

BIOWIND

Increasing social acceptance for wind energy in EU regions
through environmental and community-based planning

NEWS & UPDATES FROM THE PROJECT

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This issue marks an important milestone for BLOWIND: the project's main phase of activities have now come to a close, and partners move into a period focused on turning what they've learned into lasting change in their regions.

Dear Readers,

We are pleased to present the 7th edition of our newsletter. In this issue, you'll find an update from our latest project meeting, a look into the partnership's action plans, an official policy update from Latvia, and the results of the pilot actions carried out in Greece and Latvia over the past year.

As BLOWIND moves into its follow-up phase, the project continues to build on the outcomes achieved during the core phase, which are summarised in the figures below.

IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

9

POLICY INSTRUMENTS

Enhanced across the partnership, benefiting public authorities and stakeholders.

176

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS

With strengthened capabilities to execute environmentally friendly and socially inclusive wind energy policies.

€30m+

UNLOCKED

Backing wind energy spatial planning, energy cooperatives, biodiversity conservation and community support schemes.

Wider

AWARENESS & CONSENSUS

Among civil society groups, environmental agencies, public administrations and wind stakeholders in BLOWIND regions.

7th Steering Group Meeting

Hosted online by the University of Patras

The 7th Steering Group Meeting of BLOWIND was held online, hosted by the University of Patras, bringing together all project partners.

With the core phase now complete, discussions focused on the transition into the follow-up phase: consolidating the policy improvements achieved by each partner, agreeing on the process for preparing regional Action Plans, and planning the upcoming interregional exchange and monitoring activities for Semesters 7 and 8.

Partners also discussed the organisation of forthcoming briefings with local public authorities, to share the policy advancements achieved so far.



Highlighting good practices

Throughout the project, BLOWIND partners have been identifying real-world examples of good practice in wind energy planning from across their regions and beyond. Several of these have now been officially published in the Interreg Europe Good Practices database. Here, we take a closer look at two standout examples.

THRACE, GREECE

Protecting birds while powering the future

Thrace, in northern Greece, is home to some of Europe's most important bird populations, but it also has huge potential for wind energy. To help balance these two priorities, WWF Greece developed a detailed set of maps identifying where wind farms can safely be built, and where they should be avoided to protect breeding, feeding and migration routes for sensitive species.

Science-based siting

Maps that let authorities approve projects faster without putting local wildlife at risk.

LATVIA

Opening public land for wind power

In Latvia, a lack of clear rules for building wind farms on state-owned land was slowing down renewable energy development. To fix this, the Latvian government introduced a new legal framework setting out exactly how companies can bid for the right to build wind farms on public land.

109,000 hectares

Of state forest land opened for wind farm development since the rules came into force, with nearly 30 agreements already signed.

Discover the full collection of good practices [here](#).

Action plans begin to take shape

Some of BLOWIND's partners are already shaping the project's lessons into plans for the future, setting an example for the rest of the partnership.

Action plans are beginning to take shape around two connected priorities.

The first is strengthening the region's energy transition. This means giving citizens a greater say in renewable energy decisions and making the process easier for offshore wind projects.

The second priority is shaping guidance for wind farms. This covers how they are built, upgraded and eventually decommissioned, with the aim of protecting local biodiversity throughout. In time, this guidance may be folded into regional funding. Alongside this work, findings are being shared with national authorities, feeding into wider efforts to protect birds from wind turbines.

Both approaches are expected to act as a **model for the rest of the BLOWIND partnership**. Over the coming months, every partner is expected to shape their own action plan, turning what they've learned through the project into lasting change in their region.



Latvia: a new approach to wind energy planning

Zemgale Planning Region

The Zemgale Planning Region in Latvia has officially updated its regional development programme to reflect what it learned through BLOWIND.

The change means that, going forward, wind energy planning in Zemgale will take biodiversity into account from the outset, and will make greater use of digital tools to gather public input. It also gives municipalities a stronger role in organising discussions with local communities about upcoming wind projects.

This update builds directly on lessons the region picked up through BLOWIND's international exchanges, including workshops in Ireland and Finland, and on its own experience testing a digital public consultation platform as part of the project's pilot action.

After a month-long public consultation, the updated programme was formally approved by the **Zemgale Regional Council on 19 May 2026**.

Why it matters: Zemgale is the first BLOWIND region to write the project's lessons directly into a binding regional planning document, a template the rest of the partnership will follow as their own action plans take shape.



Pilot action results: Greece & Latvia

Over the past year, BLOWIND partners in Greece and Latvia tested new ways of involving the public in wind energy planning. Both pilots have now concluded.

Greece - Region of Western Greece

The Region of Western Greece trialled a digital platform allowing citizens to discuss wind energy projects online. The platform lets people explore project locations on a map and take part in focused discussions on topics like protected bird routes and the future decommissioning of turbines.

The trial found that this kind of tool works well alongside traditional public meetings, giving people who can't attend in person a way to stay involved at any stage of a project. It proved especially useful for keeping people informed about smaller projects that might otherwise attract less public attention, and it pointed to opportunities for using such tools even after a project has been approved, to help monitor construction and operation.

The full Pilot Action Report is available [here](#).

Latvia - Zemgale Planning Region

Zemgale tested a similar approach across five wind farm proposals, combining an online platform with in-person meetings held in four towns across the region. The consultations brought together residents, wind energy companies, public authorities and environmental groups, and directly shaped the recommendations that fed into Latvia's newly updated regional development programme (see page 06).



Next steps

- 01** The Region of Western Greece, as Lead Partner, will bring together results from all BLOWIND regions into a single report showing how the project's policy recommendations are being applied on the ground.
- 02** Partners will launch a survey among project partners, stakeholders and associated organisations in the final semester, measuring how far BLOWIND has strengthened the organisations it works with.
- 03** Partners will keep tracking how the policy changes are working in practice and share what they learn with each other through regular online peer-review meetings.
- 04** Every partner will brief local public authorities in their region on the policy improvements achieved so far.
- 05** A follow-up meeting with key stakeholders will look at what the policy changes have meant for each territory.



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