

**RURENER**

Network of small  
RURal communities  
for ENERgetic-neutrality



# RURENER CHARTER

Principles, rights and duties  
of  
RURENER MEMBERS

Supported by

Intelligent Energy  Europe

[www.rurener.eu](http://www.rurener.eu)

[info@rurener.eu](mailto:info@rurener.eu)

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## PREAMBLE

The project Network of small RURal Communities for ENERgetic Neutrality (acronym RURENER) is financed by IEE (Intelligent Energy Europe) programme on behalf of the European Commission.

The **main objectives** of RURENER are to:

- demonstrate interest for small rural communities, by promoting energetic-neutrality and innovative local development.
- give support to small rural communities to set up integrated energy policy, by providing methodological and technical support and facilitating experience sharing and mutualisation of resources and tools.
- stimulate energy efficiency actions in rural areas, through public and private investment for Renewable Energy Sources (RES), Rational Use of Energy (RUE), and use of local resources.

RURENER Network brings together **2 types of members**:

- Members of the RURENER Consortium from: France, Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Greece, and Romania. They compose the Technical advisory council.
- Small European rural communities committed to reach energetic-neutrality.

This document describes who can join RURENER NETWORK, what are the purposes of the network members, what are their rights and duties, advantages and responsibilities, in order to allow the network to develop and exist during and after the lifetime of RURENER project.

The RURENER Charter is translated into the 8 Consortium partners' languages

## CHAPTER I: PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES

The **main objectives** of members of the RURENER NETWORK are to:

- Make progress toward energetic-neutrality in small rural communities.
- Share experience and pool resources and tools.
- Attract public and private investments for Renewable Energy Sources (RES) and Rational Use of Energy (RUE).

Members of RURENER NETWORK subscribe to the following **principles**:

1. Members keep their responsibility, work independently with the support of the network, and aim to be successful in reaching their own objectives.
2. Members share the value of integrity, which creates an environment of mutual trust and respect.

3. The members are willing to work jointly for results which improve their own efforts of which other small rural communities can benefit.
4. Members benefit from shared knowledge, and results.
5. Members agree to educate and support the next generation in the spirit of energetic neutrality and protection of our planet.
6. Members have the spirit of learning and contributing on bringing their own best ideas in order to improve the activity of the network.
7. Members prove a flexible approach and openness to new ways of thinking.

## **CHAPTER II: MEMBERSHIP**

To become a member of RURENER NETWORK, the public representative of any rural community has to:

- respect the definition of rural community, as established within RURENER project and mentioned below in this charter;
- express its willingness to become energetic-neutral according to a local RES and RUE plan;
- accept and adhere to the current charter.

According to RURENER, rural communities are defined as follows: "communities or joint communities in a rural area with around 350 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> or 15.000 inhabitants in total, who are willing to use energy in a most sustainable and efficient way and deal with one or more of the following issues:

- make use of renewable energy;
- far from decision centers;
- energy efficiency in housing and buildings (measured on less than 50 housing units or 5000 m<sup>2</sup>);
- spatial planning, urban development, land use planning:
  - renewable heating projects under 3 MW
  - renewable power station projects
  - biomass production, transformation, conditioning and delivery
  - energy efficiency in agriculture and forestry units
  - energy efficiency in industries and services (less than 100 employees)".

To show its interest in becoming a member of RURENER NETWORK, a community must prepare a letter of interest and send it to the Consortium ([info@rurener.eu](mailto:info@rurener.eu)). The requests for network membership will be agreed on and confirmed by RURENER Consortium.

Within RURENER NETWORK, the small rural communities are represented by their public authorities. When joining RURENER NETWORK, the community representative will sign a copy of the present charter.

## **CHAPTER III: BENEFITS**

The participation of rural communities in RURENER NETWORK guarantees the support from the RURENER Consortium to make progress toward energetic neutrality.

The main benefits for local communities are:

- experience sharing and pooling of resources and tools;
- access to all project information and online tools developed by RURENER;
- free participation to training in the field of renewable energy sources and rational use of energy;
- support and participation in/organization of national and regional exhibition/conferences or seminars and local energy days, organized in every country during the project lifetime;
- model for SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the community in terms of energy savings and implementation of renewable energy sources;
- support for communication inside the community, to the citizens and outside of community to the important regional and national administrative personalities that can help the community development in the field of RES;
- support to identify financing sources and to obtain financial support;
- support for planning the expansion of existing RES and/ or transition to a new renewable energy source;
- help to design a more efficient use of energy;
- presentation of communities' activities on the project website in English and in its national language and on the community weblog;
- opportunities to establish twinning, inside the RURENER NETWORK, with other communities from different countries.

## **CHAPTER IV: TASKS**

In order to ensure the success of the activities, the communities being members of RURENER NETWORK will take/ respect the following challenges/ duties:

- to designate a local steering committee to lead the implementation of the actions at the local/regional level;
- to share their experience, data, successes and difficulties, to communicate their actions concerning energetic neutrality, mostly via Internet;

- to cooperate in studies on local community potential and needs;
- to develop energy data databases at the community level in order to emphasize the progress toward energetic neutrality;
- to support communication and dissemination at the community level;
- to make use of the online tools developed by RURENER;
- to report the progress towards energetic neutrality.

## **CHAPTER V: GOVERNANCE**

RURENER NETWORK encourages good partnership and cooperation between its members.

The following pilot communities are the founders of RURENER NETWORK: Atzeneta del Maestrat (Spain), Călimanești-Căciulata (Romania), Keratea (Greece), Nagypali (Hungary), Nikiforos (Greece), Perkupa (Hungary), Peyrelevade (France), Saint-Etienne de Lugdares (France), Saint Jean d'Alcapiès (France), Samtgemeinde Schladen (Germany), Samtgemeinde Wesendorf (Germany), Stadt Schöeningen (Germany), Tașca (Romania), Tirano (Italy).

RURENER Network is managed by the RURENER Consortium, taking into consideration the positions of communities' representatives.

The RURENER consortium's role is to support:

- progress toward energetic neutrality, according to the measure grid/ roadmap defined by RURENER project;
- concrete action in the field at the community level;
- RURENER NETWORK expansion;
- active twinning;
- participation in national/ regional/ international exhibitions/ conferences/ seminars on energetic issues;
- communication and actions between RURENER NETWORK members;
- communication and actions between RURENER NETWORK and other European networks dealing with rural development and energy;
- implementation, during the project of the optimal organizational and financial measures to ensure the sustainability of the network, after the lifetime of RURENER project (01/12/2011).

## **CHAPTER VI: TWINNING**

The twins can be two members of RURENER NETWORK or a member and another community, for example of an existing town twinning. A member can have several twins,

according to its specificities, opportunities and interests. A twinning can be materialized by experience sharing, meetings between representatives of inhabitants, participation to local energy days or technical cooperation. It is the responsibility of each community to get committed and assume its actions in the process of twinning.

Existing town twinning can be a tool to expand the network and to invite new communities to become a member.

## **CHAPTER VII: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS**

All and any materials, technologies and products resulted from **RURENER NETWORK** activities are protected by the intellectual property rights and cannot be used or distributed to any other than the participants of the network unless such an action is allowed by the partners in RURENER and also with the accord of IEE, which finances the RURENER project.

## **CHAPTER VIII: PACIFIC SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES**

The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the goals of RURENER NETWORK shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, or other peaceful means of their own choice.

## **CHAPTER IX: AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to the present charter shall be adopted by a vote of two thirds of the members of the RURENER Consortium.

This form of the charter is for the project lifetime and will be amended before the end of the project. A meeting for the purpose of reviewing the present charter may be held at a date and place to be fixed by a two thirds vote of the members.

## **CHAPTER X: RATIFICATION AND SIGNATURE**

The content and the form of the present charter shall be ratified by all RURENER NETWORK members, rural communities and Consortium partners. The Charter of RURENER NETWORK will be deposited at the coordinator of RURENER Consortium and published online.