



The role of civil society in the implementation of the *EU Renewable Energy Directive: an impact study across six Member States*

Background and goals

The European Union (EU) is making good progress towards increasing the production of energy from renewable sources. In 2011, the latest year for which data is available, renewables accounted for 13% of the energy consumed in the EU. At a first glance this could not seem much, but one should consider that in 2005 the renewables' share was only 8.5%. Even if targets have so far been met for the EU as a whole, country performances are variable, with most countries over performing and a few underperforming.

In accordance with the new guidelines stemming from the President's strategy "Wind of Change", the Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO) therefore decided to carry out an *ex-post* impact study to assess the **factors** underlying the differing **levels of implementation** of the **Renewable Energy Directive** (RED) and the transition to more decentralised energy systems across Member States. In this respect, the study will devote special attention to the influence of two factors:

- the **involvement of civil society**; and
- the **ownership structure** of renewable energy facilities (i.e., a balanced mix between small scale producers and larger companies).

Complementing these objectives with a practical dimension, the study will then identify **good practices** in Member States while taking into consideration their national contexts, and develop **recommendations** about the energy policy beyond 2014 for the EU institutions and for Member States, particularly with a view on the upcoming 2030 policy package.

Scope

In order to make the best use of the available financial, human and time resources, the study will have a limited scope both in geographical and thematic terms.

Geographically, the study will concentrate on **six Member States**, selected so as to provide a balanced geographical representation (new and "old" Member States, different success levels of implementation, etc.): **Bulgaria, France, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, and UK**. A specific **region** in each of these countries will be selected where visits to renewable energy installations will be held and possibly a stakeholder workshop will be organised.

From the **thematic** point of view, and given that exploring the role of civil society is among the main goals of the project, the study will look into renewable energy sources in which local communities are typically involved. More precisely, **solar** (thermal and photovoltaic), **wind**, and **biomass** (excluding biofuels) were selected.

Methodology

A variety of methods will be employed, but given that quantitative assessments have already been performed by other institutions, more emphasis will be put on qualitative methods capable of extracting in-depth information from stakeholders. **Questionnaires, interviews, workshops, visits to renewable energy installations** and a **literature review** are among the chosen methods. Relevant statistics will provide background information to better frame and interpret these data. The information obtained will then be treated and compiled into a report addressing the main project goals.

The **first stakeholder workshop** will be held in Germany. This sort of public kick-off event will count with the participation of the entire team of nine Members and serve as a learning exercise to help preparing subsequent local visits and workshops.

Outputs

The main output will be a **report** identifying:

- a) the main factors accounting for the different levels of implementation of the RED across Member States, emphasising in particular the role of civil society and of a balanced ownership structure of renewable installations in that respect;
- b) good (and eventually bad) practices in the six selected Member States, each country featuring in the report as a case-studies;
- c) policy recommendations to the European Institutions and to Member States.

The report will be made freely available in electronic format.

In order to disseminate the report among a broader public, a **summary brochure** with an attractive design will also be prepared.

In addition to several stakeholder workshops already mentioned, a **final workshop** with local, national and EU level stakeholders in Brussels will be organised in order to discuss a draft version of the report.

Team

The study will be prepared by a group of nine SDO Members:

- a **core team of three Members** that will guide the work, visit all selected Member States and draft the final report: **Ms Caño Aguilar, Ms King, and Mr Ribbe;**
- an **enlarged team of six Members** from the selected Member States. Each of these Members will be responsible for drafting their respective case-study, namely by contributing to the collection and analysis of information, establishing contacts with local stakeholders, and supporting the organization of site visits. The national Members are: **Mr Chwiluk (Poland), Mr Coulon (France), Mr Jones (UK), Mr Mačiulis (Lithuania), Mr Stoev (Bulgaria), and Mr Van Oorschot (Dutch member responsible, along with Mr Ribbe, for the study visit to Germany).**

Local Civil Society Organisations and partners in each of the six Member States will provide further support to streamline stakeholder contacts, to organise a workshop or interviews and site visits, and to review information at the national and local levels.

The **SDO Secretariat** will provide continuous support and input throughout the process.

Indicative timeline

Debate about local renewable initiatives	4 November 2013
Project kick-off meeting	27 November 2013
Background research: literature review, as well as questionnaires, telephone interviews (if needed) and workshops (in some cases) with national and local stakeholders	January – March 2014
Visits to renewable energy installations in the six Member States	March – June 2014
Draft final report	25 June 2014
Stakeholder workshop in Brussels to discuss the draft report	July 2014
Final report and summary brochure	September 2014