

Opening of the geothermal energy capacity building and training EEA Grant project, in Poland, 9th February 2021

February 2021

The 'Capacity Building of the Key Stakeholders in the Area of Geothermal Energy' Project was officially opened on February 9th, 2021. It is one of the three predefined projects co-financed by the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area under the Environment, Energy and Climate Change Program, 2014-2021.

The Project

The Project partners are the Mineral and Energy Economy Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences (MEERI PAS) - a leader, and the National Energy Authority (NEA, Orkustofnun) in Iceland - leading institutions in their countries in the field of research and use of geothermal energy. The Project will be implemented in the period 16.10.2020-30.04.2024.

The Project objective is to build the knowledge of key stakeholders in Poland in the field of optimal use of geothermal energy and management of its resources, especially for the needs of low-emission heating, mitigating climate changes. In particular:

- To increase the knowledge of key stakeholders in Poland regarding optimal use of geothermal energy and management of its resources, especially for the needs of low-emission heating,
- To enhance capacity building and knowledge-based methods, following long experience of geothermal energy in Iceland. This will be done through good methods, practice, and technologies, with the support of appropriate government initiatives, financial mechanisms, and management strategies.
- To increase energy security, development of low-emission heating, an opportunity to increase social and economic equality by providing clean energy and, inter alia, lowering heating costs. The Project aim is also to decrease pollution and CO2 emissions and contributing towards mitigating climate changes.

The main Project activities include capacity building, training activities in Poland, study visits to Iceland, expert study visits to selected localities in Poland prospective for the geothermal uses and report on these visits, information and communication activities regarding the Project and the EEA Funds.

The Project stakeholders are representatives of administration at various levels, local governments, operators of existing and investors of future geothermal heating plants, beneficiaries of government support programs, geological administration, research institutions, service providers, consultants, other entities from the geothermal sector.

The Project will contribute to geothermal energy uses development in Poland. It will assist investment activities that have been carried out thanks to several state support programs launched from 2016. The co-financing of the Project is ca. € 900 000.

The opening online event - the project and ongoing open EEA Grant geothermal calls

The opening online event was attended by over 70 persons, including many Project representatives of local governments, operators and investors of geothermal heating plants, beneficiaries of state geothermal support programs, employees of the geological survey, scientific and research institutions, other persons from the sector. Also present were representatives of entities from Iceland interested in cooperation with the Polish side, as well as representatives of Norway, the donor state of the NMF.

The opening of the Project was honoured by following attendance speakers: Maria Erla Marelsdóttir -the ambassador of Iceland (the Donor State of the EEA Grant in Poland), Gerard Pokruszyński - ambassador of Poland in Iceland, Adam Guibourge-Czetwertyński - Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Climate and Environment and Artur Sz. Michalski - Vice President of the National Fund for Environment Protection and Water Management, Piotr Bogusz - Deputy Director, Ministry of Climate and Environment, Edyta Kuźmińska and Maria Cholewińska from the National Fund for Environment Protection and Water Management.

From MEERI PAS the speakers were Krzysztof Galos, Director, and Beata Kępińska, Manager of the Project and from Orkustofnun GuSni A Jóhannesson, Director General and Baldur Petursson, Manager of the Project.

In remarks from speakers, they emphasized the importance of the Project, especially in the light of the activities undertaken in Poland for the development of low-emission geothermal heating. They indicated that the Project provides an opportunity to benefit from Iceland's knowledge and experience and to strengthen cooperation in the field of geothermal energy between the two countries.

In his speech, Mr. Adam Guibourge-Czetwertyński, Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Climate and Environment, pointed out that Poland is facing the challenge of energy transformation. Therefore, the country aims to increase the share of renewable energy sources to improve air quality, and geothermal energy can play a large role in this process.

Artur Sz. Michalski, Vice-president of the National Fund for Environment Protection and Water Management, emphasized that clean air is of key importance for Poland and that it can match other countries in this respect. This will be served by, among others, using geothermal energy in heating, and the inaugurated Project will support initiatives in this area.

The ambassador of Iceland Maria Erla Marelsdóttir expressed the conviction that the Project will be very helpful both in terms of raising knowledge and future geothermal investments in Poland. It is part of the measures taken to mitigate climate change. The example of Iceland shows the importance of geothermal energy in this respect, thanks to which the country has substantially reduced its greenhouse gas emissions. The ambassador also pointed to many years of good Icelandic-Polish relations and the importance of the EEA FM Grants as the main instrument for strengthening ties with Poland, also in the field of geothermal energy.

The ambassador of Poland Gerard Parazyński indicated that Iceland is a world leader in the use of geothermal as an ecological, reliable source of energy. It is one of the pillars of economic development, high quality of life, and health of the country's society. The Project will help to transfer some of these experiences to Polish ground, and geothermal energy should be one of the main areas of Polish-Icelandic cooperation.

Representatives of the National Fund for Environment Protection and Water Management Edyta Kuźmińska and Maria Cholewińska presented information about the ongoing geothermal calls for investment projects under the EEA Grant program and under Polska Geotermia Plus program.

Director General Krzysztof Galos of MEERI PAS and Director General Gudni A. Johannesson of Orkustofnun (NEA) presented their institutions and geothermal activities and experiences.

Lastly but not least Beata Kępińska, Project Manager, MEERI PAS and Baldur Petursson, Project Manager, from Orkustofnun (NEA) side, presented information on the Project and the opportunities of participating in training workshops and study visits.

In the opinion of many participants of the Event, the Project that is being launched is very promising, including for stakeholders who are just starting their "adventure with geothermal energy", looking for opportunities to acquire the necessary knowledge in this field. Hence, they expressed interest in the planned activities, in particular training workshops and study visits.

The agenda, speeches and presentation can be seen [here](#) with a link.

More information regarding the project can be reached from:

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