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Act Now! Newsletter #5

Juli 2020

The Act Now! Project - COVID-19 times continue

In our last newsletter we shared the impact of the pandemic on the **Act Now!** project in March and early April. While handling a world facing the COVID-19 virus progressing in recent months, the focus now is on 'How to continue' in the months to come.

Slowly – and on the other hand sometimes almost too fast – 'normalities' come back now, though future planning can be destroyed in no time by a new (regional) outbreak of the virus.

The Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat (MA/JS) of Interreg Baltic Sea Region provided the option to apply for a project prolongation, but without additional funding. The project partners discussed this in several online meetings and came to the conclusion to apply for it. We are awaiting the response – hopefully the confirmation - by the Secretariat. Act Now! has voted at the last 'Steering Committee and Partner Meeting' not to exhaust the 6-months-option, but finalise the project within 3 additional months.

Well, the last 'Steering Committee and Partner Meeting' on 16th & 17th June 2020 was conducted online (originally it had been planned to take place a week earlier in Finland in Ylivieska as a face-to-face meeting). Though quite a few of us had anticipated problems using MSTeams as platform for the online conference and working in subgroups, the meeting went very well. Another learning curve in these times :-)

Due to various travel- and contact restrictions all other local/regional/national **Act Now!** meetings in recent weeks had to be either cancelled or postponed or be switched to an online-format. Communication and cooperation between partners has been more difficult and took longer due to irregular and partly reduced working hours and locations of people; reports are

The work of the local energy efficiency groups (LEEGs) has been disrupted, some project partners had more difficulties than others. Many third national/regional **Act Now!** workshops – aiming at capacity building and dissemination of project results - have been either postponed and/or go online.

In some cases postponements by contractors for installing pilot investment measures lead to delays in data collection, so do delays in procurement procedures due to staff shortages or inaccessibility of documents from home offices. Buildings are not used in their normal way (no children in schools and kindergardens e.g.) and subsequently energy efficiency monitoring is disrupted. Study visits could not be conducted or were changed to an online format.

The pandemic threw new/other tasks on our desks, many people suddenly worked from their home-offices, facing specific challenges in this work environment. Time planning, budgets, work plans and procedures need to be adapted and constantly reviewed. Some of us had to put a lot of time and effort into making it all happen and adapt the 'old/usual' structures to an environment with COVID-19 restrictions and future insecurities (e.g. Will it be possible to conduct a transnational conference as a face-to-face-event in November?). Building up interpersonal relationships suffers and with it the personal networking. Are our online activities equally bonding us together?

Nobody knows how the COVID-19 situation might develop. Force majeure has become a 'stable insecurity' and an impact might differ hugely in regions or in the 9 countries of the **Act Now!** project area. At the same time, the image of a solidary, caring project community, which reliably stands together in difficult moments, has been consolidated in recent weeks.

delayed.

[Author: Petra Schneider]

How COVID-19 affected us at Riga Technical University in Latvia

Starting from March 9th the pedagogical and research activities at RTU were stopped. Nowadays it is possible to physically work in the University and have meeting with a maximum of 25 participants still respecting some safety rules. All the classes and lectures during the lock-down period were still guaranteed to students but all were made in remote. This in turn provided an increase of the working load normally allocated to the lecturing made in presence. The effects were influencing the planned working agenda for the Act Now! project with a delay for the planned deadlines of GoA 3.2 (Investment for Local Management System), GoA5.1 (4 Guidelines

and 1 Manual finalization) and GoA5.2 (National and regional workshops).

Nevertheless during the lockdown period it was possible to finalize the SECAP for Gulbene Municipality as a main output from the coaching tandem approach between RTU and Gulbene Municipality. The SECAP is now ready to be approved by the Municipal Council. In September it will be presented to other neighbour municipalities in the Vidzeme Region of Latvia at the last workshop of the tailored Capacity Building Scheme which was developed during the first part of the **Act Now!** project.

[Author: Francesco Romagnoli]

New Energy Management System introduced within **Act Now!** project in the trolleybus depot building in Gdynia / Poland

On 15th November 2019 in accordance with the sectoral regulations obliging PKT GDYNIA a tendering procedure within the **Act Now!** project was started by publishing a request for quotation regarding „Delivery, assembly, start-up and visualisation of the stationary central archiving and control system for selected electrical and heating-ventilation installations in the depot building of PKT GDYNIA”. On 5.12.19 a contract between PKT and ALPAT (a company from Gdynia) was signed.

According to the request for proposal, the task of implementing the EMS in Gdynia trolleybus depot building was divided into two stages, as described in the contract:

1. Stage 1 - Installation of 6 additional heat meters at the main heat node of the depot building. The additional meters allow to collect data , which will be used to prepare the final analysis how to introduce energy savings patterns.
2. Stage 2 - completion of all works and start up of the entire central archiving and control system for selected electrical

These six additional heat meters are now used to measure and archive data on building heat distribution.

After the implementation of the first stage of the investment, the collection and archiving of data from the new six additional heat meters and electricity meters previously installed in the **Act Now!** project is currently done automatically. Thanks to new heat meters, we are able to instantly indicate whether a given part of the heating system is working properly and optimally and whether there is, for example, a need to intervene in its functioning. Acquiring data on a regular basis, PKT is able to quickly capture and check if there has been, for example, a leakage in the heating system or whether someone has manually changed the parameters in the ventilation unit in an unauthorized manner, e.g. by raising the temperature by several degrees, and thus causing unnecessary energy losses. If there was not this detailed current archiving and separation into individual parts of the heating and ventilation installation, these irregularities causing energy losses would be extremely difficult to detect. The archiving is very precise as it takes place every 5 minutes, thus providing a thorough overview of the building's

and heating-ventilation installations in the PKT depot building.

The first stage of work was carried out in accordance with the contract until 19.12.19. Six additional heat meters were installed (previously there was only one main heat meter for the entire facility, on the basis of which PKT settled accounts with the heat supplier).

At present, in addition to the main heat meter, in the building there are additional 6 heat submeters corresponding to the following building areas:

1. Installation of central heating (radiators) in the administrative part of the building (office)
2. Installation of central heating (radiators) in the workshop part of the building (metal, upholstery, warehouse, tool shop, electronic workshop, etc.)
3. Mechanical ventilation - installation of heaters in the building's mechanical ventilation centers
4. Central heating with heaters – workshop hall
5. Curtain heaters at the entrance gates of the inspection hall part
6. Hot running water in the building.



energy consumption.



In the final stage of the investment, which was realized by the end of June, the contractor installed a synchronized central control and archiving system for the data from the above mentioned heat node meters and electricity submeters. All data archiving is now done automatically and it is visible in one computer stand as well as special interactive display placed in the heat node room. In addition, 13 heaters of the workshop and inspection hall as well as the car wash room were replaced with new, more efficient and steerable devices, equipped with an automatic central control system in place of the existing manual stationary controllers. Data from the operation of new heaters (e.g. temperature in a given zone) are also connected to a central energy management system visible in one computer.

After the whole investment implementation in the **Act Now!** project, for the first time in selected parts of heating and electrical installations in the depot building data is automatically archived and automatic control and steering system of these installations is handled from one computer aided control station.

What is essential, the depot building EMS system is based on Schneider Electric software which comes free of charge when ordering this producer's PLC sensors.

By the possibility of creating new paradigms of setting particular parameters controlled by the system Gdynia EMS provides great opportunities for future energy savings which are estimated at about 20-30%.

[Author & Pictures: Marta Woronowicz]



Business as (almost) usual in Southeast Sweden

Springtime 2020 will be a spring we all will remember. Restrictions, news flash, a lot of worries and a totally new unexpected situation. For the Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden, the busy spring with many international, regional and local meetings turned suddenly upside down. However, with four offices with long distance from each other our staff was well prepared to quickly transform all meetings into online meetings using Teams, Zoom, Google hangout and whatever tools and technique is available.

Within the **Act Now!** project the planned meetings with the local energy group in Mönsterås are now online meetings from home or an empty office since the municipality has restrictions of visitors in their premises. The same restriction as Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden is following.

We have had interesting discussions, capacity building meetings and even an online study visit where we “visited” a neighbouring city to learn how they have implemented an energy monitoring system in their organisation.

Yes, it does work with an online study visit, but of course from a social point of view it is a bit skimpy. Bring your own coffee to your laptop is the message! We all follow the recommendations of the Public Health Agency of Sweden and our government and due to the situation with Covid-19, our events and international project meetings are performed online. But we are still working towards a sustainable society as diligently as ever, with reports and strategies, online seminars and meetings and such. So business almost as usual for us.

[Author: Lena Eckerberg]

Working in ProjectZero during Corona and lockdown:

Working during the Corona crisis has been very much focused on creating a new ZERObolig 4.0, with a clear vision, strategy, and concepts for efforts towards the homeowners.

We have worked much on tools for getting more homeowners to energy renovate, especially personas have been a focus point during these past couple of months – which in the present will be used as a tool when creating communication and activities towards the homeowners. The time has been very much one of looking inwards and

Some of the projects that have been planned during Corona, and will take place in the next couple of months:

- Webinars towards homeowners focusing on heating solutions
- Video with a walk-through, with an energy advisor, where he shows what is important to be aware of in your home,

analyzing and planning the next step towards getting in closer dialogue with both homeowners and stakeholders.

It has been difficult to start many of the projects due to the fact that physical meetings have not been possible, however, with almost everything reopening it will be possible to plan more events for homeowners and stakeholders in the future.

for example amount of isolation, windows, roof and so on

- A course for banks focusing on energy in homes and how to help homeowners to choose energy renovations
- Meetings with craftsmen that eventually should lead to courses for them in how to talk to customers, talk energy and so on
- More stories on homeowners that have energy renovated in the home

[Author: Vivian Krøll]

COVID-19 did not stop discussing Municipal Energy Management and Ways of Financing Energy Efficiency measures in Kaliningrad at our regional **Act Now!** workshop

On June 4, 2020 a regional workshop “Energy management in municipality and financial mechanisms for implementing energy-efficient measures” was held online on the ZOOM cloud platform as part of the **Act Now!** project. The event was organized by the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University in cooperation with the Fund for Capital Renovation of common property in apartment buildings of the Kaliningrad region.

The seminar was attended by 45 people - representatives of 41 organizations (including municipalities of the Kaliningrad region and house managing companies, the Administration of the city of Kaliningrad and the Ministry of Infrastructure Development of the Kaliningrad Region).

The tools for the development of an energy management system in the municipality and energy-efficient projects initiated by the

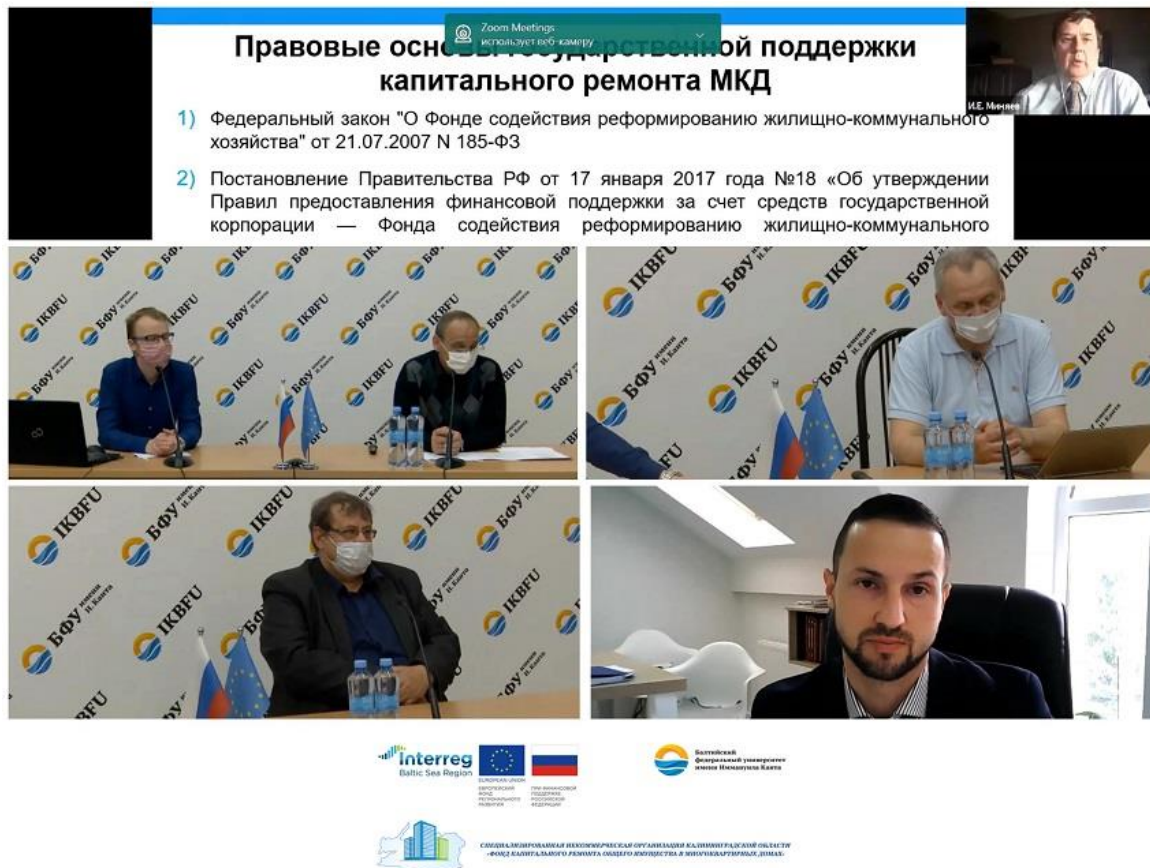
Kaliningrad LEEG (local energy efficiency group) were presented and discussed.

The participants were introduced to the practice of application of energy-efficient measures in small and multi apartment buildings with different energy efficiency classes and ways of its financing by means of existing public-private funding programs for energy efficiency measures and energy service contracts.

The workshop was a good opportunity to share and disseminate the Kaliningrad municipality' experience and results of the Act Now! project among other municipalities of the Kaliningrad region.

The information on the workshop was published at the web site of IKBFU www.kantiana.ru/news/universitet/v-bfu-im-i-kanta-obsudili-energomenedzhment-v-kaliningradskoy-oblasti/

[Author: Olga Kovaleva]



Gdynia still in action

The outbreak of the pandemic thwarted most of the project's plans, but did not cross them out. The study visit in Sopot for LEEG members scheduled for March 2020 took place virtually with a 2-month delay with even more recipients than originally thought. Gdynia's LEEG still does not exclude a visit to the facilities in Sopot which have been included in the thermomodernization project with the EMS, if it proves possible.

Using various communication tools, we are trying to make up for the stuck tasks, although not everything is possible. The closure of schools and the decision to reopen them means that it is difficult to plan the measurements that have so far taken place in municipal school buildings. Despite the restrictions still in force, we hope that the 3rd workshop scheduled for September will take place "in real life".

[Author: Ewelina Barnat-Prokopiuk]

6th Act Now! Steering Committee and Partner Meeting not as usual

On 16th and 17th June 2020 the Steering Committee and Partner Meeting (SCM) was held not in Finland but online – due to COVID 19 pandemic restrictions.

Instead of meeting in Ylivieska some 30 members of all 9 member states attended the online conference. Some joined from their home offices, some from their regular offices; Petra and Till moved to another municipal building to

Meinhard and Anne-Riikka shared the tasks of facilitator and chat-moderator and guided us nicely through a fruitful conference.

Main topics were

- the application for a prolongation of the project and consequences for the final

avoid the bad internet quality which their usual office restricts them to. We all had to make ourselves comfortable with our own favourite drinks and snacks, no dinner together after the meeting, no shaking hands.

Some of us were nervous beforehand, if this online SCM with conducting subgroups and various presenters etc. would become a disaster. Do we need a plan B? But it all went very smoothly, particularly as Anne-Riikka from our Finnish partner Centria was very patient to guide everybody through the platform MS-Teams.

transnational conference,

- 'Financing Aspects'(pilot and future investments and illustrations, feasibility studies),
- the 'Second Round Report' about the LEEGs' work and subgroups discussing most important lessons learnt,
- an intensive discussion in the plenum and in subgroups of the '5 public documents'. These five documents – a manual and four guidelines - are one of the main outputs of the **Act Now!** project.

After two half days we all shared a new and pleasant SCM-experience!

[Author: Petra Schneider]

Installations in Sievi municipality

One typical shortcoming of municipalities found in **Act Now!** project is weak control of rural satellite services and buildings. Sievi municipality in Finland serves as a good example of this. The big main buildings in town center are equipped with comprehensive monitoring and remote-control services provided by major vendors. The village schools, however, have so far been totally isolated and islanded, controlled only by old local, purely heating curve-based dummy control, without any possibilities for remote monitoring.

Now, as a result of the **Act Now!** project, all 6 village schools are now equipped with a sensor system, enabling remote monitoring and logging of energy consumption. In the biggest school, there is also a hot tap water consumption monitoring as a separate function.



Device closet in Jokikylä village school

The sensor system is based on Beckhoff CX - series embedded rail PCs connected to the sensor set tailored for each building needs. All data is transferred then to the Beckhoff C6015 server, which stores the data and shares it for the further registered services.

Having this data recorded, paves way for further energy efficiency actions, such as energy budgeting, rapid handling of deviations and even proactive identification of potential problems ahead. All Beckhoff installations, programming and Ui designs were made by Centria Research & Development, which is the expert partner of Finnish consortium in **Act Now!**.

[Author: Mikko Himanka. Pictures: Tuomo Viitala / Centria]



Real-time consumption values on the tailored dashboard.

A new and promising cooperation partner

Among many benefits of the project **Act Now!** Elva Rural Municipality has found a new and promising cooperation partner in the form of LEEG (Local Energy Efficiency Group). During the formation phase of the group some people were invited personally, others heard about the possibility and decided to join. A few newcomers have picked the opportunity as a result of public workshops. Anybody willing to contribute has been most welcome, nobody has been excluded.

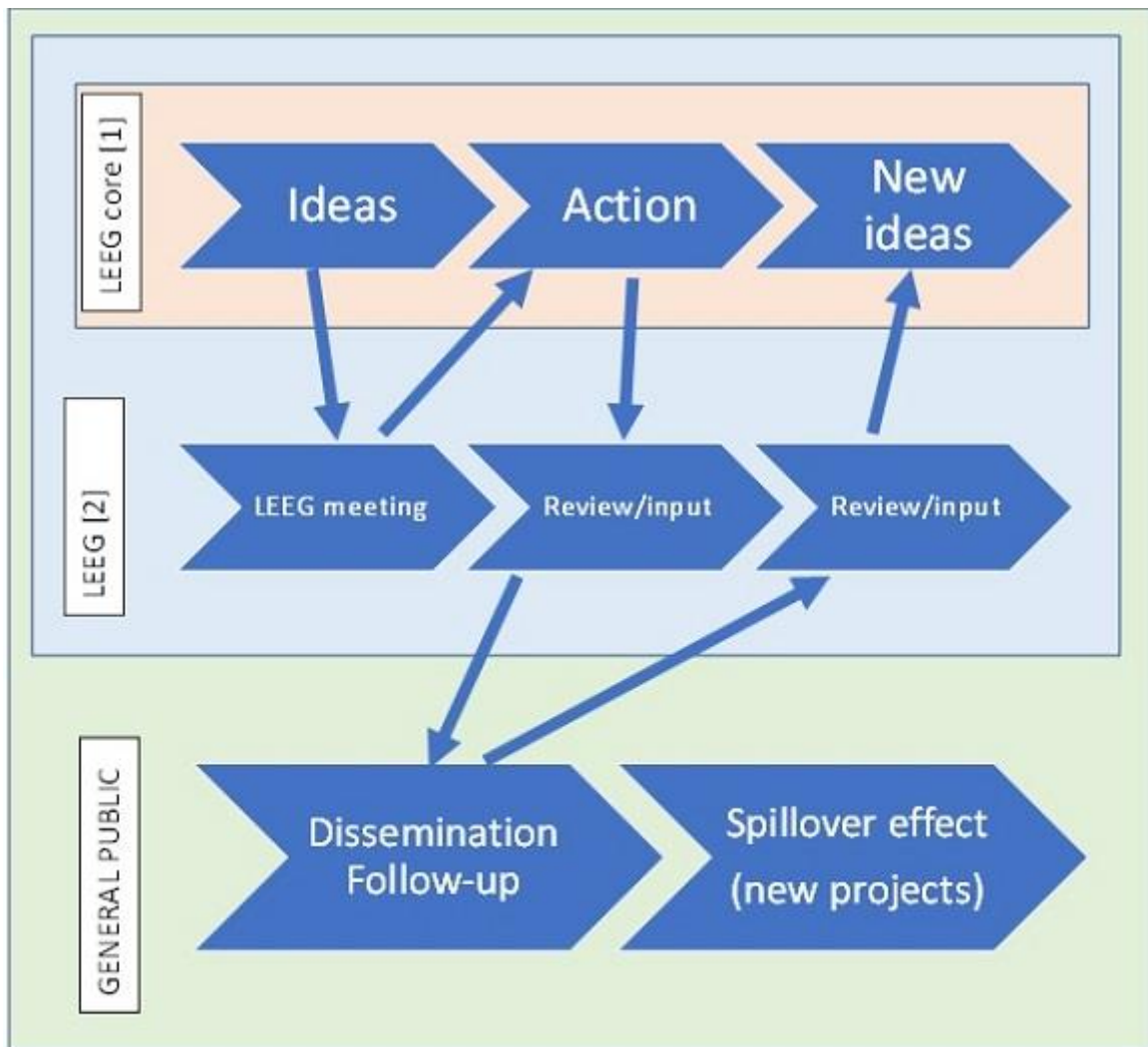
Since May 2018 altogether 10 meetings of the group, now including 15 actively contributing members, have been held. The group members have been involved in all stages of investment development in Elva starting with identifying public buildings with highest potential and best visibility, screening their technical documentation, making the final selection to be included in the public procurement (Elva Gymnasium, Elva Murumuna Kindergarten, Konguta Kindergarten/primary school/local service centre, Elva Basic School and Elva Rural Municipality Centre), preparation and

implementation of public procurement, implementation of energy audits, approval of procurement outcome, following the purchasing and installation process of the equipment and launching the data collection.

LEEG members have also supported implementation of local workshops and the project meeting held in Estonia. As an added value the project has allowed including a training element in each LEEG meeting to achieve a comparable level of technical knowledge and understanding of the importance and essence of the energy management system and monitoring tools.

LEEG has become a real and active partner contributing with time, knowledge and actual work making thus things move and develop much faster. This team has a very strong potential to become a permanent unit in the municipal structure with relevant knowledge, skills and capacity to identify even small important steps in a big picture of energy efficient Elva Municipality.

[Author: Mari Habicht]



- [1] LEEG core consists of people directly involved in project management and the city government high officials
- [2] LEEG membership is always open to anyone who is a bit more deeply interested in giving their input or taking action

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