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Act Now! Newsletter #6

December 2020

Act Now! Final Transnational Conference

The „Green economy – the heating market changes – *Act Now!*“ conference was conducted as an online event on 19th & 20th November 2020. Originally it had been planned as a live event in Bremerhaven (Germany), but the Covid-19 pandemic changed these plans.

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A Manual, four Guidelines and a web-based learning programme

The *Act now!* project has developed a web-based learning programme along with a Manual and four Guidelines. Ryotaro Kajimura, Francesco Romagnoli, Lars Holstenkamp and Peter Rathje introduced these to the audience at the final transnational conference on 19th November 2020. They are available for all municipalities and other interested stakeholders on the [Act Now! Learning Platform](#).

- Manual "From SEAP to Investment"
- Guideline "Energy Efficiency Strategy for Municipal Buildings"
- Guideline "Identification of Most Effective Energy Efficiency Measures"
- Guideline "Public Private Partnerships"
- Guideline "Financing of Energy Efficiency Projects"



Act Now!'s Final Steering Committee and Partner Meeting

As part of the final transnational *Act Now!* conference the last Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) was conducted on 20th November 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic as an online event. All 17 project partners attended the meeting, we were 30 participants from 9 countries. Following our SCM routine the meeting was nicely chaired by Meinhard Schulz-Baldes.

After we had heard more about the web-based learning programme a summary was given for the status and the transnational values of the pilot investments. It showed that 6 of 7 involved project partners went through the phases of procurement, installation, data production and have reached the final phase of data being linked to the energy management system.

As next presentation the status report about the feasibility studies showed an overview of the future investments planned by the 9 municipalities after the *Act Now!* project will be finalized.

Besides the regular Interreg BSR progress reporting and budget topics, the dissemination of project results through publications and through workshops were discussed.

The 24 regional/national workshops conducted overall in the 9 countries have reached an audience of approximately 1,000 stakeholders, and there are two more workshops to come in the next weeks.

The final project evaluation showed good results for project management and work in the local energy efficiency groups and also illustrated the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on project activities. For the municipalities the work was rated as very beneficial.

[Author: Petra Schneider]

Workshops for a raised value of the building stock

During the three years of cooperation in the international project *Act Now!*, funded by the EU Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme, three workshops have been conducted in Southeast Sweden. The first two workshops were mainly targeting the public sector and the third included also the private sector. The three workshops have influenced the local authorities to change their lending from other sources into the Kommuninvest Green lending system for investments in energy efficiency measures. They have also to some extent changed how they deal with budgeting investments to achieve long-term investments and keeping the buildings in better shape to avoid costly maintaining emergencies.

Lena Eckerberg, project manager at Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden says: *"There are still a lot of things to improve but the wheels are spinning in the right direction."*

At the first workshop the participants discussed how to work for energy efficiency in public owned buildings. Three main points were discussed: policy documents, training and capacity raising activities and energy monitoring systems. The participants discussed the importance of local

Integrating energy issues with daily work is a constant process that must be followed up continuously. In the daily work, it is appropriate to work with checklists. The group discussed that the knowledge about energy use and energy efficiency in buildings must be increased. Different training is required depending on the role, tasks, need for cutting-edge knowledge. Acquired knowledge and experience should be shared with colleagues within the municipality.

The main topic discussed in the second workshop was how municipalities should work with the first concrete steps towards smart and resource efficient energy optimization. The workshop started with the present municipalities during the workshop discussing their problems when it comes to energy efficient investments and calculate the energy consumption waste. The municipalities have calculated investments, results and how to streamline results. They spend too much money on maintenance instead of reinvesting in a long-term to maintain value and energy-efficient properties. The possibility of using Kommuninvest Green lending opportunities were highlighted.

The third workshop was organized as an online

policy documents to give support and goals to the work and the employees. They also pointed out the value of mapping the energy consumption on the buildings to give a good overview in the present situation and important key figures for the monitoring process. They agreed to pinpoint a few buildings to let them be a model for the upcoming work. A good structure and well-working routines are fundamental for the success of energy efficiency work. A clear division of roles with responsibilities must be introduced. It is important that the person responsible for delegating the tasks also ensures that they are carried out. Structure and routines must be processed and disseminated to all employees involved.

event and was also targeting the private sector. The conclusions and findings from the previous workshops were presented. Many property owners do not have a long-term strategic planning for the improvements of their properties. Instead the buildings are maintained by upcoming necessary actions using resources that should/could be used for long term improvements of the buildings and by that keep and raise the value of the buildings.

[Author: Lena Eckerberg]

Act Now! has been a spur in Mönsterås

Mönsterås municipality is participating in the *Act Now!* project and by that changed their systematic work with their buildings. They have now an approach of value-raising of their buildings rather than ordinary maintaining the buildings. By focusing on preventive maintaining instead of ordinary maintaining they avoid future problems in the buildings, for instance mold, moister etc.

Marcus Olsson, building manager at Mönsterås municipality says: *"The cooperation with Energy Agency for Southeast Sweden and the repeatedly organized local energy group meetings have been a spur for us. It has boosted the internal strategic energy efficiency work. Also, the capacity building activities within the project has led to a new approach from our financial department and we handle the future investments differently. The long-term strategic energy efficiency work has now a stronger position in the budget. Our next step is to develop a premises supply plan to ensure we make the most efficient use of the existing buildings and premises we have in our building stock."*

In addition to the changes in the internal work, with improved routines and a complete review of the properties, Mönsterås municipality has developed a new function as an operations technician for the buildings. The first task for Albin Berg, the new employed operations technician, was to now prepare the settings of the municipality for the new automated energy monitoring system that saves time, provides



Albin Berg says: *"Now we will have significantly better control of the properties and good conditions to reduce problems and maintenance costs in our properties."*

For three years, Energikontor Sydost has worked within the international EU-project *Act Now!* The project is about supporting municipalities for energy-efficient property management.

"Our aim is to strengthen our members, the public sector with the development and use of more efficient energy monitoring, collection of energy data and monitoring of energy performance. It is also about bridging various forms of administrative barriers that slow down decision-processes and initiatives for energy efficiency by highlighting various innovative financing methods." says Johan Milton, project manager at Energikontor Sydost. "It' feels great to see our work gives positive results."

[Author and picture: Lena Eckerberg]

better supervision and an overview of operation and energy statistics.

ProjectZero's third Workshop in the *Act Now!* project



ProjectZero hold workshop #3 on 4th September 2020 at Hotel Scandic in Sonderborg, where 65 citizens participated.

The participants represented working group participants from i.a. our LEEG in *Act Now!*, "ambassadors" for the green transition, local stakeholders and experts, who all contributed their knowledge, experiences and relationships to the local community.

The purpose of workshop 3, which we called "Summer Summit" was to take stock of the results since the summer of 2019 in all working groups including our LEEG for the private home owners in *Act Now!*, to look ahead, be aware of the challenges and discuss and laid a specific work plan for the next 12 months of work. There in addition to strengthen the execution and implementation of the 50 concrete projects in Sonderborg municipality's climate action plan, "Roadmap2025" where the next milestone is 2025, which shows the way to CO₂ neutrality in 2029.

Due to Covid-19, the process of the meeting was different than at the two previous workshops in *Act Now!*. The working groups sat in their respective rooms throughout the meeting, and joint presentations to the participants and reporting from the groups took place online.

This means, of course, that we had to do without the informal discussion, which is usually during the breaks and which also contributes to the exchange of knowledge and new acquaintances between the participants. The joint presentations were of a general nature, which were subsequently to contribute to the discussions in the groups. The focus was on the national framework, the government's new climate law, Sonderborg municipality's SEP on results and recommendations, especially on heating, transport and agriculture.

In *Act Now!*'s LEEG for private home owners, everyone agreed, that the work and results over the past year were extremely satisfying, with a really good and dynamic work ethic. Our Act Now LEEG works purposefully to achieve the estimated CO₂ reduction both in 2020 and in "Roadmap2025" through good contact with citizens, through tools such as courses for craftsmen and employees at financial institutions and cooperation with district heating supply companies and providers of heat pumps.

Analysis of the different LEEG's focus areas shows that energy consumption and CO₂ emissions are generally developing more positively in Sonderborg, than in the rest of Denmark, but also that there is a need to strengthen energy efficiency efforts across citizens, housing associations, schools and companies and others.

After a full day of indoor work in the working groups, the participants gathered with some distance in the late afternoon, on the lawn outside the hotel. There, Mayor Erik Lauritzen thanked on behalf of the city council the many volunteers both LEEG in the *Act Now!* project and other groups, who together contribute to the goal in "Roadmap 2025" for a reduction of 75 % CO₂.

[Author: Vivian Kroll]

Sievi Local energy efficiency group (LEEG) – the comprehensive development of municipality energy efficiency

Sievi is a small municipality with a population less than 5,000 inhabitants and it is located in Northern Ostrobothnia Finland. It is an industrial locality with the rich agricultural sector and therefore the self-sufficiency in workplaces is one of the highest in Finland, over 100 %. *Act Now!* project helped to establish Local energy efficiency group (LEEG) in Sievi at the end of 2019.

Due to the fact that the municipality has strong stakeholders, the structure of the LEEG is also stakeholder dominant, having members not only from the municipality but also from local industry, agriculture, the parish and the energy company.

Although the main work of Sievi LEEG is to develop the energy efficiency of the municipality buildings, the LEEG meetings often have different stakeholder talking to each other with new ideas



how to develop their shared interests. LEEG meetings have been so innovative that the newly written SEAP contains a chapter with the energy efficiency actions and ideas of the stakeholders. It could be truly said that Sievi LEEG is developing the energy efficiency of the whole municipality!

[Author: Anne-Riikka Rautio, Photo by Oliva Kankaanpää]

Regional workshop #3 in Sievi municipality



The third regional workshop in the *Act Now!* project was held in the municipality hall of Sievi on November 6th. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the workshop had been postponed from August to November. However, the postponement gave an excellent opportunity to combine the workshop with the ending seminar of the Finnish part of the project. The workshop was a hybrid model meeting, both physical and online versions at the same time. Six participants attended the physical meeting in Sievi and 19 people participated online.

Jarkko Kivioja, the person responsible for the municipality buildings in Sievi, opened the workshop by telling how the *Act Now!* project has been useful for Sievi municipality. According to him, especially helpful aspects were the

Centria team, Anne-Riikka Rautio, Mikko Himanka and Simo Mäenpää, gave interesting presentations. Anne-Riikka Rautio talked about the whole energy efficiency process of the buildings, opened what are important parts of the process, and what is the road map for a successful energy efficiency work and results.

Mikko Himanka in co-operation with Ari Huhtala from Schneider Electric reviewed Sievi's EMS that has been developed during the project (investments and software). They pointed out how to improve the data collecting and how to analyse it in order to help the municipal decision making. This section caused a lot of discussion.

Simo Mäenpää talked about district heating trends in the past and in the future, starting from the 1st generation district heating model at the late 19th century ending at the 5th generation model. He also clarified what the flexible heat and electricity based on demand system and talked about the future trends concerning investments for heat and electricity storing systems are.

Before closing the workshop, Ritva Isomäki, the special adviser of the Northern Ostrobothnia provincial climate road map, briefed about the situation of the road map work. She also discussed with the workshop participants how to

investments made during the project, and the modernization of EMS including data collection and analysing system that are planned together with Schneider Electric. Jarkko Kivioja was also very satisfied that the Sievi LEEG (local energy efficiency group) process was started during the project. He believed that the LEEG process and SEAP implementing will continue very intensively in Sievi even though the *Act Now!* project will be ending.

link the very concrete and useful work from the *Act Now!* project to the province's road map work. The final conclusion was that the best way to do this is to get some budget for human resources in LEEG process and climate work (at municipal and regional level). To ensure the money dedicated energy and climate work, LEEG process and benefits could be written to the regional road map.

[Author and Photo by Anne-Riikka Rautio]

Why and how should we invest in improvement of air quality and energy efficiency of schools and public buildings?

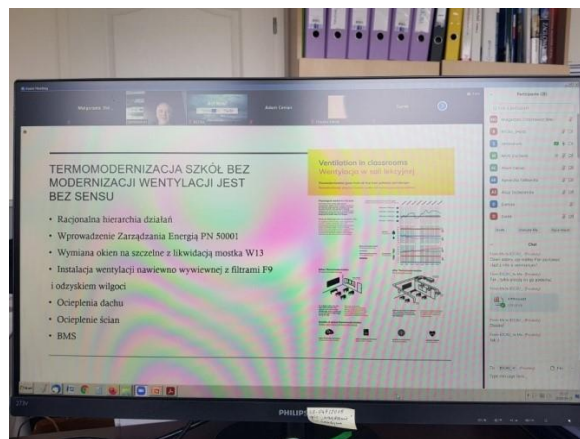
The third workshop (on 25.09.2020) of the *Act Now!* project focussed on the issues related to investments, thermomodernization and air quality in school building in Poland. The workshop had been planned as lively, active interactions of Academy, city administration and education specialists, but due to Covid-19 restrictions was moved this time to the internet. The Agenda included topics such as:

- Not obvious consequences of ventilation type in school classes;
- Results of air condition online monitoring in classes of Gdynia schools and proposed solutions in time of pandemic;
- Energy management system in PKT Gdynia and its effect;

- System solution for energy efficient buildings – case study – grammar school in Chotomów;
- Recommendations related to energy audits in Gdynia schools.

It is remarkable that law treats farm animals better and limits CO₂ concentration to 3000 ppm, whereas children in some schools are studying and writing tests when CO₂ concentration exceeds 4000 ppm. This was confirmed during monitoring air conditions in the frame of the Act Now! Project. This must be changed and such are our recommendations to Gdynia and other participating (OMGGS) municipalities.

[Author: Adam Cenian, Pictures: M. Ostachowicz]



Elva is looking towards the future

October 28 marks a kind of milestone in the life cycle of the *Act Now!* Project for the local community – the last stakeholder seminar - **ENERGY EFFICIENCY – How to Launch a New Growth Engine?** - was held in Elva Cultural Centre. **18** people participating physically and **25** following the event online via Youtube received a detailed overview from Siim Meeliste, local project manager, of the project, its achievements in the whole consortium and concrete gains for Elva Rural Municipality. The following presentations guided the audience to different possibilities to fund local initiatives and projects in the future and brought some motivating examples of successfully implemented projects. Mari Habicht introduced energy and transport related topics in the future programme Horizon Europe focussing specifically on local municipalities. This presentation was followed by Jaanus Tamm demonstrating a success story – a Horizon 2020 funded project SmartEnCity implemented in the second largest town in Estonia, Tartu.



Another successful project - EFFECT4Buildings – which developed a toolkit for implementing energy efficiency projects, was presented by Mikk Maivel. Krista Tõnisson from the Estonian Ministry of the Environment gave a detailed overview of the call for proposals addressing local municipalities and assisting them in development and compilation of SECAPs. Tarmo Kivi from the Estonian Ministry of Finance introduced a future initiative which will support local municipalities in reconstruction of the existing as well as construction of new near zero buildings for public use. The timing of the seminar was planned so that there was enough time after each presentation for questions and answers, which was actively used by the audience. Before and after the event and during the breaks, everybody could touch and taste the demo stand exhibited in the lobby. Explanations were given by Siim Meeliste.

More than 100 visitors have watched the **seminar recording** after the event. And even more will do in the near future as the information has been disseminated to a wide range of local municipalities and service providers and the topics covered were of great interest.

[Author and Photo by Mari Habicht]

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