



# ETIP SNET

EUROPEAN  
TECHNOLOGY AND  
INNOVATION  
PLATFORM

SMART  
NETWORKS FOR  
ENERGY  
TRANSITION



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## ENERGY STORY:

### **ENERGISE: promoting active energy citizenship**

The ENERGISE project identifies cultural change as a key ingredient for a successful energy transition and promotes changing practices for a more sustainable pattern of energy consumption.

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Each and every one of us has an impact on the stream of energy that feeds our society. Energy is embedded in our lives and we live in symbiosis with it, sometimes not fully understanding the control we have over why, when and how we consume. Improved societal norms and routines can play a major role in changing energy consumption patterns. ENERGISE is a Horizon2020 project (GA no. 727642) that specifically tackles the community weight on energy consumption. The main purpose of the project was to try and understand better the social and cultural factors of energy use, demonstrating the significance of using social sciences as a ground for evidence-based policy making in the energy sector.

## **ENERGISE Living Labs: creating new energy cultures**

The core of the project were the ENERGISE Living Labs (ELLS), 16 energy communities set up in 8 different countries (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK), comprising 308 households. The aim of these labs was to promote sustainable energy use through a change of habits and their social roots, by working with and for the community. The main outcome of the Living Labs was the creation of a method for the reduction of the energy use that embraces not only the quantity but also the everyday mindset towards energy consumption. To this end, the ELLs comprised very different types of household including families with children, elderly people and students.

ELLS' multi-phased working process started with the definition of the condition of energy usage in the interested community, through a survey that was distributed to the participants. The second step was the identification of the set of changes in practices that would result in a more sustainable behaviour. In particular, the method that was used in the experiment was to challenge the participants to decrease their energy use in two domains of everyday life: house heating and laundry. The aim was to reduce the indoor daytime temperature to 18 °C and washing laundry by half. After exchanging ideas, concerns and expectations, the participants then proceeded with the implementation of the challenges in the testing phase. To promote a proactive attitude towards the challenge, two boxes were provided to all the households containing useful tips and tools to ease the transition: some examples are hot beverages, wool socks and products for dry cleaning.

At the end of the experiment the households had the chance to reflect together on the lessons learnt and discuss their perception of 'comfort', as well as alternative ways they found in order to maintain an appropriate level of comfort, even with a reduced energy use. A common example is simply wearing warmer clothes instead of increasing the indoor temperature. Participants also had a chance to reflect on their attitudes toward cleanliness, and what it means to be 'clean' in different social situations. In general, results show that households could reduce their temperature by one degree and reduce their laundry cycles by one per-week, without compromising levels of comfort or cleanliness.



## Impact

The University of Geneva, Swiss partner of the project, calculated the consequences of the fluctuation of energy use if these results were achieved by all the households in Switzerland. It was estimated that a reduction of 1 °C in indoor heating, which amounts to a 6% energy saving, corresponded to twice the energy needed for all laundry and drying requirements in Switzerland for a year. Moreover, cutting the laundry cycles by 1 per week would mean saving 30 million m<sup>3</sup> of water (more than 5000 Olympic-size pools), 10 million litres of laundry products and the equivalent of the annual electricity consumption of ninety thousand households. Another example: it was calculated that if all the households in Hungary were to achieve the results found in the ELLs, the reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions would equal the annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of almost seven thousand Hungarian citizens.

### Project Benefits

- Reduced energy bills
- Citizen empowerment

Some of the outcomes of the experiment are already being applied in contexts outside of the project life: for example the university of Aalborg, the implementing authority of the ELLs in Denmark, has been asked by the municipality of Roskilde to help develop educational materials in relation to energy saving practices for school children. Moreover, in Hastings, England, the local ENERGISE partner (Energise Sussex Coast) is engaging with the Muslim community to extend the advice work of the ELLs to refugee groups.

Given the fundamental importance that was dedicated to concrete, immediate and effective energy saving practices for everyday life, the project was greatly covered by the media, with more than 500 entries among national and local newspaper, radio interview and also TV reports. Furthermore, the project forms the basis of an impact case-study, to be submitted for a forthcoming national research evaluation (the UK Research Excellence Framework, 2021).

The ENERGISE project shows just how much our impact on the energy flow is fundamental and in what practical ways we can change habits and behaviors to render our print more sustainable. Overall, a keyword of ENERGISE was “energy culture” and the success of the experiment led to the promotion of an active energy citizenship, boosting the interest in moving from passive energy consumers to interested actors, developing an understanding of the importance of energy saving and having a greater role in energy democracy.

**Keywords:** Energy Culture, Sustainable Consumption, Active Citizenship

**More info at:** <http://www.energise-project.eu/>

**Note:** Project benefits based on specific criteria outlined in [ETIP SNET monitoring exercise](#)



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