



EVENT DESCRIPTION

Project partner: ESV

Title of the event: Round-table "Solar Process Heat & Solar-Contracting"

Date & location: 6 May 2010, Linz/Upper Austria

Organiser: O.Oe. Energiesparverband

Number of Participants: 17

Summary

Even though contracting is well established in the region, there are only a few contracting projects implemented in Upper Austria that also include solar thermal.

The aim of the round-table was therefore to discuss with the stakeholders the barriers and opportunities for solar contracting. The main stakeholder groups represented were solar thermal companies, ESCOs (all leading ESCOs in Upper Austria were represented) and energy advisers, specialised in business and industry. Experiences with solar contracting were exchanged, barriers and solutions to overcome them were discussed.

Objective & main programme point

The aim of the round-table was to discuss activities to trigger market development in the field of solar thermal contracting.

After a short introduction to the subject and a brief presentation on recent SO-PRO activities, the main focus was put on contracting. ESV gave an overview on the Upper Austrian contracting market, including information on the Upper Austrian support programme for contracting.

Afterwards all ESCOs represented at the round-table gave a short presentation on their experiences and activities in the field of solar contracting and one company, which is most active in this field, presented their experiences in more detail.

Then a highly interactive session followed focusing on the following topics which were intensively discussed:

- barriers for solar thermal contracting
- most relevant stakeholders to trigger solar thermal contracting

- which activities could be implemented to trigger solar thermal contracting
- next steps

Conclusions & lessons learnt (based on stakeholder input)

Although the market for energy performance contracting is well established for municipalities in the region, it took some time to bring this market development to companies as well. Presently only few solar thermal installations in industries in the region are implemented by using a solar contracting scheme (most heat contracting projects deal with biomass). In some cases, solar thermal was part of an energy performance contracting project (where solar thermal is only a minor part of the whole energy performance contracting project).

The main barriers to explain the low number of solar thermal contracting projects in the region in Upper Austria were identified as the following:

- need for back-up systems:
under the climate conditions in Austria, solar thermal always needs a back-up system for the colder months. This makes "solar thermal only" projects comparatively complicated from a financial and organisational point of view as the solar system needs to function in combination with another heating system.
- economic considerations:
solar thermal systems have longer payback times than for example biomass heating systems which makes them less attractive for contracting projects.
- the limited offer:
active ESCOs (their number is very limited) can find projects with better economic viability in the biomass heating field where also excellent supply chains are in place. The group that has the highest economic interest in solar thermal contracting, the solar contracting producers, in general do not have the necessary capital for starting ESCOs businesses (they usually need all their capital for expanding their production business).
- funding schemes and legal framework:
the main field for larger scale solar thermal installations are apartment buildings where - due to the existing funding schemes and legal framework - energy contracting projects are very rarely realised
- lack of awareness and knowledge:
so far, contracting is often not considered as an option when realising a heating installation in a business as is solar thermal.

The following activities were discussed::

- the ESCOs present showed an interest to include more solar thermal installations in their projects, also as a "sales feature": many clients will be pleased to see a solar thermal installation included in a contracting project has a very positive image and could therefore accept that the contract duration will be prolonged by a few months.

- collecting the few existing projects and presenting existing projects on the website in order to inform stakeholders about this option
- increasing the efforts in triggering best practice examples, using the promotional activities foreseen in the So-Pro project
- increasing the visibility of solar thermal in other contracting promotion activities carried out by ESV, e.g. existing training courses on energy contracting, the comprehensive contracting information on ESV's website and in information events.

ANNEX

The following documents are included in the Annex:

- programme
- ppts
- pictures

Programme

- 15.00 Get together, start of the round-table
Tour-de-table
Introduction by the chairperson Christiane Egger
- Presentation of the "So-Pro project" by Christiane Egger
Update of recent activities, checklists, timetable
- Introduction "Contracting in Upper Austria" by Christine Oehlinger
Presentation on solar thermal contracting by Horst Lebschy (ESCO)
Short statements of the ESCOs attending the roundtable on their experiences with solar thermal contracting
- Working groups to answer the following questions:
- What are the main barriers for solar thermal contracting?
 - Who are the main actors?
 - Possible activities to trigger market development?
- Discussion of next steps and time-table
- 18.00 End of the round-table / snack

PPT

Pictures

