



SHARE

Social Housing Action to
Reduce Energy Consumption



Case study 20



A local work group was set up as part of the SHARE programme. It identified the need to help families to understand their electricity bills, and developed the “bill mask” as an advice tool for this purpose.

The tool consists of a sleeve which the electricity bill can be slid into. It has windows cut into it in the relevant positions so that the important information on the bill can be highlighted, and linked to explanations.

The aim is to help families to extract the useful information to enable them to monitor annual consumption, and so be in a better position to control their expenditure on energy.

The use of a “bill mask” to help interpret electricity bills

The bill mask was funded by EDF (the principal electricity provider in France) and 1000 copies printed. It will be distributed:

- Directly to families in difficulties
- Through social workers, to use in advising and supporting their clients
- By the energy ambassadors, for whom the ability to analyse consumption by telephone is facilitated by the prior sending of the bill mask to a family that needs it.

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

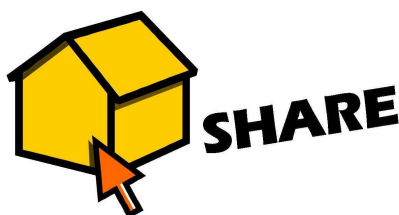


Loïc Lepage, French manager of SHARE project, declared:

“The experience of using the bill mask will be transmitted to other French associations interested in the issue of energy among households in difficulties.

We hope that sharing this experience will encourage the multiplication of the results we achieve through the SHARE programme, and perhaps that will encourage the use of this tool beyond the Haute-Savoie department”.

Discussions are taking place to realise a similar tool, in collaboration with GDF, the French main gas provider. The local group hopes that this type of approach may become standard for energy providers in France.



French electricity bills – the context

Until recently the general public in France only had access to a single electricity and gas provider (EDF-GDF). With the imminent liberalization of the electricity market (July 1st 2007), new providers will be able to offer their services to private individuals.

In preparation for liberalisation the entity EDF-GDF has split into two distinguished companies: EDF and GDF. Customers used to receive one only bill for electricity and gas., but by the end of 2006, they received two different ones.

With the arrival of new providers, there will be soon as many styles of bill as there are energy providers. This may exacerbate the difficulties families can face in understanding their bills and create confusion among consumers.

On the European level, annex A of the 26th of June 2003 directive concerning the common rules for the domestic electricity market determines the minimum content in electricity contracts and bills that is to be respected by every electricity provider in the European union. To be applicable, this directive is going to be transposed to French law.

Contact detail

Name: Lepage Loïc

Organisation: Prioriterre

Téléphone: +44(0) 4 50 67 17 54

E-mail: loic.lepage@prioriterre.org



The sole responsibility for the content of this document lies with the authors. It does not represent the opinion of the European Communities. The European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein