

BELGIUM

Local development

Location

Pays des Condruses

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P6 – Social inclusion & local
development

Measure

M19 – LEADER/CLLD

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 52 000
EAFRD 20 124
National/Regional 31 876

Project duration

2017 – 2020

Project promoter

GAL Pays des Condruses asbl

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A Local Action Group (LAG) helps coordinate the climate and energy strategies of its municipalities.

Summary

Given the high cost of energy, the economic pressure on households has been increasing. At the same time concerns about the environment, e.g. on climate change, are growing too. In this context, the LAG Pays des Condruses asbl, was mandated to coordinate the climate and energy strategies of its seven municipalities.

The LAG organised several types of activities. These included innovative economic models based on crowdfunding, networking with the building sector, and collective design of soft mobility solutions. The main project output was a local climate plan. This set concrete targets and milestones to achieve the goal that by 2050, Pays des Condruses will be a 'positive energy territory', producing more energy than it consumes.



Results

The main output of the project will be a local climate action plan. It will include four main strands, on i) assessments and diagnosis, ii) a combined strategy for the seven municipalities in the LAG area, (iii) an action plan consisting of 20 action points, (iv) a communication plan and a provisional calendar for delivering all action points.

The plan includes an analysis of data about CO2 consumption in the project area between 2006 and 2012. This provides the baseline upon which quantitative estimates can be set for the future.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The local climate action plan mainly focuses on reducing energy costs, by developing new, affordable and renewable local energy.
- ❑ The plan can be updated to include monitoring and evaluation benchmarks to assess whether it is being correctly implemented and, if necessary, to make adjustments.
- ❑ People with relevant engineering skills in the field of climate action are very precious assets at local level. LEADER can successfully support this kind of specialised expertise.

Context

The rural area of Pays des Condruses is located South of the city of Huy (Liège county), on the Condroz plateau. It has almost 30 000 inhabitants. The area is mainly dedicated to agriculture (60%) and forestry (30%).

In 2011, the Walloon government launched its Employment-Environment Alliance and created a new public service post, called the eco-broker position (in French: éco-passeur). The government part-funded the salaries of these posts in 53 municipalities¹ for three years. Given the high cost of energy, the financial pressure on households was increasing and environmental concerns were growing with them. Based on the principle that the cheapest energy is the one we do not spend, inexpensive solutions can often be found to significantly reduce households' energy consumption. The role of the eco-broker is to inform citizens about energy efficiency actions. Two of these eco-brokers work in Pays des Condruses.

In 2012, the Walloon government launched another programme called POLLEC². This set out to coordinate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, in compliance with the Covenant of Mayors for climate and energy³. In this context, the Pays des Condruses LAG was mandated in April 2017 to coordinate the climate and energy strategies of its municipalities. It had already supported energy efficiency pilots during the 2007-2013 programming period, such as a biogas station on a farm and a hydropower dam which led to the creation of a citizens' cooperative in 2014⁴.

Objectives

The aim of the project is to support the energy transition of this rural area into a more sustainable model of energy use. This should be achieved in a coherent manner between the seven constituencies of Pays des Condruses. In operational terms, it aims to increase the energy autonomy of the rural areas by working on small-scale local initiatives that can generate added value for municipalities, citizens and businesses, specifically in the field of energy efficiency (rational use of energy) and renewable energy (hydropower, solar panels, biogas).

The aim is to reduce CO₂ emissions by 27% in 2030,

compared to 2006. The targeted public includes elected members of municipalities, their staff, citizens, enterprises, farmers, local NGOs, etc.

Activities

RDP financing covered the cost of hiring a project officer with an industrial engineering background (0.8 FTE) for four years.

Other supported actions include:

- Acquisition of 70 fuel meters and 20 sensors (€23 000);
- Communication and facilitation (€4 000);
- Two feasibility studies on hydropower (€18 000);
- Technical assistance on legal and business aspects (€5 000); and
- Training and field visits (€2 000).

Several types of activities were organised, such as the design of innovative economic models based on crowdfunding, networking actions with the building sector, and the collective design of soft mobility solutions. With regard to housing and social issues related to energy efficiency, a partnership was set up with 'Devenirs' asbl⁵, a local NGO specialising in the field.

A conference gathering 50 participants was organised in April 2017, with speakers from the Liège University and the Walloon Climate Agency⁶.

The main deliverable will be a local climate plan consisting of:

- a diagnosis of CO₂ emissions from municipal operations (municipal buildings, vehicle fleet, public lighting, etc.). This is based on data collected from the various services of the seven municipalities;
- A diagnosis of CO₂ emissions linked to all activities of the seven municipalities (residential, industrial, tertiary, etc.), based on the regional mapping done by the Walloon Climate Agency in the context of the POLLEC programme;
- an appraisal of each municipality's vulnerability towards climate change; and
- proposed action points to reduce CO₂ emissions in land planning, health, agriculture, energy, water management, forestry, biodiversity and tourism.

¹ <http://www.uvcw.be/actualites/2,129,1,0,4054.htm>

² Politique Locale Energie Climat – the third campaign was launched in 2016 and gathers more than 200 municipalities.

³ <https://www.covenantofmayors.eu/about/covenant-initiative/origins-and-development.html>

⁴ <http://coopcec.be/>

⁵ <http://www.devenirs.be/>

⁶ Local actions for global challenges' – 26th April 2017 with Pierre Ozier & Dominique Perin.

Special focus is put on energy efficiency in public buildings and the potential use of renewable energies (wind, sun, water, manure). The LAG is in charge of facilitating and coordinating all activities identified in the local climate action plan, in partnership with relevant local partners, when necessary.

The vision is that by 2050, Pays des Condruses will be a 'positive energy territory' (in French: Territoire à énergie positive), producing more energy than it consumes. In 2006, there was no renewable energy production in the project area. By 2012, it had reached 4%. According to the plan, renewable energy production could reach 17% by 2030, some 117 902 GWh. The renewable energy potential of the area is estimated at 850 601 GWh/year. In order to become a positive energy territory by 2050, it will be necessary to increase renewable energy production by an additional 732 700 GWh.

Quantitative targets on energy consumption have been set for housing (heating and electricity), the tertiary sector, road transport, agriculture and public buildings.

The plan will include specific actions, such as a municipal premium for rational use of energy, personalised support for renovating homes, training on energy efficiency (insulation techniques), information and awareness raising campaigns, workshops, soft mobility (i.e. a car sharing scheme, school bikes, etc.), support to wind energy initiatives, hydropower projects, on-farm biogas installation, etc. The project officer is also in charge of delivering energy audits to small-and-medium-sized enterprises, farms and retail businesses.

The local climate action plan brings together in a coherent manner the action plans for sustainable energy (in French: Plan d'Action pour l'Energie Durable – PAED) of the seven municipalities of Pays des Condruses, in compliance with each municipality's signature of the Covenant of Mayors.

The LAG officer in charge of energy projects is responsible for preparing the plan in close cooperation with the regional authority in charge of the POLLEC scheme and the regional agency for climate.

A participative approach is supported by the LAG staff through the creation of a steering committee which brings together all the relevant local stakeholders and is supported by local committees at municipal level.

Main results

The main output of the project is the local climate action plan. It includes four main strands: (i) assessment and diagnosis, (ii) a combined strategy for the seven municipalities, (iii) an action plan listing 20 concrete action points, (iv) a communication plan and a provisional calendar for delivering all action points.

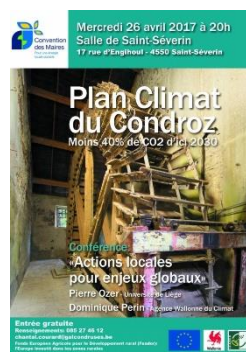
As part of the plan, the seven municipalities have signed the Covenant of Mayors charter, stating their commitment to reducing their energy-related CO2 emissions by 40% by 2030. The plan includes an analysis of data about CO2 consumption in the project area between 2006 and 2012. This provides the baseline upon which quantitative estimates can be set for the future (2030 and 2050 are the major milestones).

Key lessons

The particular feature of this local climate action plan is that it mainly focuses on reducing energy costs, while developing new, affordable and renewable local energy. Additional aspects such as soft mobility, or waste reduction are listed in the action points, but less emphasis is given to them.

The plan can be updated to include monitoring and evaluation benchmarks to assess whether it is being correctly implemented and, if necessary, to make adjustments.

Human resources with relevant engineering skills in the field of climate action are very precious assets at local level. LEADER can provide local municipalities with this kind of specialist expertise.



Additional sources of information

<https://energie.wallonie.be/fr/pollec.html?IDC=9178>

www.awac.be/index.php/thematiques/politiques-actions/plan-pacc