

Municipalities and ASSIST

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Basic principles tackling energy poverty

EU Frameworks recognise energy vulnerability on national, regional and local level.

Tackling energy poverty should be at the heart of national and local recovery plans post-COVID not to leave EU citizens behind.

Access to essential services includes energy (buildings and mobility).

EU Framework

Art 3 (7) Third Energy Package

Member States shall take appropriate measures to protect final customers, and shall, in particular, ensure that **there are adequate safeguards to protect vulnerable customers**. In this context, each Member State shall define the concept of vulnerable customers which may refer to energy poverty and, inter alia, to the prohibition of disconnection of electricity (gas) to such customers in critical times.

Source: Electricity and Gas Directives (Directive 2009/72/EC; Directive 2009/73/EC)

[Clean Energy for all Europeans Package](#)

[Recommendation on energy poverty \(EU\) 2020/1563, issued as part of the renovation wave package](#)

[European Recovery and Resilience Facility](#)

Public responsibilities

23 out of the 27 EU Member States, and in the UK, there is no official and/or legal definition of essential services covering all or some of the six essential services (i.e. water, sanitation, energy, transport, financial services and digital communications).

[ESPN synthesis report: Access to essential services for people on low incomes in Europe](#)

Recommendations:

1. Countries should develop their policy frameworks for essential services so that municipalities could tap into: Adoption in process: National Climate and Energy Action Plans
2. Environmental and sustainability dimensions of these frameworks should be considered a public service obligation and should not lead to extra costs for vulnerable groups seeking to access these services.
3. Countries should monitor energy poverty and undertake a detailed analysis of it at national and subnational level -
See Energy Poverty Indicators of the Covenant of Mayors (currently being updated) and of the [EU Energy Poverty Observatory](#)
4. **Assistance programmes to tackle energy poverty should include support measures/ programmes that address existing barriers**

Energy poverty = no access to energy?

Essential services

- Illustrated in Principle 20 of the [EPSR](#) (European Pillar of Social Rights) by a non-exhaustive list of services: water, sanitation, **energy**, transport, financial services and digital communication
- established in the **United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and its **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, proposed by the UN endorsed by the EU

Energy poverty / vulnerability = access to energy?

“ ...] the inability to realise essential capabilities as a direct or indirect result of insufficient access to affordable, reliable and safe energy services, and taking into account available reasonable alternative means of realising these capabilities.”

Covenant of Mayors

What is the problem municipalities face?

Energy poor households experience inadequate levels of essential energy services.

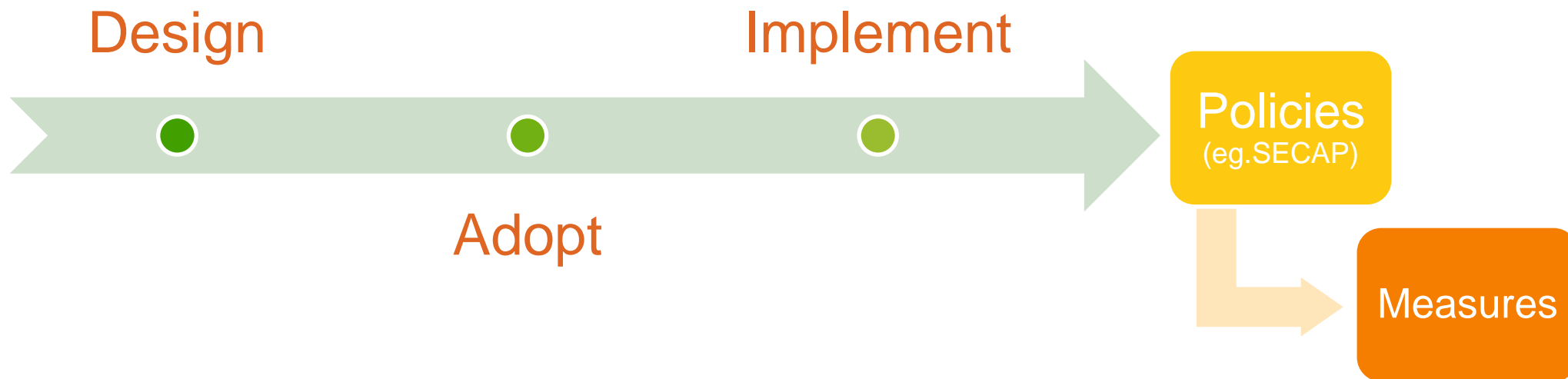
(lighting, heating/cooling, use of appliances, moisture, transport, access to essential digital services such as education in extreme times = pandemic, etc.)

Why?

- high energy expenditures,
- low incomes,
- inefficient buildings and appliances,
- specific household energy needs,
- exposure to climate extremes,
- mobility infrastructure, etc

What can municipalities do?

Local characteristics and circumstances



How municipalities CAN start

Choose the target groups for intervention

chronically ill, disabled, pensioners or children, poor families, etc

Consider possible spatial patterns

- areas with poor quality buildings, poorly accessible areas

Analyse energy carriers and the related costs and efficiency

- wood, coal, heating oil, natural gas, biomass, geothermic energy etc

Define the type of policy and measures

- building retrofitting, awareness raising, mobility improvements, financial support

What can municipalities do?

Policies

Energy poverty **commitments defined/integrated into the SECAP**: a SECAP is aimed at defining climate mitigation actions that allow cutting down at least 40% of CO2 emissions;

Human, technical and financial **resources identified**

Energy poverty team (officer) appointed within the municipal administration, trained and clear responsibilities assigned: consultations and participatory mechanisms shall be in place to better understand citizens' needs and challenges

Horizontal coordination mechanisms in place: across sectoral departments

Vertical coordination mechanisms in place: across governance levels

Consultative and participatory mechanisms set up, fostering the multi-stakeholder engagement

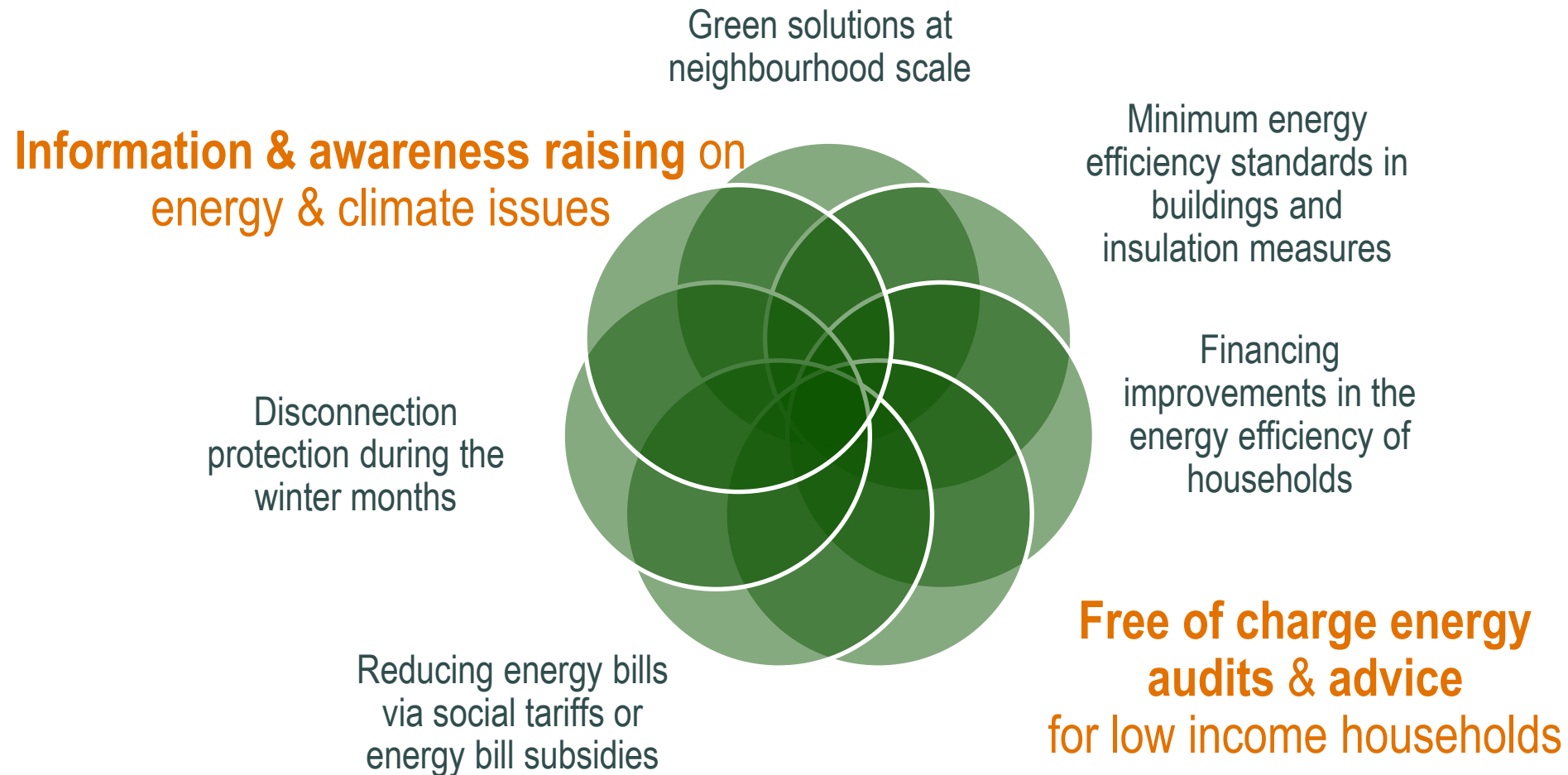
Communication, communication, communication

What can municipalities do?

Measures

- **Understand** energy poverty locally: consultations and participatory mechanisms to better understand citizens' needs and challenges
- A good communication strategy is key to engage the target audience. ASSIST provides **training** materials and capacity building tools for local authorities.
- **Continuously assess local energy poverty and you actions:**
 - Map methods & data sources for detecting and assessing (EP Indicators of CoM & EPOV)
 - Prioritise
 - Periodically review and integrate new findings
 - Energy poverty actions: full portfolio compiled, documented and assessed
- **Mainstreaming** energy poverty action into other mitigation and adaptation policies/actions identified (eg. heat action plans, water management actions, community actions, advisory services)

What can municipalities do?



ASSIST and Municipalities

Advisory services for energy efficiency, retrofitting, low-income support, health issues exist in various countries on various levels

- **Energy Efficiency Advisors** are often integrated in municipal frameworks
- **Social Services** provide services to low-income household including health advice in various countries, depending on the local systems
- **Public-Private partnerships** with NGOs have access to vulnerable households

Integrated Contact Points = Home Energy Advisors combine (municipal) support services for energy vulnerable homes by training, support, advice and local actions:
human one-stop-shops



Existing similar models/infrastructure

NGO + Public

Germany: Stromsparcheck

The Caritasverband collaborates with local municipalities and trains long-term unemployed people to become "service advisors for energy and water-saving". The Cariteam advisors visit energy poor households and perform energy checks and give support.

At the same time, households with the lowest incomes receive free energy and water and water-saving advice, which includes energy-saving devices are installed directly. The Cariteam Energy Saving Service is an integrative concept that exemplifies labor market, social and social and climate policy goals with each other in an exemplary manner.

Public

Sweden: Energy Advisors Network

The national energy agency provides the financial means to Swedish municipalities to hire an energy advisor, who is in contact with the citizens to give advice on energy efficiency, run information and awareness measures to assist and advise vulnerable households. Municipalities provide this service free of charge. The network is run by municipalities and organized by the regional energy offices including training, monitoring, supervisory and networking measures. The advisors provide a variety of services, including energy checks, energy upgrade advise, energy efficiency advice, etc. Home visits are sometimes performed together with related municipality colleagues.



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Thank you!



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