

IMEA – Integrated Measures for an Energy Efficiency Approach

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Introduction

Energy efficiency (EE) is recognized as the simplest, fastest, least expensive and lowest risk resource to meet the growing energy demand (CalCEF Innovations White Paper, 2009). EE is widely regarded as a crucial policy theme within the EU. The EC “Action plan for energy efficiency” and the Directive 2010/31/EU “on the energy performance of buildings” (EPBD) elaborate on the possibilities of focussing on the built environment, as buildings account for 40% of total energy consumption in the Union and have many-decade lifetimes.

Energy efficiency in the built-up environment is a relatively low-cost, high-value opportunity. However, economies of scale tend to drive most activity towards large-scale projects (public buildings, schools, hospitals). The residential market (housing) represents large potential savings but is disparate and fragmented. Thus, IMEA will focus on:

- Energy efficiency (saving energy by improving ‘old’ collective energy infrastructure systems, insulation, stimulating energy efficient behaviour)
- The built-up environment
- Residential areas (in cities as well as in smaller municipalities)
- An area-based approach: the interplay between the level of individual households and neighbourhood level

Local and regional public authorities play a key role in the realisation of the EU energy ambitions. However, it turns out to be challenging to realise the transformation towards energy efficient cities and regions. A policy framework and technological solutions are available but the implementation of these solutions is strenuous. Next to this, energy efficiency measures are often well suited to address adjacent issues as local and regional economic development. This potential is not yet fully exploited.

Public authorities do want to play a more proactive role in enhancing their energy efficiency. The “Integrated Measures for an Energy Efficiency Approach” project (IMEA) will provide them with concrete tools to do so. Focus will be to the built-environment. Specific attention will be given to the interplay between the household and neighbourhood/district level, by addressing measures that make buildings more energy efficient, as well as instruments and devices that stimulate energy efficiency energy efficient behaviour. Public/private business models will be exchanged and tested to facilitate their implementation.

IMEA aims to support local and regional authorities in taking a pro-active role in improving the energy efficiency of the built environment whilst enhancing local and regional economic development.

Objectives

- To exchange and improve viable business models that create local and regional economic spin-off (themes a.o.: area-based funding schemes, local and regional energy companies, retrofitting (new technologies in old systems);

- To exchange and test innovative tools that stimulate energy efficient behaviour
- To bridge the gap between policy and implementation, to put policy into practice by implementing change strategies, development of SMART projects and implementation plans

Two of the ways in which IMEA will meet its objectives are Thematic Working groups and Change Cases. The Working groups will focus on Awareness Raising to influence citizens' energy consumption patterns, and Business Models to enable local and regional authorities to take a pro-active role in financing an energy efficient future. The Change Cases, that all partners will be working on in duo's, analyse an area-based challenge to be solved. Within the project, partners will test and implement a change strategy to address their case, by making use of input from the thematic working groups and advice from other partners (a selected team of 'critical friends').

Partnership

The IMEA consortium consists of relevant local and regional authorities partnered by National Focal Points (NFP) of the European Urban Knowledge Network (explained below). The added value of linking national knowledge partners to local and regional authorities and to embed these partnerships within a European network is an effective way to capitalise on transnational and cross-border cooperation. Partners have identified interesting complementarities in the expertise of public authorities from new and "older" member states with regard to energy efficiency. Experience with innovative energy efficiency measures is predominantly available in the "older" member states. But newer member states have older systems that might be the key to large scale innovation. The collective heating systems in former Eastern European countries may seem outdated but by retrofitting (using new technologies in old systems) they may be perfectly applicable for energy efficiency measures that need a collective effort. The other way round: business models for collective heating from former Eastern European Countries may be well applicable for collective innovative energy efficiency measures in residential areas in 'Western' Europe.

EUKN is a (not EU subsidised) intergovernmental network that facilitates the exchange of demand-driven knowledge and experience. "Urban" in this sense does not exclude regions, smaller towns and villages but indicates a focus on the built-up environment. EUKN has close connections with regional authorities, ministries on a national level and other European networks. The NFPs are either ministries or knowledge institutions. They act as knowledge brokers and mentors for local and regional authorities. EUKN currently addresses seven policy themes: social inclusion and integration; housing; transport and infrastructure; urban environment; economy, knowledge and employment; security, skills and capacity building. Members of the network have indicated to be in need of support in the field of energy efficiency.

Objectives:

- To exchange, connect and integrate governance models (possible themes: retrofitting and collective ownership, local and regional energy companies, area-based financing schemes)
- To connect “Energy” to local and regional authorities’ social agenda's
- To bridge the gap between policy and implementation, to put policy into practice

