



Engaging consumers towards more sustainable energy consumption behaviour

Consumers are expected to play an important role in the transition towards sustainable energy and have therefore been induced to reduce their energy consumption. However, despite the abundance of information available on the Internet, they are often confused about what they could do to make their energy consumption behaviour more conscious and sustainable. ECO2, a Horizon 2020 project involving partners from nine European countries, aims to provide consumers with a structured information about how they can act to reduce their energy consumption.

Introduction

Energy consumption in Europe remains high, which calls for urgent measures and actions. At the same time, consumers are becoming more aware of the impact their daily lifestyles have on the surrounding environment. To motivate consumers to take action, the European Commission actively supports projects that involve European citizens in adopting more conscious behaviour towards their energy consumption.

ECO2 and ACT4ECO – inspiring energy conscious behaviour

Energy Conscious Consumers (ECO2) is a Horizon 2020 project aiming to guide the European energy consumers to become more conscious about their role in the transition to a low-carbon future. The project engages and empowers consumers by enhancing their knowledge on how to consume energy in a responsible way in their everyday lives, improve energy efficiency and increase utilisation of renewable energy sources.

The main outcome of the project is ACT4ECO – a large-scale and multi-language online learning platform. The e-learning platform

advises consumers how to reduce their energy consumption and puts them in a position to act. The platform users have the opportunity to go through transformative learning processes, which are expected to change their behaviour and motivate them to implement concrete actions to save energy, make their homes more energy efficient and reduce their CO₂ footprint.

ACT4ECO thematic actions

ACT4ECO platform includes five thematic actions for motivating energy conscious consumer behaviour:

- 1) *Become a smart consumer*
- 2) *Improve your home*
- 3) *Avoid the rebound effect*
- 4) *Manage your energy consumption*
- 5) *Produce your own energy*

Each user of the platform can decide which thematic actions to complete, based on personal needs and interests.

The platform includes an additional action on policy support for the energy conscious consumer behaviour. The so-called *Policy Development Action* is implemented in a





bottom-up manner, by asking the users of the platform to identify important issues/challenges related to conscious energy consumption that should be communicated to relevant policy-makers.

Expected outcomes

The ECO2 project expects 1,000 consumers from each consortium country and from two additional partnering countries to enrol in the e-learning platform, with each platform user completing at least three thematic actions. As a final outcome, this is expected to reduce the energy consumption of the users, increase their awareness and knowledge on energy efficiency and make them more responsible and environmentally conscious citizens.

Contribution to policy

Lessons and feedback from the ACT4ECO users will be collected, transformed into messages for policy and innovation and communicated to stakeholder networks and policy-makers nationally and at EU level.

The policy recommendations and advice will be communicated through policy briefs and policy outreach seminars.

A total of six thematic policy briefs (one per each thematic action) will be produced within the project along with nine national policy briefs focusing on specific national policy challenges identified by the platform's users in each consortium country. The policy briefs will target policy makers, stakeholder networks and the press and will address policy issues and advice regarding sustainable energy consumption and energy conscious behaviour.

The project will further contribute to policy development by organising nine national level

policy outreach seminars and two EU level seminars. The seminars will provide opportunity to get in direct dialogue with stakeholders and policy-makers and to debate the policy issues and challenges that the users of the platform have identified.

Project partners

Fonden Teknologirådet – Danish Board of Technology Foundation (DBT), Denmark – Project coordinator

Hebes Intelligence Single Member Private Company (HEBES), Greece

Sinergie Società Consortile a Responsabilità Limitata (SINERGIE), Italy

Helsingin Yliopisto – University of Helsinki (UH), Finland

Associação Portuguesa para a Defesa do Consumidor (DECO), Portugal

Strategic Design Scenarios (SDS), Belgium

Applied Research and Communications Fund (ARC Fund), Bulgaria

Asociacija Žinių Ekonomikos Forumas (KEF), Lithuania

University College Cork, National University of Ireland, Cork (UCC), Ireland



