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How to Enable Industrial Energy Communities?

Pola, 27th October 2026

09:30 – 09:45 | Registration and Welcome Coffee

International Multi-Stakeholder Workshop – How to Enable Industrial Energy Communities?

09:45 – 11:05 | Session 1: Opening and Introductory Presentations

- **09:45 – 09:55 | Welcome and Workshop Opening**
  - **Speaker:** IRENA / Head of the Administrative Department for Economy of the Region of Istria
- **09:55 – 10:05 | EU Policy Perspective: Energy Efficiency Policy and Financing: Driving Industrial and SME Decarbonization**
  - **Speaker:** Policy Officer, DG ENER (live stream from Brussels)
  - **Topic:** Policy update on the latest developments in energy efficiency financing, including strategic perspectives on funding decarbonization for industry and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- **10:05 – 10:20 | REFINEE Project Framework**
  - **Speaker:** REGION OF ISTRIA / FVG Plus
  - **Topic:** How to combine public and private funds to help companies more easily finance joint green energy projects.
- **10:20 – 10:35 | FVG: From Funding to Design**
  - **Speaker:** Energy Transition Department - FVG (live stream from Italy)
  - **Topic:** "Supporting Local Renewable Energy Communities (REC) and Developing a Regional Energy Community"
- **10:35 – 10:50 | Cross-Border Practical Insight: Industrial Clean Transition**
  - **Speaker:** Dr. Chittaro Carlo, Representative of Bluenergy Assistance S.r.l.
  - **Topic:** Real-world examples from Italy on how factories are upgrading their technology and lowering energy bills.
- **10:50 – 11:05 | Inter-Project Synergies: The HERCULES-CE Initiative**
  - **Speaker:** Representative of IRENA – Istrian Regional Energy Agency
  - **Topic:** How to launch energy communities in historical old towns and heritage zones.

11:05 – 11:15 | Break

11:15 – 12:15 | Session 2: Panel Discussion: "The New Legislative Wave – Will the Amendments to ZOIEVUK and ZTEE Finally Unlock Industrial Energy Communities?"

- **Format:** 55 minutes (5-min moderator introduction + 3 thematic blocks of 15–20 min each with rapid responses up to 2 minutes per speaker)
- **Language:** Croatian
- **Invited Panelists:** HEP ODS, North Adriatic Energy Community, EIHP, SME Sector Representative, Commercial Bank.
- **11:15 – 11:20 (5 min) | Provocative Moderator Introduction:** Paper accepts anything, but the grid doesn't: Do we have a law for the future or a brake on investment? What is the potential for investment and energy sharing?
- **11:20 – 11:45 (20 min) | Round One: "Go-to Zones and Administrative Turnaround – What Does the New ZOIEVUK Bring?"**
    - **Focus:** Accelerated development of renewable energy sources (RES) in business zones and simplification of procedures.
    - *Question for EIHP:*
    - *Question for the North Adriatic Energy Community*
- **11:45 – 12:00 (15 min) | Round Two: "The Law on the Electricity Market in the Parliament – Grid and Storage in Practice"**
    - **Focus:** Technical limitations, energy storage (batteries), and advanced metering.
    - *Question for HEP ODS:*
    - *Question for the SME Sector Representative*
- **12:00 – 12:10 (15 min) | Round Three: "Bankability of New Models and Risk Management"**
    - **Focus:** Financial risk under the new laws.
    - *Question for the Commercial Bank*
- **12:10 – 12:15 | Workshop Closing** – Discussion question

12:15 – 13:00 | Break and Networking

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Focus Groups: Sustainable Zones, Stable Investments: Energy Efficiency in the Focus of Istrian Entrepreneurship – Round Tables

- **13:00 – 13:10 | Introductory Remarks** – 10 minutes
- **13:10 – 14:00 | Topic 1: Business Zones and Energy Transition** (50 minutes)
    - This part focuses on physical space, infrastructure, and the implementation of sustainable energy solutions in zones – much will already be addressed in the morning session.
    - **Participants:** Banks, Local Government Units (LGUs), Entrepreneurs, IRENA, and potentially participants from the morning workshop (e.g., North Adriatic Energy Community...).
    - **20 minutes | Needs and Challenges in the Zones:**
        - What is crucial for entrepreneurs in the zone, what infrastructure is offered, and what is missing for upgrades?
        - What specific problems do entrepreneurs face and how do LGUs plan future investments (is it permits, financing, or infrastructure)?
    - **30 minutes | Green Infrastructure and Energy Communities:**
        - How to transform zones through energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energy sources (RES)? How much more attractive to investors would such a transformation make these zones? Could this be the key?
        - What is the interest and what are the barriers to establishing energy communities in zones (the role of IRENA and LGUs)? – *here we would just present conclusions from the preceding morning workshop.*
        - Solar energy in zones – is it an absolute necessity today or a secondary investment?

- **14:00 – 14:40 | Topic 2: Investment Financing and Achieving EE Goals** (40 minutes)
    - This part connects the needs of entrepreneurs with the financial sector and specific goals of the REFINEE project.
    - **Participants:** Entrepreneurs, Banks, Region of Istria, IRENA.
    - **[20] minutes | Capital Availability and Macroeconomic Trends:**
        - What are the current trends in SME loan requests and what is the current availability of capital?
        - Interest rate movements today and in the future – how does this affect investment decisions?
        - Do entrepreneurs mostly finance investments from their own funds or external sources, and what are the main barriers to accessing capital?
    - **[20] minutes | Investments in EE and REFINEE Goals:**
        - What is considered a good investment in EE, how much is invested, and how crucial is the return on investment (ROI) timeline for entrepreneurs?
        - REFINEE focus: The project targets a 15% savings in EE investment. How difficult or easy is it for entrepreneurs and banks (through green loans) to achieve and track these savings?

- **14:40 – 14:50 | Closing Remarks**