

POWERTY

NEWSLETTER N° 2

Renewable energies for vulnerable groups



Welcome to the second edition of the POWERTY Newsletter

Alterations due to COVID-19

After the first semester of the project, in which all the working groups were set up and the first analyses were carried out, in this second semester, which covers the period from February 2020 to July 2020, the first results of the work carried out by all the partners have already been observed.

However, this semester has coincided fully with the health crisis situation caused by COVID-19, which has greatly affected the implementation of the work of POWERTY. The consortium has been forced to apply some extraordinary measures to minimise the effects of this health crisis on the progress of the project, among which the transfer of the first interregional thematic seminar, scheduled in semester 2 in Lithuania, to semester 3 (foreseen for the last quarter of 2020). It has been decided to maintain the face-to-face format of the interregional seminar because other formats (virtual) would harm the objective of this type of seminar, in particular, the co-learning and exchange of experiences between all the actors involved: partners, stakeholders, policy makers, regional experts and other actors at European level. Moreover, the face-to-face format guarantees the realisation of the study visit, which is a necessary element in the learning process.



Other activities initially planned in a face-to-face format have been developed in a virtual mode, such as the internal meetings of the stakeholder groups in each of the regions, as well as the internal meetings of the consortium.

Thus, partners have met virtually during this second semester, on 27 May 2020, to discuss the workplan for the exchange of experiences, as

well as communication/dissemination and reporting/financial issues, and on 3 July 2020, to discuss the Agenda of the Interregional meeting in Lithuania, to update on the Good Practices collected by partners, discuss communication and financial activities, to update partners on the measures proposed by the JS relating to COVID-19 and its impact on the project.



POWERTY, an opportunity to reduce the effects of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups

The health crisis is causing an economic and social crisis which is aggravating the situation of vulnerability of part of the population. Although there are no official statistics, COVID-19 is increasing the number of vulnerable people, and is also intensifying the degree of vulnerability of those groups that were already in a vulnerable situation before the health crisis. From an energy point of view, the increased vulnerability (in number of people and in intensity) aggravates the phenomenon of energy poverty, because the health crisis has reduced household income and increased household energy consumption as a result of the increased time people spend in their homes.

The POWERTY project, which aims to facilitate the use of renewable energies among vulnerable groups, and specifically some of the good practices that have already been identified, can be a satisfactory response to this serious situation, providing appropriate solutions to reduce the energy bill that vulnerable households continue to face. Furthermore, to the extent that through the POWERTY project the provision of quality energy supplies and services (based on renewable energies) to households is facilitated, in particular the improvement of air conditioning and ventilation, the risks associated with COVID-19 can be reduced. Finally, the reduction of local pollution in cities, particularly through the replacement of equipment that consumes energy from fossil sources with renewable energy

equipment, is a factor that can reduce the effects of COVID-19, as pointed out, although preliminarily, by the results of some scientific studies¹.

STATE OF THE ART and SWOT ANALYSIS

Each POWERTY partner has carried out a detailed SWOT analysis (on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) concerning the use of renewable energies in vulnerable groups, with the collaboration of the different regional stakeholders (entities and agents). This SWOT analysis has been completed with an analysis of the state of the art of renewable energies and energy poverty to know the actual state of these issues in each region.

In this way, each region has been able to identify the main regional needs, causes of weaknesses and points of improvement.

The SWOT analysis has taken into account the 4 topics addressed in the project:

- Identify new innovative renewable energy technologies aimed at vulnerable groups, including collective and urban energy systems.
- New formulas for financing renewable energies suitable for vulnerable groups.
- Improvements in the regulatory framework of renewable energies and vulnerable groups.
- Empowerment of vulnerable groups and social innovation to stimulate citizen participation of these social groups.

It should be noted that the SWOT analysis of each region have been carried out according to a common methodology, which has been developed by the UK partner, the University of Manchester. The University of Manchester has also developed a methodology to map energy poverty in the POWERTY regions.

One of the most remarkable points is the lack of technological developments specifically adapted to vulnerable groups. Likewise, the difficulty of the vulnerable groups to access financing and aid has been verified, making it necessary to evaluate new specific instruments that cover the needs of these groups. The complexity of measuring energy poverty also means that in many social programmes vulnerable groups cannot be detected as such.

¹ The relationship between air pollution and the risk of COVID-19 has been analysed by the Carlos III Health Institute, based on the scientific evidence currently available. The complete report can be downloaded [here](#).

As positive points in these analyses, the high potential of renewable energies in certain regions, the existence of different business associations that are promoting social measures in this field and the new EU regulation regarding self-consumption and local energy communities, which introduce elements that facilitate a better access to renewable energies in these homes, are noted. Other strengths and opportunities are European funding or the growing trend of microfinance platforms to bring these technologies to the most vulnerable population.

The SWOT analysis of each region, as well as the methodology used, can be downloaded at the [POWERTY web page](#).

GUIDE OF GOOD PRACTICES

In the first phase of the POWERTY project, the partners are identifying good practices developed in their respective regions on renewable energy and energy poverty, as a preliminary step to the exchange, transfer and application of good practices to other regions. Some of these good practices, promoted and coordinated by entities of the regional stakeholders group, have been presented during the online partner meeting held last 3rd July 2020.

The Guide of Good Practices can be downloaded at the [POWERTY web page](#). This guide will continue to be expanded with new good practices in the coming months. In addition, the good practices are being uploaded to the *Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform* so they can be consulted by other IE PLP community members.

REGIONAL EXPERTS PARTICIPATE IN POWERTY

During the second semester of the POWERTY project, partners have organised different meetings of regional scope in order to promote the project among agents and entities (*stakeholders*) linked to the field of renewables energies and energy poverty in their respective countries or regions. These meetings have provided first-hand knowledge of the experience and good practices being developed, which has been used to draw up the Guide of Good Practices and, in later phases of the project, for the design the Action Plan in each of the regions.



Andalusian Energy Agency (AAE)

The **Andalusian Energy Agency (AAE)**, lead partner of the **POWERTY project**, held their **second regional stakeholder group meeting of Andalusian agents and entities (stakeholders)**, on **16th July 2020**. The Andalusian regional stakeholder group is composed of nearly 40 entities of different types, and characterised by its multidisciplinary, complementary and open character: public agencies, business sector, consumer associations, renewable energy cooperatives or other related entities, research centres, distributors and energy suppliers, financial institutions and experts. This meeting was held via videoconference, due to COVID-19 restrictions.

During this meeting, the Guide of Good Practices of successful projects on renewable energies and energy poverty at European level, which also includes Andalusian experiences, was presented. The SWOT analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats on this topic in Andalusia was also presented. Stakeholders have collaborated in this work and during this working meeting, 9 of these projects and successful works, which are being implemented or are expected to be implemented in the coming months, were also presented, 5 of which are being promoted in Andalusia. These presentations were carried out by the same entities that develop the good practices: AVRA, ENDESA, Electrica de Cadiz

and Cadiz City Council, Alcolea del Rio City Council (Seville), ECODES, Som Energía, the Naturgy Foundation and the ECROWD platform.

More information on stakeholders' involvement can be found in spanish in the library section of the POWERTY web site: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/powerity/library/>

Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes Energy Environment Agency (AURA-EE)

AURA-EE has met and discussed with the key players involved in energy poverty in their region. These various meetings provided input for the SWOT analysis and enabled them to collect new good practices.



In the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region, 19% of households are in a vulnerable energy situation: 1 out of 5. The majority of them

are social buildings with very poor energy performance and very few vulnerable groups have access to sustainable energy solutions.

The main projects that are supported and implemented at a national and regional level tackle energy retrofitting of buildings but not the development of renewable energy sources. This also concerns the financial assistance provided. There are no financing and legal instruments that facilitate the development of collective or individual energy renewable projects for those affected by energy poverty. Anyway, interesting initiatives are getting off the ground, as Sol Solidaire, an association which mobilises donations to reduce the energy bills of social housing beneficiaries using solar energy. Other opportunities have been identified, such as the availability for citizens to invest in local renewable energies, the decrease of renewable energy costs or the recognition of energy vulnerability by the local public authorities.

Several good practices have been identified as:

- Air-bois wood fund - This local fund provides subsidies for the replacement of obsolete wood heating equipment with high-performance equipment. An additional bonus is given to vulnerable households to facilitate their access to these technologies.
- Toit vosgien (résidence J. Ferry) - Social landlord which builds passive and low-tech housing supplied by RES.

- Third-party investment by citizen cooperatives - production of wood or solar heat (e.g. Buxia énergies ou ForestEnr)
- Programme CEE AEELA / MSA - "Energy Saving Accelerator for Farmers' Housing" with accompanied self-rehabilitation.

More information on stakeholders´ involvement can be found in local language in the library section of the POWERITY web site:

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/powerity/library/>

Energy Agency of Plovdiv (EAP)



The Energy Agency of Plovdiv (EAP) held their **second regional stakeholder meeting on 11th February 2020 in Sofia** which gathered a total of 32 participants. During the workshop, EAP provided information on why there is a need for discussions on the energy poverty domain. EAP also provided information on the EP national context, as well as information on the available research on this topic, coupled with the available

statistics on the number of those affected. Furthermore, EAP managed to discuss current practices aimed at energy poor households and the national plans under the Mechanism for protection of vulnerable customers. Some good practices derived from the meetings in Seville and Manchester were presented. Finally, EAP presented their vision for policy changes under some policy mechanisms, namely possible changes within the Renewables Energy Act on the *RULES FOR MEASUREMENT OF THE ELECTRICITY QUANTITY*. EAP also discussed the opportunities for improvement of the national EE programmes as to improve the programme in a way that significant energy savings are achieved. Finally, possible improvements under the Heating Aid programme were discussed.

More information on stakeholders´ involvement can be found in local language in the library section of the POWERITY web site:

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/powerity/library/>

The Agglomeration Opole Trust (AOT)



Due to the pandemic and the specific nature of their region, the Agglomeration Opole Trust (AOP) group meetings with stakeholders did not take place, but they met some in person and some on-line. Overall during this **second semester, 5 meetings took place (including a study visit of AOT board)** in which the following relevant issues were discussed: inventions

as solutions for heat recovery and renewable energies; passive house for reasonable money or cheap RES; who are the energy poor people and why are they so hard to identify in the Opolskie Voivodeship; Passive house for seniors. Also, cooperation with new stakeholders was established during the exchange of many e-mails and a dozen or so conversations.

Reports from all meetings can be found in local language in the library section of the POWERTY web site: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/powerity/library/> and <https://aglomeracja-opolska.pl/realizowane-projekty/powerity-0>

Public Investment Development Agency (VIPA)

The Public Investment Development Agency (VIPA) organised the **second regional stakeholder meeting on 10th of March 2020 in Vilnius**, with a total of 9 participants (6 stakeholders and 3 VIPA members). During this meeting, stakeholders were informed about the ongoing project activities. In addition, stakeholders participated in the interactive discussion/brainstorming regarding Lithuanian State of art, SWOT analysis and Good practices.



During the meeting, main needs, barriers/constraints and possible solutions/best practices concerning the project topics were also discussed. Participants in the meeting included representatives from: Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Housing Energy Saving Agency, The Environment Projects Management Agency under the Ministry of Environment, Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania and Alliance of Lithuanian Consumer Organisations.

More information on stakeholders' involvement can be found in local language in the library section of the POWERTY web site: +

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/powerty/library/>

POWERTY in international events

POWERTY has been presented in various events throughout the second semester and the participation of our UK partner is highlighted. Concretely, the University of Manchester has included POWERTY in two papers:

A 'Speciality Grand Challenge' article for *Frontiers in Sustainable Cities*, titled 'Transforming Urban Energy Demand: A Timely Challenge'; and a chapter for the *On Net Zero* publication by the University of Manchester. Available in [pdf](#) and [digital](#).

In addition, the University of Manchester has represented POWERTY at several events as presenter, moderator or panellist during this second semester, including, among many others:

- Fridays for Future online meeting, 30th April 2020
- eCape project conference, 18th of May 2020
- SocialWatt Capacity Building Workshop, 28th of May 2020
- 'From local to European: Barriers and solutions to tackle energy poverty'. ASSIST final project conference, 10th of June 2020.
- 'The road to recovery: Leading the green agenda after COVID-19' roundtable discussion, Policy@Manchester, 22nd of June 2020.
- 'Decisive action on energy poverty: Solutions from across the EU', EU Sustainable Energy Week session, 24th of June 2020.
- 'Energy poverty and indoor cooling in a changing climate' conference, European Policy Centre, 25th of June 2020.
- 'Towards a fair energy transition - enabling vulnerable consumers to take part in energy communities', EU Sustainable Week panel discussion, 29th of June 2020.
- Network of interest workshop, STEP IN project, 30th of June 2020
- Stakeholder discussion on energy poverty under the LIFE programme, 8th July 2020.

- Centre for Cities seminar 'What does the impact of Covid-19 mean for net zero and local fuel poverty', 16th of July 2020.
- Manchester Urban Institute Newsletter March-April 2020.

Member State Reports on Energy Poverty 2019

The EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV) has published Member State Reports which summarise the key aspects of the energy poverty situation in each EU Member State, based on the key indicators, policies and publications they have gathered and published on the EPOV website. The indicators used in the reports are based on data collected by EUROSTAT. The definition of terms used in the reports, further information on policies, organisations and publications and further statistics can be found on the EPOV website (www.energypoverty.eu). As the reports have been completed in February 2020, the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on energy poverty are not reflected in the reports.

Focus on: Energy Agency of Plovdiv (EAP)

The Energy Agency of Plovdiv (EAP) has been supporting numerous actions aiming to alleviate energy poverty for almost a decade. EAP is the first energy management agency established in Bulgaria under the SAVE II program of the European Commission. It is dedicated to promoting efficient and sustainable use of energy and renewable energy. It carries out feasibility studies, energy and environmental analyses and modelling, energy and air quality projects identification, development and management. More than 50 EU projects were successfully completed among them are ACHIEVE, REACH , IDEA and InventAir projects, all tackling the issue of fighting with energy poverty.

Through a number of actions and local campaigns during the last several years, EAP has empowered over 900 low-income households to save energy and reduce their energy and water consumption, through advising about energy consumption and energy efficient behavior and provision of tailored-made set of energy and water saving devices. While campaigning, EAP has managed to involve students from vocational schools and volunteers from the Schneider Electric Bulgaria, who are passing a specific energy related training course on how to become energy advisors to energy poor households and perform visits.

EAP has also prepared a “fuel switch” concept for the capital city of Sofia (Bulgaria) that envisages the replacement of the inefficient heating equipment and installations in

residential buildings. The interventions will take place in Sofia by 2023 and aims to replace the inefficient heating stoves of over 15,000 households relying on wood and coal as a heating mean with new smart high-efficient heating equipment based on electricity, natural gas or biomass. The interventions will reduce energy costs of participating households due to higher overall efficiency of the heating process, while reducing an estimate 300 tons of pollutants per year and thus playing a significant role in the overall reduction of pollutants in Sofia.

Within the InventAir Project, EAP investigated how low-income households, which cannot afford to change the inefficient heating equipment and thus replace poor-quality heating fuels, become a primary cause for a dramatic seasonal increase in air pollution in their communities. A major obstacle to estimating the environmental, climate and health impact of energy poverty on climate change and associated air pollution is the lack of precise data on the quantities and quality of the fuels used by the households. To overcome this barrier, EAP developed a methodological framework for making an inventory.

In addition, within its IDEA Project work, EAP focused on improving the capacity of public institutions to engage in campaigns and actions towards alleviating energy poverty. The project has developed a platform with 15 innovative ICT educational features to address both the technical and social sides of the problem and also highlight the entrepreneurship possibilities in the area of providing energy advice. The platform supports unemployed people in identifying energy advising as an opportunity for them to find meaningful employment. The IDEA platform also serves as an international network of energy advisors active in energy-poor households that promotes personalised energy advising as the best way to disseminate information and increase the knowledge level. So far, over 30 experts have been involved in the project, and a national debate has started on the pathways to alleviating energy poverty in Bulgaria.

EAP works for the establishment of energy poverty as a policy issue that needs structural tailor-made solutions. Policy recommendations at national level are provided and a mix of activities to place energy poverty on the national policy agenda are implemented.

Find out more about us at: <https://www.eap-save.eu/>

Email: petar.kisyov@eap-save.eu

Consortium

PROJECT LEADER



Agencia Andaluza de la Energía
CONSEJERÍA DE LA PRESIDENCIA,
ADMINISTRACIÓN PÚBLICA E INTERIOR
CONSEJERÍA DE HACIENDA Y FINANCIACIÓN EUROPEA

SPAIN: Andalusian Energy Agency



**Auvergne
Rhône-Alpes**
Énergie Environnement

FRANCE: Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes
Energy Environment Agency
(AURA-EE)



BULGARIA: Energy Agency
of Plovdiv (EAP)



POLAND: The Agglomeration
Opole Trust (AOT)



LITHUANIA: The Public
Investment and
Development Agency (VIPA)



UNITED KINGDOM: University of
Manchester - EU Energy
Poverty Observatory (EPOV)

Contact

POWERTY Project coordinator

Andalusian Energy Agency - Joaquín Villar - joaquin.villar@juntadeandalucia.es

This is the second edition of the POWERTY biannual newsletter. If you do not want to receive the POWERTY newsletters, please reply to this email writing "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union under the Interreg Europe programme. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the Andalusian Energy Agency and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union or of the Programme's management structures.

The Interreg Europe programme of the European Union is an initiative of territorial cooperation for the period 2014-2020 which aims to encourage cooperation between regions of the European Union. The aim is to help European regions to design and implement regional policies and programmes more effectively, particularly Growth and Jobs programmes of the European Structural Funds and Investment, but also programmes of the European Territorial Cooperation, through the exchange of experiences, knowledge and best practices between stakeholders of all European regions. The programme has four thematic objectives: research and innovation, SME competitiveness, low-carbon economy, the environment and resource efficiency. The Interreg Europe programme covers the entire territory of the European Union, Norway and Switzerland.

POWERTY is part of the Interreg Europe programme, with a total budget of 1.127.226 euros, and co-financed with European Regional Development Fund up to 83,7%.