

Informative Note

Brussels, 30 June 2014

NECSTouR ENERGY DAY

“Climate Change Mitigation through Tourism Energy Efficiency”

The [EU Sustainable Energy Week \(EUSEW\)](#) is the European Commission initiative aiming at connecting citizens and energy stakeholders at the local, regional and national levels, helping Europe to reach its energy goals and generate new ideas and actions.

Under this framework, and in light of its working group on Tourism and Climate Change, NECSTouR organized on 23rd June in Brussels an Energy Day on “Climate Change Mitigation through Tourism Energy Efficiency” in collaboration of Brussels delegation of Île-de-France Region.

The workshop aimed at identifying and analyzing showcases on **climate change mitigation through the use of renewable energy and/or energy efficiency in the tourism sector** and at debating on how these **pilot cases** can be widely transferred and **replicated within Europe**.

During the first session, **three study cases were presented** illustrating the following arenas with tourism energy efficiency: Regional Strategy (**Île-de-France**), Local Business (**Canton Valais**) and the **Nearly Zero Energy Hotels -neZEH- project** as an example of a European initiative.

A panel of experts composed by representatives from [EASME](#), [UNWTO](#), [CBCS](#) and [Visit Cornwall](#) took place thereafter to reflect what the situation on the ground is, what the barriers and opportunities are, and how to capitalize the pilot initiatives.

Tourism and Climate Change – Overview

Tourism is a highly-climate sensitive sector, since climate affects the territorial natural capital, defines the length of the tourism seasons, and influences on the choices of tourists upon the environmental conditions. Nevertheless, tourism is **also a vector of climate change**, accounting for 5% of the global carbon dioxide emissions (UNWTO 2009). Although most of the CO2 emissions are attributed to air travel, an important challenge for the tourism industry also relates to waste management, natural resources uses and optimizing energy consumption.



Climate Change can jeopardize tourism assets, is already doing so, and therefore the need of urgent mitigation measures to tackle this global challenge should be at the core of the political agendas and the tourism regional plans. Several are the existing experiences at local and regional level, however a strong behavioral change within all the stakeholders is requested in order to move from localized initiatives to mainstream actions.

Learning from pilot cases – Highlights

Paris Île-de-France undertook a Prospective study on the future of tourism in this destination including a carbon footprint assessment which studied the following sectors: transportation, accommodation, transportation at destination level, and restaurants. This Carbon footprint diagnostic tool is an accounting method for GHG emissions for any organization, public or private, developed by ADEME (French Agency for Environment and Energy Management). The results of this study show that tourism activities account for 7.6 million teqCO₂ of GHG emissions in the Region, being responsible for almost 30% of the GHG regional.

The Region acknowledged the urgent need to foster the use of environmental management tools to find concrete measures that help tourism stakeholders to adapt their activity to the effects of climate change. For this purpose [EVEA tourism](#) created [MALICE](#), a web tool application aiming at improving the stakeholders' awareness of the impacts of climate change on the tourism industry and providing with possible solutions and recommendations.

The **Canton Valais** presented two private initiatives related to sustainability within the accommodation sector. The Region has different forms to support entrepreneurial actions for Tourism Climate Change Mitigation: subsidies (renovation of buildings, thermal and photovoltaic solar production, etc), expertise and innovation (research institutes and schools of engineering, energy management, tourism all integrated in the same institutions "HES-SO Valais"), exchange of good practices (www.hotelpower.ch), and Label Valais Excellence.

The businesses cases presented, **Maya Boutique hotel** and **FerienArt Resort & Spa**, shared their implemented actions: Wood oven and thermic solar energy; Hand made with local wood furniture; Monitoring of water and energy consumptions, and Eco-team, between others. Their lessons learned coincide on the fact that subsidies and incentives are available but procedures are too complicate, new ways of financing ideas have to be found (e.g. via **crowd funding** used by Maya boutique hotel to develop a sauna heated by solar energy). The economic viability is essential and energy efficiency measures can contribute to this purpose.

Indeed, the hotel industry and other types of accommodation account for 2% of the world's CO₂ emissions, and have the potential to save up around 30% of their energy consumption. Considering that the EU hotel industry is composed by a 90% of SMEs hotels, the **European initiative Nearly Zero Energy Hotels (neZEH)** aims at accelerating the rate of refurbishment of existing hotels into Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (nZEB) and reach the European Commission targets on GHG emissions reduction by 2050.

"nZEB Building is a building that has a very high energy performance.

The nearly zero or very low amount of energy required to cover the buildings needs should be covered to a very significant extent by Renewable Energy Sources" EPBD recast, Article 2

The [neZEH initiative](#) runs for 3 years, 2013-2016 and is co-funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme (IEE) of the European Commission. Its goal is to encourage and propose concrete solutions to EU hotel owners willing to become a neZEH by providing technical advice for nZEB renovations, demonstrating the sustainability of such projects and showcasing best practices.

The neZEH Consortium consists of 10 Partners in 7 European countries (ENV/TUC, Greece; ABMEE, Romania; CREARA, Spain; ENERGIES 2050, France; EIHP, Croatia; SITI, Italy; SUST, Sweden; 2 European networks (REHVA, Belgium; NECSTouR, Belgium); and the United Nations specialized agency for tourism (UNWTO, Spain).

How these pilot cases can be widely replicated within Europe? – Reflections

The main discussion aimed to understand why capitalizing these showcases is such a challenge and to find suggestions to tackle them.

The required investment to properly adopt energy efficiency measures within the Tourism industry was clearly defined as one of the principal problems and constraints the industry suffers. Tourism is by nature a SMEs – micro enterprise sector and its investment capacities area usually scarce.

Several investment barriers in energy efficiency were detected by the European Commission expert:

- Financial: the lack of access to finance. Banks do not take into account the future paybacks of the investment (energy savings).
- Technological: tourism industry mainly lacks of knowledge and expertise in the energy efficiency/renewable resources sector. Interdisciplinary cooperation is suggested within the political and business arenas.
- Non technological: planning, special permissions for retrofitting, split between tenants and landlords (who should invest and who benefit).

Another challenge that experts encountered is the need of a behavioral and strategic change within the industry. SMEs usually have a short term vision. There is a need to move beyond the pilots and for doing so businesses need to think as a community and cooperate together in a long term perspective (e.g. district heating).

The need of fostering capacity building and marketing skills in these related topics were also highlighted, in order to foster the integration of the green agenda within the SMES businesses management. The [Hotel Energy Solutions](#) (HES) developed by the UNWTO, was presented as a useful e-toolkit that enables SMEs in the accommodation sector to assess their current energy use and carbon footprint, and provide support in ranking cost-effective energy efficiency and renewable energy investment options. It also includes information on best practices and capacity building materials and a carbon calculator.

Next steps

In view of the pertinence of the discussed topics and on the necessity to stimulate a behavioral change among the industry and the policy makers for replicating Europe wide the pilot initiatives, NECSTouR proposed to develop further the good practice exchange and pool of knowledge by involving the NECSTouR Academics in the field of Tourism and Climate Change. The aim is helping regions to improve their environmental sustainable schemes at policy and entrepreneurial level by focusing on innovative business models (e.g. circular economy, collaborative economy) and regional policy (integrating the climate change agenda within the tourism regional plan).

Cooperation between the NECSTouR Academic Committee and the UNWTO universities network was suggested for this purpose.

AGENDA

ENERGY DAY: 23rd June, 14.00h – 17.00h

“Climate Change Mitigation through Tourism Energy Efficiency”

Île-de-France Europe (Rue Montoyer, 10 – 1000 Brussels)

Workshop moderated by a representative of the Île-de-France Region

14:00 – 14:10 Welcome Speech: Energy efficiency and Renewable Energies within the Tourism Regional Plan by Île-de-France Region

14:10 – 14:20 State of art Climate Change Mitigation through Tourism Energy Efficiency by Mr. Antonio Raschi, Director of IBIMET

14:20 – 15:00 Learning from experiences:

Chaired by Cristina Núñez, NECSTouR Coordinator

- **Tourism Carbon Footprint of Paris Île-de-France** by Mrs. Réka Csepeli, Head of the Sustainable Development Department of the Paris Île-de-France Tourism Board
- **Tourism businesses Initiatives on Energy Efficiency and Management** by Mrs. Sarah Huber, Project Manager of Canton Valais Foundation for Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions
- **Fostering Competiveness and Sustainability of Hotels through Nearly Zero Energy Strategies. The European Initiative Nearly Zero Energy Hotels** by Dr. Theocharis Tsoutsos and Mrs. Stavroula Tournaki, neZEH Project Coordinator - Technical University of Crete, Renewable and Sustainable Energy Systems Lab

15:00 – 15:20 Questions & Answers from the audience

15:20 – 16:30 Opinion Platform: How these pilot cases can be widely transferred and replicated within Europe? Panelists:

Chaired by Mr. Malcolm Bell, Head of **VisitCornwall**

- Mrs. Zoritsa Urosevic, Head of Institutional & Corporate Relations **UNWTO**
- Mr. Neil Warren, Business Engagement Specialist – Tourism **CBCS**
- Mr. Philippe Moseley, Project Officer, Unit B1 – Energy, **EASME**

16:30 – 16:50 Questions & Answers from the audience

16:50 – 17:00 Wrap up and Closing, by Cristina Núñez, NECSTouR Coordinator

More information: www.eusew.eu

BACKGROUND

Preventing Climate Change and developing mitigation strategies is a major challenge for the European Union. As such, the **Europe 2020** places sustainable growth as one of the main priorities of the European Strategy leading **towards a resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.** Under the Sustainability framework 4 thematic objectives define the lines for pursuing this priority: Shift to a low-carbon economy; Climate change adaptation and risk management and prevention; Environmental protection and resource efficiency; and Sustainable transport and disposal of congestion on major network infrastructure. Besides helping to strengthen European's resilience to the impacts of climate change, investing in green technologies will also **boost the economy and create jobs in Europe.**

Tourism is a highly-climate sensitive sector, since climate affects the territorial natural capital, defines the length of the tourism seasons, and influences on the choices of tourists upon the environmental conditions. Nevertheless, tourism **is also a vector of climate change,** accounting for 5% of the global carbon dioxide emissions (UNWTO 2009). Although most of the CO₂ emissions are attributed to air travel, an important challenge for the tourism industry also relates to waste management, natural resources uses and optimizing energy consumption.

NECSTouR - The Network of European Regions for Sustainable and Competitive Tourism - has a working group on Tourism and Climate Change, aiming at identifying the social, economic and environmental impacts of Climate Change in tourism, and at studying tourism regional strategies for prevention and mitigation.

This workshop aims at identifying and analyzing showcases on climate change mitigation through the use of renewable energy and/or energy efficiency in the tourism sector, and at debating on how these pilot cases can be widely transferred and replicated within Europe.

The purpose is to look at **best practices** in terms of regional policies including Climate Change in their Tourism Regional Plans, as well as initiatives coming from the European Commission and the tourism private sector. These study cases will be analysed tackling several perspectives such as: scope, outcomes, investment, ROI, incentives, governance, barriers, and sustainability between others, which will provide the audience and experts with a complete outline of the identified initiatives.

Moreover, the workshop will count with an **opinion platform composed by a group of panelist experts** in tourism, climate change, renewable energies and energy efficiency, which will discuss and reflect together with the audience: what is the situation on the ground, what barriers and opportunities, and **how to capitalize these pilots.**

This event will target the different stakeholders being directly or indirectly involved in the workshop main topic, gathering from public administrations, private sector and international organisations as well as the general public we aim to interact with.