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## Regulatory Framework for Geothermal District Heating in Europe – a summary

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# Regulatory Frameworks for Geothermal District Heating in Europe

## Background

Despite the significant potential of deep geothermal energy in several European countries geothermal DH systems have been poorly developed so far. This situation is notably due to the lack of adequate national and regional policies and legislation concerning district heating and geothermal district heating systems (geoDH).

The IEE Project “Promote Geothermal District Heating Systems in Europe” (IEE/11/813/ SI2.616373 – GeoDH) aims at promoting geothermal DH systems in Europe, by removing main non-technical barriers.

The document *Regulatory Framework for Geothermal District Heating Systems in Europe* is one of the main outcomes of the GeoDH project. The GeoDH project covers 14 European countries and runs between 2012 and 2014. Its main purpose is to provide effective tools and guidance for regional and local decision-makers, for establishing a regulatory framework stimulating the use of clean renewable geothermal energy sources for district heating systems.

## Objectives and target stakeholders of the regulatory framework

In order to overcome the administrative barriers, the present ‘Framework’ puts forward key recommendations to remove **regulatory barriers, promote the best circumstances, and simplify the procedures for geothermal district heating systems’ investors, operators and policy makers.**

The regulatory framework is primarily addressed to regional public authorities which are in charge of regulations and local development, since they are deeply involved in licensing and other procedures related to geothermal energy exploration, exploitation, use and management.

Key stakeholders were consulted and endorsed this document.

These proposals should lead to regional and local regulations favourable to geothermal DH development in Europe. Key recommendations are provided below.

## Key recommendations

- **National and local rules must include a definition of geothermal energy resources and related terms, in line with Directive 2009/28/EC;**
- **Ownership rights should be guaranteed ;**
- **Administrative procedures for geothermal licensing have to be fit to purpose - they should be streamlined wherever possible and the burden on the applicant should reflect the complexity, cost and potential impacts of the proposed geothermal energy development;**
- **The rules concerning the authorisation and licensing procedures must be proportionate and simplified, and transferred to regional (or local if appropriate) administration level. The administrative process must be reduced;**
- **Rules for district heating (DH) should be as decentralised as possible in order to be adaptable to the local context, and stipulate a mandatory minimum level of energy from renewable sources, in line with Article 13 §3 of Directive 2009/28/EC**
- **A unique geothermal licensing authority should be set up;**
- **Information on geothermal resources suitable for GeoDH systems should be available and easily accessible;**
- **GeoDH should be included in national, regional and local energy planning and strategies;**
- **Policy-makers and civil servants should be well informed about geothermal;**
- **Technicians and Energy Service Companies should be trained in geothermal technologies;**
- **The public should be informed and consulted about Geothermal DH project development in order to support public acceptance;**
- **Legislation should aim to protect the environment and set priorities for the use of underground: geothermal energy should be given priority over other uses such as for unconventional fossil fuels, CCS, and nuclear waste deposits.**

The implementation of these recommendations will facilitate the introduction of complementary and cohesive legislation provisions essential to create a long-term stable system for geothermal district heating development in Europe.



**For more information visit [www.geodh.eu](http://www.geodh.eu)**

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