

# Information and advice citizens on energy efficiency and renewable energy for citizens and business and set up of public private partnerships

## In a nutshell

SUMMARY
It is best practice to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• adopt strategic partnerships to involve the wider community in the development and delivery of carbon reduction schemes;</li><li>• establish information and advice services to help residents and businesses reduce their energy use;</li><li>• set up and join public-private energy-related projects: public administrations can partner with private organisations with specialised knowledge in energy efficiency and renewable energy projects;</li><li>• support low-carbon pilot projects: pilot projects can help bring to the market energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions with the potential to be replicated by organisations and citizens in their territory.</li></ul>
Target group
Local authorities
Applicability
This best practice is applicable to all local public administrations with a role in promoting energy efficiency and/or renewable energy for residents and businesses.
Environmental performance indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The public administration delivers information and advice services on energy efficiency and renewable energy (y/n)</li><li>• The public administration supports low-carbon pilot projects, e.g. through public-private partnerships (y/n)</li></ul>
Benchmarks of excellence
N/A

## Description

Local government has a unique role in that it is responsible for multiple issues that affect people's lives, whilst having a more direct relationship with citizens than does central government. This gives local government the opportunity to deliver schemes which have multiple benefits, for example in terms of public health, carbon saving and job creation.

Items covered within this best practice, and applicable in an EU-wide context, include:

- Adopt strategic partnerships to involve the wider community in the development and delivery of carbon reduction schemes;
- Establish information and advice services to help residents reduce their energy consumption;
- Set up and join public-private energy-related projects/schemes; and
- Support low-carbon pilot projects.

Stakeholder engagement is not included in this best practice as this is covered in the best practice on exemplary role of the public sector.

Local governments have a unique connection with citizens. They are non-commercial, which means the information they provide and the projects they deliver are generally trusted. They have certain responsibilities and statutory obligations towards their citizens. This gives them the opportunity to deliver services and projects which otherwise would not be provided. Although regional and national governments share some of these responsibilities they lack the local presence and accountability of local government.

### Strategic Partnerships

One of the most important factors in delivering a municipality-wide scheme is having a strong strategic partnership with local organisations and institutions. Local government often doesn't have the street-level understanding to successfully deliver schemes without the support and insight of organisations like neighbourhood associations and community groups. Even though local government is generally trusted by people, there is additional value in hearing information from one's neighbour or at a regular meeting place.

Strategic partnerships generally:

- Share information between public, private and community sectors;
- Provide a means to address cross-sectorial issues and opportunities;
- Provide a forum for communication between organisations, and between the organisations and the general public
- Allow the wider municipality to hold the authority to account over its commitments

Potential strategic partners include charities, religious communities, community centres, business associations, sport clubs and other communities of interest (social clubs). In cases where there is no local organisation in a given sector, local government can adopt a supportive role - bringing together local people and helping them with resources and advice for institutional development and capacity building.

Strategic partnerships need to be accountable for the use of public funds and effective in the delivery of project activities. Arrangements for good governance can include:

- A board containing members of the partnership, often including representation of local government
- A chair/coordinator
- Regular meetings
- Workshops involving members and other stakeholders
- Engagement with the general public (for example through a website or social media)
- Working groups for particular topics, e.g. transport, energy

For example, the "Munich for Climate Protection" partnership has the following structure:

**Table 1: Munich for Climate Protection structure**

Role	Description	Responsibility
Chair	Facilitate the activities of the partnership, represent the partnership publicly.	Mayor of Munich
Coordination	Ongoing management of the partnership activities	Department of Health and Environment
Administration	Membership management	K. GREENTECH GmbH / PICS GmbH
Development	Develop projects and actions within the partnership's remit	Club members and working groups

Other partnerships, e.g. the Bristol Green Capital Partnership, have a chair that is not a representative of the authority.

It is important that the partnership includes but is independent of local government, so that it can hold it to account on its commitments and provide continuity when local government changes political control. However it is also essential that authority involvement is included, since it has in-depth knowledge and major influence over many aspects of the municipality.

Successful partnerships encourage the involvement of organisations and individuals from across the spectrum of civil society, including business, non-profit organisations and activists. A common theme such as “climate protection” or “Green Capital” provides an opportunity for these organisations to work together.

#### Information & Advice

The most basic service local government can provide is information and advice. This can be in response to a change in the law or local regulations, or as part of an environmental improvement campaign.

For example Barcelona made it compulsory to use solar energy to supply 60% of running hot water in all public and private new buildings, renovated buildings or buildings changing their use. In order to disseminate information and advice about this change in regulations, the Council worked with Neighbourhood Associations and building associations to educate people on how to measure their energy savings and keep the systems maintained. It also opened a public information centre where people can get information and advice on solar panels. (NYC Global Partners, 2011)

Information and advice can also include free household audits or lifestyle surveys. This can help individuals and businesses understand what services they are eligible for, for example free insulation or additional benefits. It is also a way to disseminate useful tips on behaviour change at the same time. For example, Leicester (UK) offered free audits to local SMEs (small-to-medium sized enterprises) and access to grants for energy-saving measures, funded by national government grants. (Leicester City Council, 2013)

It is important to identify the optimal time and situation to provide information and advice. For example, people applying for a construction or renovation permit are likely to be more receptive to information about energy efficiency measures. Such information is also unlikely to be effective in warmer months, because residents are not thinking about this issue and won't be able to put the advice into practice until the heating season. (UNECE, 2013)

#### Public-private energy related projects/schemes

It is often impossible for local governments to deliver schemes beyond information and advice with their own resources. Retrofit and renewable energy projects require specialist knowledge that local governments do not have. It is logical to partner with private organisations with those skills that can help deliver the project. This can be a commercial or a non-profit organisation.

For example, the public authority would generally provide:

- Initial publicity and facilitation of links with citizens;

- Quality assurance;
- Finance (or facilitate the financing); and
- Project management of the delivery partners.

The private organisations would generally provide:

- Expertise in the subject matter;
- Delivery of the project (e.g. installation); and
- Private finance.

For example, the London Borough of Sutton supported a pilot project to deliver retrofit to private households via 'soft' loans (low interest or non-commercial repayment terms). They partnered with national DIY retailer B&Q who ran the project, delivered the surveys and installations. The local authority managed the finances and loan system (the funds were supplied by central government). Sustainability charity BioRegional supported the project with advice, monitoring and evaluation. In this case the private partner project-managed the scheme, but the funds could only be accessed by the municipality. (BioRegional, 2011)

#### Low carbon pilot projects

Local government is also in a unique position because it does not have to make a profit and can invest in less commercial ideas. Pilot projects can help develop an idea, which, if successful, can be replicated in other areas. With regards to public authority pilot projects, the ideas generally involve property or infrastructure under its responsibility, e.g. road infrastructure, bus stops, public buildings.

Finance and delivery of the project is often via a private partner, however pilot projects differ from the public-private schemes detailed above in that they involve unproven concepts or technologies. The backing of local government is often crucial to the scheme gaining funding because the risk is reduced for the funders or project partners.

For example, Barcelona delivered a pilot project for solar-powered bus stops to provide bus times and information. This was in partnership with a private design company and a higher education institute. The pilot started with 100 bus stops, with plans to expand to 2,000 across the city.

## **Environmental benefits**

Since every project has different aims, benefits can vary significantly. Some example benefits are:

- Barcelona has saved 70,000 MWh per year, increased the surface of solar thermal square meters in the city from 1.1 m<sup>2</sup> per 1000 inhabitants in 2000 to 59 m<sup>2</sup> in 2010 due to its changed policy and information campaign (NYC Global Partners, 2011).
- A biogas cooperative set up by farmers and supported by Beckerich municipality in Luxembourg provides heat and electricity to householders. Combined with a wood incinerator supplied with waste wood from local forests, the town now supplies 90% of its electricity and 30% of its heat from low carbon sources, as well as delivering lower bills (around €500 saving) to consumers (Covenant of Mayors, 2012).
- Saerbeck in Germany decided to become self-sufficient in renewable energy and reach a positive energy balance by 2030, and through a cooperative with citizen membership to install 29 MW of renewable energy the municipality reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita from 9.9 tCO<sub>2</sub> to 5.5 tCO<sub>2</sub> (Climate Alliance, 2014b).

## Side effects

This BEMP is relatively broad in scope and examples of best practice are varied, so there are no specific negative impacts on other environmental pressures. Individual schemes and projects may have possible negative impacts. For example if an incentive scheme inadvertently encourages people to take action which impacts on other environmental issues. Careful thought should be given to incentive schemes and the possible negative impacts.

## Applicability

This best practice is applicable to all local public administrations with a role in promoting energy efficiency and/or renewable energy for residents and businesses.

## Economics

The costs and benefits of these schemes are varied, but generally they require staff time to coordinate and deliver projects. Additional finance is often gained through grants and loans for each project. A public authority may have funds available for local pilot or community projects which can be used for these schemes.

In general, public advice schemes will incur a cost to the authority – possibly already budgeted for – but private-public partnerships will have their own cost-benefit analysis and often involve additional external funding. The authority may wish to contribute financially where the project meets its objectives.

Although some incentive schemes cost the authority significant sums, they can leverage significant additional funding. For example, the Picardie incentive scheme cost the authority over €10m, but delivered €100m in overall investment, which was mainly spent with local businesses, providing a boost to the economy. Similarly, the Munich incentive scheme triggered investments over 10 times the initial subsidy (Climate Alliance, 2014).

## Driving forces for implementation

Public authorities have a duty to their citizens to provide information and advice about current legislation and policies. Local policy changes also need to be communicated.

In addition to these responsibilities, public authorities have obligations to reduce carbon emissions and poverty. It is not possible to achieve these aims without involving the wider municipality, and the authority will not have all the required knowledge and expertise to deliver the necessary actions.

## Reference organisations

### Barcelona, Spain

Barcelona was the first city in Europe to implement Solar Thermal Ordinances

### Beckerich, Luxembourg

Public-private partnerships to help Beckerich become energy self-sufficient by 2025

### Munich, Germany

Strategic Partnership between the City of Much Authority and local members committed to reducing the city's impact on the environment.

### Picardie, France

Incentive scheme for energy efficient improvements in partnership with local banks

### Provaglio d'Iseo, Italy

Public private partnership to subsidise solar photovoltaic panels

Vienna, Austria

Information and advice initiative between three utility companies owned by the city of Vienna.

## Literature

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