

RENEWABLE ENERGY COORDINATION GROUP
WORK PROGRAMME 2021 – 2022



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BACKGROUND

The Renewable Energy Coordination Group (RECG) was established by the Ministerial Council in 2015 as a broad platform for cooperation between representatives of ministries and agencies in charge of renewable energy from Contracting Parties (CPs), Observer Countries and Participants. The key objective of the group is to facilitate the transposition of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) in the Energy Community and to support effective implementation. The Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC (RED) was adapted and adopted for implementation in the Energy Community with the Decision 2012/04/MC-EnC of the Ministerial Council amending the Article 20 of the Energy Community Treaty, which made reference to previous legislative acts dealing with renewable energy. The group's predecessor, the Renewable Energy Task Force, was operational from 2009 to 2012, in the preparatory period for RED adoption in the Energy Community.

Main goal of the group is to support the identification of the appropriate measures that need to be implemented to ensure the creation of conducive investment frameworks for renewable energy projects in the Contracting Parties. Strong support offered by the representatives of the Donors Community is very important and valuable for a successful implementation of the RECG Work Programme.

The activities on the promotion of energy from renewable sources in the Energy Community are expected to gain new impetus following the transposition of the Renewable Energy Directive (EU) 2018/2001 (recast) in the Energy Community. In 2021, the Ministerial Council of the Energy Community is expected to set renewable energy targets to 2030, adapt and adopt the new recast Directive under the Energy Community framework, creating the basis for its implementation in the Contracting Parties as soon as possible thereafter.

The RECG Work Programme 2021-2022 includes 6 Chapters and focuses on implementation of key requirements of the Directive 2009/28/EC as well as other activities arising from the foreseen extension of the acquis under the Energy Community Treaty. The monitoring of implementation of the Directive 2009/28/EC will continue until new Directive is in force in the Energy Community Contracting Parties. A special attention should be given to the implementation of Guarantees of Origin as well as to the citizen's participation in the development of renewable energy projects, including enabling and implementation of self-consumption mechanisms and energy cooperatives. Reform of support scheme and introduction of market-based auctions for renewable energy projects in the Contracting Parties, as well as cross-border cooperation mechanisms between Contracting Parties and with the EU Member States will require major efforts and will remain key activities within the WP. Following the setting of 2030 RES targets, which will be done in an integrated manner through the development of National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), further monitoring of implementation of adopted policies and measures to achieve 2030 renewable energy targets will be conducted in the framework of the Renewable Energy Coordination Group.

The RECG will elect a chair among the participating CPs who will, with a support of the Energy Community Secretariat, coordinate implementation of respective WP Chapters, organise discussions and summarise key findings and recommendations during the RECG meetings.

RECG will have two meetings per year combined with training workshops. The summary table below provides the overview of chapters and activities for the implementation of WP, as well as the implementation of horizontal and cross-cutting activities.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RENEWABLE ENERGY DIRECTIVE 2009/28/EC

It is foreseen that Energy Community Treaty acquis will be extended with the adoption of the Directive (EU) 2018/2001 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (so-called REDII) by the Ministerial Council in December 2021.

In parallel with implementation of the RE Directive 2009/28/EC, RECG will discuss provisions of the REDII so it can be efficiently transposed and implemented on national level as soon as it is adopted in the Energy Community.

❖ Activity 1: National Renewable Energy Action Plan – Progress reports

Article 15 of Ministerial Council Decision 2012/04/MC-EnC requires the Contracting Parties to submit every two years a progress report on the promotion and use of energy from renewable sources. The fifth report is due by 31 December 2022. A template of the report was modelled on the existing progress report template for EU Member States and published on the 6th RECG meeting webpage.

Furthermore, the Secretariat will monitor and review the application of RE Directive 2009/28/EC in the Contracting Parties and will submit the fourth overall progress report to the Ministerial Council by 30 June 2021 and fifth by June 2023.

❖ Activity 2: Grid integration

Article 16 of the Directive 2009/28/EC requires the Contracting Parties to develop the transmission and distribution grid infrastructure, intelligent networks and storage facilities to accommodate the further development of electricity production from renewable sources, and, where relevant, to assess the need to extend existing gas network to facilitate the integration of gas from renewable energy sources. Electricity produced from renewable sources has to enjoy guaranteed or priority access to the grid as well as priority dispatch.

Article 16 also requires transmission system operators and distribution system operators to provide any new producer of energy from renewable sources wishing to be connected to the system with the comprehensive and necessary information for the estimate of the costs associated with connection, a reasonable and precise timetable for receiving and processing the request for grid connection and a reasonable indicative timetable for any proposed grid connection.

The RECG will work on identifying challenges arising from the RES integration concerning the rules for connection to and operation of the electricity transmission and distribution networks, address the deficiencies and propose common recommendation based on best practice examples. When applicable, similar exercises will be performed for gas networks.

❖ Activity 3: Administrative procedures

Article 13 of Directive 2009/28/EC requires the Contracting Parties to ensure that the administrative procedures are clearly defined, coordinated and streamlined, with transparent timetables for planning and building applications.

Smaller and decentralised installation shall enjoy less burdensome authorisation procedures, if possible through simple notification and/or the concept of one-stop-shop shall be implemented where appropriate.

Progress reports identified that the administrative procedures are the greatest barriers that the renewable energy investors are facing in the Contracting Parties. Therefore, the RECG group will work to identify and address these barriers, exchange best practices that are specific on different renewable energy technologies and could be replicated in the Contracting Parties.

❖ Activity 4: RES in transport

The framework for renewables in transport sector is defined by Articles 17, 18 and 19 of Directive 2009/28/EC. The Contracting Parties are obliged to set up a system for verification sustainability of biofuels, regardless of their origin (domestically produced or imported). The biofuels have to prove their sustainability in regards greenhouse gas emissions savings and land use impact. The Directive also provides for multiplication factor towards the target fulfillment, if biofuels are produced from waste.

The progress reports by the Contracting Parties show very slow progress in setting required framework and in increasing actual share of renewables in transport sector. Fourth and fifth progress reports -illustrating achievements by the end of the entire period, i.e. concluding with 2020, will be important for setting 2030 RES-T targets. Their determination, according to RED II, directly depends on the achievement by RED in 2020, and share of the crops based biofuels.

The RECG will present the overview of achieved RES-T targets and their impact on determination of the 2030 RES-T targets. Requirements of RED II in that regards will be presented during the meetings.

📁 TIMETABLE

No.	Activities	Coordination with other WG	2021				2022			
			1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter
1.	IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RENEWABLE ENERGY DIRECTIVE 2009/28/EC									
1.1.	National Renewable Energy Action Plan – Progress reports (Fifth for 2020/2021)									
1.2.	Grid integration									
1.3.	Administrative procedures									
1.4.	RES in transport									

SETTING 2030 RE TARGETS

In 2019, the Energy Community Contracting Parties started a process of setting 2030 targets in line with the Policy Guidelines on the development of integrated National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) under Recommendation 2018/01/MC-EnC. Renewable energy targets and policies and measures will be addressed under the

‘Decarbonisation of the economy’ dimension of the NECP in an integrated way, which recognises the interactions between the different dimensions.

❖ **Activity 1: Preparation of NECP and proposal for RE 2030 target (including sectorial trajectories) – modelling exercise including the EC study**

Most of the Contracting Parties started preparation of the NECP and in December 2020, European Commission launched modelling exercise to propose 2030 targets for the Energy Community Contracting Parties.

Members of the RECG will actively participate in the development of NECP and in the exercise launched by the European Commission by joining and contributing to relevant meetings, including meetings concerning 2030 targets organized by the Energy and Climate Technical and Energy Efficiency working groups.

❖ **Activity 2: Proposal for RE Policies and Measures**

The RECG will work on mapping key aspects which need to be addressed in order to contribute to further deployment of renewable energy. To assure that RE 2030 targets are met, relevant policies and measures need to be proposed in the NECP, including, but not limited to, specific measures on financial support for the promotion of the production and use of energy from renewable sources in electricity, heating and cooling, and transport. Specific measures such as to:

- introduce one or more contact points,
- streamline administrative procedures,
- provide information and training,
- facilitate the uptake of power purchase agreements,
- promote and facilitate the development of self-consumption and renewable energy communities,
- assess the necessity to build new infrastructure for district heating and cooling produced from renewable sources.

Where applicable, specific measures on the promotion of the use of energy from biomass, especially for new biomass mobilisation taking into account:

- biomass availability, including sustainable biomass: both domestic potential and imports from third countries
- other biomass uses by other sectors (agriculture and forest-based sectors); as well as measures for the sustainability of biomass production and use.

📁 **TIMETABLE**

No.	Activities	Coordination with other WG	2021				2022			
			1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter
2.	SETTING 2030 RE TARGETS									
2.1.	Preparation of NECP and proposal for RE 2030 target (including sectorial trajectories) – modelling exercise including the EC study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy and Climate 								

No.	Activities	Coordination with other WG	2021				2022			
			1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter
2.2.	<i>Proposal for RE Policies and Measures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical WG Energy Efficiency CG 								

INTRODUCTION OF MARKET BASED SUPPORT SCHEME

With falling costs of new technologies, electricity produced from renewable sources is becoming competitive way to meet consumption needs. At the same time, as the sector matures, support schemes have to be adapted to reflect market signals. RED II requires alignment of support scheme with requirements from the State Aid Guidelines for Environmental Protection and Energy to ensure a cost-effective renewable energy deployment.

The RECG will focus its activities on fostering the implementation of market based support schemes for the promotion of renewable energy, in line with the State Aid Guidelines, best practice and The policy guidelines for renewable energy auctions published jointly by EBRD, IRENA and the Energy Community Secretariat.

❖ Activity 1: Designing auctions

To ensure the cost-effective development of renewable energy, access to the support schemes has to be granted in a competitive, auction process where the market is deciding the most competitive bid for the specified source of energy limiting thus the support levels to the minimum.

Design of auctions is a complex process, which requires an elaboration on several aspects including institution in charge to execute auction (counterparty), financial support mechanism (for example sliding or fixed premium), models for contracts, balancing responsibility, bid volumes etc. There is no “one-size-fits-all” solution, therefore analysis need to be conducted on a country level; however, since Contracting Parties are facing similar challenges exchange of experiences is crucial.

Special attention should be paid to the alignment of national schemes with State Aid Guidelines to assure that all generators, with installed capacity above 500kW, sell their electricity directly in the market and that they are subject to standard balancing responsibilities once liquid intra-day market is in place.

The RECG will work with assistance of Donors and IFIs to support establishment of an appropriate auction design to facilitate the cost-effective deployment of renewable energy in line with the REDII and State Aid Guidelines.

❖ Activity 2: Enabling legislation and regulatory framework to introduce auctions in line with the State Aid Guidelines

Legal framework is key for enabling market-based support scheme. An optimal approach is to enable auctions in primary legislation (in the law), while providing details in secondary acts. This gives more flexibility for learning curve.

To enable market based support scheme, RECG will support Governments in preparation of the legislative framework. The RECG members will coordinate organization of round tables/discussions with relevant stakeholders (including investors) on the regulatory framework to assure transparent and inclusive process.

❖ **Activity 3: Cross-border cooperation**

Cross-border cooperation on renewable energy is surging on the agenda of many EU Member States but is yet to attract the interest of the Contracting Parties. It can have many benefits such as fulfilment of the RES target, tapping into better natural resource potential of the partner country, reaching higher market values in the partner country, accessing better financing conditions and lower costs of capital, thus reducing over all project costs and increasing competition in the national auction scheme.

In November 2020, the AURES II project in cooperation with the Secretariat published Policy brief: Renewables cross-border cooperation in the Energy Community. The brief focuses on the instruments of cross-border auctions and joint projects, as the main instrument for the CPs of the Energy Community to cooperate amongst each other and with the EU Member States.

RECG will analyse possibilities to implement some of the cross-border cooperation mechanisms in CPs.

📁 **TIMETABLE**

No.	Activities	Coordination with other WG	2021				2022			
			1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter
3.	INTRODUCTION OF MARKET BASED SUPPORT SCHEME									
3.1.	<i>Designing auctions (fixed premium, sliding premium, CfD etc.)</i>									
3.2.	<i>Enabling legislation and regulatory framework to introduce auctions in line with the State Aid Guidelines</i>									
3.3.	<i>Cross-border cooperation</i>									

GUARANTEES OF ORIGIN

As required by the Article 15 of RED, all Contracting Parties put in place legal basis for the implementation of guarantees of origin (GOs), while in some cases secondary legislation still needs to be adopted or existing needs to be updated. At the same time, CPs have designated the competent bodies to manage the schemes. However, the process to establish an operating GO system stagnated in most Contracting Parties, with the exception of Serbia. Following the conclusions of the 18th Ministerial Council, the Energy Community Secretariat drafted in March 2021 the Discussion Paper on implementation of the guarantees of origin system in the Contracting Parties.

❖ Activity 1: Establishment of national/regional electronic registry

RED requires Contracting Parties or the designated competent bodies to put in place appropriate mechanisms to ensure that guarantees of origin are issued, transferred and cancelled electronically and are accurate, reliable and fraud-resistant.

Since all the Contracting Parties are lagging behind with the implementation of this requirement, the Energy Community Secretariat drafted the Discussion Paper. The ultimate purpose of the Paper is to show options for the establishment of an efficient regional renewable energy certification system, allowing guarantees of origin to be issued and then traded among Contracting Parties. Participation in the regional system will allow for the effective issuance of national guarantees of origin by default, and may constitute the first step towards integration in the European market.

The RECG will analyze and discuss proposed choices in the Discussion Paper and support designated bodies in proceeding with the development of electronic registry.

❖ Activity 2: Enabling functional disclosure legislation in line with the EECS Rules and CEN EN 16325 standard

The primary goal of guarantees of origin is to enable disclosure, revealing the origin of energy sold to final consumers, and give consumers more ownership over the choice of the origin of their energy. Therefore, one of the main conditions to create functional GO system and aim for full scheme membership to Association of Issuing Bodies (AIB) is having appropriate disclosure legislation.

The RECG will support designated bodies in drafting disclosure legislation in line with the European Energy Certificate System (EECS) Rules and CEN EN 16325 standard.

❖ Activity 3: Enabling trading of GOs among CPs and with the EU MSs

Once the electricity provider has fed the electricity into the grid, the GO received for that amount of electricity can be sold on the open market as a commodity. The certificates can be traded within the country but also across the border. Cross-border trade can be conducted bilaterally, via brokers or through Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs). Trade of GOs among CPs could be enabled through the establishment of a regional registry. Among EU MSs, certificates are traded through the AIB Hub.

However, Article 19(11) of the REDII includes a prohibition to recognize GOs issued by a third country except where the Union has concluded an agreement with that third country on mutual recognition of GOs issued in the Union and compatible GO systems established in that third country, and only where there is direct import or export of energy. Allowing access to the European Union's market for GO will have to be addressed in the framework of the upcoming revision of the REDII and its incorporation in the Energy Community. Otherwise, the Energy Community Contracting Parties will be considered as third countries as soon as the REDII comes into force in the EU in July 2021.

The RECG will analyse possibility to create regional scheme and the registry to enable trading of GOs among CPs and preconditions for joining AIB in order to enable trade of GOs with the EU MSs.

❖ **Activity 4: Following developments on introduction of GOs for gases**

With the introduction of the RED II, the scope of GOs is expanded from electricity to renewable energy sources in general. Because of this, GOs for renewable gases, such as biogas and hydrogen, are currently already being issued in several EU Member States (MS). To enable prompt implementation CPs should in first stage focus on the introduction of GOs for renewable electricity, however keeping in mind that once REDII is transposed in the Energy Community and the EU system of GOs for renewable gases is well established, the scope of GOs in the Contracting Parties could also be further widened to renewable and low-carbon gases.

The RECG will follow developments on introduction of GOs for gases by inviting relevant stakeholders to present on meetings.

📁 **TIMETABLE**

No.	Activities	Coordination with other WG	2021				2022			
			1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter
4.	GUARANTEES OF ORIGIN									
4.1.	<i>Establishment of national/regional electronic registry</i>									
4.2.	<i>Enabling functional disclosure legislation in line with the EECS Rules and CEN EN 16325 standard</i>									
4.3.	<i>Enabling trading of GOs among CPs and with the EU MSs</i>									
4.4.	<i>Following developments on introduction of GOs for gases</i>									

CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RE PROJECTS

❖ Activity 1: Implementation of renewable self-consumption scheme

Due to increasing retail electricity prices and decreasing technology costs, distributed generation is becoming more and more attractive for consumers, which can now choose to produce part of the electricity for their own needs instead of purchasing it from a supplier. Self-consumption of electricity produced from renewable sources in on-site installations, like solar PV, increases consumer participation in the energy transition. Moreover, self-consumption is an additional tool to meet renewable energy targets, reduce network losses and peak loads, increase energy efficiency, improve demand response and contribute to CO₂ emissions reduction.

Since most of the Contracting Parties lack comprehensive legislation and regulatory framework in relation to small scale renewable installations for self-consumption purposes, the RECG will assess the changes needed to be considered to make self-consumption schemes fully operational in the Contracting Parties based on the recommendations from the Secretariat's Policy Guidelines on Integration of Renewable Self-Consumers.

❖ Activity 2: Renewable Energy Communities

In energy communities' citizens are not only energy consumers but also they can become energy producers and service providers. The promotion of community and citizen energy projects is important as it develops the local economy, creates local jobs, increases acceptance for renewables, contributes to energy independence, uses local resources and increases resilience to market conditions. Article 22 of the REDII for the first time in the EU legal framework introduces term renewable energy communities, requesting enabling framework to promote and facilitate the development of renewable energy communities.

Community energy projects are introducing new business models on the market, more focused on market based uptake of renewables centred on citizens, as beneficiaries of the entire process. Investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency gives additional opportunities for strengthening and empowering local communities. There are a growing number of innovative finance models already in use, proving to have a steep learning curve, like the crowd investing (P2P lending and equity crowdfunding) that are making use of citizen savings to strengthen local development.

The RECG will analyse current status of legal framework in the Energy Community and will provide recommendations for necessary acts to enable renewable energy communities in line with the REDII.

Given the importance of alternative financing models, the RECG will explore the usage and application of innovative business models in the field of crowdfunding renewable energy with clearly defined and prototyped business models for various technologies and their mutual integration. Through that, integration of financing models with market based energy businesses (energy production, consumption and supply/trade) will be explored for Energy Community Contracting Parties offering possible solutions to be implemented in practice.

📁 TIMETABLE

No.	Activities	Coordination with other WG	2021				2022			
			1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter
5.	CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RE PROJECTS									
5.1.	<i>Implementation of renewable self-consumption schemes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSO Electricity WG Energy and Climate Technical WG 								
5.2.	<i>Renewable Energy Communities</i>									

HORIZONTAL AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The following horizontal and cross-cutting activities will be implemented continuously during the entire mandate of the RECG.

❖ **Activity 1: Strengthening the national institutions to promote renewable energy**

Various public institutions such as ministries, regulators, agencies, operators etc. in Contracting Parties involved in renewable energy should be strengthened to facilitate successful implementation of all administrative measures and regulatory frameworks to enable investments in renewable energy projects and monitoring the progress towards the 2030 renewable energy targets. RECG will support and discuss the improvement and strengthening of the status and cooperation of all public institutions from various sectors dealing with renewable energy and invite donors to contribute to designing and structuring the procedures and processes in the most effective way.

❖ **Activity 2: Exchange of best implementation practices in CPs and EU Member States (RECG meetings, Workshops)**

RECG will exchange best practices in the implementation of measures to ensure the creation of regulatory frameworks conducive to investments in renewable energy, promote the existing financing options (project preparation, loans and grants) and monitor the implementation of renewable energy projects to contribute to targets achievements.

This will be implemented in cooperation with European Commission and EU funded projects like CA-RES, donors and IFIs invited to contribute in the RECG meetings.

❖ **Activity 3: Coordination of donors support on renewable energy, EU, EBRD, EIB, GIZ, KfW, The World Bank, IFC, USAID, UN etc.**

RECG shall play an important role as coordinator and implementation partner of diverse regional technical assistance and investment programmes. The strong support offered by European Commission, EBRD SEI -SEFFs programs, BEI, GIZ, IRENA, GGF, USAID, World Bank is very important and valuable for a successful implementation of the RECG Work Programme.

Beside this, the RECG will assess the existing assistance available from donors and IFIs and it will propose priority areas for technical assistance to promote and de-risking investments in renewable energy. RECG will discuss the extension of donor support and coordination of such activities for candidate and potential candidate countries of the Energy Community.

❖ **Activity 4: Promotion of EE & RE in heating and cooling**

Contracting Parties have much untapped potential for direct renewable energy use in heating and cooling particularly in the residential and services sectors. Nevertheless, it is important to note that hidden renewable energy capacities lie in the use of heat pumps, which are inadequately accounted for in data reporting on the renewable energy share. In fact, the contribution of aerothermal, geothermal and hydrothermal heat pumps is completely omitted in national statistics and thereby also in the progress reports. It is therefore necessary that methodologies are introduced that account for the use of heat pumps and their contribution towards the renewable energy share in the heating and cooling sectors. Existing best practices will be presented on the RECG meetings.

📁 **TIMETABLE**

No.	Activities	Coordination with other WG	2021				2022			
			1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter
6.	HORIZONTAL AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES									
6.1.	<i>Strengthening the national institutions to promote renewable energy</i>									
6.2.	<i>Exchange of best implementation practices in CPs and EU Member States (RECG meetings, Workshops)</i>									
6.3.	<i>Coordination of donors support on renewable energy, EU, EBRD, EIB, GIZ, KfW, The World Bank, IFC, USAID, UN etc.</i>									
6.4.	<i>Promotion of EE & RE in heating and cooling (joint events, policies and measures)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Efficiency CG 								