

RENEWAT

RENEWABLE ENERGY IN EUROPEAN WATERMILLS

RENEWAT addresses the cultural and territorial challenges of repowering watermills as modern tools for producing renewable energy.



ABOUT THE PROJECT:

European rivers are rich with historical hydraulic structures, but over the years many of them have fallen out of use or have not been properly maintained. Over time local mill owners have shown interest in renovating their sites for micro hydropower production, but they have often faced significant administrative obstacles.

Led by the Syndicate Energy Haute-Vienne, RENEWAT brings together 9 partners from 8 different countries (FR, IT, HR, SI, LT, PL, AL, and UA) with the aim to **inform local and regional actors of the partners territories about watermills re-powering, so that this renewable energy is well identified and supported in their local and regional policies amongst the renewable energy mix.**

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END DATE: 30 June 2028

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1. WHY RENEWAT?

“Address the cultural and territorial challenges of repowering watermills as modern tools for producing renewable energy.”

The acronym “**RENEWAT**” stands for “**renewable energy in european watermills**”, the project has been approved under the second call for proposals of the Interreg Europe Programme, within the Greener Europe topic.

What will RENEWAT change?

The project partners will work together to share knowledge and implement actions aimed at upskilling local and regional actors in their territories on watermill repowering, **so that this renewable energy source is recognized and supported in local and regional policies as part of the energy mix.**

Which are the main project activities?

RENEWAT partners will explore topics such as technical skills, administrative processes, and financial models, focusing on the renovation of a historical heritage that combines various potentials in the energy, environmental, heritage, economic, social, and cultural fields. Indeed, watermills offer a valuable local source of renewable energy and represent an important part of our historical heritage, their revitalisation can stimulate the local economy by encouraging economic development in rural areas and creating new jobs.

The RENEWAT consortium will also address six specific policy instruments related to different scales, approaches, and locations, all contributing to a complementary approach and vision for repowering existing watermills.



2. RENEWAT PARTNERS

RENEWAT project bring together 9 partners from 6 EU countries and 2 candidate EU countries. The project consortium is well-balanced and joins various views and expertise in renewable energy, hydropower, watermill revitalisation, education, and stakeholder engagement.

- **LP01** Syndicate Energy Haute Vienne (FR)
- **PP02** Fédération des Moulins de France (FR)
- **PP03** Martijanec Municipality (HR)
- **PP04** Rzeszow Regional Development Agency (PL)
- **PP05** Energy Agency of Savinjska, Saleska and Koroska Region (SI)
- **AP06** Vytautas Magnus University (LT)
- **PP07** Molise toward 2000 (IT)
- **DP08** Udhetim i Lire - Free to travel (AL)
- **PP09** Lviv City Council (UA)

3. KICK-OFF MEETING

First project meeting in Limoges

From June 11th to 13th, RENEWAT partners gathered for the official project kick-off meeting, marking the beginning of a fruitful collaboration. Hosted by the project's Lead Partner (SEHV), the meeting took place in Limoges (FR), a city in southwestern France surrounded by hills and nature.

This initial gathering offered a unique opportunity for the partners to meet face-to-face and lay a strong foundation for future cooperation. Over the course of three days, participants engaged in productive discussions focused on key aspects of the project's goals and activities.



The meeting began with a warm welcome, followed by an introductory session where each partner had the chance to present their organization and interest in the project. This helped to establish personal connections and a deeper understanding of the collective expertise within the group.

Next, the lead partner presented the RENEWAT project and its objectives, allowing all partners to understand their roles as ambassadors for the project, while highlighting the need to consider the long-term sustainability and real impact of its outcomes, particularly in terms of policy improvements and changes.

The communication strategy was also presented, along with its main goals and activities; and during an insightful workshop, the key features of watermills and how to manage their repowering were explored, offering valuable knowledge for future work. Also notable was the visit to **La Maison de l'Énergie**, after which the partners officially signed the consortium agreement, as well as the **study visits at two reconverted mill sites: Beaufort Mill and Got Mill.**

In conclusion, this first meeting provided the partners with a clearer vision of the collaborative road ahead, setting a positive tone for the work to come and promising a strong partnership as the project unfolds.



4. STUDY VISIT AT RECONVERTED SITES

The Beaufort Mill: Environmental Sustainability

The Beaufort Mill is a hydropower station owned and operated by the town council of Saint-Leonard-de-Noblat, and it is situated within a 19th-century building on the bed of the Vienne River. The hydropower station houses three turbines: one dating back to 1910 (which is no longer in service) and two operational ones, dated from 1946 and 1961.

This mill sells its electricity produced under contract at a fixed price, and the management of the site is based on the flow available: when the flow rate increases then the turbine raises its production, and vice versa.

Since 2017, the company has adopted the status of a local industrial and commercial public service, and in 2023 the town council agreed to renovate the mill, with the objective of doubling the production from the hydropower station.



The Got Mill: Socio Economic sustainability

The Got Mill, located on the outskirts of Saint-Léonard-de-Noblat, is a 15th-century paper mill that has been renovated into a museum. The site also includes a printing shop and paper production facilities.

Following in the footsteps of their 15th-century predecessors, the papermakers at Got Mill continue to produce various types of paper, used by artists for their creations or for printing diverse projects. Recently, SEHV documented the **replacement of the mill's ancient wooden wheel with a modern metal one.** Now, the mill owner is seeking to integrate electricity production with the historical aspects, which are at the heart of the site.



5. HYDROPOWER IN HAUTE-VIENNE

Assessing the **feasibility of small hydropower projects in the Haute-Vienne area.**



During the past months, SEHV has been accompanying the State Government at the departmental level through various visits to local dam sites to evaluate the potential for installing turbines and to discuss the associated challenges with local owners.

In July, SEHV visited a site at a small rural lake primarily used for fishing and recreational activities (which also includes a campsite), and on September 5th, another visit was made to a beautiful site with a rich history, where remnants of two mills can still be seen: one for flour production and the other for wool processing.

The visits were part of a pilot programme to assess methods for examining the feasibility of revitalising the sites and installing new hydropower systems. **The discussions focused on the challenges, opportunities and needs of integrating hydropower production, emphasizing the importance of balancing hydropower innovation with cultural preservation and environmental concerns.**

These factors are vital in establishing a solid foundation for the successful implementation of sustainable hydropower solutions.

6. EVENTS AND NEXT STEPS...

Events

On Wednesday, September 18th, RENEWAT project was presented during the **"Boosting Hydropower: Best Practices for Research"** webinar. The event, hosted by ETIP HYDROPOWER, aimed to showcase recent advancements in hydropower technology and provided an opportunity to share and learn about the latest research developments in hydropower across Europe.

Discover here about the **upcoming period**

In the second semester, the RENEWAT partners will participate in the 2nd Learning Event, which will be hosted in Lithuania by Vytautas Magnus University (VDU).

During the 2nd project period, the consortium will focus on the scientific background and legal framework related to the management of watermill repowering projects:

1. Different administrative and legal frameworks from various regions will be taken into consideration and compared, allowing partners to gain new insights and consider potential improvements for their contexts.
2. VDU, as Advisory Partner, will provide all RENEWAT partners with updated knowledge, helping them establish a stronger common foundation to convince local and regional stakeholders about the benefits of repowering and revitalising existing water mills.



THANK YOU!

Discover more about our initiatives
and updates on RENEWAT webpage:
interregeurope.eu/renewat

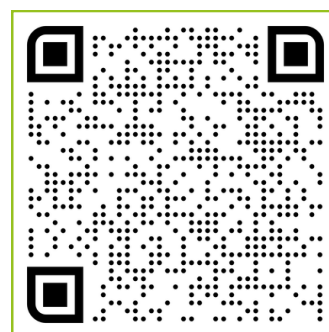
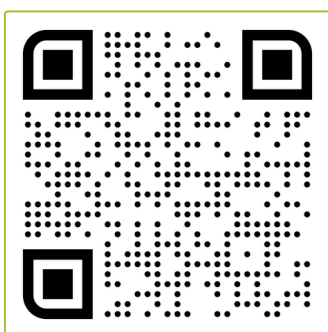
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