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Press release on the conclusion of the MountEE project

## **SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION: SERVICE FOR SUCCESS**

**Attractive architecture in combination with regional wood and stone and compliance with the passive house standard – that is what is expected of tomorrow's public buildings like schools and community centres. But: sustainable construction in different climate zones, from the Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean – is that possible? In the last three years, the MountEE project and its 28 pilot buildings have shown how it can be done.**

The European Union is calling for zero energy consumption in all new and renovated public buildings as of 2018. The knowhow and technologies are available, but local authorities require assistance at the level of implementation. In the framework of the MountEE project, construction and renovation strategies have been improved with the help of experts in six European mountain regions since 2012 with a focus on energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainability. Twenty-eight pilot buildings have been constructed or renovated on this basis, including the new town hall in the Swedish city of Kiruna, the office building of the National Park in the French municipality of Olette and a school in the Italian municipality of Sagrado.

### **Service package for sustainable construction**

In all cases, the key to success was a professional, holistic and well-structured construction process from beginning to end – from the initial proposal and planning phase to the actual construction work. That is important in order to maintain a clear overview. A wealth of experience in the field of sustainable construction and renovation is available in the Austrian province of Vorarlberg. Their system served as a model for the development of a service package, which was used for the construction or renovation of the pilot buildings.

This Local Authority Service Package for Sustainable Construction comprises five modules. From the free kick-off counselling session to the implementation and follow-up stages, local authorities and environmental consultants receive advice in the fields of energy, ecological construction, procurement and quality assurance. A combination of intelligent planning, optimised building envelope, and efficient and continually monitored heating and ventilation systems delivers up to 80 percent savings in energy and running costs.

### **Mutual learning process**

The pilot regions in the MountEE project in Norbotten and Dalarna in Sweden, Friuli in Italy, Rhône-Alpes and the Pyrenees in France, and Vorarlberg in Austria prove that, with the appropriate support, municipalities can quickly develop knowhow and experience in the field of sustainable construction and renovation.

Sabine Erber, project partner at Energy Institute Vorarlberg, explains: “In regions with an established sustainable construction culture, construction projects are handled much more economically than in regions which are only just starting with the process. The exchange of information resulting from the project enabled less experienced regions to benefit from the knowledge of the others and learn from their mistakes and so achieve their goals more quickly.”

One of the keys to the success of the project was the creation of networks for cooperation in the pilot regions. Regular meetings were held with the key actors in the construction process, such as construction managers, energy managers, politicians, architects and banks, and long-term strategies and measures were discussed and implemented on the basis of the pilot buildings.

MountEE was funded by the European Union for three years (2012-2015) in the framework of the Intelligent Energy Europe programme (IEE). Since 2003, the programme has been used to assist organisations wishing to improve energy sustainability and is part of a broad-based strategy for an energy-intelligent future. IEE supports energy efficiency and renewable energy policies with a view to achieving the EU 2020 targets: a 20 percent cut in greenhouse gas emissions, 20 percent improvement in energy efficiency and a 20 percent share of renewables in total energy consumption.

Additional information and print-ready photos are available from [www.mountee.eu/de/infoservice/press](http://www.mountee.eu/de/infoservice/press)

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#### **MountEE – sustainable public buildings**

In accordance with the EU's Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), all new and existing buildings undergoing major renovation will have to meet the NZEB standards (Nearly Zero Energy Building) as of 2018. For many municipalities, especially in mountain regions, the transition to NZEB is a major challenge. The MountEE project has supported municipalities in three European mountain areas – Sweden, the Alps and the Pyrenees – in achieving the NZEB objectives and helped transform them into front runners in terms of energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainability. In six regions, 28 public buildings have been built or renovated on the basis of sustainability and energy efficiency.

CIPRA is lead partner for the project and has responsibility for communications. MountEE received funding from the EU's Intelligent Energy Europe programme (IEE) for three years.

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