

# STRIDE PROJECT NEWSLETTER

## THE INTERREG DANUBE STRIDE PROJECT CELEBRATES ITS SUCCESS IN BUDAPEST

For the past two years, the STRIDE project provided, through knowledge transfer and development of planning tools, a comprehensive support for regional and local policy makers for the improvement of energy planning. Within the project, regional partners carried out regional analyses and developed strategies, action plans, methodologies, a guidebook and a networking platform to enable and accelerate the integration of smart grid concepts into regional and local policies.



On the **21st November 2022**, the Interreg Danube STRIDE project held their final conference in conjunction with the [5th International IEEE Conference AND Workshop in Óbuda](#) on **Electrical and Power Engineering in Budapest, Hungary** in order to share the results and findings of the project from these past two years. Participants were invited to learn more about how the STRIDE Methodology for Regional Analysis, guidebook and digital platform can be applied throughout the entire Danube region and beyond. Over 50 participants at the event enjoyed the comprehensive programme centred on guidance to the Danube smart grid implementation.



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### PROJECT DETAILS

**Period:** July 2020-Nov. 2022

**Budget:** € 1,061,969.77

**ERDF:** € 834,497.49

**IPA :** € 68,176.80

**ENI:** € 0

The Interreg Danube Transnational Programme STRIDE Project is co-funded by the European Union funds (ERDF, IPA, ENI).



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## FREE SMART GRIDS TRAINING MATERIALS

Open-source training materials that have been developed within the Interreg Danube STRIDE project are now freely available to members of the **STRIDE Smart Energy Platform**. The STRIDE training materials were piloted across Slovenia, Germany, Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina and provide public officers and other relevant target groups with knowledge on energy planning in order to build capacity for the future smart grid policy developments on the local, regional and national level. Topics of the STRIDE trainings range from smart grid motivations to smart grid strategies and energy policies at the local, regional, national and EU levels.

## LONG-TERM REGIONAL IMPACT

### Bulgaria

The Bulgarian Energy and Mining Forum and the Sustainable Energy Development Agency (SEDA), both partners within the STRIDE project, are organising a discussion forum on the roles and potential of the energy communities in Horizon 2023-2027. Held on the 28th of November, the [discussion forum](#) was organised in three panels — the first centred on STRIDE, the second dedicated to technology platforms (i.e., the opinions of municipalities on the real models and urban planning aspects, and the engineers' view of the smart energy cooperatives), and the third being a discussion on the conditions and incentives for successful development of energy cooperatives in Horizon 2023-2027.



At the event, the Director of SEDA, Mr Ivaylo Alexiev presented the energy communities and the energy efficiency monitoring as per the latest EU commitments. Mr. Nalbantov, Director of 'EU strategies and policies' Directorate, Ministry of Energy will update on the status of the harmonisation of Bulgarian legislation with the EU requirements for the liberalisation of the energy sector market. The outputs and results of the STRIDE project, along with the STRIDE platform, were also presented by BEMF.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

As part of the STRIDE project, a smart grids methodology was developed for the analysis of the energy situation. The CENER21 team conducted research and analyzed the current energy situation in the Region of Zenica-Doboj Canton and Central Bosnia Canton. Based on the

findings on the current energy situation, the Smart Grid Strategy and Action Plans were developed with the associated partners and stakeholders.



*Solar power plant with a capacity of 437 kW at the ESOF business facility installed in 2021 (Source: radiodonjivakuf)*

Over the course of the STRIDE project, the integration of renewable energy sources (RES) in the region significantly increased (100% increase in the number of small solar power plants). A significant number of industries in the region have built solar power plants that are exclusively used for their own needs.

In December 2022, the CENER21 team held a final local workshop with stakeholders, where all the achievements of the STRIDE project and the importance of introducing smart grids into energy planning will be presented. The STRIDE Guide for Regional Integration of Smart Grids was presented to all participants and given instructions for its efficient application in any region.

### Croatia

At the beginning of July 2022, HEP - Distribution System Operator (HEP ODS) hosted an informative workshop as part of the "Pilot project for the introduction of advanced networks", with the aim of presenting the results achieved in the implementation of the project in the distribution area of Elektra Zagreb. Approximately 90 million Croatian kuna is invested in this large-scale project. More specifically, as part of the pilot project, HEP ODS invests in three functional areas of the advanced electricity distribution network: advanced measurement infrastruc-

## STRIDE Regional Updates

ture, development and optimization of the conventional network, and automation of the medium voltage network in five (Elektroslavonija Osijek, Elektra Zagreb, Elektrodalmacija Split, Elektra Zadar and Elektrojug Dubrovnik) out of a total of 21 of the distribution area of HEP ODS, reported the web portal, Poslovni (savjetnik.com).



“As part of the project, about 90 million kuna is invested in advanced networks in the area of Elektra Zagreb, which includes equipment and necessary works,” stated Anton Marušić, Director of Elektra Zagreb. “All work on project activities is organised by the employees of Elektra Zagreb. Through the project, we will achieve significant savings, because, for example, only one percent of losses in the distribution area of Elektra Zagreb is adequate for the consumption of 7,500 households.”

### Hungary

To ensure the long-term impact of the STRIDE project in Hungary, Bay Zoltán commits to taking a number of steps to promote the results and international sustainability of STRIDE. A main outcome of the training events in Hungary was, that the key point to realise Smart Grid development is the joint action of advocacy and knowledge sharing in technological, legal and financial areas.

Following STRIDE, our Hungarian partners will initiate an international project to create a dedicated Knowledge Sharing Public Sourcing Living Lab Platform to provide the best ways for municipalities for electric energy sourcing, resourcing, ancillary services, etc.

Bay Zoltán has registered to the Hungarian Energy and Utility Authority innovation concept collection (i.e., innovation sandbox) that was opened as an input source of ideas for a new energy innovation support system. Also, the operation of a Hungarian Smart Energy Communities digital platform was proposed, which provides information on service offering by SMEs and addressing their potential customers as municipalities.

### Czech Republic

Interest in the smart grids concepts in the Czech Republic was demonstrated by 70 participants of two local seminars organised as part of the Interreg Danube STRIDE project –the majority of the 86 people who showed initial interest and registered for the trainings. The audience consisted of regional and local officials and company executives from the chosen Zlín Region in the Czech Republic.

Beside the introduction of the STRIDE project, topics included: utilisation of energy flexibility, use of PV within the apartment building units and community energy; use of batteries for the accumulation of electricity and micro-generation units; energy recovery from waste; and importantly, smart grids good practice examples. Lectures aimed to deepen participants knowledge, clarify ambiguities and answer questions, all to motivate implementation of smart grid concepts.

### Germany

The European Institute for Innovation - Technology (Elfi-Tech) together with their Associated Strategic Partner, Stadwerke Dorfen, have developed their STRIDE Smart Grids Strategy and Action Plan. Through their research, it was highlighted that the German government's interest in the promotion of

## STRIDE PRESENTED AT NATIONAL ENERGY CONFERENCE

In October 2022, as participants in the **SEE ENERGY-Connect & Supply V conference** in Novi Sad, CENER21 (Bosnia and Herzegovina) had the opportunity to present the importance of introducing smart grids into energy planning in addition to the achievements of the STRIDE project in the region and possibility of applying its results across other regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond.

The concept of smart grids in BiH is increasingly taking place in energy planning, thanks to the Interreg Danube STRIDE project amongst other likeminded initiatives.



## STRIDE Regional Updates

smart grid projects is rooted in the enormous impact expected in terms of the national economy and the energy industry. The projects will play a role in promoting greater competition along the value-added chain in Germany—from power stations and network operators to other players in retail, housing and services. Meanwhile, innovative growth fields and employment opportunities were developed at the interface between ICT and energy technology.

### Austria

ConPlusUltra (CPU) has become an official cooperation partner of the Sustainability Initiative of the *Raiffeisenlandesbank Burgenland* (bank) in Austria. The sustainability initiative aims at supporting private households, companies and communes who are interested in carrying out innovative green projects. To offer these services, the initiative has formed a network of finance institutions, business and technical consultants as well as engineering and installation companies to name a few.



ConPlusUltra has agreed to make all its services available to companies and communes in the region wishing to take part in the green transition and switch to cleaner energy.

Furthermore, ConPlusUltra is supporting the *Raiffeisenlandesbank* bank in setting up energy communities that can potentially cover 99.5 % of the electricity consumers in the province. For all 20 electric power transformation stations in the province, there will be a regional energy

community that will further join an umbrella energy community. The legal entities of the energy communities will be non-profit co-operatives that are under close guidance and control of the bank and hence benefit from the credibility of an established banking institution.

### Slovenia

Local Energy Agency Spodnje Podravje (LEASP), lead partner of the STRIDE project, has dedicated last six months of the project mainly to the finalisation of smart grid strategy and action plans developed for the Podravje region. All key stakeholders have been involved into development of smart grid strategy, providing all the needed data, support and much appreciated feedback.

Furthermore, to support the integration of strategy and action plans in the region, LEASP organised a final regional STRIDE event, held on 21st September 2022. The event brought together a synergistic mix of stakeholders, from representatives of municipalities (10 Municipalities from Podravje region were present) to the solution providers, such as energy agencies (all members of the consortium of Slovenian Local Energy Agencies have participated) and technology providers (Telem and Energija+).

All participants were invited to register to the STRIDE platform and learn more about the smart grid development, legislation and the smart grid opportunities across the Danube region.



## REMOVING BARRIERS TO RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS IN CROATIA

On 30th June 2022, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development published the document "Assessment with recommendations for removing obstacles and easing administrative procedures that limit greater use of energy from renewable sources". Considering the analysis presented in the document, it is necessary to ensure the implementation of ten measures that will ensure the acceleration of the preparation and implementation of projects for the development of renewable energy sources in the Republic of Croatia. Most of the measures relate to the activities of the competent institutions, given that the insufficient capacity of the institutions and the frequent changes in the energy legislative framework at the level of the EU and in the Republic of Croatia.

[Read more](#)



## INCREASED SMART GRIDS UPTAKE IN BIH

The concept of smart grids in BiH is increasingly taking place in energy planning. In August 2022, the CENER21 team participated in a public debate on the proposal of a set of energy laws that will enable all participants to be active participants in accordance with the concept of smart grids.

The draft law also contains provisions related to smart grids, the integration of RES, energy efficiency and security of supply as the primary goals of energy policy.

## ABOUT THE STRIDE PROJECT

### ISSUES ADDRESSED

In recent years, Smart Grids have established a position very high on the European Union's agenda. As the development of new technologies have allowed for more concrete and realistic system solutions in regards to smart grids, Smart Grids increasingly represent the entire future development of the electric power system. Smart Grid concepts cover many areas, from the planning, operation, maintenance of the grid on one side and on the other side, from production, transmission, distribution and end-use.

Although prepared from a technological standpoint to implement Smart Grids, the Danube region is still in the early stages of the actual deployment of smart distribution systems. Local policy change to integrate the Smart Grid concept is essential in the further development of Smart Villages, Smart Cities or Smart Regions.



### PROJECT GOALS

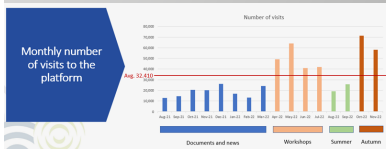
Through knowledge transfer and the development of planning tools, the STRIDE project, standing for *Improved energy planning through the Integration of Smart Grid concepts in the Danube Region*, aims to provide comprehensive support for local/regional policy makers for the improvement of energy planning. Some of the main objectives in this transnational project include regional analyses, developed strategies, action plans and other tools (i.e. methodologies, guidebook, digital platform) that will enable and accelerate the integration of Smart Grid concepts into local and regional policies across the Danube region.

### LONG-TERM RESULTS

The STRIDE project is aligned with the Danube Transnational Programme's *Priority Axis 3 – Better connected and energy responsible Danube region*, and will directly contribute to the programme *Specific objective 3.2 – Improve energy security and energy efficiency*. The STRIDE methodology for regional analysis, good practice guidebook and digital platform will be designed in a way that allows for their application to be rolled out across the Danube region — this shall have impact on building capacity of smart grid infrastructure in the Danube region. Replication of the STRIDE project shall provide much needed scalability across the Danube region and beyond.

## STRIDE PLATFORM GAINING TRACTION

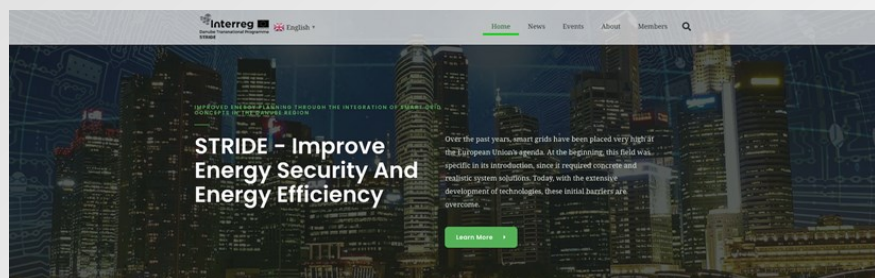
The STRIDE platform has been continuously updated with new materials related to the local trainings and workshops held in the last six months. Since then, the number of register members has risen to slightly above 70 members. Join the club! [Register now.](#)



## STRIDE SMART ENERGY PLATFORM

The [STRIDE Web Platform](#) is live and available to all project members and publicly to all interested parties. The STRIDE “Danube Smart Energy Platform” serves as a network of experts, policy makers, and other stakeholders from all target groups and therefore build capacity for the STRIDE project. The open-source platform is well-stocked with training materials, good practices, reports, and more for all interested and partners, involving members from the whole Danube Region. The platform allows members to exchange ideas, experiences, and knowledge of the STRIDE project topics and share them with the public.

Register now at [www.energy-stride.com](http://www.energy-stride.com)



## PROJECT PARTNERS

The international STRIDE consortium is well-balanced with competent partners, including energy agencies, R&D organisations, energy clusters, a university and policy makers:

- Local Energy Agency Spodnje Podravje (Slovenia)
- European Institute for Innovation-Technology (Germany)
- ConPlusUltra (Austria)
- Bay Zoltán Nonprofit Ltd. for Applied Research (Hungary)
- University of Zagreb Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (Croatia)
- Bulgarian Energy and Mining Forum (Bulgaria)
- EGÚ Brno, a.s. (Czech Republic)
- Centre for Energy, Environment and Resources—CENER 21 (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

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