Interreg Europe
Co-funded by the European Union
BIOWIND

SEPTEMBER 2025 | ISSUE #5

BIOWIND

INCREASING SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE FOR WIND ENERGY IN EU REGIONS THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY BASED PLANNING

News & Updates from the project

BIOWIND 5th NEWSLETTER

Dear Readers,

We are thrilled to present the 5th edition of our newsletter. In this edition, we will explore the progress of our project's completed activities, offering you a comprehensive insight into our operational methods.

This edition offers a glimpse into our **latest Project Meeting** in Kielce, Poland briefly introducing the lessons learnt regarding policy briefs and sharing with policy platforms. The anticipated **biodiversity risk assessment framework** for improved Policy Improvement guidance was summarised. The development of the **sustainability strategy** was analysed, tailored to BIOWIND's partners' regional focus .

The progress of the **Pilot Action implementation** was discussed while the State of Play for the Peer review process regarding policy changes was presented to the consortium.

IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

The BIOWIND project implementation will lead to the following outcomes:

- Enhancement of **9 policy instruments**, benefiting public authorities and stakeholders.
- Strengthened capabilities of **176 public administrations** to efficiently execute environmentally friendly and socially inclusive wind energy policies.
- **Unlocking over 30 million euros** to back projects related to wind energy spatial planning, energy cooperatives, biodiversity conservation, and community support schemes.
- Heightened **awareness and consensus building** among civil society groups, environmental agencies, public administrations, and wind stakeholders in BIOWIND regions.

CONTENTS

IMPACT OF THE PROJECT...1
5TH PROJECT MEETING... 2
SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT... 3
LESSONS LEARNED AS POLICY BRIEFS... 3
STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS... 4
INTRODUCTION TO PILOT ACTION... 5
INTRODUCTION TO BIODIVERSITY RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK...6
CONTACT US... 7

5TH PROJECT MEETING

During the 5th semester, the **5th project meeting** was conducted in **Kielce, Poland** with the participation of all partners of the BIOWIND project. The focus of the meeting was set on providing a **complete overview of the activities**, updates on the reporting progress and upcoming deadlines. The meeting during the first session aimed at discussing the summary of policy briefs, the biodiversity risk assessment framework for improved PI governance, the development of the Sustainability Strategy and the implementation of the Pilot Action. The second session focused around the peer-review for policy changes and the working groups, process which will be completed by the end of the core phase of the project.

Project Meeting in Kielce, Poland

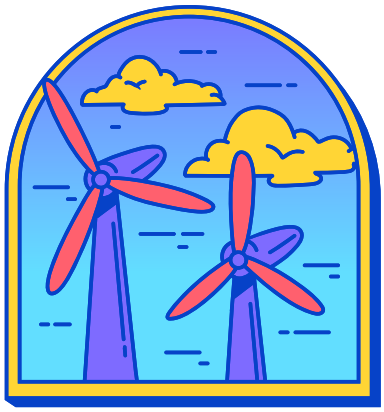
SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The **Asturian Energy Foundation** (**FAEN**) formulated a **Sustainability Strategy,** strengthening long-term planning for the clean energy transition, focusing particularly on wind energy. The Strategy aims to enhance the proliferation of socially accepted wind energy projects and presents a **consolidated set of policy recommendations** developed during the implementation of the project followed by a structured overview of partners' key territorial policies. The **objectives** of the Strategy entail primarily the translation of the findings into **actionable and concrete policy directions** per region and further the **integration of wind energy into long-term regional planning;** especially into three independent pillars:

i) the **Environmental** pillar, including biodiversity protection and ecological resilience,

ii) the **Social** pillar, including community participation, citizen-led energy models and shared ownership of a wind energy project,

iii) the **Economic** pillar, focusing on transparency, reduced administrative barriers, benefit-sharing and progress monitoring. It also provides **practical guidelines for stakeholder engagement**, identifying key actors, proposing **mechanisms to embed participatory governance** into wind energy planning processes and **reinforces the strategic role of regional and local authorities** in driving the energy transition. Access the Sustainability Strategy **here**!



LESSONS LEARNED AS POLICY BRIEFS

The Province of Flemish Brabant (PFB), as the responsible partner for the 'Policy Briefs' activity summarised the main lessons learnt from BIOWIND exchange of experience and capacity-building activities and created four operational documents (policy briefs). Their strategic role aims at linking complex research and actionable policy decisions, distill findings and offer concise recommendations. Further, the policy briefs provide the framework for the involvement of civil society and NGOs into raising awareness and improving social acceptance of wind energy, while enhancing transparency. The policy briefs namely are:

i) **Effective Biodiversity Management & Conservation Systems**,

ii) **Promoting Civic Participation & Engagement**,

iii) **Minimising Environmental Impact & Maximising Support (Finnish Example)** and

iv) **Sustainable Approaches to Wind Turbine Decommissioning**.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

BIOWIND Partners held their 5th Stakeholder meetings in their respective regions during this semester!

The **Northern and Western Regional Assembly** (**NWRA**) held its 5th Stakeholder meeting of the project BIOWIND on the 26th of May 2025. The main focus of this meeting was to **discuss and consider the Guidelines for the Joint Peer Review** of Territorial Policy Changes which included policy recommendations. Key conclusions evolved around the Community Benefit Fund ensuring that local communities gain form nearby wind farms, reducing civic opposition. Discussions concluded **updating the Wind Energy Development Guidelines** will bring the current planning rules in line with modern technology, better environmental protection and stronger public engagement. Wind energy is considered a **national strategic priority**, linked to Ireland's commitments on climate action, energy security, and EU renewable energy targets.

NWRA - 5th Stakeholder Meeting

ZPR - 5th Stakeholder Meeting

The **Zemgale Planning Region** (**ZPR**) held their 5th Stakeholder meeting on the 3rd of September 2025 . Aim of the region is to support wind energy acceptance by combining environmental responsibility, social trust, and economic benefits. A key point of the discussion was the **critical gap between Latvia's current wind energy capacity** (**140 MW**) **and its 2030 targets** (950–1150 MW). BIOWIND project's strategic approach -focusing on environmental sustainability, public and political support, and economic benefits for local communities- is essential to address the main challenges of slow administrative processes and the lack of social acceptance. The **pilot project in Zemgale**, utilizing the digital tool of the EUKI project Wind4Bio for a **combined public consultation method**, was presented as a practical step to implement this strategy. Recommendations evolved around establishing **local wind energy centers for training and awareness,** developing **community participation models** (cooperatives, local investments), introducing digital permit systems and interactive planning tools and aligning policies with regional spatial planning.

The **Asturian Energy Foundation** (**FAEN**) held its 5th Stakeholder meeting on the 24th of July 2025. Policy recommendations were discussed while the regional focus was set on **environmental factors** (including required stronger integrated governance, GIS-based planning, restoration & waste management protocols), **social factors** (including required public consultations at all project stages, education campaigns, citizen participation indicators) and **economic factors** (including support for community-owned models, legal/technical aid for cooperatives, digital platforms for permits, alignment with Spain's national energy plan). Next steps include the continuation of cross-European collaboration, enhancement of public trust, and **building long-term policy frameworks** for socially accepted wind energy development.

INTRODUCTION TO PILOT ACTION

The BIOWIND Project plans to pilot a consultation approach **merging public participation** with **wind farm constructors/operators, biodiversity experts, local community** and civil society, aiming for it to be established as a prerequisite for the successful permission of wind energy projects. This approach will serve as a **public consultation framework** and a validated consultation process securing the **social acceptance of wind energy** and the well-being of ecosystems during the energy generation. This enables partners to strengthen the governance of their Policy Instruments (PIs), in relation to wind energy expansion and biodiversity considerations. The pilot action will be locally implemented by two BIOWIND partners, namely the **Region of Western Greece** (**RWG**) in Greece and the **Zemgale Planning Region** (**ZPR**) in Latvia.

The pilot action serves the following **objectives**:

- **Improves public participation** in renewable energy planning, following an 'Inform-Involve-Empower' approach in the decision-making process.
- **Enhances the social acceptance** of the upcoming wind energy projects in the pilot regions.
- Increases the capacity of the pilot partners to effectively **implement participatory community engagement techniques** for RES planning.
- Inspires other BIOWIND partners to adopt public participation schemes in wind energy planning.

ZPR and RWG as pilot partners are tasked with employing **a consultation tool** for online sessions, resulting in **identifying wind sites**, **addressing biodiversity issues** and supporting partners to improve the procedures related to spatial and maritime planning, aiming for **environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable wind energy solutions** in their regions. ZPR and RWG further provide helpdesk support and respond to participants' inquiries to resolve technical issues.

INTRODUCTION TO BIODIVERSITY RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

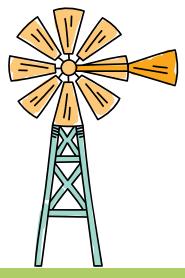
The **Biodiversity Risk Assessment Framework** tool, developed by **PROMEA**, aims at enabling partners and users to estimate the **risks of a wind project on biodiversity sensitivity** based on each site's characteristics. The framework includes **Environmental indicators** for biodiversity sensitivity assessment and for biodiversity impact assessment.

As a tool, it provides **mitigation measures**, monitors **requirements** and **success criteria** for each stage from the design to decommissioning of a wind energy project. These measures are determined based on the **final risk rating**, which is derived from the biodiversity sensitivity and impact assessment results of each project.

Additionally, BIOWIND partners will form a joint working group and organise an online workshop meeting to exchange viewpoints on the tool, test and validate its usability, applicability, effectiveness, and areas for improvement.

NEXT STEPS

- The 6th Steering Group Meeting will be held in Spain, hosted by Asturias Energy Foundation (FAEN) in 2026
- UPAT will deliver guidelines for the formation of "Wind Energy Proliferation Centres" in BIOWIND territories in the form of statutory provisions and a management plan.
- All partners will organize the 6th regional stakeholder meetings to discuss the role of the 'Wind Energy Proliferation Centres' and results from pilot activities and their integration potential into Policy Instruments.
- According to the guidelines by CARM, partners will evaluate achieved policy changes and their territorial impact, transferring successful approaches and adapting them to territorial context.



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