

Establishment of a Sustainable Energy Information Centre for Moldova

CWP.11.MD



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Abbreviations

AEE	Agency for Energy Efficiency (Moldova)
AEER	Alliance for Energy Efficiency and Renewables
CoM	Covenant of Majors
CWP	Country Work Plan
EE	Energy Efficiency
HR	Human Resources
ITS	INO GATE Technical Secretariat
MoE	Ministry of Economy
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non Government Organisation
PC	Partner Country
RES	Renewable energy
RWP	Regional Work Plan
SEAP	Sustainable Energy Action Plan
SEIC	Sustainable Energy Information Centre
TA	Technical Assistance

1 PART 1 – EUROPEAN COMMISSION

1.1 Background

Assignment Title:	Establishment of a Sustainable Energy Information Centre for Moldova, CWP.11.MD
Country and Dates:	Moldova, March 2015 – April 2016
Beneficiary Organisation(s):	Agency for Energy Efficiency (AEE)
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Deliverables Produced	Officially opened and operational Sustainable Energy Information Centre (SEIC); exhibits, printed and digital information materials, final report.
Expert Team Members	Xavier Dubuisson, Victor Parlicov, Ruslan Suguriu

1.2 Essence of the Activity

The Technical Assistance (TA) assignment on the Establishment of a Sustainable Energy Information Centre (SEIC) in Chisinau, Moldova was implemented during the period March 2015 – April 2016. This activity was implemented according the ITS Country Work Plan (CWP) for Moldova and the [Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\) signed between the Agency for Energy Efficiency of Moldova and ITS on the 21st of May 2015](#).

This approach of the ITS project was innovative. During the initial stages of ITS project, ITS experts identified that the establishment of SEICs was the most cost-effective tools for enhancing awareness raising of various target groups in PCs. In order to provide sustainability and cost effectiveness of the SEICs, ITS proceeded with the full-pledged technical assistance for those PCs that demonstrated commitments, ownership and interest in running the SEICs independently after the completion of ITS project. This TA assignment envisaged the development of the SEIC in Moldova literally from scratch, including the renovation of the premises, development of the strategy and action plan as well as providing exhibits and training the SEICs' employees (Figure 1).



Figure 1: The centre's location before (left), 3-D interior design (centre), the actual outcome (right).

1.3 Key Findings

The key findings of the activity comprised:

1. The sustainable energy sector responded very positively to the establishment of the SEIC and provided support by donating exhibits, information material and pledging ongoing technical assistance to the centre.
2. The location of the centre at the AEE should ensure that the SEIC is embedded within the agency's operations. The lack of natural footfall and direct visibility for the general public has been compensated by emphasizing outreach activities within the SEIC's Action Plan, and facilitating this by ensuring that all exhibits produced for the centre are easily movable.
3. The ongoing political support, good working relations and dedication to the project were the key success factors that allowed ITS to overcome all challenges and deliver a high quality product – the actual establishment and operation of the SEIC.
4. The combination of the technical assistance and funding was the enabler for the creation of the SEIC as a physical asset. The establishment of the steering committee and regular meetings were instrumental in creating the vision, strategy and motivation for the centre.

1.4 Ownership and Benefits of the Activity

The main benefits of the activity for the Beneficiary are:

1. AEE obtained an asset with which to implement its awareness-raising and information dissemination campaigns, based on a robust strategy and action plan. The SEIC will be a key tool to meet the national commitment to promote sustainable energy, as well as helping the Chisinau municipality in the delivery of its Sustainable Energy Action Plan as a signatory of the Covenant of Mayors.
2. The SEIC development process was also an opportunity for the team involved to build their capacity in a number of areas such as project management, market research, press relations, publication of printed and digital media, etc.
3. By raising awareness and informing the citizens of Moldova, the SEIC will help them to achieve significant energy savings, improve their well-being and reduce their environmental impact.
4. As an instrument for awareness-raising and information dissemination, the SEIC will provide a model that can be replicated in other cities and regions of Moldova, as well as among other INOGATE partner countries (PCs).

The Beneficiary took ownership in the following way:

1. There was a clear political support throughout the project, which played a key role in overcoming challenges faced during the implementation of the project. The Steering Committee established during the first expert mission was central in keeping the momentum of the project.

2. The [SEIC was officially opened by the Deputy Minister of Economy and the EU Delegation in Moldova](#) on the 15th of April 2016.
3. The AEE has allocated three technical and communication specialists for running the SEIC in 2016.

1.5 Recommendations

Actions and measures recommended to be taken after the completion of the assistance are:

1. The AEE should maintain supportive management and supervision for the ongoing operation of the centre, with a direct line manager overseeing its day to day activities.
2. The SEIC's strategy and action plan should be reviewed annually, and reflected into the centre's team work plan. A detailed communication and PR plan, including outreach activities, should be core to the centre's work plan.
3. The SEIC staff should be provided with trainings to upgrade their technical know-how and communication skills. They should also follow a varied continual professional development programme.
4. The SEIC should seek to leverage funding opportunities from national programmes as well as from international donors, to reinforce and expand its capabilities.

1.6 Challenges Faced

There were a number of challenges in terms of administrative procedures and decision-making, e.g. protracted discussions on the allocation of a suitable physical space for the SEIC, budgeting for the renovation work to enable the installation of the centre, serious time pressure etc. However, all challenges were eventually overcome through communication and dialog with all involved stakeholders. The successful outcome of this activity is testimony to the excellent collaboration between the ITS team, their experts and the beneficiaries.

1.7 Impact Matrix

Impact Area	Developments	2012 (%)*	Apr 2016 (%)*
Policy	<i>Support of the EU policy instruments, like energy labelling, building certificates etc.</i>	0%	50%
Regulation	<i>N/A</i>		
Technology	<i>Support of the development and utilisation of modern EE technologies, primarily in buildings.</i>	5%	25%
Environment	<i>State changes occurred as a result of behaviour changes that can help residential consumers to save up to 30% of their energy bills</i>	5%	65%
Economics	<i>Indicators of decreased energy dependency. promotion of local business in SE area</i>	4%	34%
Social	<i>Reduction of energy bills and enhancing the comfort level of households in Moldova.</i>	5%	35%

* The impact is estimated based on the experts' opinion under the current circumstances and can be changed over time

2 PART 2 - BENEFICIARIES

2.1 Executive Summary

This report presents the results of the ITS activity "Establishment of a Sustainable Energy Information Centre (SEIC)" implemented by the EU funded INOGATE Technical Secretariat (ITS) project during the period March 2015 – April 2016. This activity was implemented according to the ITS Country Work Plan (CWP) for Moldova and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Agency for Energy Efficiency of Moldova and ITS on the 21st of May 2015.

This assignment aimed to provide the Agency for Energy Efficiency with the full-pledged technical assistance on the development of the SEIC in Moldova right from inception, including the interior design of the centre, development of the strategy and action plan as well as providing exhibits and training the SEICs' employees. The general objectives of this activity were to reduce the country's impact on climate change and energy expenditure, raise awareness and promote behavioural change towards sustainable use of energy. In addition, the SEIC will be useful in assisting with the implementation of Chisinau Municipality's Sustainable Energy Action Plan under its CoM commitments.

The SEIC was officially opened by the Deputy Minister of Economy, the Attaché-Project Manager of the EU Delegation in Moldova and the ITS Team Leader on the 15th of April 2016. The inauguration was attended by a number of key stakeholders including industry, donor organisations and civic society that expressed interest to further support the activities of the centre. The event was also attended by a strong press contingent and featured strongly in local and national printed and online media.

Thus, the AEE now has an asset with which to implement its awareness-raising and information dissemination campaigns, based on a robust strategy and action plan that were also developed within this assignment. It is expected that the centre will deliver its service to 30,000 people per year. If each of them adopts the behaviour change at home, that alone could lead to 75 GWh/year energy savings and 50,000 tCO₂ avoided emission each year. Through greater awareness of energy efficiency, consumers are empowered to make informed choices to save themselves money and help increase their country's energy security.

This part of the report consists of eight chapters and annexes.

Chapters 2.1-2.3 are the standard parts of an ITS report that provide information about the objective and the essence of the assistance.

Chapter 2.4 outlines key findings of this technical assistance that can be taken into account for the establishing similar SEICs in other INOGATE PCs.

Chapter 2.5 demonstrates commitments, ownership and interest of beneficiaries in running the SEICs independently after the completion of ITS project.

Chapter 2.6 sets specific conditions and baseline for the evaluation of the results of this assistance in the future.

Chapter 2.7 provides general recommendations based on the developed SEIC Strategy and Action Plan that is presented in Annex 1, whereas **Chapter 2.8** outlines the expected impact of the SEIC in the future. More broadly, SEIC can become an essential instrument for the transition of Moldova and its capital towards European policy and standards in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

2.2 Background

This report presents the results of ITS's activity for the Establishment of a Sustainable Energy Information Centre (SEIC) in Chisinau, Moldova. This activity took place between March 2015 and April 2016, and it involved a number of key stakeholders:

- The Agency for Energy Efficiency (AEE) as direct beneficiary of the project;
- Ministry of Economy of Moldova (MoE) as a beneficiary of the project and an energy policy driver of the country;
- The Alliance for Energy Efficiency and Renewables (AEER) a local NGO supporting the implementation of the activity at the local level.

This activity was innovative for the ITS project. During the initial stages of ITS project, ITS experts identified that the establishment of SEICs was the most cost-effective tool for enhancing awareness raising of various target groups in PCs. However, the actual implementation of this assignment started in March 2015 when the beneficiaries demonstrated commitments, ownership and interest in running the SEICs independently after the completion of ITS project.

This technical assistance was also complemented by two capacity building activities: RWP.07 "Combined Event on Energy Awareness" organised in Dublin, Ireland, in June 2015 and RWP.103 "Regional Workshop to Disseminate SEIC Experience from Georgia and Moldova" in Moldova in April 2016. Both regional activities contributed to the enhancement of capacity of local decision makers and disseminated the results of this TA to other INOGATE Partner Countries (PCs).

2.3 Essence of the Activity

The general objectives of the SEIC were to:

- Reduce the country's impact on climate change and energy expenditure.
- Support the implementation of Chisinau's Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) and national sustainable energy policies.
- Raise awareness and promote behavioural change towards sustainable use of energy.

The specific objectives of the SEIC were to:

- Provide independent, authoritative information on energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- Influence and advice target groups towards desired sustainable energy behaviours and decision-making.
- Build capacity among relevant stakeholders to develop and implement their sustainable energy projects.

The following steps were taken during the implementation period of this activity, leading to the establishment of the SEIC:

- a) First expert mission in September 2015: This one-week mission was an opportunity for fact finding and intensive engagement with the stakeholders identified previously in the framework of a working group which met daily to determine key drivers, key target groups and thematic focus as well as reaffirm the vision and aims of the SEIC.

- b) **Strategy and Action Plan:** As an outcome of the first mission, ITS experts prepared a revised strategy and action plan for the development and first years of operation of the SEIC (Annex 1). The recommended strategy set out priorities in terms of sectorial targets (households and public sector) and thematic focus (improvement of energy performance in existing buildings). The action plan proposed a series of activities for the first three years of the SEIC to deliver its mission of awareness-raising, information dissemination and education for both its target groups. It also identified the human and material resource requirements and associated budget estimates; it also emphasized the need for leveraging partnerships in civic and institutional organisations.
- c) **Development of the SEIC:** Following the approval of the recommended strategy and action plan by the beneficiaries, the development team comprising the ITS and beneficiaries' experts set out to establish the SEIC. The development process included:
- the design and specifications for the SEIC's facility, including an office space and a public information space;
 - a brand book defining the corporate image and logo for the centre (Figure 2);
 - the production of a short animation movie introducing the SEIC and key messages;
 - the production of an interactive bike power exhibit;



Figure 2: A sample of the information tools delivered to the SEIC, from left to right: kids info corner, a brandbook and a selection of brochures collected for the centre. .

- the sourcing of exhibits and demonstration units from suppliers of sustainable energy products and services to be integrated into the public information space at the centre;
 - the refurbishment of a space allocated at the AEE (main reception area), the installation of displays and exhibits;
 - induction of the allocated staff on awareness-raising and advice on sustainable energy as well as familiarisation with the SEIC strategy, action plan and facilities.
- d) **Second Mission:** the mission took place at the beginning of December 2015 to support ongoing activities for the development of the SEIC, which coincided with the official launch of the SEIC during the Moldova EcoEnergetica event on the 4th December 2015 (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Launch of the SEIC by ITS Key Expert at Moldova EcoEnergetica Awards gala.

- e) Third Mission: the mission was devoted to the final preparation and the official inauguration of the SEIC on the 15th April. The inauguration was attended by Mr. Valeriu Triboi, Vice Minister of Economy, Mr. Alexandre Darras of the EU Delegation in Moldova, Mr. Adrian Twomey, INOGATE Team Leader for Sustainable Energy, other important decision makers, civic society and mass-media (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Official opening of the SEIC, Chisinau, April 15, 2016

2.4 Key Findings

- a) The sense that the SEIC fulfils a real need for the citizens of Moldova and stakeholders in the sustainable energy sector was evident during the final steps of opening the centre:
- There was a strong media presence at the inauguration of the SEIC and the event was largely covered in local and national media;

- Members of the sustainable energy sector generously donated exhibits and their time to induce the centre's staff, and pledged to continue supporting the SEIC via its Energy Hub platform;
 - NGOs from the sustainable energy and environmental sector also contributed to the establishment of the centre by donating information materials and exhibits.
- b) The collaboration between ITS international experts, ITS local experts and the local NGO partner AEER was excellent. The three missions to Chisinau allowed the team to develop an effective working relationship, which continued in the follow-up activities. The quality of the outcome is a testimony to their dedication to the project and their professionalism.
- c) A strong team within the AEE rallied behind the project and their commitment to see the SEIC's establishment through was essential to get things done on the ground. Equally, while decision-making process was slow at times, the political support for the SEIC was essential for its development, notably for securing the hosting facility and the staff to operate the centre.
- d) The participation of the sustainable energy sector in the development and the ongoing operation of the centre was essential. The response of the companies contacted to supply exhibits and information material was very strong and demonstrated their commitment to make the centre a success. They clearly expressed the importance of having a dynamic SEIC supporting the development of their business (Figure 5). In return, they have pledged to continue collaborating with the centre, notably in the framework of its Energy Hub platform.



Figure 5: Signature of MoU for collaboration between SEIC and sustainable energy sector stakeholders.

- e) INOGATE's technical assistance and funding was very helpful in the creation of the SEIC as a physical asset. As importantly, the ITS team with the stewardship of the steering committee was instrumental in creating the vision, strategy and motivation for the centre, which was readily adopted by the stakeholders involved. This should leave a legacy that will nurture the development of the SEIC over the years to come.

2.5 Ownership and Benefits of the Activity

Key elements that testify to the beneficiaries taking ownership of the SEIC, include:

- a) The process of taking ownership of the SEIC project by its beneficiaries started with the initial discussions that took place during a prior project which led to the definition of a Concept and Strategy for the SEIC for Moldova, published in August 2014.
- b) The participative approach led by ITS experts while co-ordinating the development process of the SEIC was also instrumental in nurturing ownership and commitment among the beneficiaries and key stakeholders.
- c) The steering committee established during the first mission was central in keeping the momentum of the project, and was an effective forum for progress reporting and trouble-shooting. The political commitment from the Ministry of Economy (MoE) was demonstrated by their participation in all regular steering committee meetings (Figures 6).



Figure 6: The first steering committee meeting in Chisinau.

- d) The fact that the AEE sent representatives to the INOGATE Combined event in Dublin, Ireland in June 2015 was very helpful in raising the beneficiary's knowledge and capability for the development of the SEIC (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Study Tour on Energy Awareness Raising, Dublin.

- e) At the Regional Workshop in Chisinau, Moldova, in April 2016 (RWP.103), the AEE and the SEIC development team were strongly represented and shared their experience of establishing the Moldovan SEIC with other INOGATE PCs. Their ownership and commitment towards the project was clearly evident from their pride and enthusiasm for what they had achieved.

Key benefits of this INOGATE activity include:

- a) The AEE now has an asset with which to implement its awareness-raising and information dissemination campaigns, based on a robust strategy and action plan. The SEIC will be a key tool to meet the nation's sustainable energy policy. It is expected that the centre will deliver its service to 30,000 people per year. Through greater awareness of energy efficiency, consumers are empowered to make informed choices to save themselves money and help increase their country's energy security.
- b) The SEIC development process was also an opportunity for the team involved to build their capacity in a number of areas such as project management, market research, press relations, publication of printed and digital media, etc.
- c) In addition, the participation of decision makers in the Combined event on energy awareness-raising in Dublin in June 2015 and in the regional workshop in Chisinau in April 2016 (Figure 8), provided them with opportunities to learn from best practice in Europe in this area and to share their own experience with their peers.



Figure 8: Inogate PCs delegates at Regional Workshop, Chisinau, 14-15 June 2016 (RWP.103).

- d) INOGATE's contribution leaves a legacy in the physical asset of the SEIC and the associated information tools that can be expanded on as the experience and resource of the centre grow, and provides a template for replication at a local/regional level in Moldova as well as in other partner countries.
- e) In addition to informing and advising Moldova's citizen, the SEIC will be working closely with the sustainable energy sector and associated stakeholders (academia, NGOs, etc.) to promote energy efficient behaviour, innovative energy technologies and energy management. This in turn will reinforce the sector's capability and market impact.

2.6 Baseline assessment

Before the implementation of this TA, ITS experts developed the following baseline indicators that were taken into account for monitoring the overall impact of ITS assistance in this area:

- SEICs – as of March 2015 there was no Sustainable Energy Information Centre or indeed any other institutional body that targets the improvement of awareness raising in SE in Moldova;
- Activities – the AEE had a certain experience in the implementation of SE awareness raising activities, but mostly this was related to the organisation of and participation in different events such as workshop, conferences etc.;
- Capacity – the AEE had virtually no information material appropriate to promote sustainable energy to citizens and households.

Thus, the ITS assistance in this area has already produced the key tangible results – official opening of SEIC at the AEE. The main targets are citizens, business people and schoolchildren.

2.7 Recommendations

The SEIC Strategy and Action Plan developed within this assistance (see Annex 1) provide guidance and key recommendations for the ongoing development and operation of the SEIC. The following points are worth considering/emphasizing:

- a) Now that the AEE has taken full ownership of the SEIC, the AEE should ensure that it has proper management structures and supervision in place. The staff should participate to performance review twice per year by their line manager and the AEE management.
 - b) The SEIC strategy and action plan should be aligned with the AEE's overall work programme and strategy for sustainable energy. On that basis, the SEIC should have an annual work programme with a detailed communication plan, and the centre's performance should be reviewed against key performance indicators twice per year.
 - c) A programme of training should be provided to the staff by qualified and experienced professionals to enable to fulfil the main information and advice requirements of service users. They should also be afforded continual professional development opportunities such as attending workshops, study tours, self-learning using online resources, work placements with partner companies, etc.
 - d) An annual budget of at least 30,000 EUR should be committed to the SEIC, a fortiori during the start-up phase of the SEIC. There is no doubt that a successful SEIC would be regarded as an asset by international donors with relevant policy agenda and funding programmes. A strategic plan to leverage such opportunities and provide further resources to the centre, should be undertaken.
 - e) As the SEIC team's know-how and capability increases, it can broaden its target audience (e.g. other national or local governmental institutions, the private sector) and the nature of its services (e.g. energy management support, feasibility studies, project development, etc.). The SEIC's strategy, funding programme and human resource management should facilitate this.
 - f) It is also essential that the SEIC staff and management undertake a concerted networking effort to leverage partnership opportunities with key stakeholders such as civic society groups,
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environmental NGOs, other government departments, local authorities, the sustainable energy supply chain, donor organisations, etc.

- g) In that regard, the AEER and the two local experts employed by ITS during the establishment of the centre should be seen as a key partner to support the SEIC's mission and close ties should be maintained.

2.8 Impact

The expected impact of the SEIC's establishment is:

- a) 30,000 citizens will engage with the centre and be empowered through information and advice. If each of them adopts the behaviour change at home, that alone could lead to 750 GWh/year energy savings and 50,000 tCO₂ avoided emission each year.
- b) With a strong outreach programme, the SEIC will overcome its unfavourable location and have a real impact in Chisinau and other regions as all exhibits produced for the centre are easily movable. It can also become a model of good practice in other partner countries.
- c) The SEIC will be a key tool for the AEE and the MoE to implement its sustainable energy policy. More broadly it should be an essential instrument for the transition of Moldova and its capital towards European policy and standards in EE and RES.

Annexes

In separate documents:

- Annex 1: SEIC's Strategy and Action Plan report
- Annex 2: Activity report by the AEER.