

RYF! REDUCE YOUR FOOTPRINT!
PROJECT PROPOSAL / INTERREG NORTH WEST
CONCEPT

INTRODUCTION

Energy Challenges (a not for profit organisation based in The Netherlands) submitted early 2023, in cooperation with other European consortium partners, a proposal for the E.U. Interreg North West Programme. The general objective of this proposed project was:

‘ to reduce the carbon footprint (foodprint) and greenhouse gas emissions of the food supply chain as well as promoting resource efficient economy and circularity by improving the awareness and behavioural change amongst youngsters (10-15 yrs).’

The proposal was developed in cooperation with RVO (Ministry of Economic Affairs, The Netherlands). Although the proposal was rejected by the Interreg NW Joint Secretary in the first phase, they were happy and optimistic about the general idea and the strategy. They also requested to build a consortium more in line with the Quadruple Helix (consortium partners from national, regional and local authorities (or EGTC's, or public equivalent organisations), universities, R&D centres, SMEs and business support organisations, sectoral associations, NGOs, lobby organisations and citizens groups).

Recent, we decided to build this consortium, were Energy Challenges would be happy to be in the lead (for information about Energy Challenges <https://www.energychallenges.nl/> and their project experience, we would like to refer to the undermentioned information.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES (to be open for discussion)

- 1). Decrease the ‘foodprint’ of youngsters and their families by 10% in 24 month (measurable and via evidence based approach).
- 2). Decrease the energy use at schools with 10% in 24 month (measurable with the Energy Challenges interface, introduced via the Energy Box Toolkit and with fun competition elements in and between schools).
- 3). Increase awareness among primary and secondary school youngsters on foodprint, circularity and resource efficiency with more than 60% in 24 month.
- 4). Target directly at least 150 schools and 80.000 youngsters.
- 5). Target indirectly, via a tailor made social media campaign with a significant role for influencers (the ones that appeal to the age group 10-15 years).

6). Make use, in a positive way, of the NWE region local differences. Using the NW region best practices (evidence based) about foodprint, energy efficiency and sustainable clothing with regard to the target group of youngsters 10-15 years.

PROJECT FOCUS (to be open for discussions).

In close cooperation with all Project Partners, we will design a transnational project, with a joint pilot action plan to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of youngsters and their families, including the promotion of resource efficiency and circularity.

Developing an evidence based methodology for rolling out several awareness campaigns in the NEW region is an integral part of our program. This part will be led by a specialized communication partner and HZ University (organisatie als <https://www.bureaujeugdmedia.nl/> vragen o.i.d.?)

Within the project we shall focus on the following three topics:

- **Food** (from research we know that cooking and the choice of ingredients has a significant implications for the Foodprint). We also know there are huge transnational differences in the North West European (NEW) Region. 25% of the meals eaten in the Netherlands are vegetarian, but in the surrounding NEW countries this percentage is much lower.

But you don't have to be a vegetarian to have a huge impact on your foodprint: i.e. eating chicken has a ten times lower CO2 equivalent than beef. So eating chicken once a week instead of beef has already a huge impact on your foodprint.

<https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2024/10/a-quarter-of-main-meals-eaten-in-the-netherlands-are-vegetarian>

<https://ourworldindata.org/carbon-footprint-food-methane>

- **Energy usage** (from the evidence based Dutch program Energy Challenges (cooperating with 142 Dutch Schools) we are able to measure, monitor and reduce energy usage at schools with 10% in 2 years). We would like to roll out a similar program, tailor made for the different NW region, but with similar tools, dashboard and statistical backbone.
- **Clothing** (from research we know that fast fashion is an increasing problem. Sustainable fashion and innovative circular solutions may have significant impact.

PILOT ACTIONS AND STRATEGY (TO BE COMPLETED AND TO BE DISCUSSED).

- rolling out cooking workshops for schools in collaboration with cooking schools and/or local chefs in all NW pilot areas.
- In cooperation with energy companies we will provide Energy Challenges Boxes to schools or similar toolkits for rolling out energy efficiency programmes at 150 schools. The boxes are especially designed for youngsters and teachers and include a dashboard for real time monitoring and including graphics. With a fun approach, youngsters start energy efficiency projects at their school with quick results and possible competitions.
- On a similar basis we shall develop toolkits to learn more about foodprints: what is it, how does it effect the environment and how to influence this with different ingredients.
- in cooperation with important regional, national or international influencers we like to develop a tailor made social media strategy and awareness campaign especially for the target group of 10-15 years.
- universities and research partners will develop tools and/or dashboards to measure output and results and/or improve already existing monitoring systems. Also, behavioral change monitoring systems needs to be developed (through qualitative research).
- governmental organizations will play an important role in the awareness campaigns as well as in the wider dissemination of the project results.
- developing and rolling out teacher training programmes with education institutes in selected NW pilot areas.

By the above approach, students become aware of their current footprint, energy consumption at school and the CO₂ impact of clothing on both an individual and a family level.

More importantly, they will discover that things can be done differently and result can be reached very quickly and in a fun way! By undertaking activities, such as cooking, monitoring the impact, learning about food conversion ratio's (eating 100 grammes of chicken has a 6 times lower footprint than eating beef), raising awareness at home, acting as young role models and accelerators among their peers and family.

The project develops a methodology to assess CO₂ footprint of food, clothing and energy use at school (definition of a baseline/forecast/measurements/results) and to visualise changes achieved in an effective and user-friendly way. Results are monitored before and after the pilot action to see what children, the climate innovators of the future, are capable of.

Activities and results monitored are used by the Local Authorities involved to design improved food, energy use and clothing strategies and guarantee sustainability of the campaign/final dissemination, after the end of the project.

N.B.: from earlier studies (Lawson et al 2018 and Wang et al 2022) and well as earlier executed E.U. Interreg projects, in which Energy Challenges has been a Partner, we know that the age 10-15 years is optimal for awareness and behavioural change. Also, there is still room in the government based curriculum at secondary school up to 15 years. However, there are no opportunities in the educational curriculum from 16 years and older. This makes the 10-15 youngster the optimal target group from both perspectives.

CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

The following partners have already committed to the project:

- **VEOLIA (water,energy and waste recycling management)**
- **HZ University of Applied Sciences**
- **Energy Challenges Netherlands**
- **Vivons en Forme**
- **Ballyhoura / Catherine Smyth**
- **Frankfurt and Main Region cities ?**
- **One partner from ENERGE (as proposed by Anne Wetzels, Director Interreg France the NEW representative From Luxembourg)**
- **City of Bruges / Elisa Raes ?**
- **Lille Metropolis / Marie Guiton ?**
- **Florence Gauthier / Centre Val de Loire !!! Deze zitten in ENERGE**
- **Climate Alliance / Jenny Claire Keilmann**

Each pilot area should commit to:

- Involving a numbers of schools
- Involving a number of youngsters
- Rolling out the programme including social media, awareness campaign and final dissemination.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR OTHER PROJECT PARTNERS AND OBSERVER PARTNERS:

- Public Organizations and Local Authorities (Government, Muni's, etc etc).
- Research institutions or Universities for CO2 monitoring, development of a dashboard, data collection, data analysis etc.
- Research institution for measuring behavioural change
- Influencers (with regard to the target group 10-15 years).

- Energy companies
- Cooking schools
- Sustainable clothing companies or organisations

ABOUT ENERGYCHALLENGES.NL

Energy Challenges is a well experienced organisation that develops, plans and executes awareness campaigns in the field of energy saving, sustainability, behavioural change and technology. Their target groups are youngsters at primary and secondary school. Energy Challenges have executed E.U. funded projects for the Interreg Programme (partner 2IMPRESZ), Erasmus+ and others. They are a not for profit foundation.

TIMELINE (to be discussed)

October/November 2024: further building the consortium

4-5 November 2024: Interreg NW meeting in Dublin

November 2024: final determination of goals, objectives and strategy. Rough guide of work packages

December: Estimation of Costs and development of draft proposal.

Januari 2025: development of final proposal

15 January: submit proposal to Interreg Management Authority.