




Intelligent Energy  Europe

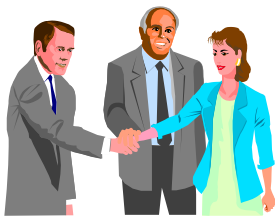
Preliminary version

Step 9

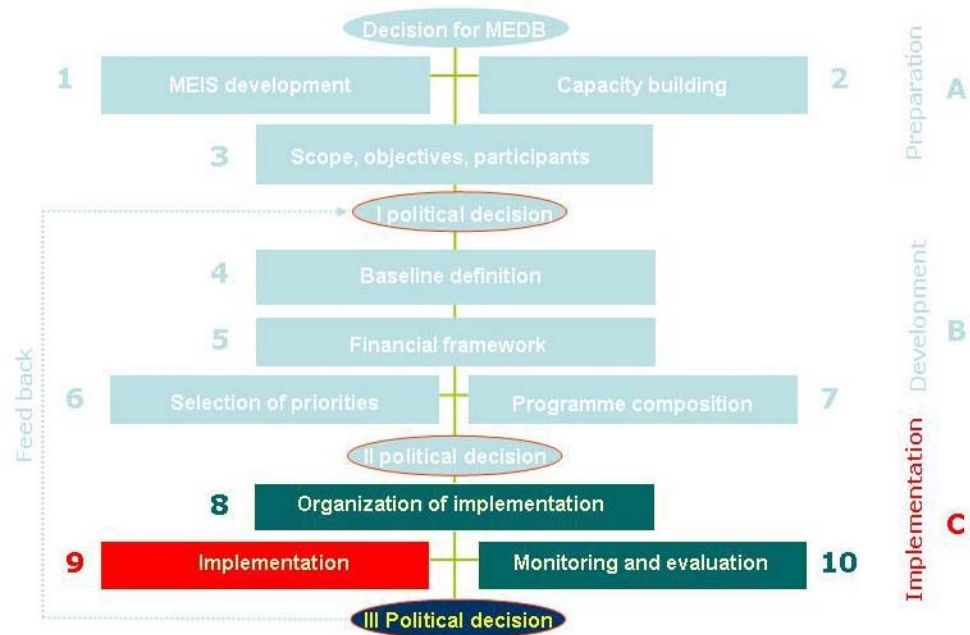
Programme implementation

Introduction

The implementation of the Municipal Energy Programme is the step, which takes the longest time, efforts and financial means. Many different players take part in the implementation, while the local society recognizes the real impact of the MEP and its overall influence on the local economy. This is the reason why at this stage the mobilization of the social support and the involvement of the population and the key players in the MEP process obtain critical importance.



The practical implementation of the municipal energy policy is a complex process, which comprises a series of policy steps and whose success depends on many factors of diverse nature. We might have worked out an excellent municipal energy efficiency programme and may have proposed the best possible measures for its implementation, based on the latest scientific and technical achievements. The elaborated business plan might be economically feasible and justified in detail from the point of view of the management. This, however, is no guarantee for success. Finally, whether the energy efficiency policy of the municipality will be implemented or will remain a pile of useless paperwork depends entirely on the human factor. The success of the municipal energy policy is intricately related to the extent in which people are willing to and capable of assuming their responsibility with respect to the state of the environment.



Immediate actions

At the implementation stage a series of immediate actions are to be foreseen. The first of one is setting up a Programme Management Unit (PMU) from employees of the municipal administration (if this has not been done in the previous stage). In some cases the programme management could be assigned to an external body or specialist. When outsourcing is to be chosen for the selection of the programme management, high priority has to be given to the organization of the tender documentation and procedures.

The same approach should be followed for the selection of energy auditing, design and consultancy companies, as well as for the selection of contractors for the execution of energy efficiency measures (retrofit).

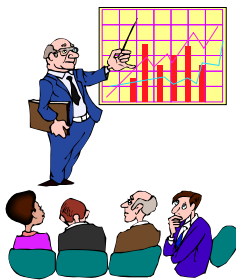
In some countries the involvement of financing institutions in the implementation of MEPs is also subject of public procurement.

Communication with the public

Dialogue with the public

The tools for implementation of the local energy policy comprise a multitude of various measures, which differ in the modalities of their application and the estimated effects.

The practice has shown that communication with the public has played a particularly important role in all cases of successful policy in the field of energy and protection of the environment. They contribute to raising the awareness about the significance of the problems, to improvement of the level of knowledge and to bringing about a change in people's behaviour. For this reason, in the process of elaboration of the municipal energy strategy it would be recommendable to pay special attention to the question how to organize its practical implementation. This means that it is necessary to ensure besides good *internal* communication (management bodies of the sites and activities, inter-departmental exchange and dissemination of information, etc.) also efficient *external* communication (information for the broad public, education and training of personnel, public debates and consultations with the target groups). Dialogue with local public is needed, since it may help to achieve a change in the attitude and behaviour of all stakeholder groups and individuals on energy-related issues.



Communication with the public is successful only when the holdbacks to changes of people's behaviour towards more effective energy conservation are not too many. It has better chances for success in the cases when communication is combined with other tools – legislative or financial.

Types of communication

The elaboration and implementation of the municipal energy efficiency strategy presumes the three major policy decisions – on the development of a strategy, on the approval of the municipal energy efficiency programme and on the evaluation of the implementation of the programme. It is important to take into account the fact that the priority objectives of communication with the local public are different for each of the phases and this predetermines the differences in the recommended forms of communication.

The energy planning process

Stages in the development of the municipal energy policy	Follow-up actions	Priority objectives of communication
<p>First policy decision Decision to elaborate an Energy Efficiency Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration of an energy efficiency strategy • Local capacity building • Elaboration of a Municipal Energy Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination and exchange of information • Announcement and dissemination of the adopted policy
<p>Second policy decision Approval of a Municipal Energy Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Municipal Energy Efficiency Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building of awareness towards the energy efficiency issues • Changes of the habits and behaviour patterns of the target groups
<p>Third policy decision Assessment of the implementation of the Municipal Energy Programme</p>	<p>Feedback in the process of evaluation of the implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of the efficiency of the municipal policy • Guarantees for democratic decision-making

Priority objectives of communication during the different stages of development of the municipal energy policy

Major dilemmas in communication

The dialogue with local communities on the issues of energy efficiency and environment protection is charged with the most unexpected challenges. Achievement of a change in people's value systems, attitudes and behaviour has always been a difficult process. People are apt to neglect any information, which casts doubt on their established habits. They usually seek confirmation on their old ideas and most frequently do not easily open their minds to new ways of reasoning.

The daily activities of groups of people and individuals are often full of contradictions with respect to energy efficiency because they are responses to a multitude of different factors. For instance, a given individual may one day use the public transport and on the next chose to use his/her private car.





Someone may always maintain lower temperature of the district heating at home, while at the same time continues to purchase all kinds of household appliances for heating. If you ask people to explain the contradictions in their behaviour, you will often hear unsubstantiated arguments. However, it is exactly these arguments that should be assumed as the starting point in the planning of all further actions, since in this case perception is the only reality. What is more, the awareness on the energy efficiency issues does not automatically lead to a more conscious behaviour towards energy. The gap between the awareness on a given problem and the actions in this respect is related to the “social dilemmas” phenomenon. These dilemmas obstruct the transformation of attitude into an energy-conscious action.

Some of the frequently shared social dilemmas are as follows:

Collective versus individual interests

The collective/community benefits from energy conservation are less tangible to the individual than the immediate inconveniences of changing one’s own behavior (e.g. reduction of individually perceived comfort).

Short-term effect versus long-terms

Short-term effects, such as reduced comfort when using public transport instead of one’s own car, are obvious. The long-term effects, however, such as preservation of the available deposits of fossil fuels for a longer period of time, are difficult to perceive or to comprehend.

The ‘here and there’ effect

The fact that the use of fossil fuels causes damage to the environment elsewhere in the country or in another part of the world is often not clear to the individual using that energy source.

Other reasons, that might cause the failure of some energy efficiency programmes aimed at changing people’s attitude and practices, are as follows:

Lack of knowledge

People often lack information about alternative equipment of higher energy efficiency characteristics that is available on the market and is sold at affordable prices.

Contradictory messages

Some people refuse to switch off fluorescent light when they leave the room for one hour because they are

convinced (they have heard from some expert?!) that frequent switching of fluorescent lamps ON/OFF leads to excessive energy consumption, i.e. it costs money. The correct message is that any switching OFF of the fluorescent lights when one leaves the room leads to energy saving.

The “after you, sir?”
effect

People tend to pin responsibility on other people or institutions but not to bear it themselves. For instance, they say: “Why should I sell my car, when my neighbours have two cars, using them for stupid things!” Or “Why should I sit in a dark and uncomfortable house when the municipality building is full of lamps burning even at night! Let the authorities act first!”

In as much as communication is an important policy tool, it should be planned beforehand in the least detail. The most tangible effect is obtained when it is correctly co-ordinated with other tools and other messages of the local authorities. In order to use them effectively for the implementation of the municipal energy efficiency policy, the public relations officers and the municipal employees working on energy efficiency and environmental protection issues should be well-acquainted with:

- the general conditions under which the activities of the programme will be implemented;
- the general policy on energy efficiency and protection of the environment;
- the thoughts, feelings and protective mechanisms of the local community;
- the recommendable methods and tools for public relations in the different phases of the programme implementation and under different situations.



Communication process

Model of the
process

There are many definitions of the notion “communication”. In this case it will be useful to assume as a starting point the following definition:

Communication is a process, in which a sender conveys information to a receiver through a communication channel in order to bring about certain response in the receiver.

For conveying a successful communication the sender should be familiar with the interests of the different target groups, their knowledge and previous experience, the manner of selection of the information and with the channels of receipt of messages.

Communication cycle

The communication strategy (public relations) is a process based on five major elements: target group, target, message, organisation and means.

Target group

The target group is an accurately described group on which the specific message will focus. For instance, the notion "the citizens" is not a good description because it is too broad (a 20 years old female reads different media than a 60 years old male and will accept as reasonable different arguments from those acceptable for him). It is important to remember that the target groups are end-users having specific common models of energy end-use, but at the same time they are human beings with their inherent propensities, biases, knowledge, behaviour patterns, (un)conscious interests, (un)willingness for change.

Target

The targets of the communication ensue from the objectives of the formulated policy. They should take into account what a specific target group has to know, feel or do. It is preferable to quantify the percentage of the target group that has to meet these targets and to set deadlines when the targets must be achieved.

Message

The message refers to the contents of the communication, which you want to convey to the selected target group.

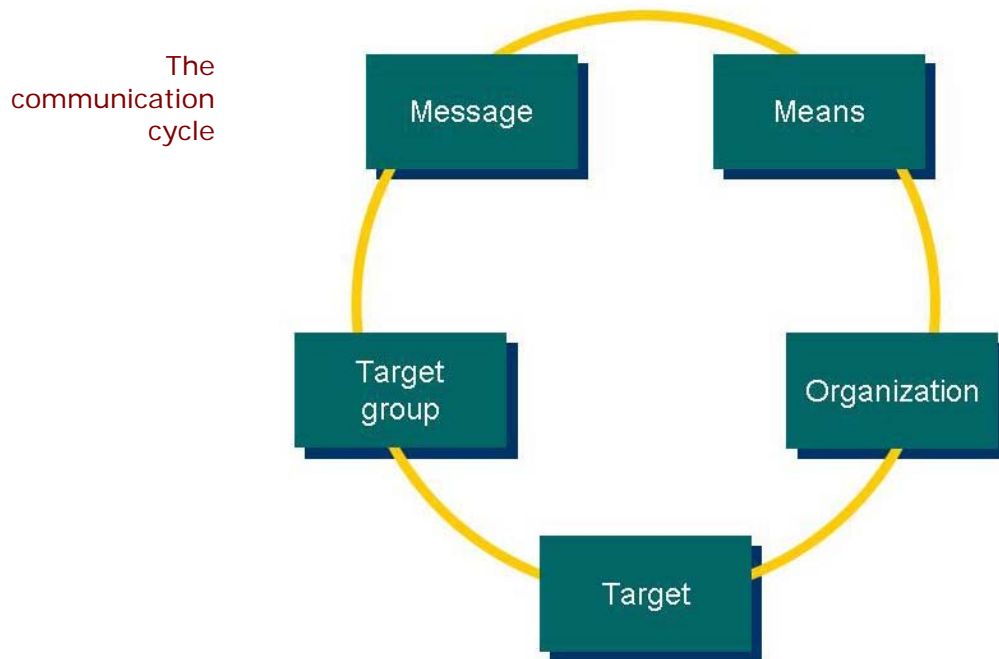
Means

With a view to transmitting successfully the intended message, it is important to select the organisations or individuals that can play the role of intermediaries for its communication. Some methods are more adequate than others for the selected targets and target groups.

Organization

The organisation concerns the planning, timing, distribution of tasks and budget, guidelines for internal and external co-operation (for instance intermediary organisations or individuals), etc.

Designing a communication strategy is not a linear, but rather a cyclic process. The practice has shown that quite often it is necessary to go back a step and to reformulate earlier parts of the cycle (for instance of the message or the target group) in order to be able to proceed successfully forwards.



Planning Communication

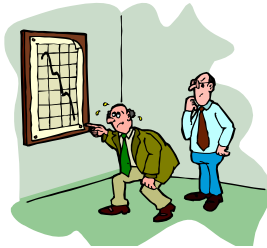
Defining communication targets

Prior to starting to work out your communication strategy it is necessary to clarify the issues covered by the municipal energy efficiency policy. This will help you identify:

- the concrete problems which you will have to deal with and
- the specific role of communication in the framework of the general energy efficiency policy.

The best way to perform this analysis is through conducting discussions or “brainstorming” with colleagues and basic sources of information. Since the very beginning it is assumed that the issues in question are of the competence of local authorities.

Defining target groups



When defining the target groups of your communication strategy, try to stick to the following steps:

- Make an overview of the target groups that play some role with respect to the energy issue selected by you. Try to be as specific as possible (for instance, the occupants of flats on a specific street or area).
- Try to rank them in order of importance. The more responsible for or the more involved a target group is in the energy issue, the more important it is to launch a dialogue with that group.
- Indicate the approximate size of the group (it might probably be necessary to make additional clustering of those incorporated in it).
- Formulate their position in the social networks and look for individuals, who might be of interest (from the point of view of their capacity to exert influence).
- Formulate the extent to which the target group is definable and accessible.
- Make assumptions concerning the feasibility of their contribution to the solution of the specific energy issue (what can they do?).

Defining communication targets for each target group

In general, we distinguish four types of communication targets:

- Targets concerning attention (having heard about, having an opinion)
- Targets concerning awareness of the issue, knowledge and understanding (being aware of it, knowing about it, understanding it)
- Targets concerning willingness and motivation (wanting, being motivated, being ready)
- Targets concerning behaviour and skills (doing, being able, participating)

These types of targets may be related not only to the implementation of the approved policy or project, but may also serve to make the results widely known and to promote the reputation of the local authority.

Defining messages

The central question here is: "What is the core message to the respective target groups?" The following two steps should be passed to answer this question:

- Formulation of the main topic - it should reflect the communication target and should be related to the general policy target
- Formulation of the specific sub-topics - they should focus on the benefits for the specific target group and attract the attention of its members.

It is recommended to opt for a balance between rational and emotional aspects by carefully weighing up the nature and attitudes of the target group. Present the issue for the respective target group in a simple, clear and understandable form avoiding unnecessary details or background information. Try to find a balance between the emotional and rational attitude. Be honest and use positive images. Point out how other people or organisations contribute to the resolution of the problem.

Defining means of communication

Some well-known means for conveying the messages are, for example, hand out of leaflets and brochures, sending letters and conducting meetings. In order to be able to use these means in the most effective way it is advisable to use local media as well.



It is wise to look for a combination of communication means. The practice proves that personal communication gives the best results. But it is also time consuming and thus often not very efficient. Moreover, only a limited number of people may be reached in this way. Mass media are much more appropriate for reaching out a large number of people. The disadvantage in their case is that the information is frequently too general and using mass media can be expensive.

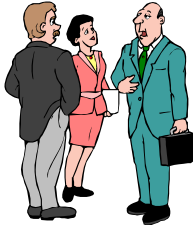
Organization of implementation

Whether your communication plan succeeds or fails depends largely on the organisation of the implementation process. Usually, the available personal capacity and financial means determine the targets you can work on and the media you can use. The following issues are of particular importance concerning the organization:

Tasks and responsibilities

Find out which persons are responsible for the communication activities in the municipality and how their activities are coordinated.

Budget



Make a preliminary estimate of the costs and indicate how the individual activities will be financed. If the available budget is insufficient, it might be possible:

- to formulate priorities
- to split activities in individual phases, so that the costs may be spread over a longer period of time
- to find additional sources
- to establish cooperation with other actors (for instance local citizens' organisations)
- to attract private professional organisations of freelancers to carry out some of the activities (sometimes this is more efficient)
- to skip activities or choose for cheaper alternative activities.

Planning

It is desirable to arrange the activities in a chronological order and determine who has to do what and when.

Implementation of a communication plan

The success of the implementation of the communication strategy and communication plan requires particular attention for the following more important aspects:

Establish coordination

It is most likely that your communication plan consists of various activities for the specific target groups. It is even likely that these activities are assigned to more than one person. In that case coordination is very important. The messages for the specific target groups should be clear and unambiguous. The activities should be carried out in a logical order, so timing is imperative. When communication activities cause confusion, there is a danger that the target group may drop out and that it will not be easily accessible again for further information.

Set an example If you want your target group to change its behaviour, you or your organisation should set an example. If this is not the case, you will weaken your message. As a result of that, your target group will confront you with your behaviour instead of changing its own.

Give a feed back Show your audience the results of their efforts, for instance:

- give personal feedback to individuals, who have independently made some efforts
- present calculations that show what it means when every citizen behaves energy efficiently in his/her house. Knowing about the results of their actions is a motivation for people to continue their efforts
- give explanations and use the negative situation to turn it into a positive starting point for further action. Never lie about results.

Use intermediaries

Using intermediary organisations as a primary source of information can be very effective for various reasons:

- their credibility is sometimes higher than yours (as an agent of the local authority);
- NGOs or their intermediaries often have a lot of experience on specific items;
- making use of NGOs or other intermediaries may save you time and money.

Invest in networking and make notice to involve interesting intermediaries as early as in the initial phase, i.e. the phase of planning communication activities.

To help you when implementing your communication activities we offer you in several checklists (see annexes).

Evaluation of implementation



It is important to evaluate both the communication activities and the cooperation with partners in the course of implementation of the communication programme. Such evaluation could be made twice – one halfway through the activities and once at the end of the communication programme.

It would be best to evaluate separately internal and external cooperation. Internal cooperation refers to cooperation between the responsible municipal division and the rest of the divisions in the municipal administration. External cooperation refers to cooperation between the responsible division of the municipal administration and the external organisations (NGOs, institutes or consultancy agencies).

Evaluation could be based on a registration of complaints and questions, informal contacts with players, analysis of messages in the media, interviews (meetings or telephone calls) with colleagues, key informants, members of the target group (most intensive), panel discussions and consultations with members of the target groups, evaluation meeting with colleagues or key informants, circulation of questionnaires at the end of meetings or sending out exhaustive questionnaires to the target groups with a request to fill it in and return.

Conclusions



The implementation of the MEP requires appropriate capacity and experience, as well as public procedures and communication. Special attention should be paid to the legitimate and transparent public procurements, which procedures require specific qualification, experience and ethics of municipal officers involved.

Outsourcing a Programme Manager (PM) might be an appropriate solution for many municipalities, which could compensate the shortage of management experience and technical capacity and ensure objectiveness and reliability.

The specific responsibilities of the Municipal Energy Manager (MEM) and his/her relations with the PM (if external) should be clearly defined and endorsed by the municipal management in an official contract.

Specific responsibilities of the municipal departments with the PM and the MEM should also be clearly defined and endorsed by the municipal management.