

LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION DELIVERS STRONGER TOGETHER FOR EUROPE

Climate Alliance International Conference 2026



WORKSHOP II: SHAPING ENERGY SAVINGS TOGETHER

How can municipalities successfully engage citizens



Co-funded by
the European Union

**Citizen Engagement as a Driver of
Energy Efficiency in Municipalities**
SaveEnergyTogether Final Event

29-30 September 2026
Les Ateliers des Tanneurs, Brussels (BE)



From Communication Idea to Municipal Campaigns:

Turning Simple Energy Saving Actions into Local Impact

Altan Sahin
Austrian Energy Agency

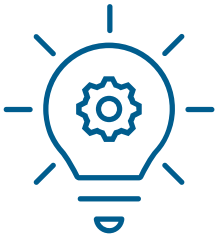


SaveEnergyTogether

Turning simple energy saving actions into local impact

Project background

Project based on the “Energy Efficiency First” principle



Project idea originated in 2022 at the height of the energy crisis



Enable citizens to save as much energy and energy costs as possible with minimal effort



Support local actors in promoting quick and cost effective measures in the household sector

Who is running it?

A network with experience and impact



AT, Austrian Energy Agency (AEA) & Energy Agency Tyrol (EAT)



DE, Allgäu Energy & Environment Centre (eza!)



LT, Lithuanian Consumer Alliance (LCA)



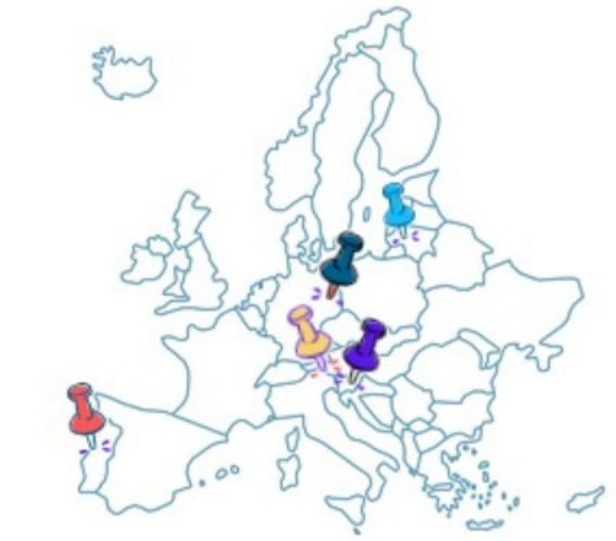
PT, National Energy Agency (ADENE)



SI, Slovenian Consumer Protection Association (ZPS)



EU level, Climate Alliance



Why SaveEnergyTogether?

Energy efficiency as response to the crisis and rising costs



Our response

simple Energy Efficiency Interventions (sEEIs)

Low threshold, behaviour oriented actions that can be implemented quickly and adapted to local contexts

Heating & comfort

Hot water

Electricity

Small investments

Tested across five diverse European pilot contexts to generate transferable knowledge, tools and procedures

The challenge



Information alone

does not guarantee action



Local capacity

and resources are limited



Impact is difficult

to measure credibly

How do we work?

Based on a practical learning cycle



Core idea: local campaigns are not stand-alone communication activities. They become a structured learning base for better campaign design and replication.

Three outcomes for local actors

Each answers a different implementation question

1 | Energy Action Blueprints

How can we run the activity?

MEASURE AT A GLANCE

What it is: 45–90 minute interactive school workshop for one class + optional 1–2 week “Home Challenge” to transfer actions to households.

Primary target: pupils (approx. 9–14 years).
Secondary: parents/guardians via take-home tasks.

Objective: make energy saving at home simple, doable, and discussed at home.

ENERGY SAVINGS

Assume an average household uses about 14,000 kWh of energy (heating + hot water + electricity) per year.

Workshop reach: 20 pupils
⇒ 20 households.

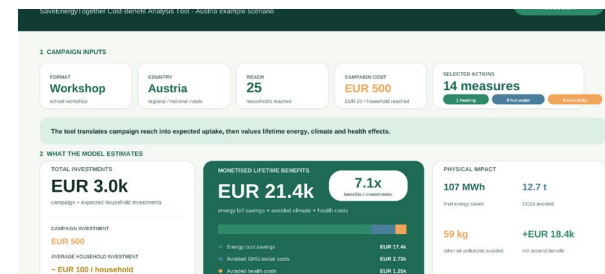
If 30 % apply the tips long-term and reduce their energy use by 5 %, then for each of them = 700 kWh/year saved.

Step-by-step campaign recipes with target groups, implementation steps, timelines, budgets, risks and measurement options

Ready to adapt

2 | Cost-Benefit Tool

Is the campaign worth doing?



Estimates of energy savings, household benefits, investments, emissions and other societal value with only minor inputs necessary

Compare activities

3 | Monitoring Approach

What should we track and report?

- Implementation monitoring:** document what was implemented, at what scale, with which resources, and with what immediate engagement results (reach, activation, satisfaction, complexity).
- Impact monitoring:** estimate or measure the outcomes in energy, emissions and costs, acknowledging that for awareness campaigns the long-term impact is often difficult to quantify and requires a pragmatic combination of measurement and estimation approaches.

As part of the project, monitoring logs were developed for the project partners, which they can use to monitor the implementation of their campaign activities and the associated key figures. Following the project monitoring approach, one “implementation log” should be created per campaign activity and filled in regularly. If an indicator is not applicable for a specific campaign format, this should be stated with a short explanation.

Addressed – reached – activated (core engagement logic)

To compare very different campaign formats, the distinction between **addressed**, **reached**, and **activated** households is essential. The log defines this with a simple example: if a newsletter is sent to 100 addresses, 50 open it and 5 join the promoted action, then the campaign **addressed 100**, **reached 50**, and **activated 5**.

Measurement and estimation: an evidence-based ladder

Many outcome indicators (especially energy savings and emissions) can be either **measured** or **estimated**.

A common logic for inputs, reach, activation and outcomes, while allowing different evidence levels and campaign formats

Build credible evidence

From campaign input to societal value

Austrian school workshop example calculated with the SaveEnergyTogether Excel tool



What can a EUR 500 school workshop deliver?

SaveEnergyTogether Cost-Benefit Analysis Tool - Austria example scenario

BENEFICIAL
FOR SOCIETY

1 CAMPAIGN INPUTS

FORMAT

Workshop

school workshop

COUNTRY

Austria

regional / national inputs

REACH

25

households reached

CAMPAIGN COST

EUR 500

EUR 20 / household reached

SELECTED ACTIONS

14 measures

1 heating

4 hot water

9 electricity

The tool translates campaign reach into expected uptake, then values lifetime energy, climate and health effects.

2 WHAT THE MODEL ESTIMATES

TOTAL INVESTMENTS

EUR 3.0k

campaign + expected household investments

CAMPAIGN INVESTMENT

EUR 500

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INVESTMENT

~ EUR 100 / household

25 households reached

MONETISED LIFETIME BENEFITS

EUR 21.4k

7.1x

benefits / investments

energy bill savings + avoided climate + health costs

● Energy cost savings

EUR 17.4k

● Avoided GHG social costs

EUR 2.73k

● Avoided health costs

EUR 1.25k

PHYSICAL IMPACT

107 MWh

final energy saved

12.7 t

CO2e avoided

59 kg

other air pollutants avoided

+EUR 18.4k

net societal benefit

What local actors gain

A practical route from an idea to a campaign



SaveEnergyTogether turns simple energy saving activities into repeatable local delivery actions with sound assumptions and a clear path to impact.

Five Stories of Citizen Engagement for Energy Saving

Silvia Remedios/João Alpalhão
ADENE - the Portuguese Energy Agency

Valentin Hübner & Denise Morandell
Energy Agency Tyrol

Angelina Witherspoon-Nocker
eza! – Regional Energy Agency Allgäu

Rūta Trainytė & Kęstutis Kupšys
Lithuanian Consumers Alliance

Urša Šmid Božičević/Barbara Primc
Slovenian Consumers' Association





Adene
Agência para a Energia



Braga

Two municipal housing neighbourhoods, Andorinhas and Parretas.

484 households

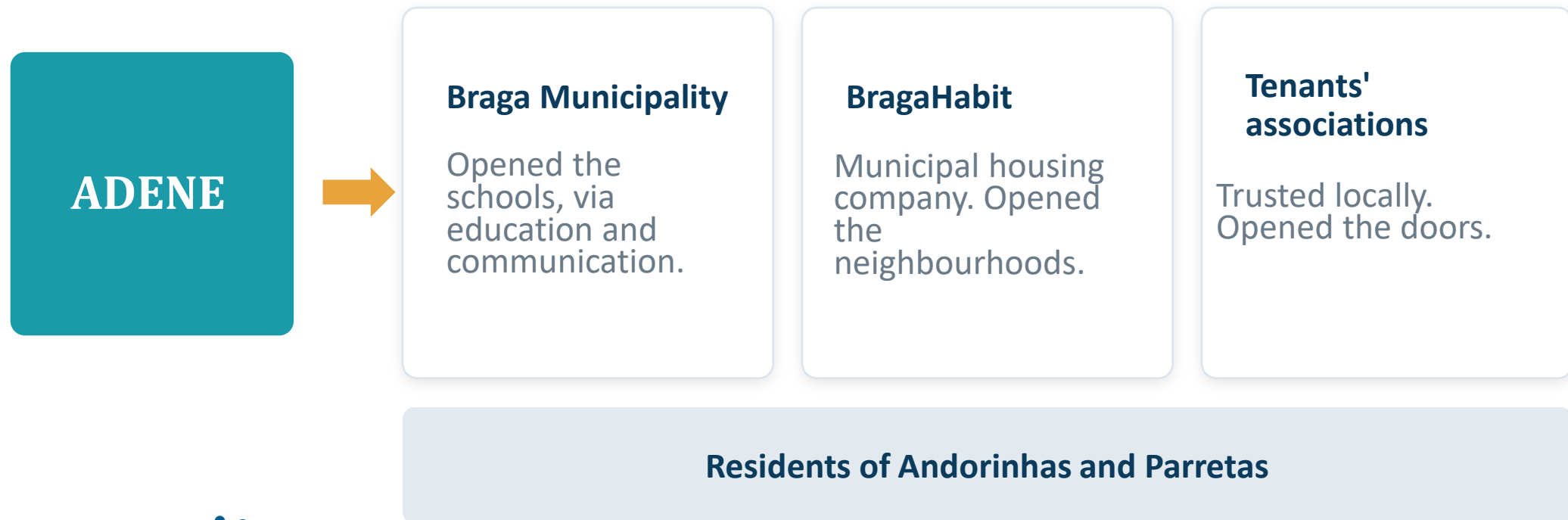
Low cost and zero cost behavioural measures, delivered through the people residents already trust.



How it started: no partnerships previously established

ADENE is a national agency. We had no active presence in Braga and no relationship with a single resident of those two neighbourhoods. That is what the Campaign Implementation Group was for.

Every route to a citizen ran through somebody else.



Four entry points



Schools

Rota da Energia sessions, ages 8 to 17



Neighbourhoods

Public sessions and door to door visits



Senior centres

Day centre and Senior Academy



Social frontline

Training municipal social technicians

All low cost or zero cost. Heating and cooling, hot water, electricity, mobility. Almost all the content already existed.

Schools: the easiest door into a household

~24

sessions

~950

participants

8 to 17

years old

April 2024 to March 2026. We reused our existing Rota da Energia programme, so preparation was about half a day per session. Teachers rated every topic as appropriate and asked us to come back.

The effect on the household is indirect, and you have to accept that.

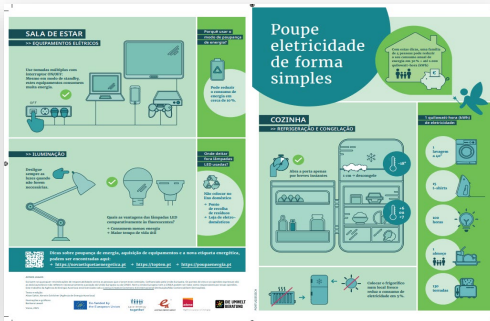


Seniors: bills, the social tariff, and an object



What worked here was not energy transition framing.

- How to read your electricity bill
- How to apply for funding opportunities
- Which appliance in your home is costing you



Everyone left with something physical

A power strip with individual switches, or draught proofing strips for doors and windows. That object is the bridge between hearing something and doing it.

The social frontline

20

municipal social technicians engaged

5

real case profiles worked as roleplay

2h30

one session, half a day of their time

They also tested our energy poverty diagnostic questionnaire, and improved it.



When the project ends, they are still there. And they are still visiting.

What did not work

Our first session in Parretas was scheduled on a weekday, after working hours. That looked like the considerate choice.

Afterwards we asked the president of the tenants' association. Saturday afternoon is when people are available. One conversation, and it should have happened before we set the date.

Our first senior session was rescheduled because of bad weather.

Attendance on the new date never recovered.

What the households told us

62% → 74%

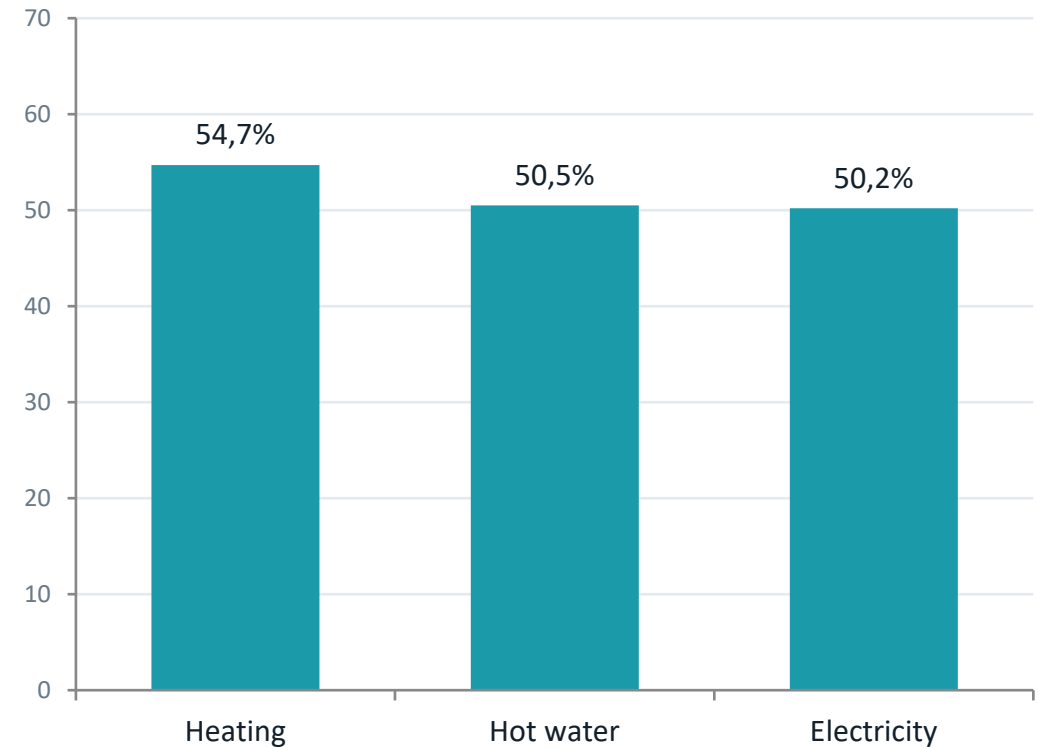
of households changed a habit at home
after contact with information
campaigns

**among those who attended an ADENE
session**

There is self selection in that number, people who come to an energy session were probably already more open. But the direction is consistent across all three domains.

Survey of 285 households, Braga region, July and August 2026.

Changed habits, by domain (%)

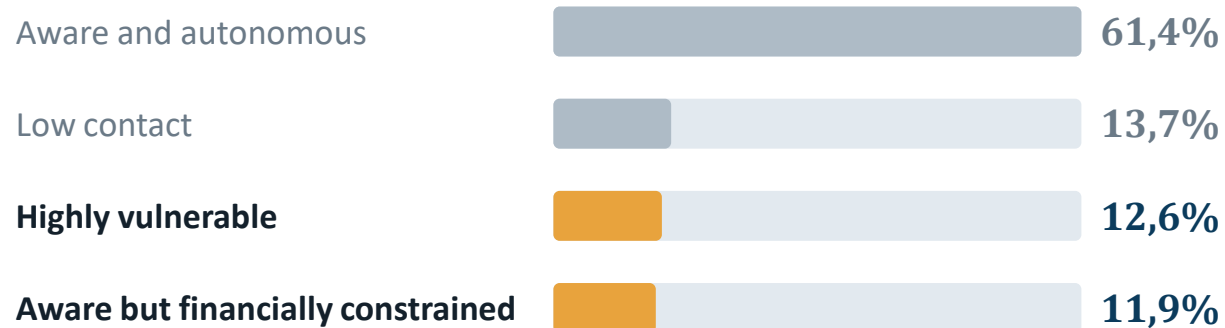


Second challenge: Where the money argument stops working

Saving costs money they do not have

A quarter of the target population

For these two groups the binding constraint is money, not information.



57% say they need financial support **52%** say upfront cost stops them

The saving means less to them

No bill

Households that do not pay for their electricity at all.

Low bill

Where the bill is already reduced, what is left to save is small.

Someone else pays

Students, and anyone who never sees the bill.

The argument here is comfort, health or safety, not euros.

Five things you can take home

- Approach through the organisation people already trust, not through your own channels.
- Ask the community when to hold it. Do not infer the timing. We got that wrong.
- Schools are the easiest door into a household, if you accept the indirect effect.
- Train the social frontline before you train the public. It outlasts your project.
- Pair every message with an object people take home.

saveenergytogether.adene.pt



Showcase Tyrol (Austria)



Energy Agency Tyrol (EAT)
Morandell Denise | 22.09.2026



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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this presentation are the sole responsibility of the author and do not reflect the views of the funding body, the European Commission.

Tyrol: Strong foundations, limited resources

Pilot region Tyrol

> Declining public attention after the energy crisis

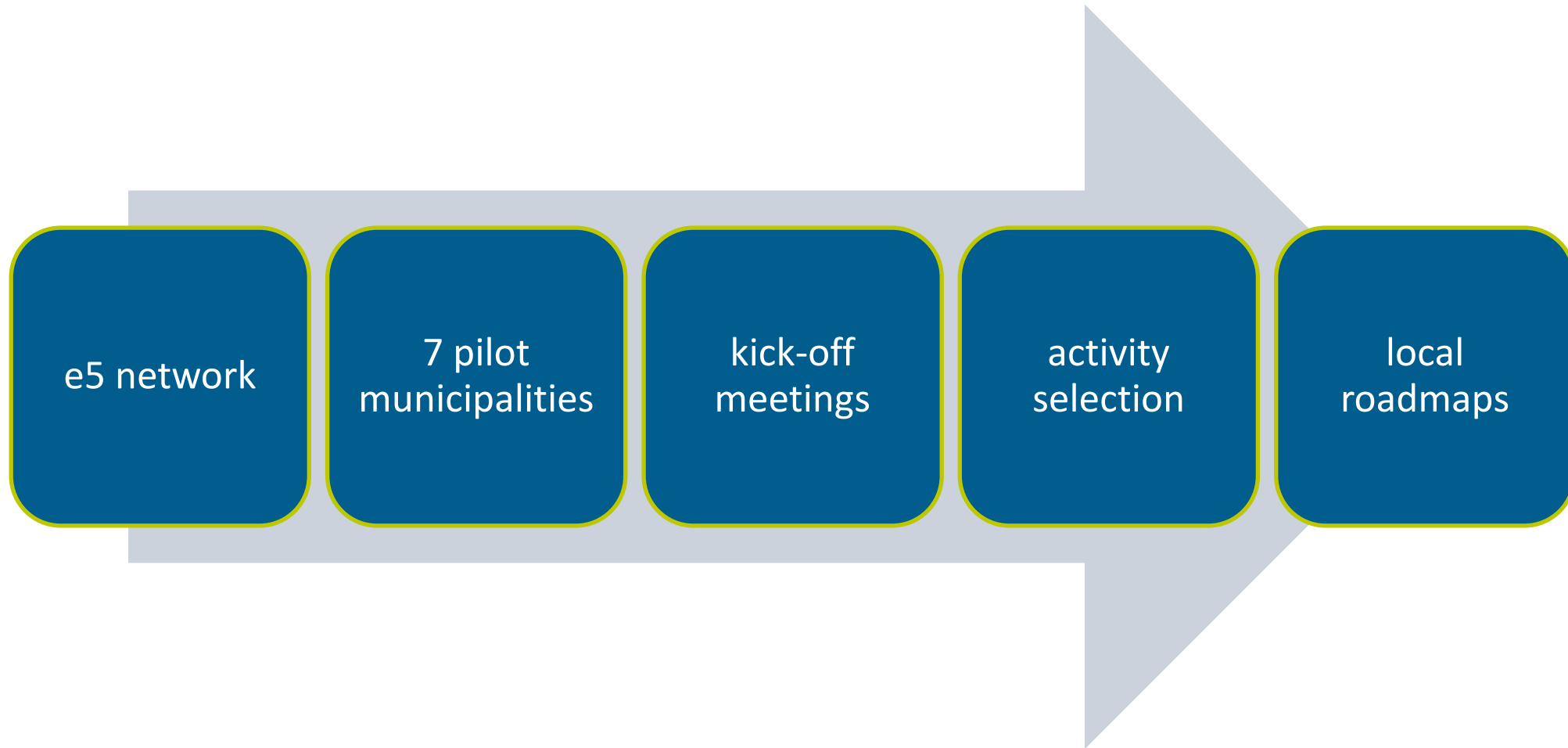
> Falling and generally low electricity prices

> Small municipalities (approx. 2,000 inhabitants)

> Budget constraints and resource shortages

> Strong and trusted municipal partnerships

From the e5 network to seven local campaigns



Municipalities chose what worked locally

Ready to go

AKTUELLES
Erneuerung UV-Anlagen



Energiesparen – Mit kleinen Maßnahmen Großes bewirken – Einfache Tipps, um Energie, Ressourcen und Geld zu sparen

Prüfung: 20.08.2018
Thema: Energie sparen und Ressourcen schonen

STROM SPAREN
Strom sparen ist nicht nur ein Ziel, sondern eine Aufgabe, die jeden von uns betrifft. Um Strom zu sparen, müssen wir uns bewusst machen, wie viel Strom wir verbrauchen und woher er kommt.

WASSER SPAREN
Wasser ist ein wertvolles Gut und sollte nicht verschwendet werden. Um Wasser zu sparen, müssen wir uns bewusst machen, wie viel Wasser wir verbrauchen und woher es kommt.

WÄRME SPAREN
Wärme ist ein wertvolles Gut und sollte nicht verschwendet werden. Um Wärme zu sparen, müssen wir uns bewusst machen, wie viel Wärme wir verbrauchen und woher sie kommt.

WÄRMEDÄMMUNG
Wärmedämmung ist ein wichtiger Bestandteil, um Wärme zu sparen. Sie hilft, die Wärme im Haus zu halten und verhindert, dass sie nach außen entweicht.

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Werde Energiesparprofi



Der kleine, schlaue
Energieratgeber

Energie verwenden, statt verschwenden!

Needs local partners

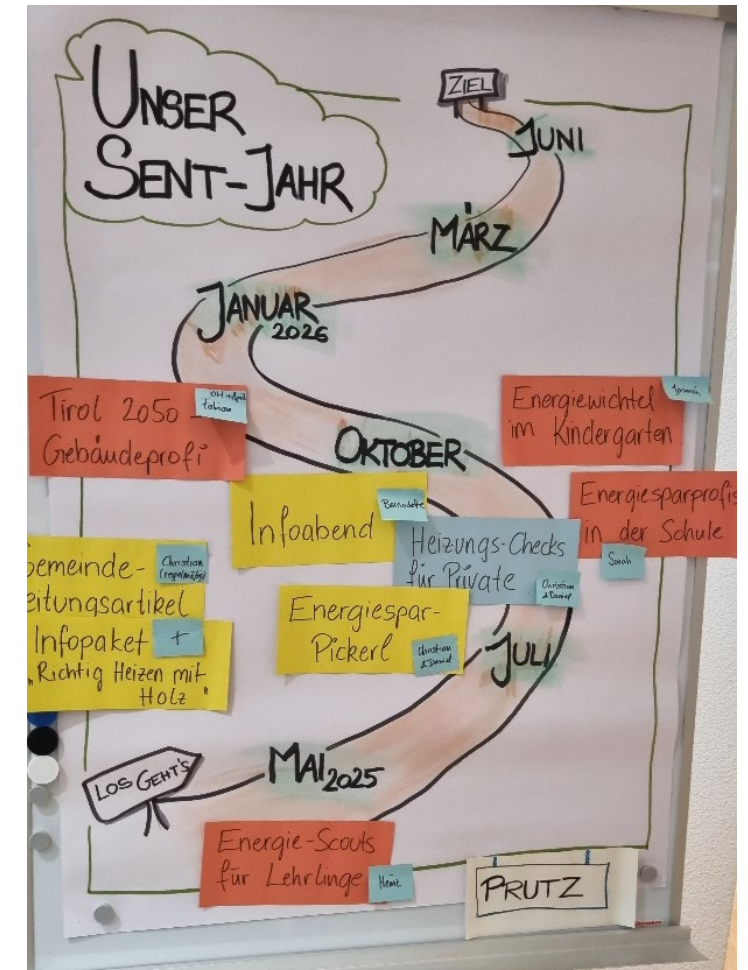


Needs specific resources



Roadmaps kept the campaigns on track

- The campaign portfolio provided choice, clarity and motivation
- Individual roadmap for each municipality
 - Clear activities, responsibilities and timelines
 - Easier preparation and coordination
- Timely follow-ups and reminders
- Networking event to share experiences
 - Shared challenges and solutions
 - Feedback and success factors
 - New ideas from other municipalities



Eight ingredients for local success

1. **Personal:** Invite people directly
2. **Practical:** Keep it short, useful and DIY
3. **Authentic:** Share local experiences
4. **Local:** Use local networks and coordinate trusted local channels
5. **Experiential:** Combine information with activities
6. **Collaborative:** Co-create with schools and local partners
7. **Simple:** Start small, use existing material, learn from others
8. **Clear:** Select activities, set timelines and responsibilities

Key lesson to take away

Do not just provide information.

➤ Give people a reason to participate!

PRACTICAL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

showcase

Gefördert durch:



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eza!

Energie- und
Umweltzentrum Allgäu



SAVE ENERGY

SAVE MONEY

SAVE RESOURCES

eza!

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A person with a backpack is walking away from the camera on a dirt path that winds through a lush, green forest. The path leads into the distance, flanked by dense trees and foliage. The lighting suggests a soft, golden hour glow.

OLD HABITS

DIE HARD

image AI-generated

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SAVING ENERGY

EQUALS

SAVING RESOURCES

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USE IT

DON'T LOSE IT!

eza!

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OLD DOGS
DON'T LEARN
NEW TRICKS?

image AI-generated



**MAKE IT
EASY!**



CHALLENGE:

DRIVE ENGAGEMENT

Online Course – Registrations

12 of 50 spots filled

Participants	Status	Registration date
12	registered	12.04.2025
3	registered	18.04.2025
7	registered	21.04.2025
...		

~~Town Hall Notice?~~
~~Local Newspaper?~~
~~Newsletter?~~



~~Social media?~~
~~Flyer?~~
~~Brochure?~~
~~Newsletter?~~
~~Press release?~~
~~Telephone campaign?~~
~~Personal approach?~~
~~Cooperation partners?~~



COMMUNICATION:

THINK ABOUT

YOUR TARGET GROUP!



GET

CREATIVE!

eza!

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GET

PERSONAL!

eza.?

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**ALL'S WELL
THAT ENDS WELL.**



BUT HOW

TO GET THERE?

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LCA – Lithuanian Consumers Alliance

Planning EE1st measures delivered in an outdoor setting:

“Face-to-face is the best way to make contact! Ever.”

‘Energy Efficiency First’ days in municipality X

(7 events so far, at least 3 more to come)

Objective

Improve the energy literacy of target groups and, as a consequence, achieve **behavioural change**.

Implementation logic

A mass event with a relaxed public creates the best time window for intervention. Therefore: an outdoor stand/tent.

How do we do this?

1. Partnership with the municipality/NGOs to gain access to the target audience, including during city festivals.
2. Preparation: assessing the level of knowledge, selecting the topics, and determining the place and duration.
3. Adapting the content to different audiences, such as school students, seniors and others.
4. Active sharing of participants’ own experiences: debate often emerges onsite.
5. Games and prizes: the “Wheel of Fortune” and solar PV are the main attractions.

SMART goals (replicable example)

Specific: Organize one session per year for three different audiences in Municipality X, for example school students, seniors and the general public.

Measurable: For example, “250 people were reached during the city festival, including young family members.” **Achievable:** This is a manageable task for the LCA team, based on previous experience; cooperation with the municipality and local NGOs is important. **Relevant:** It aligns with the EE1st principle and the national mission of the LCA and the S.E.T. consortium. **Time-bound:** 3 years, with 3 sessions per year, 10 sessions in total.

Outcome

Translate energy-saving efforts into fun, yet conscious and responsible, behaviour.

Check list

1. **Resources:** The LCA team, Municipality X, and audience-tailored materials, including presentations, demonstration objects such as photovoltaic equipment and smart switches, leaflets, giveaway board games, and prizes for quiz winners.
2. **Output:** Communication with residents contributes to increasing their level of energy literacy.
3. **Impact:** Reduced household energy/water consumption by ...% compared with the baseline, measured through a survey.

LCA – Lithuanian Consumers Alliance

Challenge identified through face-to-face energy-saving communication

Not every energy-saving tip motivates people. Some can even be irrelevant or discouraging.

20 practical energy-saving measures are discussed with residents during outdoor city events, using a relaxed and informal setting to engage people in conversation.

Key challenge:

How do we make energy-saving communication relevant to the person, rather than simply delivering a

Challenge

One-size-fits-all advice does not work for everyone.

How do we do this?

The relevance of an energy-saving measure depends on people's:

1. age and household situation;
2. income and existing saving habits;
3. appliances and housing conditions;
4. level of energy consumption and awareness.

What have we observed?

1. **Some people already save a lot.**
Older and lower-income residents may already have very frugal habits.
2. **Some tips are simply irrelevant.**
For example, talking about an ECO washing programme to someone who rarely washes or does not own a washing machine.
3. **Different groups have different needs.**
Younger people may have higher consumption but less awareness of everyday energy use.
4. **Motivations differ.**
Financial savings often feel more concrete and relevant than environmental benefits.
5. **Too much generic advice can discourage.**
People may feel that they are being taught how to live rather than having a meaningful conversation.

A Toolkit for the Communicator

From a list of tips to a meaningful dialogue

1. LISTEN
What matters to the person?
2. IDENTIFY
What are their needs and consumption patterns?
3. SELECT
Which measure is relevant to them?
4. SHOW THE BENEFIT
What do they gain – lower bills, comfort, convenience or environmental benefits?

20 measures → one flexible toolkit → personalised communication

Outcome: Maybe our problem isn't that people lack information about energy conservation. Maybe the problem is that we try too often to give everyone the same information.



Saving energy isn't a campaign here. It's how we work, every month.

Five channels, running together, all year round

Urša Šmid · ZPS – Slovene Consumers' Association · ursas@zps.si

We didn't pick one channel. We used all five.

1

Media & press

Press releases & articles, sent to trusted journalists

~200 contacts / release

2

Tarifnik app

Monthly electricity price check, with the fine print

81,600+ users

3

ZPStest magazine, zps.si and our social media channels

An energy-saving tip in every issue we publish

Every issue

4

Field & events

Eco-schools conference, the Sejem Dom fair, public events

Year-round presence

5

Municipalities

Working with Ljubljana, Velenje and Nova Gorica

3 city partnerships

Real newsrooms. Real rooms. Real numbers.



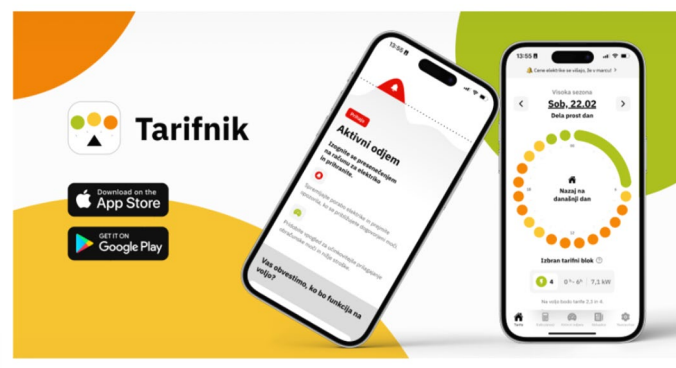
Pri nepravilni uporabi večja poraba elektrike



LJUBLJANA – Z vročimi poletnimi dnevi napoči tudi čas povečane rabe klimatskih naprav. V Zvezi potrošnikov Slovenije (ZPS) ob tem opozarjajo, da se lahko ob nepravilni uporabi teh znatno poveča poraba električne energije. Zato so pripravili nekaj nasvetov za varčno rabo teh naprav. Med ključnimi načini za prihranke pri stroških energije v ZPS svetujejo uporabo najvišje se učilno temperature, pri čemer naj bodo največ za šest do osem stopinj Celzija nižje od zunanjih in ne manj kot 26 ali 25 stopinj. V ZPS ob tem poudarjajo, da naj bodo v času delovanja klimatske naprave okna zaštrta z žaluzijami, roletami ali drugimi senčili, s čimer se prepreči pasivno ogrevanje prostora. Prostore naj se prezračuje zgodaj zjutraj ali zvečer, ko se ozračje ohladi. **STA**



Picked up by national media — Delo, 24ur, STA



81,600+ households, one new partnership



On stage at the national Eco-schools conference, festival Lupa

MONTHLY — the Tarifnik price comparison refreshes, for every supplier and every package.

SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR— ZPStest carries a new energy-saving tip to every member, web site visitor and social media follower.

EVERY SEASON — a press release goes out on a fresh hook, to >230 media posts, including all most popular ones.

YEAR-ROUND — we're back at fairs, events, the Eco-schools conference, and the table with Ljubljana, Velenje and Nova Gorica municipalities.



Face to face — at every fair and conference

Find allies, combine what you already have with what you build new.



>230

media posts
In all formats – printed,
online, TV and radio

81,600+

households using the
monthly price tool

5

channels running
together, all year

*Which trusted channels already exist in your community —
and which new ones could you add alongside them?*



Results of Collegial Counselling: Solve Real Campaign Challenges Together





Challenge 1

How to create offers or communication strategies to get people, especially seniors on board?

1. Argument with immediate benefits
2. Reducing energy use: fewer infrastructure needed – technical change (PV....)
3. Competitions, Social norms: Experiment “[ZERO FAMILIES](#)” by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research
4. Motivator: Independency
5. Build trust: engage with professionals (RALF)
6. Engage with next generation and start small
7. Go to the people (eg. [Energy Caravan](#))
8. Engage with “champions” -> Green Ambassadors





Challenge 2 How to engage people in energy saving with events

1. Involve Allies to build TRUST
2. Make sure you have realistic goals and understand the daily habits of your participants
3. Join forces with other events – combine events
4. Make sure you have the local media's attention
5. Arrange donations of extra items
6. Create a challenge/game
7. Offer child care/activities to allow parents to participate
8. Provide transportation if necessary
9. Personalised Invites – specific invitations / offer specific advice
10. If possible record sessions





Challenge 3 Difficulties to engage people local heat planning

1. Involve Local Allies to build TRUST: social institutions/organisations, sports club, fire-brigade, etc.
2. Set up bigger social media campaigns: asks questions – answer at events
3. Prepare seasonal / topical messages
4. Release video testimonials with real people
5. Engage chimney sweepers
6. Place information at different places
7. Collaborate with local festivals
8. Frame your message to your target group
9. Consider hybrid formats or video recordings





Do you want to start an energy efficiency engagement action?

Here are the good practices of SaveEnergyTogether partners:

- Information alone doesn't trigger action. People need a reason to participate, not just facts.
- One-size-fits-all tips fail. Advice must be adapted to people's needs and motivations.
- A rhythm beats a one-off campaign. Monthly content, several website/social tips a year, seasonal press releases and year-round events.
- Use channels people already trust. Slovenia successfully partnered with the popular Tarifnik price-comparison app, popular magazines and a top TV channel (230k reach).
- Habit change is hard, and "I already know everything" is a barrier. A free, self-paced online course was their answer in Germany.
- Online reach can fall short. Low registrations meant offline outreach was still necessary – lesson learned from the German pilot.
- Trust is the foundation of local campaigns. Working through local actors is what makes reaching households possible.
- Don't expect people to come to you. Nobody showed up to the first session from ADENE. So they started to go to people directly – and it worked!
- Reach the social frontline first. They visit people's homes and spread the message, so convincing them first multiplies reach.
- Low budgets and fading public attention are real constraints. An existing engaged network of municipalities makes it possible anyway.
- Interactive formats beat leaflets in Lithuania. Games and wheels at stands drew people in and other booths at local events started copying them.
- Official, personally addressed letters work. They felt like they came from a trustworthy source rather than being random.





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