

CHAPTER IV.



EKOENERGY FLAG DURING A CLIMATE DEMONSTRATION IN HELSINKI, FINLAND. SOURCE: EKOENERGY.

EUROPE

Comprehensive Approach, Inclusive Development

EKOenergy - the ecolabel for energy

SNAPSHOT

Geographical coverage: Finland, expanding worldwide

Entity name: EKOenergy (www.ekoenergy.org)

Entity type: Civil Society Organization

Implementation period: June 2013 - Ongoing

Key stakeholders and partnerships: EKOenergy's network of local and international NGOs focusing on environmental issues; Finnish Association for Nature Conservation; energy providers; local grassroot organizations; volunteers, trainees and young people.

Relevant SDGs:



Click to learn more: sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=29804

Brief Summary

EKOenergy is a worldwide, non-profit ecolabel and a network of environmental NGOs. Initially launched in 2013, the organization aims to fight climate change, protect the environment and alleviate energy poverty. The ecolabel is a tool, working within existing market mechanisms, for people to find energy produced through highly sustainable means and contribute to financing renewable energy projects in remote areas of developing nations.

EKOenergy has three main objectives. First, broad structural change in the economy towards a more sustainable model: the ecolabel provides a tool to effect broad structural change in society, in line with SDG 12. In order to qualify for EKOenergy's ecolabel, power plants must be both renewable and must meet additional environmental requirements. Second, communication about climate change and the adoption of renewable energy: EKOenergy works to maintain environmental issues, global warming and

the injustice of energy poverty within public discourse. To do this, EKOenergy's website was translated into 40 different languages, and the organization maintains active blogs and stays vocal on various social media platforms. The third key objective is to channel money into renewable energy projects that alleviate poverty and inequality in developing countries. For each megawatt hour of energy sold with the ecolabel, the seller contributes 0.10€ to the EKOenergy Climate Fund. Unlike a more conventional fundraising model, the Climate Fund allows for efforts and impacts to complement one another by encouraging people to buy eco-labeled energy, bringing all the structural and environmental benefits of supporting sustainable energy, whilst also providing renewable energy solutions to those who are in need of it most.

The organization works to bridge the gap between environmental NGOs and energy suppliers by finding and promoting power plants that fulfill their sustainability criteria and contacting Governments and regulators to inform them about the need for infrastructure to support the development of the renewable energy industry. The number of energy providers that offer EKOenergy labelled electricity started at 16, predominantly in Finland, and has now increased to 55, in countries spanning all over the globe. The total Climate Fund budget has grown significantly from 2014 (1,307€) to 2018 (254,734€). This growth has allowed funding for an increasing

number of climate projects such as: providing solar lanterns to communities in North Darfur, Sudan; funding the installation of solar panels on five medical buildings in Guinea; the installation of a solar internet cafe in Nisur, Tajikistan; and the setup of solar powered spinning machines in Marangani, Peru, among others.



*EKOenergy Project in Palestine
Source: EKOenergy*

The growing interest in renewable energy worldwide makes EKOenergy's work possible. Energy markets are developing rapidly due to both economic factors and growing public concern over climate change. The need to address climate change is growing immensely as climate effects become increasingly visible. On the other hand, due to the development of new technology, renewable energy is getting cheaper yearly. Therefore, EKOenergy is becoming more relevant as their ecolabel functions as a guide to highlight the best renewable energy choices available. One of the

most significant factors which has enabled this work is the existence of tracking systems for renewable electricity. These include the Guarantees of Origin system in Europe and I-REC certificates which the organization uses in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The existence of renewable energy legislation such as these is important for allowing a renewable energy market to exist, so EKOenergy vocally supports Governments which are in the process of introducing this kind of legislation.



EKOenergy Project in Togo, Source: EKOenergy

Through the EKOenergy ecolabel, the Climate Fund and Environmental Fund, EKOenergy works to realize the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2020, EKOenergy's overall contribution to several SDGs through new clean energy projects has exceeded 1 million euros. EKOenergy has made it a primary goal to communicate about environmental and climate related issues, even though achieving visibility is an ongoing challenge that is faced.

Through partnerships with other environmental organizations, energy providers and companies who promote clean energy, their gradual growth into new markets around the world has allowed more and more people to learn about their services. The ecolabel not only works as a fundraising tool, but also helps to change the behavior of consumers and raise awareness for the impact of people's daily lives on the environment. EKOenergy's work highlights the importance of buying sustainable energy, and through communication, encourages the public to account for sustainability issues by demonstrating small yet impactful practices that people can incorporate into their daily lives.

Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 has minor impact on EKOenergy, as most of its work has been carried out digitally before the pandemic. The organization will continue its endeavors in promoting renewable energy and sustainable development.