

Stimulating innovation in energy efficiency and renewable energies, the successful cooperation between European and Eastern Partnership countries

Between 2013-2016 the EU-funded project ener2i stimulated knowledge-transfer and networking between experts in energy efficiency and renewable energy to accelerate the innovation and transition of processes and products from the labs into the market

Energy is part of our daily life. We use it for instance to move around, to run businesses, and stay in touch with family and friends. When new discoveries in resource efficiency, renewable and sustainable energies fail to reach the market, the industry and society at large are missing out on opportunities in terms of competitiveness and innovation. Repercussions manifest themselves in several forms, such as weak job growth, high energy costs, and exposure to climate change.



The ener2i project, running from 2013 until 2016, bridged the gap between energy research and business, and facilitated the transfer of lab results to the market, to create innovative processes and products.



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Over the course of 3 years, ener2i involved partners from 6 EU countries, namely Austria, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Romania, to cooperate with four EU Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova. The € 1 Mio. funding were used by both sides to innovate in energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energies (RES), and to establish cooperation among research and business representatives from the EU and EaP countries.

About 300 professionals from business and research attended 8 workshops and 8 brokerage events in EU and EaP countries, refining their skills in EE and RES, and building up their professional network for on-going and future joint projects. ener2i mobilised 47 experts for knowledge transfer and network building in EE/RES thanks to study visits and staff exchanges. 30 innovation vouchers of € 4,000, for a total investment of € 120,000, have been awarded to businesses in EaP countries to support their projects in EE/RES. The competition and voucher projects were financed by the EU Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7), and the Austrian Development Cooperation in the Central European Initiative CEI-KEP Austria programme. The direct funding supported small and medium sized enterprises, including Start-Ups and spin-offs, in moving their projects beyond the initial stage of development. It helped in improving energy efficiency of SMEs, in developing renewables and in bringing products and services to the market. As a result, cooperation between EaP and EU business, research organisations and universities, evolved beyond the ener2i project to new proposals and joint projects in Horizon2020 (H2020) and in the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST).



Corina Guțu-Chetrușca,
Expert,
MoSEFF, Chisinau,
Moldova

“The ener2i training workshops I attended in Minsk, Belarus, had a positive impact on both my work and studies. I gathered new insights from world-renowned experts on energy efficiency and renewable energy and how they work in other countries. Participating to the project gave me the opportunity to strengthen my personal network of international professionals. The insight offered by the ener2i project contributed to my professional success in subsequent working opportunities.”



Nicolae Cojocaru,
Project Manager of
“Flow of Life”,
Naiman-Com Srl,
Chisinau, Moldova

“The ener2i innovation voucher was very useful, especially for young entrepreneurs like us, as it had a big impact on the growth of our company. Thanks to the project we created an energy-independent greenhouse. When the products reach optimal conditions they are tested in the labs to be certified. If the products are recognized as organic, our partners will buy them on industrial scale and the products will reach the market. Thanks to this prototype we have been able to build additional industrial greenhouses, with a total surface of 1000 m², employing 7-8 different technologies.”



Ina Körner, Professor,
Hamburg University of
Technology, Hamburg,
Germany

“The ENER2i project gave me the possibility to present part of my work to scientists and practitioners in Chisinau/Moldavia and in Tbilisi/Georgia. Citizens from Western and Eastern Europe had the chance to meet, exchange thoughts, and discuss different framework conditions in their countries. Experts from many former Soviet Union Republics were sitting at one table. I had the impression that the ENER2i participants recognized they could all be partners to promote a sustainable future in spite of political and cultural differences.”



Kakha Karchkhadze,

Chair, Dep. of
Innovations and
Commercialization at
Ilia State University,
Tbilisi, Georgia.

“The ener2i project was a great experience as I developed new insights about modern trends in energy efficiency and biomass-based renewable fuels in the EU. Thanks to the professional network developed during the project, I was able to launch the first biodiesel production lab and the first biodiesel vehicles in Georgia. The participation to ener2i helped me to get involved in other projects on renewable energies, which led to the instalment of a 35 kW solar photovoltaic system at ISU. The system now supplies clean solar energy for university buildings.”



Genady Zhavnerko,

Chief of Surface
Chemistry &
Nanotechnology
Department, IZOVAC
Technologies Ltd,
Minsk, Belarus.

“The ener2i project gave us with an innovation voucher the possibility to check an idea about protection of cover glass of solar modules with extremely wear-resistant, transparent coating. Here in Belarus we proved that the proposed approach can increase both the efficiency and the durability of solar cells and modules. Broad commercial potential of the proposed technology may give the industry a direct tool for efficient, ecology friendly and high-quality fabrication of protective coatings for photonic applications, including transparent electrodes on different kinds of rigid and flexible solar cells and modules, for Low E glass, etc.”

ener2i Coordinator:

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