

### 3Smart Project as a Way to Gain New Knowledge and Experience

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Slovenian partners in 'Smart Building – Smart Grid – Smart City' (in short: 3Smart), a project launched on 1 January 2017, have high expectations of this undertaking, Managing Director of Nova Gorica-based local energy agency GOLEA, Rajko Leban, told Energetika.NET. Worth around EUR 3.8 million, the international project will run for 30 months, from this January to June 2019.

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As previously reported in the article 3Smart Project to Connect Five Countries, the main aim of the project is to provide a technological and legislative setup for cross-spanning energy management of buildings, energy grids and major city infrastructures in the Danube region. This includes the development of a modular platform for co-ordinated building and distribution grid energy management. The developed platform will be installed at five pilot locations in five countries (Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Hungary and Bosnia and Herzegovina) and a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis will be performed to verify the platform's performance.

The lead partner in the 3Smart project is the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (FER) Zagreb. Other project partners are: Hrvatska elektroprivreda; Slovenian company E3; the Municipality of Idrija; Elektro Primorska, the European Centre for Renewable Energy Gussing; the Municipality of Strem; Energy Gussing; the University of Debrecen; E.ON Tiszántúli Áramhálózat; the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Belgrade; Elektroprivreda Hrvatske Zajednice Herceg Bosne (HZHB); and the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Computing, University of Mostar. The project also includes the following associated strategic partners: the Croatian Energy Regulatory Agency (HERA), the Jožef Stefan Institute (JSI), Slovenian local energy agency GOLEA, the Regulatory Commission for Energy in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FERK), and the Hungarian Energy and Public Utility Regulatory Authority.

#### Anticipating sustainable solutions

"Our decision to participate in the project was based on the fact that this is an international development project towards building a modular platform for co-ordinated energy management in buildings and distribution grids," said Tjaša Frelih of Elektro Primorska. Frelih is confident that the range of partners participating in the project can meet Elektro Primorska's requirements and deliver innovative and sustainable solutions.

"As an owner of the distribution grid we are providing the required infrastructure and our capacities to help develop an energy management tool for the network. We expect the project to deliver solutions which, after they are tested on the platform, can be used in practice and expanded to the entire network," said Frelih, adding that Elektro Primorska's investment in the project is worth EUR 83,000. The total budget for the project is EUR 3,791,343.41.

#### Aiming to upgrade the current range of services

The reason E3 decided to join the project was to gain new knowledge and experience, thus to possibly upgrade the company's current range of energy services for final consumers, explained Kristina Furlan. Their tasks include development of an energy management system which enables them to optimise consumption and monitor the consumption of heating installations in the Idrija School Centre. The envisaged budget for their part of the project is just over EUR 300,000, and the plan is to obtain EU funding for more than half of this, added Furlan.

GOLEA is an associated partner in the project as the energy manager of the Municipality of Idrija, said Managing Director of this Nova Gorica-based agency Rajko Leban. "Our shared expectations of the 3Smart project are high; our desire is to join forces to turn Idrija into a pilot site of 3Smart: Smart Building, Smart Grid, Smart City," said Leban. The main task of GOLEA is to provide consulting, while according to Leban the agency wants to use the findings of 3Smart to upgrade its previously implemented project and integrate them into the 3Smart platform. The Municipality of Idrija could not be reached for additional explanations.

The Jožef Stefan Institute (JSI) was more willing to comment. The institution has years of experience in developing concepts, methodologies, and concrete solutions for smart communities at large.

"The Institute has been one of the initiators of the Flapax project for the development of regional smart community projects, and is a coordinator of smart specialisation activities," said Mitja Jermol, Head of JSI's Centre for Knowledge Transfer in ICT. "It was several years ago when we started a strategic co-operation with the Municipality of Idrija, which has since grown to become one of the leading municipalities and a point of reference in terms of implementing smart city and smart community solutions. 3Smart is but one of the ongoing projects. Together, we are answering various calls for proposals and building a story that will become an example for the entire region, which spans more just over 35,000 municipalities," said Jermol.

#### The right environment attracts investors

In these projects, JSI mainly contributes innovative solutions and approaches in areas including intelligent transportation systems, smart energy networks, intelligent infrastructure for municipalities, and most notably intelligent, self-learning environments for improved quality of living.

According to Jermol, for research and development to be effective and yield results, each research environment needs not only its own labs, but also real environments. "Not just in order to test and evaluate its findings, but above all to truly understand what real environments need in the first place, and how potential solutions could benefit everybody, people as well as the social and natural settings," explained Jermol, adding that the Idrija municipality makes such an environment.

"Together with the leading Slovenian companies, various organisations, ministries and the local administration, the Institute is actively engaged in making Slovenia a globally celebrated green destination in a digitised Europe. Our long-term aim is to further enhance the environment for top-level research, to attract local and foreign researchers and investors," added Jermol.

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