How is the EU Tackling Energy Poverty? Policy overview, capacity building and on-the-ground support

EU Energy Poverty Advisory Hub

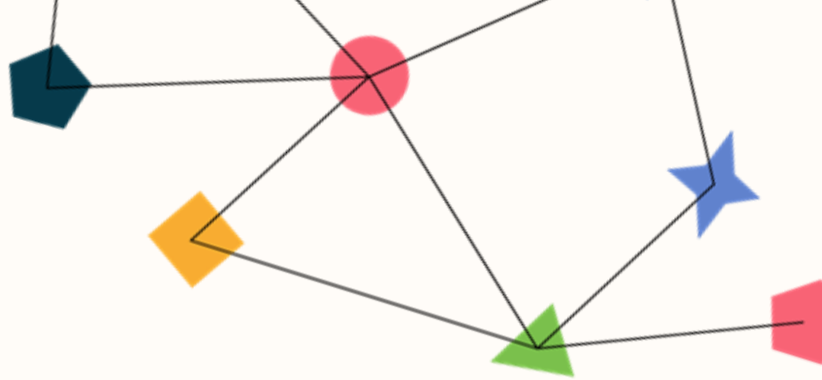
João Pedro Gouveia (NOVA FCT & EPAH)

CENSE center for environmental and sustainability research

NOVA SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

26-02-2026

European Policy Framework to Tackle Energy Poverty



Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) — 2023

- First binding EU-level definition of energy poverty
- Member States must set indicative national targets
- Requires energy poverty measures in National Energy & Climate Plans

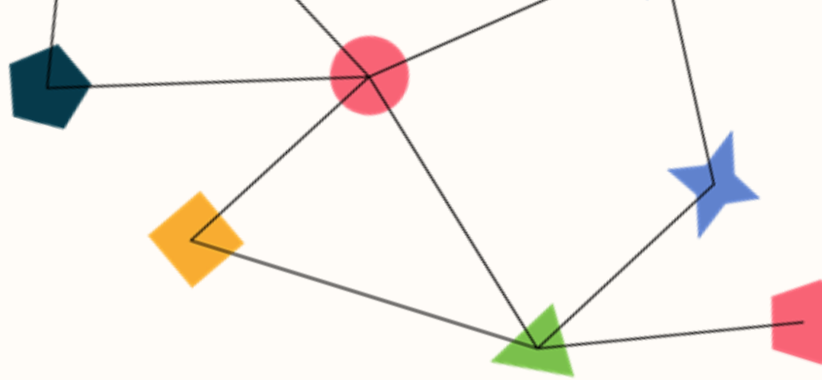
Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) — 2024

- Mandates progressive renovation of worst-performing buildings
- Prioritises vulnerable households in renovation plans
- Disproportionate burden on energy-poor homes addressed

Electricity & Gas Directives

- Protect vulnerable consumers from disconnection
- Winter disconnection bans for vulnerable households
- Access to social tariffs and price comparison tools

European Financial Instruments to Tackle Energy Poverty



Social Climate Fund

€86 Billion · 2026–2032

Addresses social impacts of ETS2 carbon pricing on buildings & transport. Direct income support + efficiency investments for vulnerable households.

ERDF & Cohesion Fund

Structural · Ongoing

Supports building renovation, district heating upgrades and energy access in less developed EU regions.

Just Transition Fund

€19.2 Billion · 2021–2027

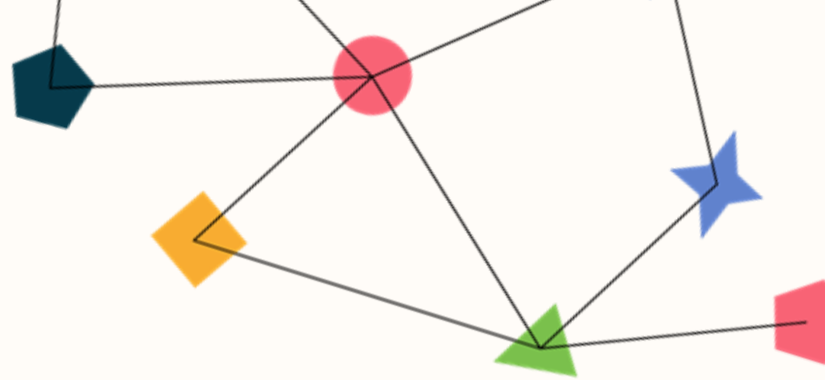
Supports territories dependent on fossil fuels. Protects vulnerable communities from energy cost increases during transition.

REPowerEU

Emergency · 2022+

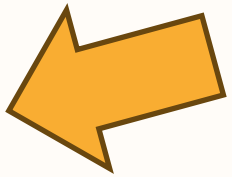
Accelerated renewable deployment & building renovation following the 2022 energy crisis. Includes provisions for energy communities.

European Governance and Monitoring to Tackle Energy Poverty



National Energy & Climate Plans (NECPs)

Member States must embed energy poverty strategies in NECPs submitted to the Commission



Energy Poverty Advisory Hub (EPAH)

Launched 2021 · Technical assistance, knowledge sharing & capacity building for Member States and local authorities

European Commission Oversight

Monitors progress, reviews NECPs and can issue country-specific recommendations

ETS2 Carbon Pricing Mechanism

Extends EU carbon pricing to buildings & transport from 2026. Social Climate Fund offsets impacts on vulnerable households

01 The leading EU initiative run by the European Commission

European Commission

Vision

To eradicate energy poverty and accelerate the just energy transition of European local communities.

Mission

To be the central platform of energy poverty expertise in Europe.

02

Ecosystem: structure and target groups

European Commission

EPAH in a Nutshell

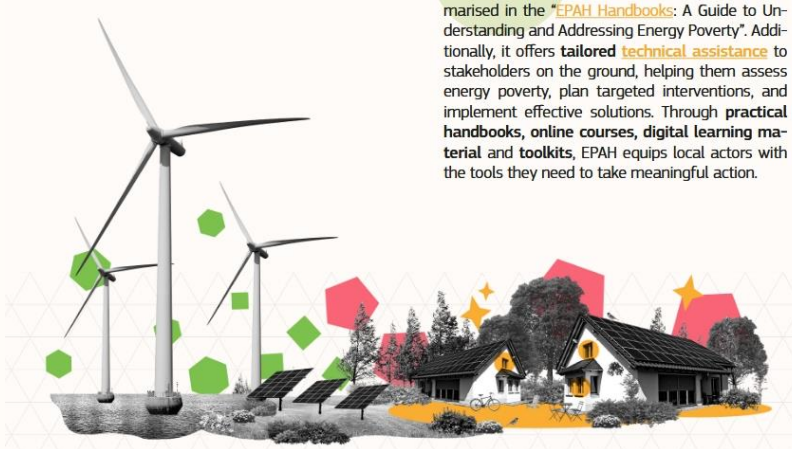
WATCH EPAH INTRODUCTORY VIDEO

Mission and vision

As the central platform for energy poverty expertise in Europe,

EPAH is the leading EU initiative aiming to eradicate energy poverty and support the just energy transition of local communities.

EPAH is a European Commission initiative implemented by five partner organisations and supported by national antennas across all Member States, creating a strong collaborative network of stakeholders.



Main work areas

Strengthens collaboration and promotes knowledge exchange by connecting stakeholders of all levels of governance from across the EU through **international conferences, national and practitioners' events, thematic webinars (lunch talks),** and the **Energy Poverty Projects Working Group.**

Strengthens local capacities. EPAH has **developed a comprehensive and easy-to-follow methodology** to assist stakeholders in their local actions to tackle energy poverty. The methodology is summarised in the "EPAH Handbooks: A Guide to Understanding and Addressing Energy Poverty". Additionally, it offers **tailored** technical assistance to stakeholders on the ground, helping them assess energy poverty, plan targeted interventions, and implement effective solutions. Through **practical handbooks, online courses, digital learning material** and **toolkits**, EPAH equips local actors with the tools they need to take meaningful action.

Builds awareness by maintaining an open-access online platform. This space enables different stakeholders e.g local governments, practitioners, institutions, and researchers to access valuable content created by the EPAH team. Stakeholders are also welcome to submit publications, news, events, policy updates, projects, and measures (EPAH ATLAS) and contribute to a growing knowledge base and ensuring both policymakers and practitioners have access to up-to-date, actionable insights.

Develops data and evidence to **inform policy decisions**. It publishes reports (such as country fiches, guidelines, annual thematic reports, reports on indicators analyses etc.) that monitor the state of energy poverty across all EU Member States and hosts a dedicated indicators dashboard. This helps users better understand energy poverty trends, track progress, and identify key challenges. **Policy conferences** further support this effort by bringing together all levels of governance to share experiences and move forward on solutions.

DOWNLOAD EPAH LEAFLET

EPAH Structure

Core team

Climate Alliance

NOVA SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

akaryon

ecoserveis

AISFOR

+ National antennas

Austria	Klimabündnis Österreich GmbH		**Italy**	AISFOR ((Partner)
Belgium	Climate Alliance		**Latvia**	Ekodoma
Bulgaria	CLEANTECH		**Lithuania**	Ziedine Ekonomika
Croatia	Drustvo za oblikovanje odrzivog razvoja (DOOR)		**Luxembourg**	Citizens for Ecological Living and Learning (CELL)
Czech Republic	SEVEN		**Malta**	Malta Intelligent Energy Management Agency (MIEMA)
Cyprus	Cyprus Energy Agency		**Netherlands**	Vereniging World Information Service on Energy Amsterdam (WISE)
Denmark	Energy Consulting Network		**Poland**	Association of Municipalities Polish Network Energie-Cites (PNEC)
Estonia	Estonian Green movement		**Portugal**	NOVA (Partner)
Finland	Tampere University		**Romania**	Reper21
France	SERAFIN		**Slovakia**	KLÍMA ŤA POTREBUJE Climate Needs You
Germany	Klima-Bi.indnis e.V. (Partner)		**Slovenia**	Focus Association for Sustainable Development (FOCUS)
Greece	INZEB		**Spain**	Ecoserveis (Partner)
Hungary	Reflex Environmental Association		**Sweden**	Stiftelsen The Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)
Ireland	South East Energy Agency (SEEA)			

Target groups

Communities able to develop substantive measures in tackling energy poverty and representatives of vulnerable consumers:

- Local governments
- Policy makers (all levels of governance),
- Civil society organisations (NGOs, advocacy groups, foundations),
- Consumer groups,
- Energy agencies and cooperatives,
- Universities and research institutions,
- National and EU institutions/governments.

Special focus will be on communities highly affected by energy poverty.

03

Objectives and activities

European Commission

Established network of support - enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing

Website as a knowledge hub

Learn from others by submitting your project, organization, or publication.

Targeted communication

Podcasts and video stories that share insights and experiences.

Event series

Regular opportunities to exchange ideas and grow together.

- **International conferences** – Featuring high-level panels and hands-on workshops.
- **Policy sessions** – Promoting dialogue and collaboration among institutions.
- **Practitioner events** – Sharing challenges and solutions among experts in the same region.
- Working groups – Learning from other projects and building on each other's success.
- **Lunch talks** – Staying connected and discussing focused topics in an informal setting.

Practitioner events and EPAH lunch talks

#20 Lunch Talk: Tackling Energy Poverty through Energy Renovation and Affordable Housing in Europe

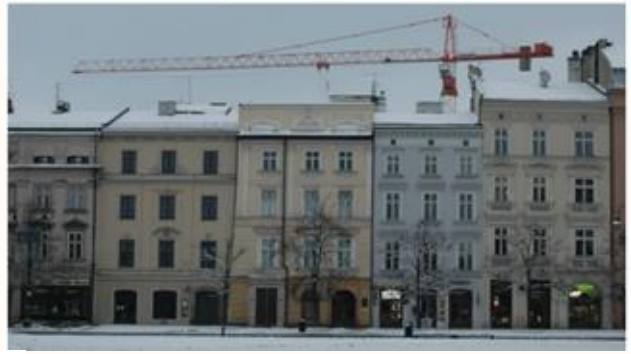
INSIGHT FROM OUR LAST EVENTS

Equity and Vulnerability in Energy Poverty: Insights from the 3rd Practitioners' Event and the 21st Lunch Talk

2025 Practitioner events

2nd practitioners event

Spotlight on Energy Renovation in Central and Eastern Europe — Join the 2nd Practitioners' Event



1st practitioners event

Hot Summers, Growing Inequalities: EPAH Brings Summer Energy Poverty to the Forefront of European Debate

3rd practitioners event

Equity and Vulnerability in Energy Poverty: Insights from the 3rd Practitioners' Event and the 21st Lunch Talk

Develop data and knowledge
Inform policy

In-depth reporting

Detailed assessments of conditions across European Member States.

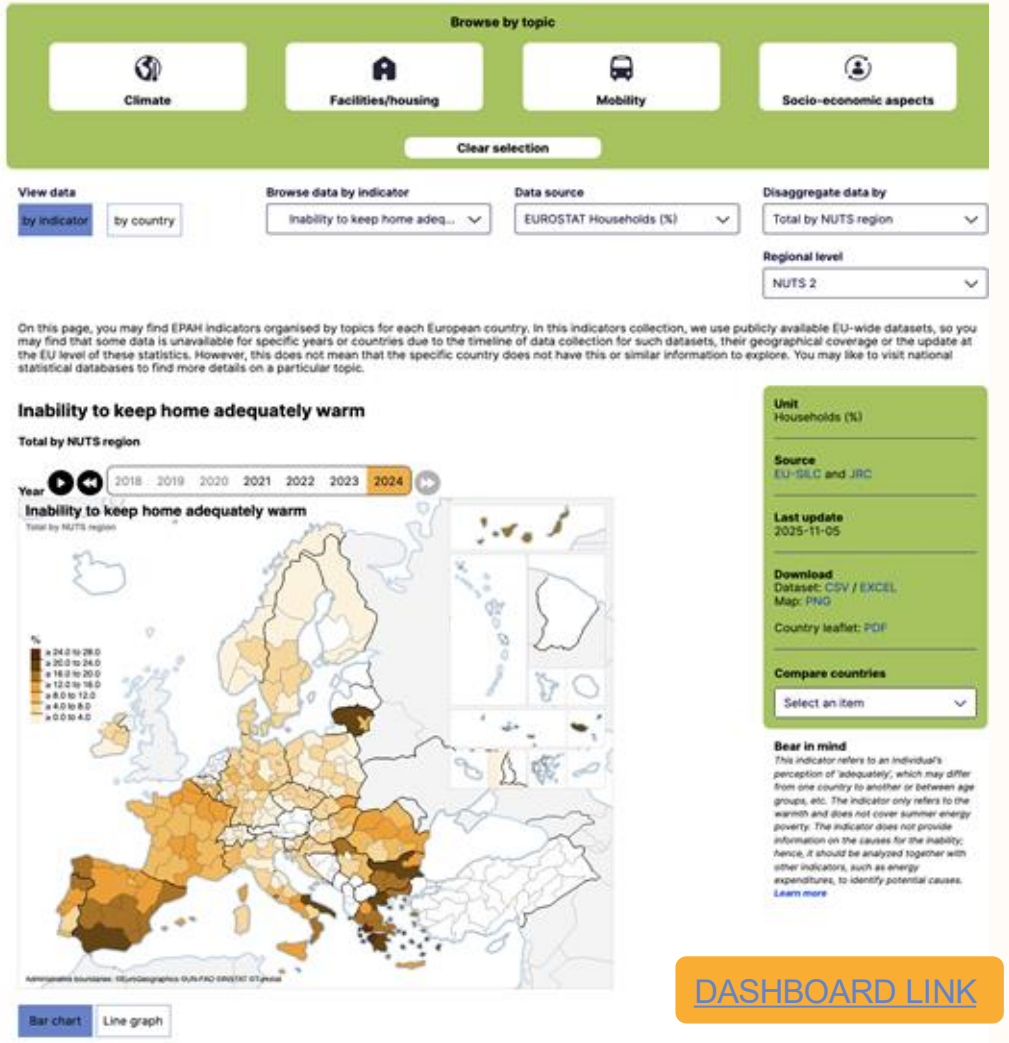
Data and indicator analysis

Supporting the development of a structured and consistent framework.

Country-specific insights

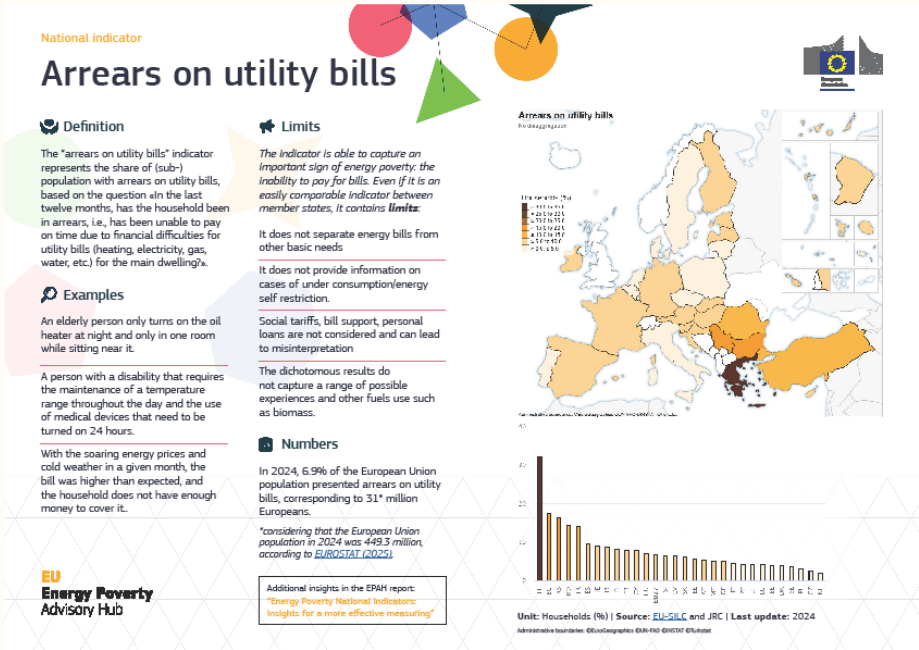
Tailored analyses to help national institutions address energy poverty.

EPAH Indicators Dashboard



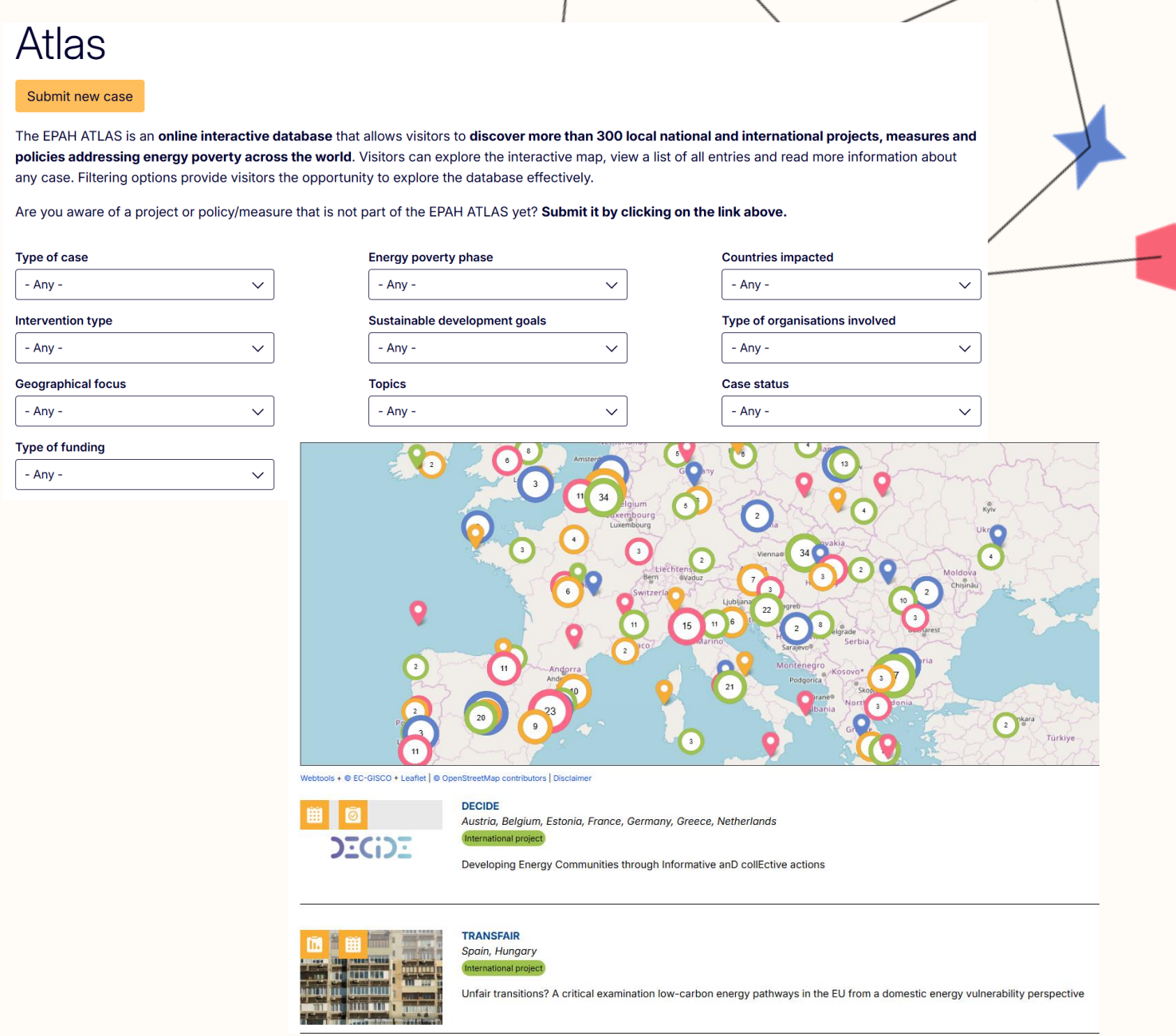
DASHBOARD LINK

- Dashboard data is constantly being updated
- Several indicators now with regional data available
- New design
- Revision of the informative documents (indicators leaflets) for each indicator



EPAH ATLAS

- Access to more than 300 projects to get inspired
- Possibility to submit your own project with a new, improved form
- New design
- Included link for organisations (possibility to submit your organisation)



CONSULT THE EPAH ATLAS

Increase capacity of local communities

Direct support

Two calls for technical assistance to help local communities **(Open now)**

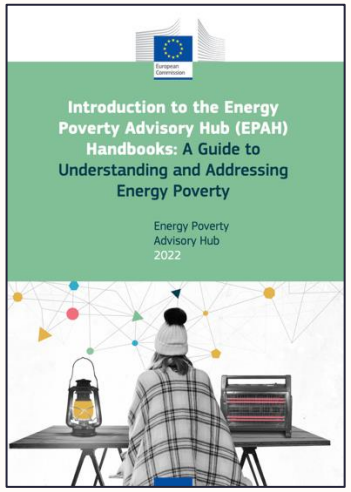
Practical guidelines

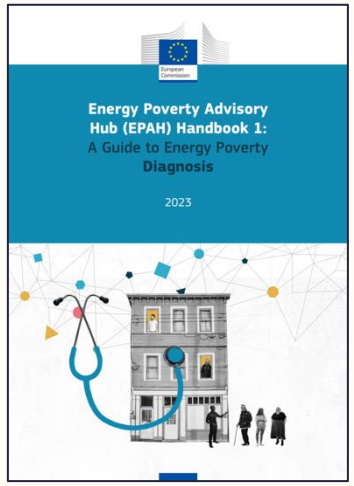
Concrete tips for addressing specific challenges.

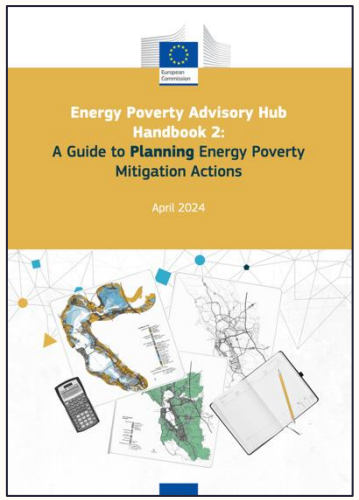
Technical exchange

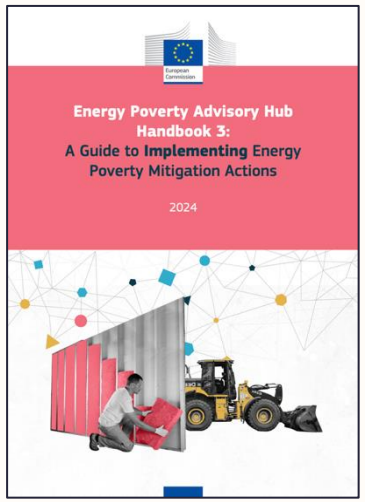
Sharing existing solutions and strengthening overall capacity.

Step by Step Learning Guides

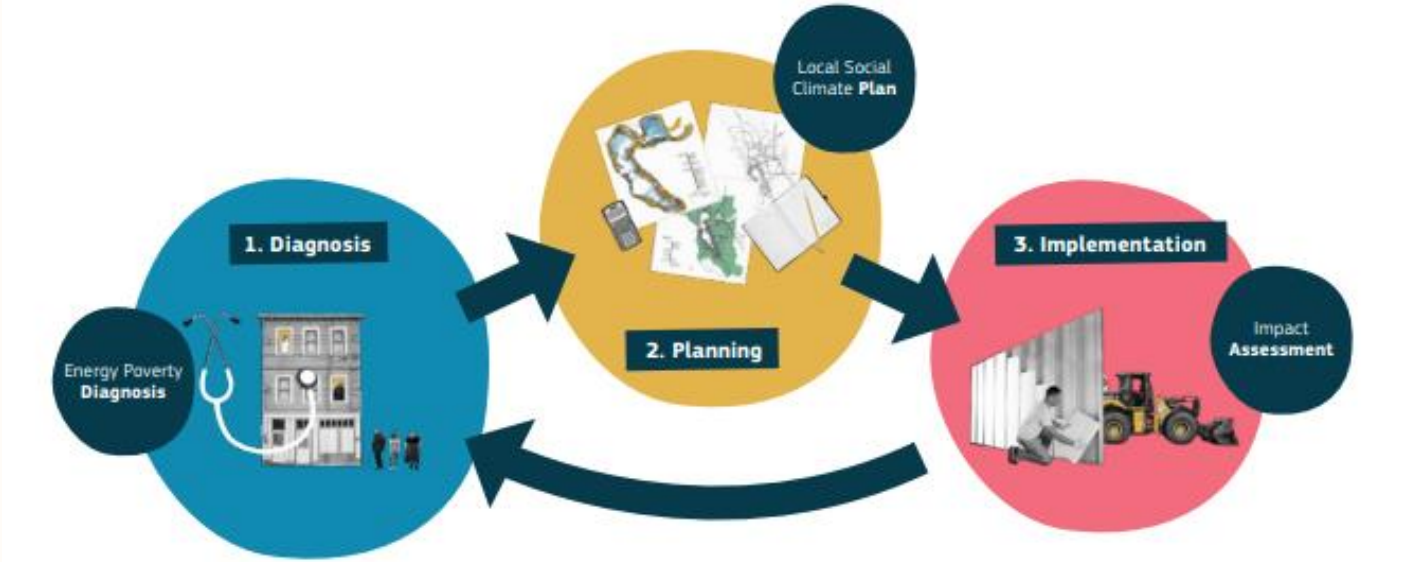








A series of **practical guidebooks** for local governments and practitioners ensuring that the social dimensions of the energy transition are addressed efficiently.

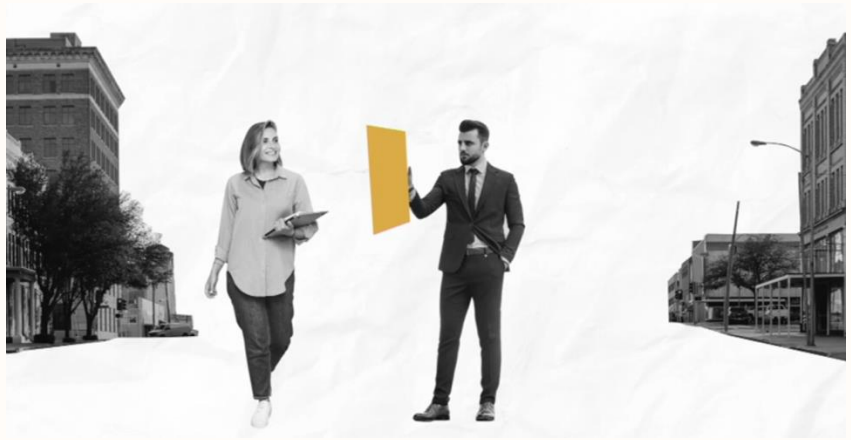


LINK

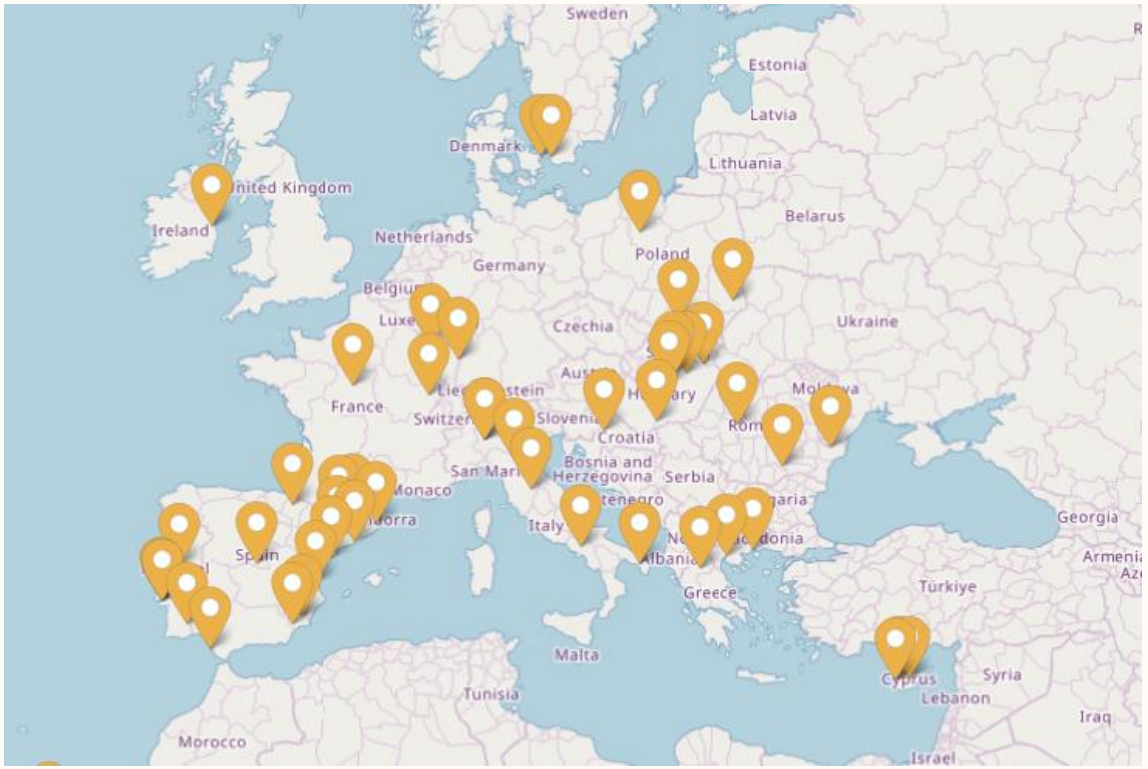
Energy Poverty Advisory Hub

Technical Assistance

Tailor-made solutions for Local Governments



2 calls (2022 & 2023)



Projects being supported	53
Municipalities under the Technical Assistance	85
Country represented	13

Open Call now (Until 31st March)

100 technical assistances more

Mértola, Portugal

RESULTS
1st technical assistance of the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub 2022-2023

DISCOVER EPAH

European Commission

November 2022 - July 2023

Energy poverty phase: Diagnosis

Topics: information and awareness

The technical assistance was provided by the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon (ICS-ULisboa) to Junta de Freguesia de Mértola and Associação de Moradores do Centro Histórico de Mértola, in collaboration with the NOVA School of Science and Technology (FCT NOVA).

Objectives

The expert carried out a qualitative assessment of energy poverty in the historical center of Mértola, aiming at the characterisation of households' experience of energy poverty and identification of factors contributing to energy poverty in the area. The objective was to use this assessment to inform an effective work plan and subsequently tackle the energy poverty challenges in Mértola.

family habitus related to cold and heat, practices related to energy consumption, family dynamics regarding energy consumption, payment of energy bills, characterisation of energy supply contracts, information on energy efficiency and support schemes. A report was produced that included advice on concrete actions and interventions, taking into account the specificities of the local context. Workshops and info sessions presented the results of the report to local stakeholders and aimed at informing them for the energy poverty challenges of the community.

Activities & Outcomes

32 doo-to-door interviews with consumers and 7 interviews with a focus group and local informants were conducted. The questionnaires collected info regarding: the characterisation of the household, material conditions of the dwelling, history of renovation works, practices of coping with cold and heat at home,

Challenge

Identifying potential interviewees was chllenging since the population has declined sharply in recent years. Additionally, when conducting the final report, it was necessary to take into account the specificities of the historic center of Mértola. Local climate, topography, buildings, demography, economy and heritage protection guidelines and regulations make it a very unique place.

Who did we reach?
- Rural, low-income, low-education, ill-health, elderly

Who was left out?
- migrants, tenants, unemployed, young, multi-familiy

EU Energy Poverty Advisory Hub

Lumiar (Lisbon), Portugal

RESULTS
1st technical assistance of the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub 2022-2023

DISCOVER EPAH

European Commission

October 2022 - July 2023

Energy poverty phase: Diagnosis and planning

Topics: Energy poverty diagnosis; Renewable energy communities

The **Lumiar Parish Council**, in collaboration with the **Local Partnership of Telheiras and with the assistance of Coopérnico and CENSE, FCT-NOVA University of Lisbon**, embarked on technical assistance (TA). The goal was to set up one of the first citizen-led and inclusive renewable energy communities in Portugal by tackling energy poverty and promoting energy democracy.

Objectives

The project aimed to raise **awareness** and **diagnose** energy poverty while offering **counseling** to vulnerable households and community intermediaries. The TA produced an **open-access guide** for building local energy communities, aiming for replication in Lumiar Parish Council and alignment with Portugal's multi-level energy and climate policies. Progress was monitored through indicators, tracking households engaged and actions taken during and beyond the pilot phase.

Activities & Outcomes

Detailed energy poverty reports for Lumiar and Lisbon were produced. **A pilot renewable energy project with 16 solar panels (7.0 kWp) benefitted 17 community members, including 3 energy-poor families, and the parish council itself.** An inclusive financial model allowed participation without substantial upfront costs. Internal rules stressed equal participation as a non-profit. Successful participant recruitment and engagement of energy-poor families were achieved through community efforts. **Regulatory approval and legal licensing were obtained** in November 2023.

This TA established a robust local partnership, government support, financial aid for vulnerable families, a motivated network, and expert input, enabling international financial support through the DUT Partnership's Urban Doers Grant.

Challenge

In Portugal, inclusive energy communities face several barriers, with **licensing being a complex and lengthy process**.

Future

The Telheiras Renewable Energy Community is planning a **second solar project** to expand impact and share lessons for replication.

Lumiar

PARCERIA LOCAL TELHEIRAS

coopernico

CENSE

NOVA

EU **Energy Poverty** Advisory Hub

Who did we reach?
- High-income, low-income, elderly

Who was left out?
- Rural, low education, migrants, tenants, ill-health and disabilities, unemployed

Barreiro, Moita, Montijo, Alcochete, *Portugal*

RESULTS
2nd technical assistance of the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub 2023-2024

DISCOVER EPAH

European Commission

October 2023 - June 2024

Energy poverty phase: Implementation

Topics: Energy audits, information and awareness

The "Ponto de Transição + PRÓXIMO" or "Transition Point Next2U" is a **mobile one-stop shop** which provided energy related advice by meeting people at a mobile assistance point. The support can significantly enhance the living conditions of vulnerable families, boost their resilience and speed up a fair energy transition.

Objectives

The "Transition Point Next2U" project alleviates energy poverty by providing **personalized support** through qualified technicians and **Transition Agents**, offering free advice on energy bills, financing for home renovations, and application assistance. By engaging the community, conducting home energy assessments, and fostering partnerships, the initiative successfully improved energy efficiency and sustainability in the municipalities of Barreiro, Moita, Montijo, and Alcochete.

Activities & Outcomes

The "Transition Point Next2U" initiative involved recruiting and training local technicians and Transition Agents to provide energy assessments, advice on bills, and assistance with financing for home renovations across Barreiro, Moita, Montijo, and Alcochete. As a result, the project attracted **366 visitors, conducted 256 home energy assessments,** and identified 131 potential beneficiaries for the "Energy Voucher" program, demonstrating significant community engagement and support for addressing energy poverty.

This assistance was a learning experience that brought the involved municipalities closer to achieving a sustainable and energy-efficient future.

Challenge

Challenges in addressing energy poverty include coordinating diverse stakeholders, improving data collection systems, engaging vulnerable populations through innovative outreach, and ensuring sustainability through capacity building and long-term planning.

RNAE · NOVA School of Science & Technology · Moita Município · Montijo Câmara Municipal · S.Energia · Alcochete Município · Barreiro Câmara Municipal

Who did we reach?
- Low income, low education, elderly, unemployed

Who was left out?
- Rural, migrants, high-income, tenants

EU Energy Poverty Advisory Hub

Arganil
Portugal

RESULTS
2nd technical assistance of the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub 2023-2024

DISCOVER EPAH

European Commission

September 2023 - June 2024

Energy poverty phase: Diagnosis, Planning

Topics: Building typologies, monitoring

This project emerged following an application by the Centro Regional Coordination and Development Commission (CCDR-Centro) and the Municipality of Arganil to the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub – 2nd Call for Technical Assistance 2023.

Objectives

The objective of the application was to obtain specialized technical assistance to address energy poverty, specifically in identifying and mapping instances of energy poverty, as well as analyzing appropriate energy efficiency measures for implementation. Additionally, the assistance included providing advice and guidance on the most favorable financing mechanisms. A tool has been developed to identify and map cases of energy poverty within the municipality of Arganil.

Activities & Outcomes

The project involved analyzing and monitoring the temperature and relative humidity of buildings, conducting inspections and diagnoses, as well as surveys related to energy poverty and thermal comfort analysis. The building inspections revealed widespread moisture issues, inadequate insulation, structural concerns, and inefficient heating systems. The survey showed that the majority of respondents are homeowners who rely on biomass for heating, face significant humidity problems, and often experience discomfort during both winter and summer due to high energy costs and inadequate climate control system

It was found that some families are unable to maintain their homes within the range of temperatures considered comfortable. Notably, a building in Foz da Moura registered room temperatures below 9°C

Challenge

The monitoring campaign highlighted significant challenges in maintaining comfortable indoor temperatures, particularly in older buildings, where architectural constraints limit the feasibility of insulation and climate control improvements, necessitating careful analysis to develop sustainable solutions

EU **Energy Poverty** Advisory Hub

HES engenharia

ccdrc Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Centro, I.P.

NOVA SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

ARGANIL Município

Who did we reach?
- Rural, low-income, elderly, ill-health, low education

Who was left out?
- Migrants, multi-family, tenants, high-income

European Commission

Baixa da Banheira & Vale da Amoreira *Portugal*

RESULTS
2nd technical assistance of the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub 2023-2024

DISCOVER EPAH

European Commission

September 2023 - June 2024

Energy poverty phase: Diagnosis

Topics: Health, survey

The Union of the Civil Parishes of Baixa da Banheira and Vale da Amoreira, in collaboration with the health center USF Querer Mais, addressed energy poverty as a public health issue. Energy poverty affects health, especially for those with cardiovascular, respiratory, or rheumatologic conditions, as they are more vulnerable to **extreme home temperatures**.

Objectives

The objectives include developing a process to identify individuals in energy poverty, establishing methods for health center staff to recognize energy poverty using surveys and existing data, coordinating access to mitigation measures through collaboration with local partners, and consolidating and sharing knowledge to improve public access to resources.

Activities & Outcomes

The survey of 66 vulnerable families analysed energy poverty and health data, while support included promoting synergies with another EPAH TA replicating a OSS Transition Point NExt2U, energy bill analysis, and assistance with funding applications. Additionally, a **statistical tool and mapping** were created to guide future measures and prioritize areas for initial action. The results revealed a high vulnerability to energy poverty among the surveyed population, with potential **severe health consequences**.

The project will continue to gather surveys, explore the detailed relationship between energy poverty and health, and evaluate the follow-up support provided to families.

Challenge

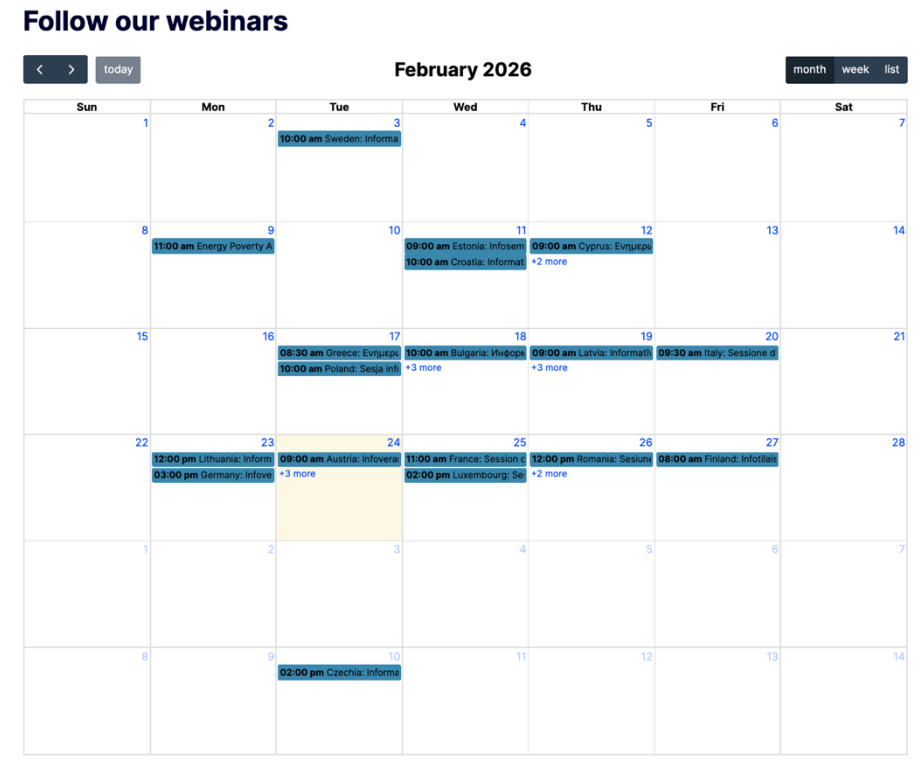
Resource constraints, including limited human resources, posed significant hurdles. Data gaps, particularly in local data related with health impacts, required additional efforts in primary data collection. Building trust with beneficiaries was another challenge, as initial mistrust from vulnerable consumers needed to be overcome.

EU **Energy Poverty** Advisory Hub

Who did we reach?
- Low income, low education, elderly, ill-health and disabilities, migrants, unemployed, tenants

Who was left out?
- Rural, high-income

Call for Technical Assistance Open



- https://energy-poverty.ec.europa.eu/technical-assistance-call

Annual Conference 2026– Registration Open

https://energy-poverty.ec.europa.eu/newsroom/events/energy-poverty-advisory-hub-annual-conference

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Advisory Hub

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