



## Project Fact Sheet

Updated: August 2007

### Rural Advice and Support Units for RES in Heat Systems and Integrated Energy Management in Buildings (RURASU)

<b>Programme area:</b>	ALTENER, heat from renewable energy sources
<b>Status:</b>	Finished
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<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.rurasu.info">http://www.rurasu.info</a>
<b>Objective:</b>	Providing energy management, energy conservation consultancy and services in rural areas
<b>Benefits:</b>	Systematisation & exchange of knowledge & experience, support of local Energy Management, Partners' network
<b>Keywords:</b>	local & regional activities, rural design & advice support units, RES in heat
<b>Duration:</b>	01/2005 – 06/2007
<b>Budget:</b>	€ 1.095.500 (EU contribution: 50%)
<b>Contract number:</b>	EIE/04/223/S07.38603



#### Short description

RURASU focused on energy problems of each involved rural area (Pieria in Greece, Allgäu in Germany, South Ayr in United Kingdom, Cordillera Subetica in Spain), aiming to support dispersed local actors like engineers, buildings designers, public authorities and consumers on the use of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency measures in the building stock. The support was continuous, throughout the project duration, and was achieved through the setting-up (in United Kingdom and Spain) and further development (in Greece and Germany) of Rural Design and Advice Support Units (DASUs).

The continuous support provided to local actors resulted in the broader use and implementation of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency techniques. Important elements were:

- The development of educational materials (Information Acquisition Tool, leaflets etc.)
- Analysis, training and consultations regarding the European Buildings Directive (2002/91/EC)
- Networking and training of the involved professionals and support of local energy management in general.

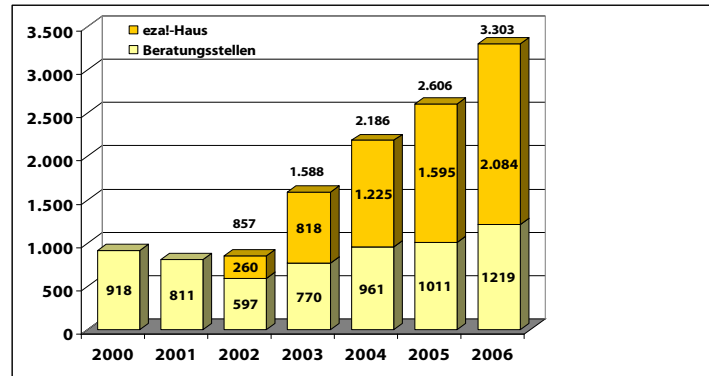
#### Achieved results

- Operation of Design and Advice Support Units (DASUs) in the four rural involved areas.
- Creation of methodological tools for supporting the establishment or further development of rural based Design Advice and Support Units.
- Creation of Public Relation strategies for all involved areas and application of these strategies, including coalition with local media of the involved areas.
- Set up of Partners' networks in each Design and Advice Support Unit (DASU) and training of the professionals involved.

- World Wide dissemination of deliverables and production of educational material in local languages focusing on specific categories of professionals and individuals.

## Lessons learnt

- During the RURASU project a significant rise of the impact of eza! (German DASU) on the regional markets for building industries and renewable energy in buildings was achieved. It was obvious that a rising number of householders relied on the recommendations of eza!. Figure 1 shows the rising yearly numbers of initial consultations in the 40 consultation offices of eza!.



*figure 1: initial consultations in the Allgäu performed by eza!*

With this impact complaints on poor workmanship have been sent to eza! in a rising number. For eza! to keep its outstanding positive image in the regional public opinion it was very important to react and to develop a strategy to ensure a high quality for both the businesses in the partner network and the energy advisers. After many discussions and an intensive discussion process together with the companies of the DASUs partner network it was stated that the only reliable control for quality is the satisfaction of the customers. To have an indication for the satisfaction of the customers and of the quality of the workmanship of the partner companies a new quality control system for the partner network and the energy advisers was developed and introduced. Now all customers of all partner companies and of all energy advisers are asked with the final invoice to give a mark on the performance of the company or the energy adviser by internet or telephone.

- One important lesson learned is the importance of establishing a “corporate brand” for the DASU. Following the presentation on this subject by the German DASU, Eza, the Scottish DASU put together a marketing strategy and developed its “brand”. It is clear that this helps to establish the organization so that the Energy Agency is recognized throughout its local area for providing free, impartial, expert advice to households, businesses, schools and communities. It is thought that by developing a higher profile and a clear identity that the Energy Agency will become the first contact point for people and companies in the region. The marketing strategy developed will also help to focus the development of the DASU.
- Successfulness of the DASU operation is based on the framework of the body within which it exists and of its relation and experience with the focus area. PIERIKI (operator of the Greek DASU) is the most experienced organisation of rural development in the prefecture of Pieria. Through the implementation of programmes and projects from 1991 up to now, PIERIKI is identified by the local actors and the inhabitants of the rural areas as their “tool” for rural development. The vast number of rural oriented programmes and projects are interrelated, in a way that successful dissemination of new projects (as RURASU) was achieved. Moreover, PIERIKI through the already established DASU, offers energy consultations to all building construction projects under funding, and is responsible for auditing the implementation of the proposed measures. In that way successful implementation of the consultation is registered in order to be used in future dissemination activities.