



SHARE

Social Housing Action to
Reduce Energy Consumption



Case Study 5



Locally sourced wood fuel as a renewable solution to fuel poverty

Nearly half of land in Estonia is covered by forest. In many rural areas heating is provided through small district heating system using oil as a fuel.

In 2005 local oil shale oil prices nearly doubled. This “jump” in prices made the cost of heating extremely high compared with consumer income.

Most of the inhabitants of the rural villages are retired people who live on an income below the average (mainly their pension). These consumers need to find appropriate solutions to avoid fuel poverty.

The consumers themselves usually own the boiler, and decisions about heating are made by majority of owners.

Backed up by simple calculations, REC Estonia suggested one possible way for keeping the cost of heating under control and acceptable for consumers. The next step depended on the decision of the flat owners association.

They decided to make a single purchase form the wood market of all the logs needed for one year's estimated consumption for heating. This bulk purchase reduced the price by about 15%.

SHARE is an Intelligent Energy Europe Project working in eight European areas to develop energy efficiency and low carbon technologies in social housing. For more information about the SHARE project and for other case studies see the project website:

www.socialhousingaction.com



Because the logs were 3 meters long, they had to put their own efforts into cutting them to a usable size. The logs ready for the boiler were stored close to the boiler house.

Every flat owner was responsible for their own share of the logs, based on heated area of their flat.

If the owner was unable for some reason to do this, an internal (in house) service was available to help them.

With the help of a dry summer 250 m³ logs were ready at the start of the heating season.



Benefit from wood-logs.

By using wood logs the heat consumer will support the local economy . The quantity of logs needed for heat production will be cut down from a nearby forest.

The owner of the forest will get the benefit and at least part of the money will stay circulating in the local economy.

If carefully managed, wood is a relatively clean and renewable bio fuel with less negative impact on the environment than burning fossil fuels.

For the heat consumers in 16 flats in this case, this meant that they saved 10 000 euros a year compared with using oil .

The average monthly income for pensioners living in these flats is about 200 euros, so this means that each flat saved about 3 pensions per year.

The boiler is operated by people living in the same block of flats, enabling direct feedback on heat quality.



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