



Actions to Mitigate Energy Poverty
in the Private Rented Sector

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Recommendations for replicating best practices for energy poverty in the private rented sector

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE CHECKLIST FOR UPSCALING BEST PRACTICES

There are several policy and measure best practices across the EU for combatting energy poverty in the Private Rented Sector (PRS). These range from the financing of building renovations to Energy Efficiency Obligation Schemes and information and advice measures for landlords and tenants. These best practices originate from ten successfully delivered policies, which have been adapted during the Horizon 2020 ENPOR project to address energy poverty in the PRS market. The checklist items are intended to be *interdependent yet flexible*. Some steps, such as developing inclusive eligibility criteria and establishing support centers, lay the groundwork for others, like monitoring renovations and involving tenants in decision-making. While the actions can be initiated in parallel, certain foundational steps, particularly those involving policy framework development and stakeholder engagement, are best addressed early in the process of upscaling best practices to ensure a solid foundation for subsequent actions.

2. UPSCALING INFORMATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

This checklist tool is designed for policymakers at various governance levels - from the EU down to national and regional authorities - as well as for the multitude of stakeholders directly involved in the implementation of energy poverty alleviation policies. The spectrum of these stakeholders is broad, ranging from utility service providers, social sector professionals, and representatives advocating for the rights and interests of tenants and landlords within the PRS. This checklist is structured to guarantee that these initiatives are not only inclusive and specific to the identified target group but that they also maintain longevity and adaptability over time, with a focus on application and iterative improvements.

The direct impact of such a checklist is on energy-poor households within the PRS, who will be benefitting from a thorough repository of knowledge and tools that enable them to manage their energy consumption and related expenses with more autonomy, awareness and efficiency. Indirectly, the checklist is set to facilitate a heightened degree of clarity and improved collaborative efforts among stakeholders, laying the groundwork for a more integrated approach to tackle energy poverty.

2.1 Collaborative Outreach and Material Dissemination

- Provide decentralised consulting services** to support existing institutions (whether regional or national) with sustainable financial resources provided through tendering processes. This can happen through:
 - Conducting region-specific needs assessments, both through surveys and data analysis, in consultation with local agencies.
 - Mapping resources and identifying institutions offering support or collaboration, such as governmental and energy agencies, as well as NGOs,

- but also utility companies and research institutions and university, to not forget community groups and associations.
- Based on available resources, plan and implement a viable financial model, that eventually incorporates both private and governmental funding, thereby making this effort more sustainable and likely to succeed in the long run.
 - Define implementation strategies for the material dissemination, through target distribution channels (also using local media, when possible), engaging in community collaboration and leveraging existing networks.
 - Make use of identified institutions to establish local partnership and in so doing, increase trust in engaged communities.
- Collaborate with local and regional agencies to distribute multilingual materials according to the local needs with easy-to-understand advice and pictures on reducing energy poverty, thereby promoting wider accessibility and understanding across different communities. The same materials can also be distributed to other countries beside the one producing it, due to the initial efforts to make materials available in several languages.
- Take advantage of tailored communication materials and channels**, by using flyers, posters, emails, and other materials, such as the energy boxes, to provide legible and replicable information and energy saving practices. To engage broader audiences, organise community events, such as workshops and seminars, and open forums and discussion panels, and make use of social networks, while ensuring communication channels are adapted to the relevant target groups.

Real world examples

Examples of best practices include Austria's approach to reducing language barriers in energy poverty materials and the successful dissemination strategies targeting energy poor tenants and households. Outside of the measures implemented in ENPOR, a second example from the [MCPE Project](#) includes conducting home visits for personalized energy-saving advice, with a dual-visit approach: initial visits for basic energy-saving tips and follow-up visits by energy experts to assist with bill understanding and renovation scheme eligibility. This approach ensures a deepened understanding of individual household needs and effective dissemination of practical energy conservation knowledge.

2.2 Comprehensive Understanding of Energy Conservation

- Through **Social Energy Advice**, offer low-threshold energy advice via trained social advisors, focusing on reducing energy consumption without significant investments.
- Organise training sessions at the local or regional level with a focus on understanding energy bills and conservation methods, tailored to the specific needs of each community. The results of these training sessions can be used for outlining a strategy to deliver community-specific training sessions focused on energy literacy and saving, with the aim

of using the insights gained from these sessions to improve and expand the program's reach and impact.

Develop materials based on EU recommendations on energy poverty that can be customised for national use, ensuring consistency in the information provided across member states.

Real world examples

In Germany, follow-up surveys as part of the StromSparCheck measure showed improved understanding of energy conservation among tenants as it was assessed throughout the ENPOR project, as this approach included engaging unemployed individuals as social advisors, providing both employment opportunities and enhancing the social impact of energy poverty programs. Additionally, within Italy's educational training policy, more comprehensive communication strategies have led to an increase in knowledge on energy conservation measures as reported by past survey results for the overall campaign.

Similarly, POWERPOOR, ENPOR's sister project, has educated 1174 Energy Supporter and Mentor on EU level through their "Training seminars for Energy Supporters and Mentors". Additionally, they engage directly with energy poor citizens and advise them on improving their energy efficiency. Energy Mentors provide support and expertise related to energy communities and crowdfunding at a local or regional level and staff the Energy Poverty Alleviation Offices (EPAO) that have been established in municipalities.

2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation for Long-term Effectiveness

Although likely resource intensive, a focus on **continuous monitoring is imperative**. Put in place a monitoring system with suitable indicators, in collaboration with statistical institutes and the use of tools like the [Energy Poverty Dashboard \(EPD\)](#) but also take advantage of utilizing qualitative data (people's lived experiences & needs) to integrate the monitoring and inform better policies.

Set EU standards for monitoring and evaluation that can be adapted and implemented at national and regional levels to ensure consistency in long-term impact assessments. For this purpose, use regional data to assess energy bill savings and conduct localised evaluations of policy effectiveness.

Real world examples

Examples of best practices include the need for ongoing monitoring as highlighted in the Austrian and German policies to assess the long-term effectiveness of energy advice.

*Additionally, in 2020, as part of the Compete4SECAP project, three Croatian cities include energy poverty as their measures. Two non-ENPOR key measures available in the [municipal SECAP in the City of Rijeka](#) aimed at reducing energy poverty for socially vulnerable groups while enhancing efficiency and aiming at long-term energy poverty alleviation: one is co-financing energy renovations of families unable to invest independently (which was also done in Zadar), with the other being the establishment of a center for energy counselling, as also present in the [city of Osijek](#). Furthermore, in Osijek, a small energy efficiency measure, namely energy boxes, was implemented. **This measure of Energy boxes is similar to the ENPOR policy in the Netherlands.** After these three cities introduced measures for energy poverty, another 12 cities and municipalities in Croatia designed measures for energy poverty.*

Under EPAH TA, the city of Zagreb has designed the “Program to reduce energy poverty in the area of the city of Zagreb for the period until 2030”. The Program includes seven measures: the Establishment of a system for collecting and monitoring data on energy poverty; Energy consulting, Energy box, Replacement of household appliances, Energy renovation of multi-apartment buildings and Energy renovation of family houses.

2.4 Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building

- Offer capillary and collaborative trainings sessions for social workers and energy advisors, involving representatives from target groups both in the training design as well as in the delivery process. Throughout ENPOR, the co-creation process increased the holistic understanding of various actors’ needs, allowing for the resulting measures to be tailored and therefore more relevant to those targeted.
- Implement training and information programs designed for regional adaptation and execution at the national level by fostering new collaborations, improving skills, and facilitating cooperation between state organizations and stakeholders.
- For replication of national programs within a Member State that wishes to implement training and information measures, forums and working groups should be created to promote, exchange and collaborate on energy poverty, ensuring the participation of diverse stakeholders including property owners and tenants.

Real world examples

An example of best practices from the [REACH programme](#), implemented by the Energy Agency of Plovdiv and covering Croatia, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Slovenia, include empowering energy-poor households to save energy and change habits. The programme focused on establishing energy poverty as a critical issue requiring tailor-made policies in these countries with key components involved such as engaging decision-makers and providing them with actionable recommendations, thereby fostering a more informed and responsive approach to energy poverty at both the local and national levels.

In Croatia, under the REACH project, the Energy box was used during simple energy audit in Sisak Moslavina County for the first time.

2.5 Data-Driven Policy Development

- Push for the collection of data on energy poverty and the effectiveness of implemented measures continuously to support long-term evaluation by providing support to institutions via training or direct collaborations.
- Use EU frameworks to guide the collection of new insights and data to inform the implementation of energy poverty policies. At the national level, integrate these insights into the design of future energy poverty policies and programs, ensuring alignment with broader strategies. Relevant EU frameworks to keep into consideration are:
 - [Commission Staff Working Document \(SWD/2003/647\): EU guidance on energy poverty \(accompanying the Commission Recommendation on energy poverty \(C/2023/4080\)\)](#)
 - [Commission Staff Working Document \(SWD/2003/647\): EU guidance on energy poverty \(accompanying the Commission Recommendation on energy poverty \(C/2023/4080\)\)](#)[Commission Recommendation \(EU\) 2023/2407 of 20 October 2023 on energy poverty](#)
 - [Commission Recommendation \(EU\) 2023/2407 of 20 October 2023 on energy poverty](#)
 - [Directive \(EU\) 2018/844 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 2010/31/EU on the energy performance of buildings and Directive 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency \(Text with EEA relevance\)](#)
 - [Energy Poverty Advisory Hub](#) offers more tools and information.

Real world examples

The Lithuanian Ministry of Energy includes a legal requirement for energy suppliers to provide advice and education to consumers on energy saving measures, ensuring consumers receive valuable information on how to enhance energy efficiency and change consumption behaviors, with a mandate for suppliers to disseminate this information at least annually. This approach not only increases consumer awareness but also holds suppliers accountable for participating in national energy efficiency efforts.

2.6 Enhancing Resource Availability

- Combine energy-saving measures with coaching, installation services, and repeat visits to ensure the highest effectiveness of outreach activities.
- Verify available resources at the national or regional levels to establish funding streams dedicated to energy efficiency renovations. If feasible, develop these funding streams to complement informational and training measures.
- Ensure these funding streams are designed to be accessible and transparent in their application process while also including specific provisions in the funding streams, such as earmarking amounts for households under a specific income threshold.
- Locally, improve access to financial and informational resources to enable stakeholders to undertake energy conservation measures and renovations. *See Establish Point 2 One-Stop-Shop Support Centers below.*

Real world examples

Examples of best practices include Italy's efforts in promoting the production of new data on energy poverty in the PRS and seeking opportunities for funding allocation.

In Croatia, connecting surveys from EmpowerMed project in the city of Zadar, the POWERPOOR project in the city of Križevci and EPAH TA in the city of Zagreb with ENPOR project by including questions about property ownership to gather data on the tenant's situation regarding energy consumption and the energy performance of buildings.

3. UPSCALING FUNDING SCHEMES FOR ENERGY POVERTY

This second implementation checklist is targeted at governmental entities, energy agencies, housing collectives, and non-governmental organisations actively involved both locally and nationally in addressing energy poverty through renovation grants and financing schemes. The core aim is to refine, fortify, replicate and upscale the methodologies associated with the allocation and utilisation of renovation grants. To do so, this checklist ensures that fiscal mechanisms developed are not only expansive and encompassing but are also finely tuned to confront the complex landscape of energy poverty in the PRS.

The completion of this checklist foresees significant advancements in the quality of life for tenants within the PRS, allowing for the delivery of better living conditions, the redistribution and related diminishing of financial burden related to energy expenses, and the fortification of energy security. Property owners and housing associations will also benefit from schemes developed using this list, thereby gaining access to information with clear instructions, robust financial support, and an increase in property value post-renovation.

3.1 Develop More Inclusive Eligibility and Support Structures/Schemes

- Design renovation grants with **inclusive eligibility** criteria that consider social, economic, and energy-related factors, including tenure status.
- Structure the grants so that **approved applicants receive up to 100% of the renovation funds upfront**, based on strict income criteria. Applicants should then be obligated to provide proof of completed renovations within a specified timeline, moving away from reimbursement-based models.
- Drastically improve rent control regulations** alongside increased funding for rented buildings to prevent renovictions.¹
- Identify the split incentive issue in regional and national housing and renovation regulations as well as funding schemes. Tools and methodologies to calculate the energy renovation costs covered by landlords and tenants should be used, which are informed by the benefits each party gains from renovations. To determine appropriate measures to mitigate the split incentive problem, tools like the [split incentive calculator](#) can be used to determine the proportion of renovation costs to be borne by landlords and tenants, based on the benefits each party receives, thereby informing energy-related policy making and grant schemes.
- Develop an all-inclusive energy poverty regulatory and policy framework that connects individual energy efficiency measures to the national policy landscape, as is expected in the 2024 NECP updates.

¹ This recommendation has been produced by the ENPOR project and does not necessarily reflect the views of UIPI.

Real world examples

Examples of best practices include Estonia's refined targeting of renovation grants towards buildings likely inhabited by low-income households. The Greek measures – [Savings at Home I and II](#) - can also be considered best practices in terms of granting subsidies directly, rather than applying for reimbursements later, although only a select few target groups are allowed a 100% support, and for now partial investments are still considered loans to be paid back.

3.2 Establish One-Stop-Shop Support Centers

- Create (and ensure continuous public funding for) one-stop-shops (OSS)** or dedicated public offices at the national and regional level, offering comprehensive guidance and support to landlords and tenants in a cooperative manner.
- In these same OSS locations, provide **ongoing technical and administrative support** and simplified processes for renovation grants at the regional and local levels, ensuring accessibility for all aforementioned stakeholders.

Real world examples

Examples of best practices can be drawn from the concept of [one-stop shops as seen in other EU initiatives](#), where comprehensive guidance and support are provided to stakeholders, streamlining the process of accessing and utilising renovation grants. Some other best practices include:

- [Hauts-de-France Pass Renovation](#) in France, the technical and financial instrument designed by the regional Public Service for Energy Efficiency
- [SuperHomes](#) in the UK: creating more and more energy-aware households that are redefining green living.
- [CoachCopro](#) in France: public service for the renovation of co-properties
- [Setting up community energy one-stop-shops – Guidance document](#)
- LIFE crOss renoHome in Croatia: city of Zagreb and city of Križevci

3.3 Prioritise Whole-Building Renovation Approaches

- Advocate** for regulations and legislation that focus on the **renovation of entire buildings** to maximise energy efficiency improvements on a larger scale.
- Work towards policies that equitably redistribute the financial responsibilities of energy renovations, ensuring that costs are shared fairly among stakeholders.
- Encourage the full renovation of historical buildings**, focusing on preserving heritage while simultaneously enhancing their energy efficiency.
- Support clustered renovations** and district-wide improvements, simplifying joint procurement and improving the capacity of building associations.

Real world examples

Examples of best practices from the [Programme for Renovation in Areas of Special State Concern](#), initiated by the Croatian Government, include the comprehensive approach to restoring national buildings in priority areas. The program aims to significantly reduce energy poverty and improve tenant health, while also boosting employment and the use of renewable energy sources. Notably, the program has so far covered the renovation of 387 residential buildings, with plans to finance 100% of the renovation costs, demonstrating a strong commitment to addressing both energy efficiency and economic development in these targeted areas.

3.4 Implement Effective Measurement and Monitoring

- Develop robust systems to measure and monitor the impacts of policies on energy poverty, using suitable indicators at the EU and national levels. To do so:
 - Identify specific indicators that accurately reflect the dimensions of energy poverty in your region.
 - Align national data collection and monitoring systems with EU frameworks, such as the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub or similar platforms.
 - Engage with stakeholders including local governments, NGOs, and community groups to gather ground-level data and insights.
 - Implement a schedule for regular reporting and analysis of collected data.
- Cross-sectoral collaboration** is fundamental for informative evaluations, involving statistical institutes and leveraging EU tools like the EPD, as well as the ENPOR split incentive calculator.

Real world examples

Examples of best practices can be modeled on EU-level initiatives like the ENPOR EPD, which provides robust data for measuring and monitoring energy poverty and the effectiveness of policies. Also, be on the lookout for updated monitoring frameworks published following the recast EED and EPBD.

*SocialWatt, another ENPOR sister project, developed, adopted, tested and spread innovative schemes to alleviate energy poverty. The appropriate tools - **SocialWatt Tools** - developed within the framework of SocialWatt aim to help **utilities and energy suppliers** effectively identify energy poor households, as well as develop and monitor schemes that focus on increasing the energy efficiency of these houses.*

3.5 Enhance Tenant Participation and Decision-Making

- Increase tenant participation** by involving them in decision-making for the renovation process through a consultative role, alongside owners or representatives of rental apartments/housing associations.
- Use **digital tools** to promote wider sensibilization to the topic, and eventually participation in the housing association decision-making process, making it more accessible, democratic and transparent at the same time. Such tools can include:
 - Virtual meetings and seminars
 - Interactive websites
 - Mobile applications
 - Social media channels linked to NGOs, associations, etc. involved
 - Online survey or feedback forms
- Capacity-building programs** are a great **opportunity for vulnerable tenants** to improve their understanding about and engagement in energy efficiency measures, thus tenants should be presented with the opportunity to attend such events via accessible formats at times which suit their schedules.

Real world examples

Examples of best practices from the Programme to Promote the Improvement of Energy Efficiency of Housing, overseen by the Ministry for Transport, Mobility and the Urban Agenda in Madrid, include offering financial assistance for energy efficiency renovations in households. This program is particularly notable for its inclusive approach, providing increased aid to people with disabilities and young people in rural municipalities. By targeting these specific groups, the program ensures that the benefits of energy efficiency improvements are accessible to some of the most vulnerable segments of society, thereby addressing both energy efficiency and social equity, while offering a great opportunity for enhanced community building.

3.6 Strengthen Support for Building Associations

- Provide **targeted support for building associations**, especially those lacking renovation capacity, to aid in the full renovation process.
 - Start by assessing the renovation needs of an area or a property.
 - Establish contact with the relevant stakeholders and work with them to determine their actual capacity to implement renovations.
 - Present tailored financial support programs suitable to tenants and landlords.
 - Simplify (or offer support in) the application procedure.
 - Provide a list of pre-vetted available and reliable local contractors and experts to carry out renovation works.
- Encourage the use of national renovation grants for comprehensive renovations, ensuring the funds are used specifically for the enhancement of thermal comfort and energy efficiency of properties.

Real world examples

Examples of best practices include the support for comprehensive renovations using national grants, as seen in the policy frameworks of Estonia and Greece, where building associations play a crucial role in effectively managing renovation projects and funds, while also serving as a liaison between tenants, landlords, and contractors to ensure successful implementation and compliance with energy efficiency standards.

3.7 Financial Longevity and Market Considerations

- Ensure national **renovation grants are financed for a minimum number of years (10) to be determined by local stakeholders and authorities which can provide long-term certainty and support for citizens facing energy poverty.**
- Acknowledge market dynamics** when introducing regulatory measures to avoid distortions, involving all responsible public authorities in these discussions.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is important to note that the measures outlined in this checklist, including both training and renovation grants, are most effective when implemented in tandem rather than in isolation. The integration of comprehensive training programs with financial support mechanisms for renovations creates a more holistic approach to reducing energy poverty, by combining the empowerment of citizens through increased knowledge gained via trainings with the practical support of renovation grants. Implementing bodies can therefore achieve a more significant and sustainable impact in alleviating energy poverty in the PRS by applying both measures in parallel.