

# BIOWIND

INCREASING SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE FOR WIND ENERGY IN EU REGIONS THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY BASED PLANNING

News & Updates from the project

## BIOWIND 4th NEWSLETTER

Dear Readers,

We are thrilled to present the 4th edition of our newsletter. In this edition, we will explore the progress of our project's completed activities, offering you a comprehensive insight into our operational methods.

This edition offers a glimpse into our latest Project Meeting in Hungary, briefly introduces the developed policy briefs regarding the lessons learnt from the previously conducted workshops and provides insights into the policy change peer review process.

Furthermore, it highlights the project's participation into various third party events that occurred in the 4th semester.

## IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

The BIOWIND project implementation will lead to the following outcomes:

- Enhancement of **9 policy instruments**, benefiting public authorities and stakeholders.
- Strengthened capabilities of **176 public administrations** to efficiently execute environmentally friendly and socially inclusive wind energy policies.
- **Unlocking over 30 million euros** to back projects related to wind energy spatial planning, energy cooperatives, biodiversity conservation, and community support schemes.
- Heightened **awareness and consensus building** among civil society groups, environmental agencies, public administrations, and wind stakeholders in BIOWIND regions.

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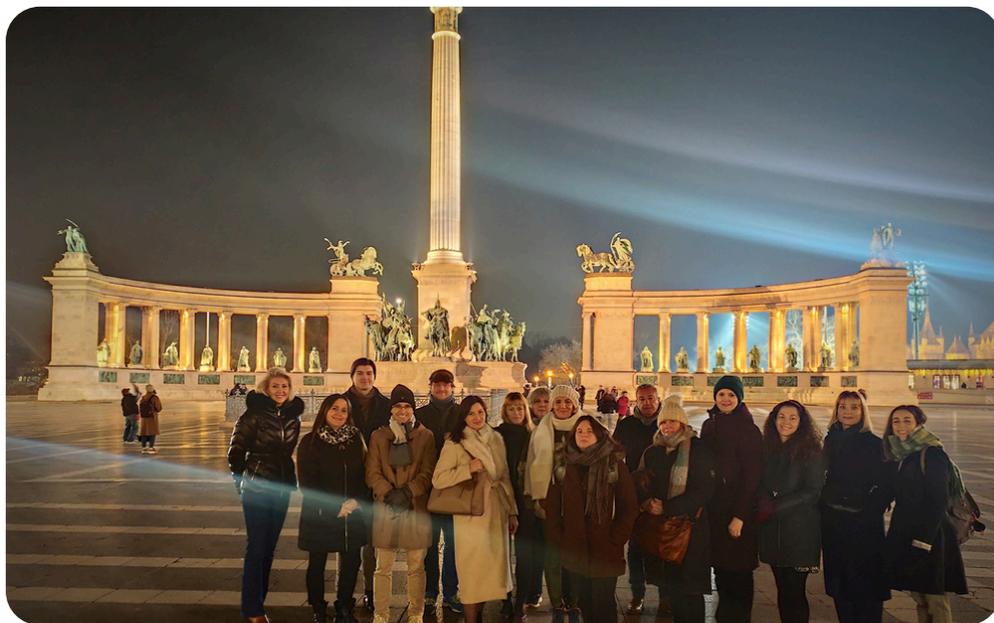
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## 4TH PROJECT MEETING

During the 4th semester, the 4th project meeting was conducted in Budapest, Hungary with the participation of all partners of the BLOWIND project. The focus of the meeting was set on providing a complete overview of the activities, updates on the reported progress and upcoming deadlines. The meeting further aimed at discussing policy instrument advancements and recommendations, providing an overview of the peer-review process which will be completed by the end of the core phase of the project.



Project Meeting in Hungary, Budapest

# WORKSHOP ON ENERGY COMMUNITIES IN BUDAPEST

On December 4th, 2024, a workshop on "**Energy Communities: Building Citizen Acceptance and Engagement**" was hosted by the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform, bringing together five Interreg Europe Projects: REC4EU, Leeway, SlreENERGY, ShareRES, and BLOWIND. Community energy is **key to a decarbonised economy** and a crucial step in tackling climate change. The goal of energy communities is to **enable collective and citizen-driven energy initiatives** supporting the transition towards clean energy. The main focus was set on increasing public acceptance of renewable energy projects while **attracting investments** in the green energy transition sector.

The primary objective of the meeting was to gather experts, partners of the projects and representatives from across Europe to exchange ideas, share experiences and explore practical approaches for **creating and supporting energy communities**. Group work during the meeting prioritised identifying approaches for reaching target groups and empowering local populations to generate, consume and manage renewable energy in order to promote **energy independence, sustainability and economic resilience**. The presentations during the workshop emphasised the ability of energy communities to **enhance grid stability, reduce emissions, boost local economies** and support a more efficient and sustainable energy system overall. European initiatives and good practices from Catalonia, Greece and Ireland were communicated, providing insight from successful wind energy community projects. The BLOWIND project aimed at **raising awareness and building consensus** among stakeholders, by sharing experiences and insights and contributing to the collective goal of a greener and more sustainable future.

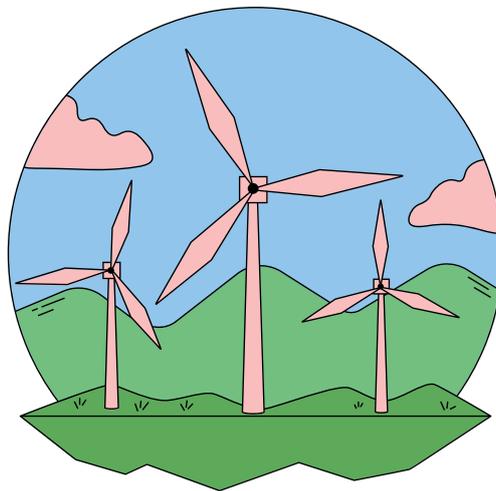


# POLICY BRIEFS

## CIVIC PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT IN WIND ENERGY PLANNING

The **Province of Flemish Brabant (PFB)** is the partner in charge of the 'Policy Briefs' activity. The policy brief regarding the Promotion of Civic Participation and Engagement in wind energy planning, based on the background study and the interregional workshop organised by Northern & Western regional Assembly (NWRA) in Sligo, Ireland, was developed this semester.

The policy brief, aims at **encouraging civic involvement in wind energy development** to increase social acceptance of the sector. The engagement offers a chance for stakeholders to gain a better **understanding of proposed projects**, to **explore added value for the area**, to identify which options would be most suitable in the local context and to **help shape solutions** that work for all actors involved. The **eight policy recommendations** introduced in the policy brief, will aid governments and policy making bodies to **support civic involvement in wind energy development** and to **increase social acceptance**.



## SUSTAINABLE APPROACHES to WIND TURBINE DECOMMISSIONING

The policy brief regarding the Sustainable Approaches to Wind Turbine Decommissioning based on the interregional workshop in Leuven, Belgium, was developed this semester. The policy brief, recognises the **lack of EU regulations regarding waste management** of wind turbines and their decommissioning and states the **need of including specific guidelines for decommissioning** wind turbines in EU renewable energy policies.

Further, it proposes integrating a principle of prioritisation regarding wind turbine end-of-life scenarios, to the next revision of the Renewable Energy Directive. Finally, it provides policy proposals referring to i) the **requirement of developers to create a dismantling manual**, ii) **securing financial guarantees** for the recovery of the project zone, iii) introducing the complete **demolition of the turbine components into the legislation** and iv) the **improvement of blades recycling** by providing five necessary policy actions for this purpose.

# POLICY BRIEFS

## EFFECTIVE BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT & CONSERVATION SYSTEMS IN WIND AREAS

The policy brief refers to the impact on biodiversity and ecosystems within the wind farms and the surrounding areas. The brief aims at addressing all impacts, ensuring a **holistic understanding** of the potential consequences of the wind park throughout its lifecycle on biodiversity. These impacts include the **loss/fragmentation of habitat** and the disturbance or **mortality of species** leading to the breakdown in the functioning of the ecosystem and the services it provides to animals and people. The elements of i) adequate **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)**, ii) strong **Environmental Management Plan (EMP)** and iii) an **effective Environmental Management System (EMS)** have been introduced as crucial for an environmental stewardship of a wind energy project. **Fourteen policy recommendations** are introduced in the policy brief, based on the workshop on effective biodiversity management and conservation systems in Jelgava, Latvia and the associated background study.



## MINIMISING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT & MAXIMISING THE SUPPORT BASE: THE FINNISH EXAMPLE

The policy brief is based on the partners' study visit in **Suolakangas wind farm in Kauhajoki, Finland**, organised by the Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia and intended to understand the regional planning approach of wind farm design and site selection. The objective of the brief is to **integrate environmental considerations** into the selection of a location, such as the **distance** from natural reserves and cultural sites, **biodiversity sensitivity** and **land erosion issues**, while taking into account **public concerns** and maximising the **political and social support** base of a project. Both the environmental impact assessment (EIA) and the efforts to include citizens and decision-makers should be conducted at an **early stage** aiming at **creating alternatives** and having the least adverse environmental impact with the strongest possible backing. **Twelve policy recommendations** are introduced into the policy brief, based on the discussions of the workshop and the input paper guiding the debate.

# BIOWIND PROJECT PRESENTED IN EUROPEAN EVENTS

The **Asturian Energy Foundation (FAEN)** participated at the **North Renewables Congress 2024**, held on November 20 & 21, which brought together key players in the renewable energy sector in a business-focused environment aimed at fostering industry development. This event established itself as a **key platform** for analyzing the challenges and opportunities associated with solar, wind, and green hydrogen energy through presentations and panel discussions designed to facilitate knowledge exchange and **promote innovative projects in the field of energy sustainability**.

The Asturian Energy Foundation played a prominent role in this edition. The Director of FAEN inaugurated the second day of the Congress, where the Foundation took center stage with the presentation of the **European BIOWIND Project**. During a panel discussion, two main factors limiting the deployment of wind energy projects—identified within the framework of the project—were debated: local community opposition and the complexity of administrative procedures.



Our Irish Partner, the **Northern and Western Region Assembly (NWRA)** was present at this year's **Association of Irish Regions Training (AIR)** seminar. AIR provides an annual training seminar about evolving governance, European and place-based policies and planning space. Discussions advanced on how the **regions play a leadership role** in supporting the **delivery of national objectives** and remain at the **forefront of best practices**. The event featured an exciting exhibition space that spotlighted the remarkable work of the Regional Assemblies, including Interreg Europe Projects like BIOWIND while NWRA provided an excellent opportunity to learn more about impactful regional initiatives.



# POLICY CHANGE PEER REVIEW PROCESS

The Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia (CARM) created the Guide for the Joint Peer - Review of territorial policy changes. The Guide states the need for the formation of a working group - consisting of one representative from each partner- to jointly evaluate the partners' actions for territorial policy changes, monitor policy implementation progress and assess the impact of these changes.

Key findings from best practices, gaps and insights of previous reports, as well as stakeholder meetings of the project have been synthesised into a list, creating a **set of policy recommendations** and categorised under **five broad policy areas**, namely: i) **Community engagement and public participation**, ii) **Regulatory and governance reforms**, iii) **Environmental management and biodiversity protection**, iv) **Socioeconomic and financial support mechanisms**, v) **Planning and capacity development**.

The guidelines further provide **criteria** based on which the policy improvements will be evaluated by the partners of the project, with the use of a set of **recommended indicators** for each proposed policy change. The partnership, through the guidelines, is provided with a **tailored peer review framework**, with **precise instructions and strategies** to facilitate the joint assessment of the policy changes and their resulting territorial impact. The peer review process will be implemented at the end of the core phase and partners are responsible for implementing policy changes -following the guidelines- until then.

Finally, during the Project Meeting in Hungary, the peer review process was addressed in a break out session dedicated to this activity. In this session, the overview of the peer - review process was presented to the partners of the project, while the list of policy recommendations & indicators as shown in the Guide was finalised.

## NEXT STEPS

- The 5th Steering Group Meeting will be held in Poland in June 2025
- All partners will organize the 5th regional stakeholder meetings to exchange the project results
- PROMEA will design the indicator framework as a tool for biodiversity sensitivity evaluation and environmental threats across different wind park stages
- FAEN will develop a detailed sustainability strategy report guiding partners' long-term planning for the clean energy transition
- Policy changes implementation will take place following the policy recommendations stated in the guidelines, while the peer-review process will be conducted at the end of the core phase.

## CONTACT US



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Regional Assembly



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REGIONAL COUNCIL OF  
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ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKIE  
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