



Energy efficiency

What drives the development and implementation of energy efficiency policies?

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POLICY PAPER



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Thematic capitalisation

Over the last seven years the INTERREG IVC programme has been enabling public institutions all over Europe – over 2000 in total – to ‘learn through cooperation’ across 204 different interregional projects aimed at improving regional policies.

In June 2012, the programme commissioned a team of thematic experts to analyse, benchmark, and capitalise on the wealth of knowledge generated by projects working on similar regional development issues. Altogether, 12 policy themes, ranging from innovation to the environment, have been covered. 12 reports are now available detailing the insights and lessons from this capitalisation process for the benefit of all regions across Europe.

This policy paper distils the essential findings of the report into a ‘ready-to-use’ tool to convince policymakers of not only the need for change, but exactly what change is required.

Energy efficiency has many benefits, but barriers remain

Improving energy efficiency has a number of benefits – it reduces climate change, energy bills and energy imports. In addition it can create jobs and improve the quality of life for many citizens.

Energy efficiency is improved when the amount of energy used to achieve an output is reduced. This output can be the provision of heat, light, cooling, transport or a product or service.

Despite these attractive benefits there are a number of barriers to the uptake of energy efficiency. It can be difficult to access the finance required for some investments and many energy users are unwilling to invest their capital. In order for energy efficiency investments to happen there are often a diverse range of stakeholders that need to be convinced. Many of these stakeholders may not be fully aware of the benefits of energy efficiency.

A number of INTERREG IVC projects* have been analysed by three capitalisation experts for interesting lessons to teach policymakers about energy efficiency. Some of the key lessons are:

Provide more practical advice on turning policy targets into action as opposed to detailed technical advice and information.

The projects reflect this by, for example, focusing on the ways in which plans can be turned into action (IMEA project), the community involvement promoted by the EnercitEE and LoCaRe projects and the development of local authority toolkits for developing and testing policies in the IMAGINE and RE-GREEN projects.

Present policy arguments in a simple way which appeals, and is relevant to local politicians.

Most of the projects stated that political support for energy efficiency is much easier to gain when local politicians can understand the positive aspects they can promote to voters.

Pursue awareness-raising and behavioural change actions and make them locally and target group specific, practical, and deliverable via diverse methods.

For example the LoCaRe project uses schools as a way of cascading information on energy efficiency through a local community and a number of projects use targeted communication tools (videos, web-based information etc.) to appeal to specific audiences (e.g. EnercitEE, IMAGINE).



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* The projects analysed are: EU2020, EnercitEE, CO2FREE, STEP, RENERGY, RE-GREEN, PLUS, LoCaRe, SERPENTE, IMEA, IMAGINE and GreenITNet.

Promote the creation of local/regional energy strategies, because they help in applying European energy policy regionally and locally.

Having energy plans ensures that there are baselines, roadmaps, indicators and a realistic approach towards implementing energy policy. They also need to capture local strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. This experience is apparent in a number of projects including REnergy, CO2FREE and REGREEN.

Continue to promote Energy Services Companies (ESCOs) as they are an important mechanism in enabling larger scale investment in energy efficiency, particularly in the public sector.

ESCOs help in addressing the barriers of a lack available finance and can also help in addressing technical and commercial knowledge gaps within the public sector as well as the split incentives barrier – because the initial capital outlay is reduced. Their importance is recognised in projects including STEP, REnergy, IMEA and REGREEN.

Work with and involve policymakers in other areas in order to improve energy efficiency.

There is potential for good regulation in related areas to help enable energy efficiency. An example of the link is the constraints on transferring energy-saving information to users on transport options – because of data security concerns - in the GreenITNet project.

Recognise that INTERREG IVC helps the dissemination of the results of other energy efficiency programmes.

A number of INTERREG IVC projects use / promote examples funded by other European Commission schemes concerned with promoting energy efficiency, e.g. Intelligent Energy Europe, the Framework Programme and LIFE+. This helps spread the results and outputs of these projects to a wider audience.

Build energy efficiency into regeneration and social inclusion programmes, because it brings both social and energy benefits.

This is demonstrated in the SERPENTE and IMEA projects, with their inclusion of energy efficiency in social housing and the use of local citizens as role models to encourage their peers to consider and adapt energy efficient lifestyles and choices.

Green public procurement should continue to be promoted as it is an effective way for the public sector to 'lead by example' and to help create a demand and market for energy efficient products and services.

This approach helps in addressing the barriers on lack of awareness and technology credibility. It also illustrates the positive effect of drivers such as the potential for creating green jobs. This approach is promoted in a number of the projects, including REGREEN, SERPENTE, IMEA, IMAGINE.

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