



Factsheet n°2

Energy Poverty and Energy Efficiency in Rural Areas : Stakeholder Survey Findings



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Introduction

To deepen the understanding on rural energy poverty and energy efficiency, the [RENOVERTY project](#) conducted an online survey of relevant stakeholders across Europe deriving key insights on existing needs, barriers, and proposed solutions for energy poverty and energy efficiency in vulnerable rural and peri-urban areas across Europe.

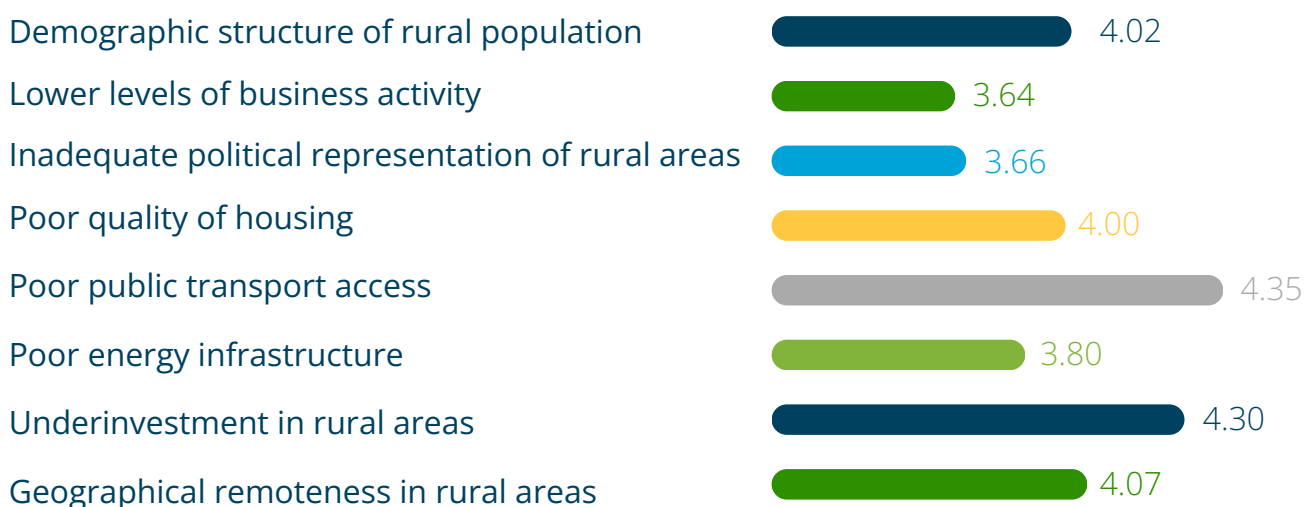
During this process, 130 stakeholders/experts from the fields of academia, policymaking, private and social sectors, etc., focused on European Union (EU) rural areas responded to the survey.

Rural energy poverty drivers

The respondents were asked to rate eight different drivers of energy poverty on a Likert-scale of 1-5 (1: “not important at all” – 5: “very important”).

The most important drivers across Europe included **poor public transport access, underinvestment in rural areas, demographic structure**, and **poor housing quality**.

Ranking of energy poverty drivers

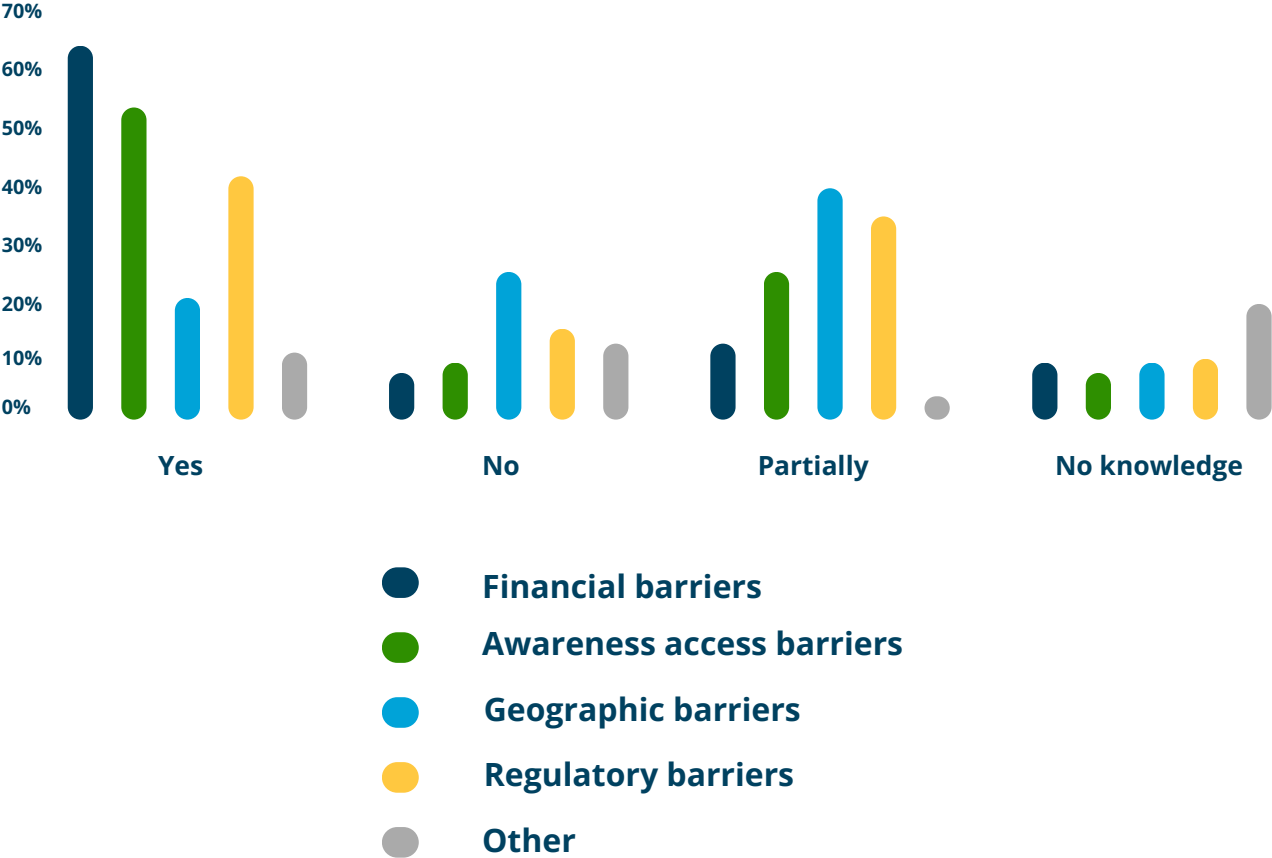


Barriers in implementing energy efficiency measures to address energy poverty in rural areas

Barriers to the implementation of energy efficiency measures span **financial, awareness/access, regulatory, and geographical domains**, as they were identified by the desk research that was utilised for the development of the survey.

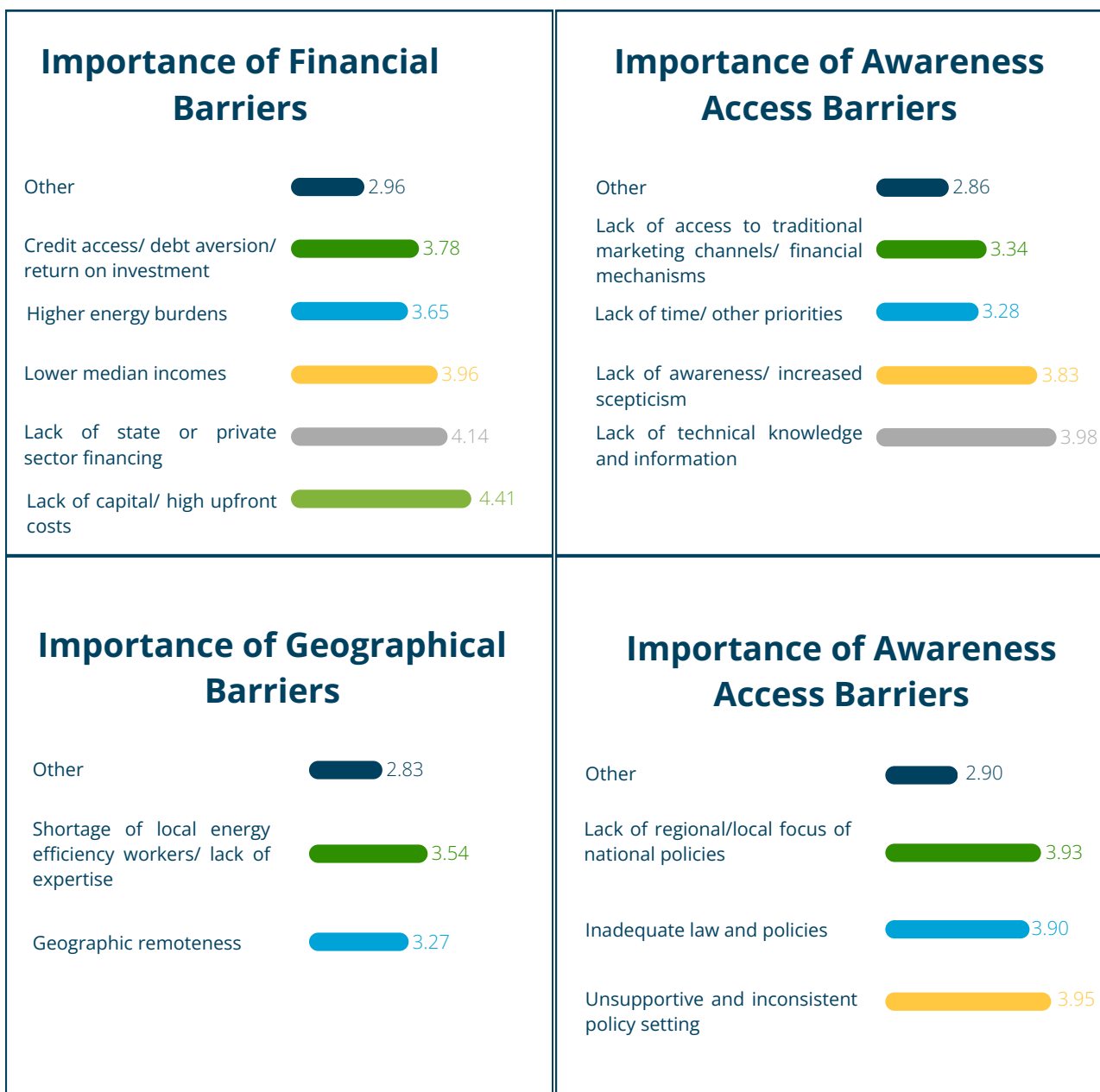
Respondents were asked what categories of barriers they have encountered while dealing with energy efficiency improvements in rural areas. They deemed **financial barriers** as the most prominent ones in all cases, followed by **awareness/access** and **regulatory barriers**.

Existence of barriers to energy efficiency improvements in rural areas



To further delve into the specifics of the importance of each barrier category, the respondents offered their insights into each category's specific barriers.

- Most important financial barrier: **lack of capital and high upfront costs**
- Most important awareness/access barriers: **lack of technical information and the skepticism of rural households**
- Most important geographical barriers: **lack of local energy efficiency workers and expertise**
- Most important regulatory barriers: **existent unsupportive and inconsistent policy setting**

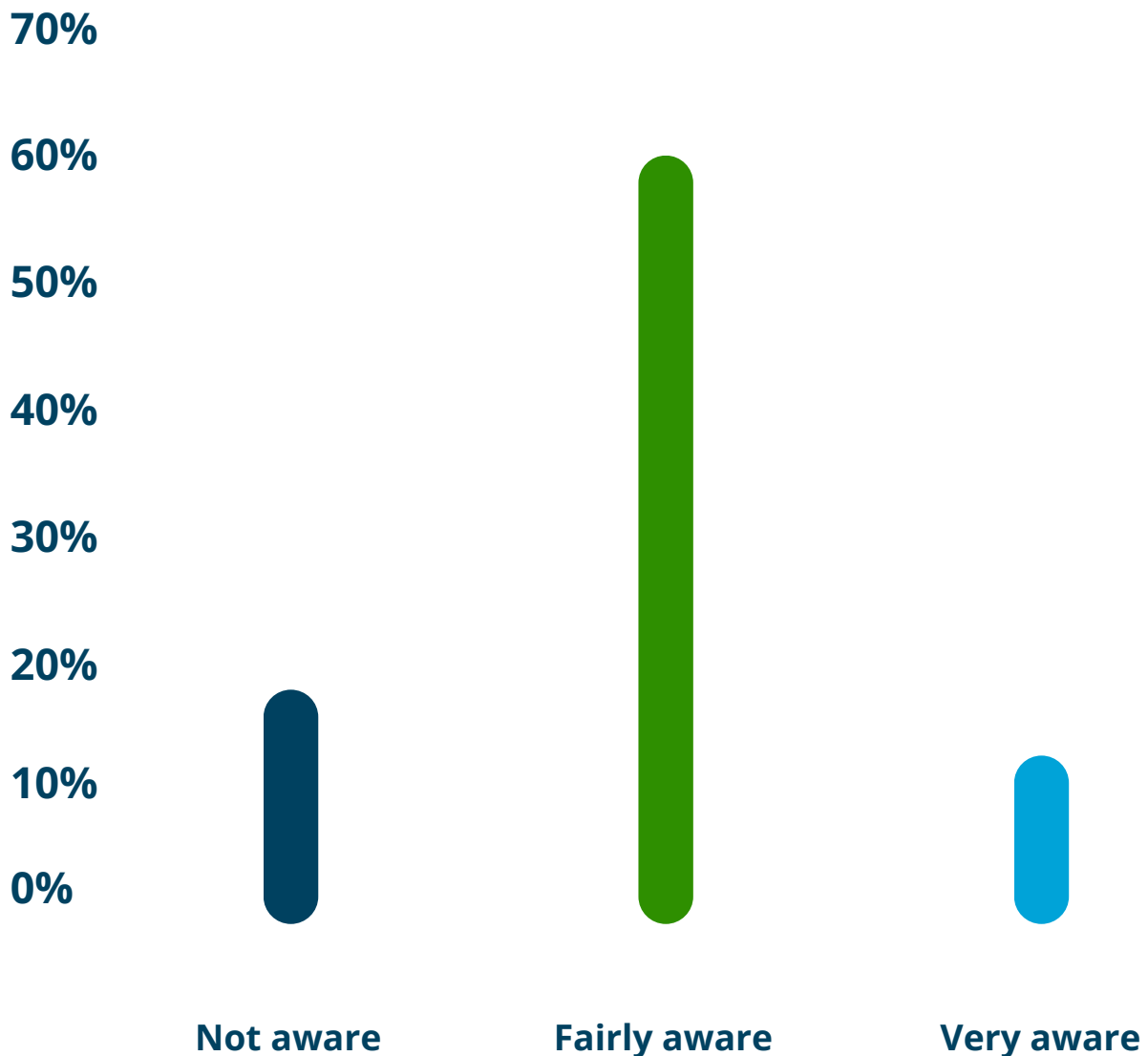


Policy awareness

Even though most of the respondents answered that they **were fairly aware** of rural energy efficiency policies, most of them were **facing challenges in providing examples of such policies**.

Most of them mentioned general **EU strategies and directives** (i.e., Energy Efficiency First Principle, National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan, Regional Just Energy Strategy, etc.).

Awareness of policies that address barriers to energy efficiency in rural areas



Rural Energy Poverty Alleviation: What can governmental bodies do?

Stakeholders and experts across Europe provide narrative and concrete insights on practical recommendations to overcome ongoing challenges in rural areas. Furthermore, they compiled a list of various actions that governmental bodies at all levels (i.e., EU, national, regional, and local) could implement to address energy efficiency and energy poverty in rural contexts.

EU Governmental bodies



Policy transformation

A key theme is the introduction of policy changes in the existing legal and policy framework, including setting targets for energy efficiency and energy poverty reduction in rural areas.



Financial mechanisms and support

Develop new funding mechanisms and financial support for energy-efficient initiatives, making projects feasible and sustainable in rural settings will be established.



Stakeholder engagement and collaboration

Engage with all relevant stakeholders, including governments, communities, and institutions, to collectively address energy poverty.



Education and awareness building

Initiate large-scale outreach efforts such as workshops, training programmes and public campaigns to enhance awareness and understanding of energy poverty issues within rural communities.

National Governmental bodies



Policy transformation

National authorities should propose plans and strategies that consider the unique challenges faced by these communities. This includes creating subsidies, monitoring mechanisms, and legislation that encourages energy efficiency improvements.



Financial support and incentives

Develop new funding mechanisms and financial support for energy-efficient initiatives, making projects feasible and sustainable in rural settings will be established.



Access to information, training and financing

National governments should implement nationwide campaigns, educational programs, and community outreach efforts to disseminate information about available resources, technologies, and the benefits of energy-efficient practices.

Regional Governmental bodies



Empowerment and customised strategies

Efforts should extend beyond urban-oriented strategies, enabling the development of unique solutions for rural challenges. Regional-level education and awareness campaigns are pivotal in conveying the benefits of energy-efficient practices to the population.



Financial support and accessibility

Long-term funding, innovative financing tools, and partnerships with financial institutions can ensure sustained investments in energy efficiency projects. Funding should be directed at areas with higher energy poverty prevalence.



Collaboration and advocacy

Effective collaboration between local, national, and European entities is essential. This involves cooperation with national stakeholders to improve rural-specific plans and policies. Advocacy for changes at higher levels, including harmonising regulations and access to incentives, is crucial.



Inclusive infrastructure and innovation

Infrastructure improvements are integral to rural development. Initiatives include enhancing public transportation connectivity, upgrading energy systems, and promoting sustainable building practices. Innovation is essential, especially in transitioning from dormitory villages to vibrant, self-sufficient rural communities.



Data-driven planning and accountability

The creation of dedicated departments to oversee local government activities can ensure accountability in implementing plans. Moreover, facilitating collaboration between various stakeholders in data sharing can lead to more informed decisions.

Local Governmental bodies



Financial support and funding allocation

Local governments should allocate funds for retrofitting buildings, implementing energy-saving technologies, and supporting energy-poor households. An emphasis on the targeted allocation of funds based on the specific needs of different regions is essential.



Local policy development

Municipal authorities should prioritise the energy challenges faced by rural regions within their remit, facilitate access to technical expertise, and develop specialised plans. The role of local governments in providing support to the most remote and vulnerable communities is also highlighted, particularly in relation to the reduction of transport poverty.



Local engagement and participation

Co-producing policy with local stakeholders, in addition to supporting energy communities, is also highlighted. Encouraging rural residents in decision-making processes, to participate in local energy projects, and establish local energy communities is also crucial.



Co-ordination and collaboration with higher levels of government

Local governments are encouraged to work closely with authorities at other governance scales to overcome structural barriers and adapt policies to the local context. Local governments are seen as intermediaries to communicate the specific needs of their areas.

ABOUT RENOVERTY

RENOVERTY fosters energy efficiency building upgrades in the energy poor households of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) / South-eastern Europe (SEE) and Southern European countries (SE) by establishing the methodological and practical framework to build renovation roadmaps for vulnerable rural districts in a financially viable and socially just manner.

RENOVERTY ensures that building retrofits consider the social dimension by incorporating security, comfort, and improved accessibility in the roadmaps to further improve the quality of life of vulnerable populations. Over the project's three years, seven pilots located in Sveta Nedelja (Croatia), Tartu (Estonia), Bükk-Mak & Somló-Marcalmamente-Bakonyalja Leader (Hungary), Zasavje (Slovenia), Parma (Italy), Coimbra (Portugal), and Osona (Spain) will implement the roadmaps, while wider integration of rural and peri-urban development is foreseen in the long run.

[Access the full report here](#)

Our website: <https://ieecp.org/projects/renoverty/>

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