

# Rural territories

get involved in



Year of Innovation

For Rural Energy!

**Make rural energy the unavoidable subject of 2017**

## Four actions

Evaluate

1

**RURENER Audit:** RURENER supports you as you conceive and implement evaluation and audit tools for your energy transition projects (5 days of personalized assistance + training for your agents in the process).

Cooperate

Discover

2

**Cooperation in Europe:** RURENER works with you to develop cooperative projects; from the moment you identify your needs, to writing tailored project descriptions, to building European partnerships. (5 days assistance + a turnkey cooperation project).

Rural

Energy

3

**Field study tours:** RURENER helps you design a field study in your territory and helps you realize the experiment (7 days assistance + identification of stakeholders + a turnkey field study + a field experiment + networking with other pioneer territories).

Experiment

Share

4

**Brussels:** A European event ensures that all actions taken by the network's members are recognized with an opportunity to present results of the evaluation reports, and cooperative workshops with projects' partners. The event will also launch the field study tours.

Promote

# Rural territories

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For Rural Energy!

## Numbers

2017



**MASSIF CENTRAL**

15 actions

A 81 964€ project

57 374€ grant

Territory commitment  
of 2 500€ per action

200 days of expertise

Of which 150 of fieldwork



**EUROPE**

**700** cooperative territories across Europe

**12** countries

**3** universities

**15 experts** ready to help you

**5** European projects

Rural territories,

Get involved in

« **2017 Year of Innovation for  
Rural Energy** »



# I General presentation of the project

## A. Context and general presentation

The project “*2017 Year of Innovation for Rural Energy*” will

1. Identify and evaluate innovative projects and politics concerning the production, distribution and consumption of renewable energies in the French Massif Central and in other rural territories in Europe,
2. Offer services tailored to rural territories (financial expertise, project design, animation and dialogue on energy issues, European cooperation, etc.),
3. Ensure communication and lobbying about these projects for a better recognition of rurality in energy policies at the national and European levels.

This project is aligned within the context of the mountainous territories of the French Massif Central, innovating to reduce their use of fossil fuels and improve their production and distribution of renewable energies. These territories aspire to create energy policies like the PCET (Territory Climate Energy Plan) and get involved in national action programmes such as the TEPCV (Positive Energy Territories for Green Growth) in France.

They are members of different networks, TEPOS (Positive Energy Territories) at the national level and RURENER at the European level. Through these networks, they share good practices and are represented during political meetings at different decision-making levels. They are also involved in targeted policies to reduce their fossil fuel consumption, such as town-centre renovation or urban renovation platforms. The Massif Central’s territories look for innovative funding to finance their energy transition by involving citizens, investing jointly in insulation materials, or signing contracts with renewable heat providers. They include citizens in their energy policy through citizen climate assemblies for instance. Finally, new organizations, such as SCIC (Cooperative Societies of Collective Interest), involving all the stakeholders of a territory, appear to produce and supply populations with renewable energies.

In the meantime, rural communities are confronted with new challenges. They must build policies of change impacting the whole community and put efforts in mobilizing them. This can lead to temporal conflicts between the short-term policies of public action responding to calls for proposals, and long-term policies of change.

On the financial level, communities have to find continued funding for renovation and sustainable energy production in the long-term, which bring together public and private efforts. This requires a previous knowledge of technical innovations in

other territories of France and in Europe. Indeed, research for new materials, processes and approaches is necessary to reduce the costs of the energy transition.

## B. Main objectives

The main goal of the project is to focus European decision-makers and partners' attentions on rural energy in 2017, designated as the Year of Innovation for Rural Energy by RURENER. The goal is to condense, on a short period of time, major efforts in the Massif Central and in Europe in order to revive decision makers and partners' attention on rural energy.

The project's main gain can be broken downs into specific objectives:

- Evaluate the impacts of local integrated energy policies in rural territories and the efficiency of the actions on the field; identify local innovative skills and expertise.
- Broadcast innovations experimented in the Massif and in Europe and feed local initiatives with innovations born elsewhere in Europe. The European network RURENER was born in the Massif Central; this project is a way to confirm the leadership of our territories at the European level in terms of rural energy.
- Demonstrate, based on fieldwork results, the strengths of rural territories in a medium-altitude mountain environment, to elaborate innovative energy policies in France and in Europe, and influence national and European decision-makers.

If we better understand the impacts of our local sustainable energy policies, we have more leverage to convince others of their importance and we can keep enhancing them.

If the expertise and the resources offered to the Massif Central and to the European rural territories are directly built with the local stakeholders and are shaped according to the territories' constraints, we improve our chances of offering simple, operational and realistic solutions.

If rural territories in the Massif Central combine the technical support they need, and other territories' innovative actions, it will create a collective stimulation, an increased political interest and the recognition of rural territories for their innovative ability.

From then on, other projects can be developed, territories will save and enrich their natural and human resources, and they will have the means to respond to tomorrow's social and environmental challenges while preserving their local dynamic.

# II Actions and means

## A. Action 1 - RURENER Audit

### 1. Presentation of the action

**“RURENER Audit”:** Evaluation of 5 territories in the medium-altitude mountainous environment engaged in an innovative energy policy in Europe (10 projects): RURENER offers these territories an expertise meant to:

- **Analyse and formalize one or more project(s) implemented on the territory. Identifying factors of success, difficulties, the replicability and the conditions to make the territory a field for study (see action n° 3 Field Study),**
- **Assist the realization of projects (emerging or in-progress) with the identification of the necessary expertise, strengths & weaknesses, and the formulation of recommendations,**
- **Design a monitoring-evaluation model for project evaluation and use for monitoring on a continuous basis on the field. These tools will be forwarded to the members of RURENER network to improve the monitoring of projects, evaluate the impacts of our approaches, and reinvest our experience to make the best choices on the field. Finally, the evaluation reports will be used for lobbying during and after this project.**

The main goal of this evaluation is to rationalize the impacts of rural energy projects on our territories, not only in terms of energy production and consumption, but also in terms of social, environmental and economic change. We already know that the bigger renewable energy providers are not necessarily the ones with the biggest socio-economic impact. What RURENER seeks to demonstrate is that the impacts concerning energy production are not enough to ensure a sustainable development for rural territories. Thus, RURENER audits will establish a basis to keep promoting innovating projects in medium-altitude environments and to contribute to a larger analysis of human resources, financial means, technical expertise, etc. in rural territories.

### 2. Tools and means

**On the one hand, the global energy strategy of a territory will be evaluated considering how its history, society, administrative organization, political orientation, geography and social processes (governance choices, civil society actions) contribute to the energy strategy of a given territory and what are the social, economic and environmental impacts of this strategy. On the other hand, one or two flagship project(s) for each territory will be evaluated to understand**

how the project is part of the general energy strategy of the territory in an effort to find a balance between consumption and production of renewable energies. Again, factors of success or failure, difficulties and facilitators will be identified. The monitoring-evaluation model will be made in collaboration with experts and Universities specialized in the fields of energy and territory management. At the end of this stage, a monitoring-evaluation model for policies and projects and a survey towards pilot territories will be done.

The action of audit will be conducted between June 2017 and January 2018. It encompasses a visit on the territory, a meeting with elected representatives and technicians in charge of the energy sector on the territory, and the writing of an audit report consisting of three parts: a part corresponding to the evaluation of the energy strategy and its impacts, a part on the project(s) evaluation and a part for recommendations. The audit reports will be written between January and June 2018. The results of the evaluations will be presented during the Brussels' event in the fall 2018.

**Synergies:** These results will enrich cooperation projects that will incorporate in their objectives the factors of success and solutions to tackle the factors for failure. Likewise, the robustness of the lobbying action will be rooted in this data. Finally, thanks to this emphasis, the territories will have access to new resources to host field studies from all over Europe (if they apply for the action n° 3 Field Study).

Until the end of the project, the process of monitoring-evaluation will be continually tested by local stakeholders and RURENER will help with its appropriation.

Audit reports will be built internally by the RURENER coordinator and broadcasted on the project's website and through other means of communications identified in the communication plan.

Each territory will benefit from the expertise of the RURENER coordinator for 5 days.

### 3. Prerequisite and territories' engagement

- This action will give a priority to:
  - Territories that do not have the financial means to realize an evaluation themselves
  - Territories that have had an energy policy for more than 3 years

## B. Action 2 - Cooperation in Europe

### 1. Presentation of the action

**“Cooperation in Europe”:** RURENER supports rural territories in a medium-altitude environment to build cooperative projects related to the energy transition and the development of these territories. Technical but also organizational and financial questions can be concerned. **The projects will be built with different territories**

**depending on their needs and thus tailored to the territories.** Some territories in the Massif Central have already expressed their interest for projects in different domains like: judicial and financial models for public-private cooperative societies in order to produce renewable energies, or a sectorial approach for techniques and materials' quality, sustainable mobility, etc. Cooperation projects must motivate policies of change in their territories and promote innovation to initiate all the local stakeholders to use, produce and distribute renewable energies.

5 cooperation projects on 15 territories within the Massif Central and the rest of Europe have to be built by the end of 2018. At least 5 of these territories must be in the Massif Central (medium-altitude mountain communities of 20, 000 inhabitants).

## 2. Tools and means

Depending on the deadlines of the different European cooperation programmes, RURENER will help with the **writing, establishment of partnerships and building of joint applications during the year of 2017**. In the fall 2018, a European meeting between territories and the mobilized local stakeholders will be organized as part of the 2017 Year of Innovation for Rural Energy European event, in order to consolidate cooperation projects and the meeting of European partners. Cooperation projects might be realized by the end of 2018 and during the first semester of 2019.

In order to complete this action, RURENER relies on its experience of development and support of Leader projects, EIE and Interreg and on its **network of 700 European territories**. The coordinator, specialized in development and authorship of European projects, will dedicate 93 days to this action over the course of the two year project. This corresponds to 5 days of work for each territory or 15 days for each cooperation project.

## 3. Prerequisite and territories' engagement

- This action will give a priority to:
  - Territories that have identified a specific need of cooperation to improve their energy strategy
  - Territories engaged in a continuous monitoring-evaluation approach that will feed the long-term initiative started by action n°1 RURENER Audit.

## C. Massif Central field study

### 1. Presentation of the action

**“Field study for rural energy”**: drawing from previous knowledge of rural territories engaged in the energy transition, RURENER assists in the building of a network of pioneer territories that are likely to **host field study projects (research and research-action programmes) from other European territories.**

- Examples in Austria and Italy show that a new economic model can be invented by combining tourism and experience transfer. Some of the Massif Central stakeholders started their engagement towards the energy transition by participating in such studies in the Vorarlberg (Austria) and the North of Italy.
- Today, the Massif Central has enough feedback from past innovative experiences and realizations to build its own offer and get recognition at the European level. Thus, it will spread an original perspective on the energy problem in medium-altitude environments.

### 2. Tools and means

The action Field Study will take place in 3 stages:

- A diagnosis to identify the territories and local partners able to receive field studies, and to define a field study of the territory.
- The structuring of the process: joint work with tourism offices, tourism specialists, energy specialists to define the tangible ways and means to organize the study and offer a turnkey field study in the fall 2018 during the Brussels event.
- The implementation of the study: during the Spring and Fall 2018 the first field trips will be organized in the Massif Central.

A market study will be carried out on each territory to highlight their potentials and geographic distribution (a field study is usually a three day trip so it cannot cover the entirety of the Massif Central). The market study will allow selecting the most relevant and competitive territories at the European level.

Simultaneously, the application of each territory will be examined by a qualitative and quantitative study of the needs of the foreseeable visitors to uncover the specificities of the targeted demand.

Then, the market study will allow us to define a marketing strategy to sell the Field Study tours (price, communication, distribution channels).

In this domain, logistics will be evaluated and chosen so transportation, housing, food services, training centres will be available and consistent with the dynamic of the energy transition as presented in the territories. A tour will be organized and structured during the second semester of 2018. The local stakeholders able to provide training and services linked to the energy transition will be mobilized so the tour can be sold as soon as 2019.

The final event of the project will be the occasion to launch the tour.

RURENER coordinator will dedicate 25 days to this action on the two years project. This corresponds to 7 days of work for each selected territory.

An expert in structuring field study tours in the Massif Central will be mobilized for the market study and assist RURENER coordinator in structuring local offer.

### 3. Prerequisite and territories' engagement

- This action will give a priority to:
  - Territories that have a potential for hosting international experts
  - Territories where a global offer can be structured (housing, sites visits, food services...) and shows real commitment.

## D. Brussels event

The event 2017 Year of Innovation for Rural Energy ensures the reputation of the project's actions thanks to presentations, evaluation reports' results, cooperation workshops and the launching of field study tours.

It will be the occasion for all French territories taking part in the project to share their experiences with partners in France and Europe, to highlight their actions to the French and European decision makers and realize the innovative dimension of their actions.

## III Financial contribution

### A. Financial terms

To take part in the project, the territories are asked to contribute financially to RURENER's operational fees.

The fixed amount of the co-financing is 2, 500€ for each action for which the territory will take part.

- For instance, if a territory is selected for the Cooperation action only, it commits to pay 2, 500€ to participate.
- If the territory is selected for the action RURENER Audit + Cooperation + Field Study, it commits to pay 7, 500€ to participate.

### B. Selection procedure

To apply you only need to:

- Fill-up the Google doc form by clicking on the link below before **December 31, 2017**:

<https://goo.gl/forms/ROmTHqNcgQsZJRcw2>