



“HERON”: “Forward-looking socio-economic research on energy efficiency in EU countries”



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The preamble: Energy efficiency is considered as the most clean and effective “fuel” in the combat against Climate Change and comprises one of the pillars of the submitted to UNFCCC Intended National Determined Contributions (INDC) by EU. Understanding the behavioral obstacles that hinder the implementation of effective policies is a complicated process that this project attempts to carry out for the benefit of all EU countries.

The project: “Heron” is the acronym of the “Forward –looking socio-economic research on energy efficiency in EU countries”. It is a twenty six (26) months R&I project financed with 1million € in the context of Horizon 2020 and has started functioning on 1st May 2015. The Kick – off meeting with the participation of policy makers, market stakeholders and representatives from international organizations will take place in KEPA premises on the 18th June 2015 in Athens.

The consortium: Eight (8) academic and research institutions from seven (7) EU member states and one (1) EU candidate country¹ with variable experience in EU energy efficiency policies, cooperate in HERON.

The challenge: Implementing energy efficiency policy mixtures and promoting new products and technologies is hindered by existing social, economic, cultural and educational barriers that correspond to behavioral characteristics in the societies of the EU countries under research.

The aim: The “HERON” aims to facilitate policy makers of multi-level governance and market stakeholders in EU, to develop and implement effective energy efficiency policies in the sectors of building and transport.

The objectives: 1) the impact of socio-economic and institutional factors on implementing energy efficiency policies and measures, 2) the development of energy-efficient pathways to the horizon 2030 and beyond taking into account the socio-economic drivers and the updated energy efficiency measures, 3) the improvement of energy modeling by incorporating social, educational and cultural factors so as to reflect the end-user behavior, 4) the establishment of communication channels between researchers, decision makers of different governance levels, market stakeholders and society.

The work packages: These objectives will be achieved through the following work packages: (1) Mapping of energy efficiency policy instruments, available technologies and social, economic, cultural and educational barriers in transport and buildings, (2) Assessment of the evidenced barriers and the main driving factors, in order to define their weight/importance for the implementation of energy efficiency policies, (3) Determination of linkages between the factors and the energy efficiency, (4) Forward-looking scenario analysis, focusing on macro- and micro-economic impacts of energy efficiency policy options, (5) Policy recommendations through multi-criteria evaluation and feedback mechanisms with policy makers and market stakeholders from EU (member states, Covenant of Mayors) and neighboring countries (Business Council of BSEC). HERON will develop an innovative decision support tool to incorporate non-economic and non-market elements, such as social, educational and cultural, into scenario analysis.

The innovative element: Non-economic and non-market elements, such as social, educational and cultural, will be incorporated with economic and technological elements into energy scenarios development and modeling reflecting the end-user behavior towards energy efficiency in building and transport sectors

The benefits: The outcomes of the project will empower policy makers and market players by providing them with an innovative policy tool allowing them to select and implement the most effective policy instruments for energy efficiency in building and transport sectors.

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