

Request to join a project application/consortium

LIFE CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION ALLEVIATING HOUSEHOLD ENERGY POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY IN EUROPE

Purpose of this document

The city of Ostend, Belgium, runs the 'Energiehuis', a one-stop shop that supports citizens, companies and public authorities in their energy refurbishment projects. Established in 2007, the main task of the Energiehuis is to help reduce the CO₂ emissions in Ostend with a special focus on citizens living in energy poverty.

As signatories to the Covenant of Mayors 2050, the Energiehuis is now collaborating with other services of the city of Ostend and civil society associations to prepare an Energy Poverty Action Plan. We aim to maximize the impact of this plan by embedding it in a LIFE Clean Energy Transition application (Subtopic: Alleviating household energy poverty and vulnerability in Europe). This will increase both the financial leverage and the opportunities for cross-fertilization with other initiatives and players.

This document describes the energy poverty actions we are aiming for and the project context we envisage.

An Energy Poverty Action Plan: progressing from a policy vision to tangible cost- and energy-saving projects for vulnerable households

The 2021-2023 energy crisis revealed, among other things, the increasing urgency of addressing energy poverty. The city's climate mitigation plan (in execution since 2021) was already anticipating this and explicitly states addressing energy poverty and implementing an inclusive climate policy. However, access to renewable energy sources is far from obvious for vulnerable groups in energy poverty. At the same time, they represent a group of the population where a major breakthrough can be achieved in realising the climate transition.

Many European cities signed the Covenant of Mayors 2050. Drawing up an Energy Poverty Action Plan is therefore a collective task for European cities, but also requires an approach that is new for many cities. This makes it a suitable topic for international cooperation through a European project grant, in particular LIFE Clean Energy Transition.

By cooperating internationally on the preparation of action plans against energy poverty, we aim for knowledge and expertise to be shared between different European cities, research institutes and organisations committed to fighting (energy) poverty. But we also want to go beyond just a policy document. Given its action-oriented nature, our greatest interest is to ensure that this plan also leads to tangible results in the field.

One possible action is a financing model to offer solar energy to disadvantaged target groups. Another one could be a cooperation model with the social housing company in which the energy consumption of around 100 households is accurately mapped by linking dongles to digital meters. In-depth energy scans then make recommendations to drastically reduce energy consumption through small interventions. A European project would enable the creation of a 'monitoring centre' at the Energiehuis to oversee, implement and then scale up the process undertaken.

This directly links us to scope 2 'Design & pilot tailored, large scale programmes to improve energy skills and capacity of vulnerable households' and scope 3 'Capacity building for public authorities and social intermediaries – set up cross sectoral coordination structures'.