

Energy education (Energie(k) Onderwijs)

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NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM

The project fulfils a social role and plays an essential role in accelerating the energy transition. There are several similar projects and valuable initiatives in Belgium and the Netherlands, but not all stakeholders are familiar with their details. To avoid duplication of effort, it is very important that all stakeholders can find each other and share relevant information effectively.

Geographical area

The Netherlands and Belgium

More specifically The Southern Netherlands and Flanders.

Period of implementation

Started 1 May 2023 until 30 April 2026

Scope of the practice

Secondary education

Higher education

Post-initial education (upskilling and retraining programs)

Educational level

ISCED level 2-6

Introduction and context

Key stakeholder: civil society

Type stakeholders: educational institutions, the government and the concerned sectors, plant engineering, construction, (chemical) industrial and energy, metal and engineering.

Target group(s):

- educational institutions in secondary and higher education (Netherlands: mbo, hbo; Flanders: aso, bso, tso / finalities A – D/A - D)
- pupils/students and teachers within those educational institutions
- potential lateral entrants
- companies, employees and branch organisations in the relevant sectors
- governments (politicians, administrators, policy makers) and education committees
- EU citizens reached through the press

Funding/budget:

Total EUR 4,240,364.22

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) € 2,120,182.09

Partners also use additional co-financing options.

To achieve the EU climate targets, competencies around sustainability are essential. Over the past 10 years, the focus of the energy transition has largely been on developing and testing innovative energy technologies. A necessary condition but certainly not the only condition for this major, societal task to succeed.

Skills shortages are a bottleneck for realising the energy transition. Various reports show that there is already a significant shortage of skilled personnel, and that this shortage will only increase in the coming years. This shortage is caused not only by increasing and changing labor demand from the sectors involved, but also by the aging of the current workforce. The type of personnel needed as a result of the energy transition will change significantly in the coming years. How exactly, is impossible to say in view of the rapid developments. In any case, there is a need for broadening skills. Technicians must no longer have only substantive technical competencies, but also knowledge and insight into the economic perspective of sustainable technologies. The importance of core or key competencies is therefore increasing. Furthermore, high demands are placed on digital competencies.

It is clear that labour supply from education/training lags behind demand. Also, in view of lateral inflow (e.g. unemployment, inactivity, leaving abroad), there is currently insufficient supply. In addition, the sectors active in the energy transition are competing strongly with other technical sectors.

The challenges we face on both sides of the border are similar. By cooperating across borders, needs can be met more quickly and efficiently, and mutual competition can be countered. The educational institutions involved represent the majority of secondary/medium and higher (vocational) education in their respective sectors. And the entrepreneurial organisations involved have a good picture of the work sector in the Netherlands and Flanders. Together, the project partners also want to ensure that corresponding skill levels are recognised across borders.

Key activities and outcomes

The project partners make every effort to prevent the energy transition from stalling because of personnel shortages in the energy sector. To this end, the project focuses on:

- Making visible the qualitative and quantitative demand from the market for personnel for sectors that are linked to the energy transition, and comparing this with the supply of training (0 measurement and gap analysis). (This will include the use of analysis results from the Interreg Border Region Project GHLOBO).
- Adapting regular courses in these sectors in secondary and higher education (based on 0 measurement and gap analysis), including educational innovation (hybrid and blended learning, community learning, case-based learning), continuous learning lines and addition of interdisciplinary modules in curricula.
- Developing new retraining pathways for lateral entrants to the relevant sectors, e.g. for people distanced from the labour market, persons having experienced job loss in other sectors.
- Developing in-service training pathways for employees in the relevant sectors (especially of older and short-skilled staff to prevent outflow) and for teaching staff in the relevant educational institutions.
- Utilisation of cross-border complementarity through which (energy) education on both sides of the border can be strengthened and updated. Cooperation and knowledge networks of educational institutions and companies in the relevant sectors can be shaped.
- Developing and implementing a recruitment and awareness campaign aimed at pupils/students in primary and secondary education, and potential lateral entrants (retrainers) to enthuse them for training pathways in the sectors concerned.
- The creation of hybrid apprenticeships with good coaching programs at educational institutions and companies in the sectors concerned, both for initial education and for further and retraining programs.



SOURCES

<https://interregvland.eu/energiek-onderwijs/over-ons>