



ENERGY COOPERATION BETWEEN THE EU, THE LITTORAL STATES OF THE BLACK & CASPIAN SEAS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES



REPORT: COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP IN BELARUS

by Component C, INOGATE New ITS Project

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1. Executive Summary

The INOGATE Technical Secretariat (ITS) conducted a communication workshop on sustainable energy in Minsk, Belarus, on 18 June 2013. Goals were a) to define the main direction of an awareness raising campaign for Belarus, b) to identify contributing stakeholders, and c) to identify potential actions for implementation. Additional goal of this workshop was sharing of ideas with stakeholders for possible areas of cooperation in investments in SE.

ITS will use its limited resources to support local stakeholders willing to take ownership of awareness raising campaigns. ITS will build synergies and reinforce existing initiatives through media, internet, information centres, schools and more.

Thematically, the communication workshop chose a focus on energy efficiency and energy saving for general public including the target groups of youth and schoolchildren. For various reasons, this was the most appropriate direction of an awareness raising campaign in Belarus.

However, during the workshop and follow-up meetings some stakeholders also presented ideas on awareness raising and capacity building for renewables, EE needs for industry and business.

As result of discussions and brainstorming, workshop participants presented their best ideas on awareness raising campaign themes and activities:

- Information campaign for general public on EE and Energy Saving
- Educational information campaign on EE and Energy Saving involving schoolchildren
- Organisation of events
- Development of video and other information materials
- Web sites and exhibition/information centres
- Engagement of communities
- Awareness raising and capacity building for national and local authorities
- Awareness raising for industry, businesses and local banks

2. Participants

The workshop gathered key stakeholders with interest and willingness to support awareness raising campaigns on SE. The stakeholders were: the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Belarus, the State Committee on Standardization, the Republican Unitary Enterprise Belinvestenergoberezhnie; the Belarusian National Technical University represented academia and BelSEFF the finance sector. Professional Association of Industrial Energy Engineers and energy engineering consulting company ENECA as well as ESIB Coordinator in Belarus also participated in the workshop. Key NGOs involved in energy efficiency and environmental activities contributed to the discussion on the involvement of civil society. Media was represented by the professional newspaper. Representative of the EU Delegation to Belarus addressed the workshop participants during opening.

Workshop participants actively engaged in brainstorming discussions. They shared their ideas on the needs and possible activities for awareness raising on SE and capacity building.

Participants recognised the importance of promotion of EE among general public and particularly, engagement of youth and schoolchildren. They also highlighted the need for implementing activities for communities and local authorities.

The final list of participants appears in Annex 2 of this report.

The organisers of the communication workshop were sustainable energy and communication experts of the INOGATE ITS Project and the Country Expert for Belarus. INOGATE expert on investment in SE presented and led discussion on potential areas of cooperation in SE investment – priorities, promotion of investment mechanisms, cooperation fora and awareness raising for investment.



ITS Presentations at the workshop in Belarus

3. Objectives

The overall objective of the workshop was to identify the main direction of awareness raising campaign, to develop a tailored campaign strategy and, subsequently, an action plan for Belarus.

The main specific objectives of the communication workshop were

- To discuss and select the thematic focus of an SE campaign in Belarus
- To identify target groups in order to refine the concept of an SE campaign and ensure its effectiveness
- To elaborate ideas for the plan of activities for awareness raising campaign
- To identify organisations that would lead, guide and contribute to conducting the SE campaign.

Additional objective was to present to stakeholders possible activities in the area of investments in SE and exchange ideas.

It is critical that local stakeholders take ownership of awareness raising campaigns. ITS will use its limited resources to support those organisations that are willing to contribute and sustain such campaigns. The ITS approach aims at building synergies and reinforcing existing initiatives, where possible, rather than embarking on new campaigns. Options for specific actions may include mass media publications, local websites, SE/Energy information centres, educational materials on SE for schools, contests.

Thematically, the communication workshop focused on possible awareness raising activities in energy efficiency. Participants highlighted the need to increase awareness of the public on the benefits of EE and Energy Saving at central as well as local level. Also, Belarus has experience in education campaigns for schoolchildren and involving youth in awareness raising activities. This can be reinforced and further developed. In addition, participants shared ideas on possible capacity building and awareness raising for industry and business.

4. Main findings and further actions

ITS presented its approach for selecting energy sectors for a targeted awareness raising campaign.

Participants engaged in discussions and brainstorming.



Discussions yielded the following proposals:

- Information campaign for general public on EE and Energy Saving – the Department of Energy Efficiency of the State Committee for Standardization, one of the key stakeholders in EE has implemented awareness raising and information activities for general public on EE. This can be enhanced and further developed to increase public awareness and understanding of the importance and benefits (economic, environmental) of energy efficiency, and how to save energy.
- Educational information campaign on EE and Energy Saving involving schoolchildren - Belarus has experience in developing educational and informational materials on energy efficiency/energy saving and environment for schoolchildren (such materials are used at schools). This effort can be multiplied and developed to engage more schools in EE in main cities and at local level. Educational programmes and activities for children and youth can help to nurture the culture of efficient use of resources and contribute to longer term behavioural change. Such materials can be developed for pre-school education also.
- Organisation of events – Build upon existing initiatives (Energy Saving Days), support to contests (national Energomarathon with different nomination categories), sports activities involving different target groups; organise a youth forum for the INOGATE Partner Countries.
- Development of video and other information materials – some video materials developed by the Department of EE but more video materials are needed. Public Services Announcements (PSAs) can be placed on TV free of charge. Information materials can include leaflets, brochures, flyers, posters for billboards, stickers which can be disseminated with energy journals in different organisations and offices, so called “bus advertising” – using bus and trolleybus exteriors, which is currently an untapped potential.
- Web sites and exhibition/information centres – website of the Department of EE can be upgraded and improved; development of contents for websites. There is existing educational exhibition area which can be further developed (for instance, setting up a permanent exhibition).

Sharing of experience in setting up information centres and assisting with information materials.

- Engagement of communities – some stakeholders have experience in working at local level and engaging communities through provision of information, raising awareness, promoting SE. This effort can be enhanced.
- Awareness raising and capacity building for national and local authorities – This may include a) enhancing capacity of the Department of EE and other stakeholders on planning and effective implementation of awareness raising on SE; b) organisation of workshops, seminars, events for local authorities to raise their awareness on SE which is lower compared to the central level.
- Awareness raising for industry, businesses and local banks – as identified by some stakeholders, this may include development of specific information materials on EE for industry, businesses and offices; tailored workshops/seminars on SE technologies; capacity building and awareness raising for local banks on SE and SE project financing.

5. Conclusions

The workshop participants expressed their support for the effort aimed at creating a conducive and enabling environment for the development of sustainable energy. Many stakeholders present at the workshop showed interest in participating in awareness raising activities for EE. However, the legal requirement of registering projects and external assistance should be considered while planning activities.

The awareness raising needs identified by the stakeholders during the workshops are twofold: a) awareness raising for policy makers, and b) awareness raising for the wider public. For the first group, the aim is to **enhance institutional capacity** and effectiveness of work. For the second group, it is to reach out to the wider public to **improve understanding of EE**, educating and fostering behavioural change.

The communication workshop in Belarus also helped to identify the synergies that may lead to effective and successful public awareness.

6. Annexes (separate documents)

6.1 Agenda

6.2 List of Participants

6.3 Presentations by ITS:

- Presentation: Overview and awareness raising on sustainable energy – Khatuna Didbaridze
- Presentation: Facilitation of sustainable energy investments – Dmitry Strokon
- Presentation: Sustainable energy work programme – Alexander Antonenko
- Presentation: Awareness raising on sustainable energy, EE campaigns – Khatuna Didbaridze