2. The HVAC system consists of two air-water heat pumps; the mechanical ventilation system is provided with heat recovery device on exhaust air.
3. Floor heating was installed in the entrance and in the restaurant/café area for higher comfort and to keep wet floors dry.
4. Walls, floor and roof were insulated.
5. Furthermore, the campsite manager is focusing on convert the service buildings (bathrooms, kitchen, laundry facilities) with renewables.

Results in pills

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<tr>
<td>Primary energy saving</td>
<td>4.8 TOE/yr (45%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CO₂ avoided</td>
<td>26 tCO₂/yr</td>
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<td>Cost savings/year</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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The Bulgarian RELACS winner: ALBEN A HOTEL COMPLEX (located in Albena resort)

Project context
Albena hotel complex is a beach resort located on the north-east Black Sea coast. Most of the hotels in the complex have been renovated and meet energy efficiency requirements. The main energy consumption is electricity for the HVAC system, lighting, devices in the hotel and technical rooms, etc. Heating in some hotels is provided using electricity; in other hotels, solar collectors or CNGs are used. Potential RESs near the Albena resort are: solar energy, biomass and geothermal water. Biomass is the most interesting, because close to the resort there is a well developed rural area.

Measures
In the summer of 2012, the complex undertook energy efficiency measures on heating and power systems. 1. Given the availability of straw, the management board decided to build a new installation for heat and power which will use biomass grown nearby. CHP is a highly efficient method of biomass. The project is now at the foundation building stage. Implementation activities will be finished by October 2013. To cover the electricity needs of the Albena Hotel Complex, 55 GWh is needed annually. The energy audit shows the possibilities of installing a cogeneration biomass power station. Suitable power would be 2900 kW in total - 500 kW of electricity and 2,320 kW of heat power. Heat power will be used to heat the greenhouse until the winter and for the hotel’s needs in summer (hot water, pool heating). The cogeneration power station will produce 4.3 GWh of electricity and 16 GWh of heat energy.

Results in pills

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Primary energy saving</th>
<th>618 TOE/yr (13,09%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>CO₂ avoided</td>
<td>7.376 tCO₂/yr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost savings/year</td>
<td>250,000 EURO</td>
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Project context
No. 2 Danby Cottages has been involved with the RELACS project from very early on, as this business became one of the UK case studies due to its having already undertaken a wide range of work to improve the sustainability of the building.

Measures
1. This previous work includes: polystyrene blocks in between the timber frame of the existing cottage and lining the walls with foil-backed plasterboard (the most effective way to insulate these unusual old walls), 250mm of fibreglass loft insulation, double-glazed sash units in all replaced windows, double-glazed top-hung timber units with aluminium external facings have been installed in a new extension, floor insulation installed between joists, blown recycled paper insulation in the cavity of the new extension, a high efficiency oil-fired condensing boiler supplemented by two wood-burning stoves in central/convenient locations, 2m² solar water heating, 2kWp and PV panels.

2. In addition, the business is also reducing energy consumption by ensuring that the business owners (the only staff) are kept up-to-date with information on reducing their energy consumption, providing guest information on a range of sustainability issues, installing an energy monitor in the guest accommodation and taking regular meter readings to monitor use.

3. Further sustainability efforts undertaken by this business include: provision of full recycling and waste separation facilities; provision of local food and information on sources of further local products; provision of only ‘eco’ cleaning products; information provision on local activities, bike hire facilities and public transport; the option to arrange supermarket deliveries; information on local walks; many books on sustainable living available in the cottage; rainwater collection, low flush toilets and AAA rated appliances; clothes drying limited to a washing line; provision of locally sourced wood.

4. In addition, the business has made the cottage fully accessible to wheelchair users and will provide incentives to guests arriving by public transport (which is extremely limited in this area).
Join the network: the benefits for you

The RELACS Network is a European network of tourist accommodation buildings devoted to the reduction of their energy consumption and more generally of the environmental impact of their activity. It currently runs in 10 European countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Hotels owners/managers (and of any other type of tourist accommodation) wishing to join the RELACS network should commit to meet not less than four out of the 10 RELACS criteria, one per category at least.

RELACS CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Energy consumption:</th>
<th>Creating awareness:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documentation of monthly energy usage</td>
<td>Staff training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual evaluation of documented energy usage data</td>
<td>Information for guests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aim to reduce energy consumption by 25%</td>
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<tr>
<th>Investment in building improvements:</th>
<th>Sustainable resource management:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rational Use of Energy (RUE: energy saving)</td>
<td>Input (use of sustainable/regional products, water saving systems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewable Energy Sources (RESs)</td>
<td>Output (waste avoidance, separation, recycling, water treatment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sustainable Transport” (public transport, non-motorised traffic, call &amp; collect, mobility management)</td>
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building energy audits

Understanding where, when and how much energy is used by your accommodation premises is the first step towards detecting the most relevant weaknesses and key measures to be taken. Experience through RELACS has further shown that energy-saving measures planned by accommodation owners prior to energy audits are not always the most effective and profitable ones. Furthermore, there is a need for non-profit support to provide clear information for accommodation owners about the most challenging situations and ensuing energy interventions to carry out. That is why energy advice from third-party organisations is essential.

feasibility studies for energy efficiency/renewable measures

Once the energy audit has been finalised, revealing the priority areas (of building or systems) to be addressed, feasibility studies allow for a deep analysis of relevant energy solutions, in terms of future energy savings, thus highlighting the return on the investment. Prior to any actual investment, feasibility studies should always be carried out.

training and information for managers, employees and installers (info-packs, etc)

A number of events were freely proposed to accommodation managers throughout the RELACS project. In each region involved – in most cases jointly with hotel associations – seminars were held informing accommodation managers not only about the RELACS project but also about real best-practice cases in terms of energy efficiency/renewable measures in accommodation premises, environmental management schemes available (both at EU and at national level), as well as funding opportunities for the accommodation sector.
updated information

...about actual devices, technologies, systems for sustainable energy along with certification schemes and funding opportunities was further provided to managers through the creation of a Guide to Sustainable Energy in Tourist Accommodation Buildings. The Guide is available in each national language. Download it from www.relacs.eu or ask your national contact for a paper copy!

technical meetings with and for installers

In each region involved, three technical meetings with installers were organized in order to directly involve operators providing services in the accommodation sector. Therefore, meetings dealing with specific technologies or systems (high energy-efficient lighting devices, building automation, solar systems, etc) were held, and were deemed a great success.

workshops

Finally, since personnel working in accommodations may also play a relevant role in an energy-saving strategy, workshops were also held for this target group, investigating issues related especially to behavioural changes with a view to saving energy. This kind of information may easily be provided in combination with the mandatory training courses (fire routines, health and safety, etc) that hotel staff regularly have to attend.
European and local study tours

In order to favour the international exchange and transfer of knowledge among network members, five study tours were organised in several European regions and in relation to different accommodation typologies. During such events, accommodation owners had the chance to directly experience the concrete implementation of renewable systems or energy efficiency measures undertaken by the accommodation visited. The visits were also appreciated since they allowed accommodation owners to confront themselves with their ‘colleagues’ and share ideas about the solutions adopted. In line with the positive feedback received from participants on the European study tours, several partners organised successful study visits also at a national level.

technical assistance

As well as energy audits and feasibility studies, a number of accommodation managers was provided with further information/assistance. 11 newsletters were delivered to network members about funding opportunity updates, certification schemes, ways to approach and inform guests about their ‘green’ efforts. Similar information was provided upon request by phone or by email to accommodation managers who expressed interest.
Green marketing tools developed for network members include:

Website
A website in 10 languages in which each network member is described and promoted.

European Catalogue
An European catalogue in which, along with all European members, each accommodation service in the network is further described. The Catalogue is online on the RELACS home page, and each network accommodation service is also highlighted on the European map.

National Brochures
National brochures for each region involved (describing the network accommodation, visualized on a map) were developed and distributed to tourist offices and to other relevant regional stakeholders.

National Competitions
National competitions – within the framework of specific galas – were entered by the accommodation services providing the best energy efficiency/renewable results.

Awards&Mentions
Lastly, three European awards and special mentions were delivered at the ITB Fair in Berlin in March 2013.

National and European winners were identified though the main criteria of primary energy saved and CO₂ reduction achieved, thanks to the improvement works undertaken. Broad media coverage of these events was reached and therefore winners also benefitted from this further promotion.
Understand where energy is used, knowing what you pay for energy (electrical, heating or cooling) and how it is used are necessary steps before implementing any kind of energy-saving measure.

Ask for an unbiased and trusted assistance to get an initial overview on energy consumption of your accommodation premises!

You can decide to ask for a preliminary audit and then for a thorough analysis of the energy consumption profiles.

The pre-audit report is based on the information gathered during a preliminary interview and a quick walkthrough analysis. It suggests zero/low cost remedy-measures, and identifies the possible investments, listing them by cost size and estimated simple payback (SPB). The pre-audit suggests the possible financial opportunities for the prioritised investments. Finally, it can present a contractual proposal for a detailed-audit with feasibility study, including additional services for the design of the measures, the filling in of application forms for the grants or loans requests, and for works supervision.

Source: 2013 ERASME project handbook on energy audits in SMEs.
Relacs and... take action!

Through the support and services provided, the RELACS project achieved very important results throughout Europe.

212 members of the network

94 energy audits

58 feasibility studies

30 GWh/y of renewable energy produced

more than €800,000 per year in cost savings

more than 1,600 t CO₂ reduction

51 accommodations undertaking sustainable energy measures

7 agreements with regional associations to take over the initiative

more than 1,000 hotel managers and staff involved in the 72 seminars and events held

over €6.6m investments triggered in energy efficiency/renewables

www.relacs.eu website running in 10 languages

nearly 5 GWh/y of energy savings

While RELACS partners are seeking funds for extending and improving the capacity building activities for the accommodation sector, the initiative still goes on through agreements with regional associations.

Get in touch with your national RELACS contact and... take action!
Tips for improving the energy sustainability of your tourist accommodation building:

- Take a picture of your accommodation premise. Ask for an impartial energy audit. Understand where energy is used. Knowing what you pay for energy (electrical, heating or cooling) and how it is used are essential parts of good energy management.
- Reduce your energy needs and improve the efficiency of your energy operating systems.
- Install renewable energy systems to produce heating, cooling and electric power.
- Select low fuel consumption and low emissions company cars. Encourage your guests to use sustainable transport options where available.
- Involve staff by explaining your energy-saving plans and ask for their suggestions.
- Involve your guests by informing them about your sustainable energy policy and kindly asking them to contribute to your efforts.
- Search for available funding to help you implement your sustainable energy plan.
- Use an environmental management system to guide your efforts and promote your achievements by applying for a relevant eco-label.
- Join the RELACS Network and seek assistance help in saving energy and money in your business. RELACS members are also promoted on the RELACS website.
- Be proactive with your accommodation association! Push them to establish partnerships for helping accommodation to become more energy efficient!

“By cooperating with the RELACS project we have a very good baseline for our work and can continue the initiatives started in RELACS... We also check how the tourist business are preparing for climate changes and the threats connected to this”

Tommy Lindström,
project manager for the regional initiative Klimatsmart Tursim Öland, Sweden
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To learn more about RELACS visit www.relacs.eu