

# Sharing Expertise in Energy Advice Across Europe

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Focus on free energy advice provision to households  
and social housing occupants

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## Why energy advice

- Sustainable energy use - core element of action on climate change, security of supply and the ability to develop and maintain a vibrant economy.
- Consumer access to advice and information is important to enable households and social housing occupants to take the necessary steps to achieving a more sustainable use of energy.
- Energy advice is the ‘soft stuff’ that needs to be wrapped around all sustainable energy programmes to ensure that they arrive at their destination complete.



# Project tasks

- research energy advice provision in Europe – **report ready**
- collect information on methods, materials, results and make freely available through **online toolkit**
- Dissemination programme to publicise resources & facilitate exchange of experience



# Overview of energy advice in Europe

around one third of countries have no or very little energy advice, around a third have fairly well developed services, and a third are somewhere in between ;



# Benefits, weaknesses, and barriers to the provision of energy advice

## Benefits:

- Impartiality and neutrality
- Free to user
- Ability to advise clients on all relevant technologies and how they can be combined
- Practicality of advice
- Multiple benefits to consumers: financial, comfort, health as well as environment
- Interpretation of technical information at the right level for different clients
- Combining communication skills with technical, social and market knowledge
- Assistance that is personalised and meets specific needs



- 'One-stop shop': enabling client to get all they need at one place, from identifying the main issues and recommendations through to how to finance and install them
- Being close to the consumer and to the local administrations – able to understand the needs of the clients and the issues relevant to their ability to improve the sustainability of their energy use
- Giving advice forces advisers to constantly extend their knowledge and avoids stagnation
- Ability to act as a relay for government policy
- Creating a culture of energy efficiency /renewable energy
- High proportion of clients taking action as a result of advice
- Continuous growth in demand for advice
- Development of public awareness of the service over time – and growth in word of mouth referrals to the service
- Impartial and free help for consumers with a difficult and worrying issue (building works for their home)



## Weaknesses:

- Lack of resources – limited funding limiting numbers that can be reached.
- Lack of accessibility due to over centralisation – not recognised as a problem by authorities who are themselves centralised
- Limitations in the advice approach permitted /enabled by funding regime – such as not being able to do site visits (important for the development of practical experience of real situations as well as in its advice value)
- Not enough knowledge exchange between advisers
- Installers/suppliers not able to provide the measures recommended (need for training etc)
- Client confusion due to overlap between advice and other services
- A tendency for clients to seek advice only when they have a problem, which can limit the scope of what advice they will act upon
- Time spent on documenting and reporting compared to actually advising



## Barriers

- A lack of understanding of the role of advice within energy policy and achieving energy and climate change objectives.
- The ‘soft science’ of communication is sometimes dismissed or overlooked where the energy field is dominated by a ‘techno-hierarchy’, and a cultural gap may exist between technical and communications professionals.
- A general lack of awareness as to what constitutes advice, and a widespread misconception that it is no more than a generalised leaflet or promotional campaign.
- Linked to this is a lack of awareness of the skills that are required to deliver energy advice effectively. Advice is specific to the needs and situation of the client, and is a step beyond promotion of general information in that it specifically enables and motivates action by the client in question. Marketing, technical and communication skills are all required to achieve this.
- Similarly, a lack of understanding of the nature of energy advice will tend to mean that the resources required and methodologies that may be used are not understood.





- Authorities assuming that information and communication needs are covered and complacency about the achievement of policy objectives without special attention to this issue.
- Utilities seeing sustainable energy advice as potentially in conflict with their aims.
- Structural changes, such as privatisation or centralisation, leading to loss of community or social involvement of major energy or heat companies in a region – where these may have been supportive of information services in the past.
- A view that if advice is required consumers will pay for it, and the demand will create the supply.
- Provision by commercial bodies seen as filling the need – but not commercially independent or technology neutral.
- Lack of clarity as to where responsibility for energy advice and information might fit (for example which government department) – this can be a difficulty for energy policy in general



# Best practice of advice provision:

## Slovenia

- National energy advisory network 1991
- 75 licensed advisers, in 26 offices
- Free advice to domestic sector
- Efficiency, renewables
- 6000 advised directly in 2005, plus awareness
- Evaluation indicates 19% energy savings, corresponds to the reduction of 50-65kg CO<sub>2</sub>/m<sup>2</sup> of heated floor area.



## Sweden

- Energy efficiency and renewables
- Free for homes, SMEs, organisations
- Funded by government through national energy agency - municipalities can apply
- 200 energy advisers (many part time) cover 290 municipalities

## UK

	Target	Achieved	%
Households reached	615,490	740,463	
Home Energy Checks (written reports)	566,875	559,267	99
Presentations/ Events	5,000	5,200	104
Training	1,495	1,026	69
Home Visits	-	5,591	-
Local Authority	261	345	132
Calls to advice line	-	322,609	-
Total predicted savings from advice given: 24,969 kWh, 1,093,936 tonnes of carbon (tC)			
Cost of whole advice network for the year: £7m (10.5m€)			
Average investment in energy saving per customer: customer £144 (216€), energy supplier £51.80 (78€)			
<b>Predicted annual savings from advice given (including all measures, and based on a 24 year life for concrete measures)</b>			
Total	37,896 tC		

## Austria

Nine Austrian regions - different systems for providing energy advice to private households. An estimated number of 40-60,000 energy advice sessions annually, about 20,000 of them face-to-face, taking at least one hour, a significant percentage of them in the client's home;

The first advice session (over the phone or in the energy advice offices) is free in all nine regions; In Upper Austria - free for up to 1.5 hours per household per year;

Evaluation procedures in Upper Austria - written questionnaires sent out to 1000 randomly selected clients, overall client satisfaction is very high;

The most frequent criticism is that the advice comes too late for some of the recommendations to be implemented.

## Summary of energy advice programmes for households by country

Country	Programme	Type	Delivery agent	Area	Topics	Commercially impartial	Free to user	Date set up
Austria*	Different in each of 9 regions	Various	Mix	Patchy	RES, RUE	Mostly	Some services	
		Phone, mail, home visit, sessions in public buildings	ESV (regional energy agency)	Upper Austria	RES, RUE	Yes	Yes	
Belgium	Guichet de l'énergie	Interview at centre, home visit, public events, phone, mail, e-mail.	12 local advice centres	Walloon region	RES, RUE	Yes	Yes	1985
Bulgaria	National Information Centre	Drop in centre, info and some advice	Bulgarian Energy Efficiency Agency	Sofia city	RES, RUE	Yes	Yes	
	EBRD & Kozluduj funds for measures	Advice linked to installation of measures and obtaining funding	Agency Suppliers, installers, banks, utilities	all	RES & RUE equipment	No	Yes	
Czech	EKIS CEA	Phone, mail, e-mail, interview at centre, home visit, public events	Czech Energy Agency through local centres	all	RES, RUE	Yes	Yes	1995
Denmark	Energitjenesten	Phone, mail, e-mail, some drop-in centres	13 regional energy service centres	all	RES, RUE	Yes	Yes	2005

Estonia	ESK Kredex		Energy Efficiency Consulting Centre (ESK)	all	Buildings RUE	Yes	Yes	2005
France	Espace Info Energie	Phone, mail, home visit and other direct advice.	ADEME, through independent local centres	all	RES, RUE, SMO	Yes	Yes	2001
Germany	Energy hotline	Phone	DENA (national energy agency)	all	RES, RUE	Yes	Yes	
	Energy advice as part of range of consumer advice services	Advice at consumer centres or on site	Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband	all	RES, RUE	yes	No (small fee)	1978
	BAFA (within Ministry Economy & Technology)	On site technical advice for owners of older buildings	Consultant advisers and engineers	all	RES, RUE, funding	yes	yes	
	CO <sub>2</sub> online	Web based	CO <sub>2</sub> online	all	?	yes	yes	
Hungary	Energy efficiency Advisory Network	Advice interview at centre by appointment	Environmental NGOs run energy advice centres	all	RUE	Yes	Yes	
Ireland	No specific programme	Info mainly through website and promotional events	SEI (info)	all	RES, RUE	Yes	Yes	



Italy	CCEI (Centro di Consulenza Energetica Integrata)	Advice at drop-in centres, projects, energy audits, energy planning	ENEA, National Energy Agency	11 towns	RES, RUE	Yes	Yes	
	Consumers' Information Desk	Phone, post and e-mail, from one central office, 3 days/week	Adiconsum: Consumers' Association	all	RES, RUE	Yes	Yes	
	Advice from utilities - various	Advice desks, exhibition centres, websites	Utilities required to give advice under 2001 legislation	all	RES, RUE	(yes)	yes	
Latvia	Energy Efficiency Centre	<	Latvenergo (state owned energy supplier)	Riga	Efficient use of electricity	No	Yes	
Lithuania	ENA	<	ENA (State Energy Agency)	all	RES, RUE	Yes	Yes	
Luxembourg	<	<	ASBL Reidemer		RES, RUE	yes	yes	
Malta	MEEREA	Info and awareness only	MEEREA: Malta Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Association	all		Yes	Yes, to members	
Netherlands	Milieu Centraal	Info website plus some phone, e-mail and mail advice and loan of meters.	Milieu Centraal	all	Range of environmental issues	yes	yes	
	Eco-driving	Awareness, info, phone advice, training	Senternovem	all	SMO	yes	yes	
Poland	Thermo-modernisation programme	Energy audits, in connection with funding for measures	KAPE (national energy agency)	all	RUE	yes	Client pays, & reclaims if no funding approved	



Rumania	Brashov Energy Info Point	Drop in centre with info and advice	Brashov Energy Agency	Brashov City	RUE	Yes	Yes	
Slovakia	Energy advisory network	Half day advisory sessions in 8 cities, aimed at professionals	Energy Centre Bratislava	all	RES, RUE	Yes	Yes	
Slovenia	ENSVET	Network of licensed local advisers based in 35 municipal offices	BCEI ZRMK (Building & Civil Engineering Institute)	all	RES, RUE	yes	yes	1991
Spain	Various energy awareness, info and advice activities	Free phone advice, interactive website, mass media awareness activity.	IDAE (national energy agency)	all	RES, RUE	yes	yes	
Sweden	National energy advice service	Awareness raising, phone advice, limited face to face.	STEM (national energy agency) funds via municipalities	all	RES, RUE	yes	yes	1998
UK	EEACs/ESTACs	Phone, mail, home visit and other direct advice. Written reports, outreach and marketing.	Energy Saving Trust (EST) through independent local centres	all	RUE, move to cover RES & SMO	Yes	Yes	1991
	Advice from utilities	Most have advice desk contactable by phone.	All utilities serving domestic sector	all	RUE	(yes)	yes	
	Home Heat Helpline	Phone advice targeting vulnerable households	Energy Retail Association, for 6 main utilities	all	RUE, bills and supply issues	yes	yes	2005

## Advice methods

### *Approach:*

***Systematic:*** Taking all clients through a standard procedure, such as the UK 'Home Energy Check' questionnaire, or an energy label/energy performance certificate/energy audit.

***Responsive:*** Answering directly the specific questions asked – this is by far the most common approach.



## *Location*

- at advice offices;
- regular sessions in public buildings, such as local authority office, library, general consumer advice centre, housing association premises;
- at fairs and exhibitions;
- site-survey (SME premises or homes);
- utility consumer counters



## *Level of depth*

- Single answers and referrals.
- Discussion or systematic approach to identify the problem and solution.
- Survey with written report, such as energy performance certification reports.
- More detailed and time-consuming support, such as:
  - ‘handholding’ a vulnerable client through getting works done, obtaining subsidies and understanding best use of new equipment;
  - project support, for client carrying out substantial building work or installing microgeneration

# Advice topics

By category:

- measures (identifying them, finance, suppliers and installers)
- purchases and procurement
- behaviour/use
- energy supply
- health and comfort
- Policy: environmental, transport, housing, climate change, spatial planning, community, economic development...



## by topic

- Thermal insulation
- Heating, air conditioning and hot water appliances
- Cooking, lighting, laundry, refrigeration, consumer electronics and other electrical appliances
- Heat and power from on-site renewables, including heat pumps, solar thermal, photovoltaics, hydro, wind, biomass, geothermal.
- Buying electricity from renewable sources
- Ventilation and condensation
- Consumption and payments (meters and bills)
- Grants, tax incentives and other subsidies



## by topic

- Carbon calculation and ‘footprint’
- Low carbon building design
- Energy used in production of appliances and building materials
- Ecological building materials and finishes
- Carbon impact of different mobility options
- Efficient driving habits
- Environmental impact of different vehicle models
- More environmentally friendly transport fuel options
- Travel plans



# Marketing and outreach

## Goals:

- To raise awareness of the benefits of energy efficiency/sustainable energy use
- To bring consumers to the advice services which will enable them to take appropriate action

## Examples:

- direct mailing
- inclusions in official local authority mailouts-





- advertisements, editorials, competitions and other features in press, radio, tv
- stands at fairs, exhibitions, shopping centres, libraries, leisure centres, local authority buildings, hospitals and other public places;
- leaflets and posters;
- briefing and training sessions to staff of other services, to facilitate referrals, such as housing providers, local authorities, health and social care, utilities, other types of advice agency, volunteer groups, environmental NGOs. ;
- community ‘champions’ and support workers ;
- events and presentations at schools and colleges



## Examples of advice materials and services for households:

France - ADEME SNCF eco comparing tool –web-site



**Voyages-sncf.com** Thalys vous fait une fleur.

Accueil week-end vacances France **train** vol hôtel voiture loisirs + promos Mon Espace Client

**L'EcoCompareur**

Comparez sur le site Voyages-sncf.com et voyagez moins cher !  
Train, Vol, Low cost\*, Voiture personnelle

☐ Aller-Retour ☒ Aller Simple

Au départ de : ANNECY [Choisissez ici](#)

A destination de : MONTPELLIER [Choisissez ici](#)

Date de départ : 05/05/2007 entre 15h-18h

Date de retour : j/mn/aaaa entre 07h-10h

Nombre de passagers : 1

[Plus d'options Voiture](#)

**Comparer**

**Le seul comparateur qui permet de :**

- ☐ Comparer les tarifs (adultes 26-59) du train et de l'avion disponibles sur Voyages-sncf.com, y compris des low costs\*, sur toute la France et l'Europe proche
- ☐ Prendre en compte les caractéristiques de votre voiture personnelle
- ☐ Vérifier la disponibilité des billets en temps réel et réserver directement

**Aperçu des résultats <sup>1</sup>**

Trajets en :	Train	Avion	Voiture**
Paris - Nice	174.40€	209.98€	322.21€
Durée de trajet	06h45	01h35	08h58
Indice de CO <sub>2</sub>	10	208	373
Lyon - Lille	150.30€	145.91€	239.10€
Durée de trajet	03h10	01h15	06h39
Indice de CO <sub>2</sub>	9	165	277

**EcoVoyagez**  
ADEME Avec l'Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise de l'Energie, Voyages-sncf.com calcule pour vous l'impact sur l'environnement de chaque mode de transport.

[En savoir](#) <sup>1</sup> le lendemain matin

**Besoin d'aide ?**

- Consultez notre [aide en ligne](#)

## Luxemburg - The Energy Tour



## UK -Energy Conscious Behaviour Saves Money - Booklet

Type	Printed Leaflet
Language	English
Source	<p>The Energy Advice Providers Group (EAPG) of the Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes.</p> <p>Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes 21 Dartmouth Street London SW1H 9BP</p> <p>To download a copy of this leaflet in black and white pdf format, or for a full report on this research in Word format go to;</p> <p><a href="http://www.est.org.uk/partnership">www.est.org.uk/partnership</a> or <a href="http://www.eeph.org.uk">www.eeph.org.uk</a></p> <p>E-mail <a href="mailto:partnership@est.org.uk">partnership@est.org.uk</a> for a printed copy of the full report.</p>

## Ireland - Energy Calculator

Type	Web tool
Language	English
Source	<p>Sustainable Energy Ireland Glasnevin Dublin 9</p> <p>Tel: +353 1 836 9080 Fax: +353 1 837 2848 E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@sei.ie">info@sei.ie</a> Website: <a href="http://www.sei.ie">www.sei.ie</a></p> <p>The tool can be accessed from <a href="#">here</a></p>
Permissions to use	Freely downloadable from the website

# Thank you for your attention!

