



Capacity Building Actions

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Authors' affiliation: ESTIF

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SUMMARY

The Capacity Building Actions (CBA) organised within the FROnT project were focused on multipliers. As such, this constitute an interesting way of spreading the project results, by reaching to target groups that can have an impact in consumer’s decisions.

The target groups include policy-makers at different levels (national, regional or local); Technical staff and energy experts; Industry: manufacturing companies and manufacturing industrial organizations; Consumer and environmental NGOs at the national, regional and local level, energy agencies.

This document provides an insight into the main factors behind the preparation of such events and provides an overview of the events organised, as well as the feedback received.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the FROnT project (Fair RES-HC Option & Trade) is to promote a level playing field for Renewable Energy Sources - Heating and Cooling (RES-HC) in Europe, and develop strategies for its greater deployment.

This project, started in 2014 and was co-funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) programme, has analysed both existing support schemes and end user decision factors, addressed the levelised costs of heating and cooling, as well as information gaps and other market barriers, in order to help establish strategic policy priorities for enhancing RES-HC presence in the market.

FROnT initiative has produced diverse tools and studies which will support consumers in their decision process, industry in communicating better with consumers and policy makers to create better and efficient policies regarding RES-HC.

One of the important goals of this initiative was to reach out to consumers. Considering the limited resources available, the best way to reach a larger number of consumer would be using multiplying effects.

It is in this context that FROnT aimed at organising capacity building sessions. These were regarded as sessions addressing multipliers, those persons that would be in a position to spread information and knowledge about RES-HC.

FROnT Consortium



DEVELOPING CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIONS

Developing the concept

The Capacity Building Actions (CBAs) planned in the framework of the FROnT project were focused on enhancing project results, using multiplying effects. As such, they targeted multipliers, key actors that can have an impact on consumers' decisions regarding heating and cooling solutions.

The CBAs had to be organised at national level but used common resources developed by the project. The concept was discussed by the project partners based on previous experiences and new ideas, on how to address different target groups and how to tackle different outputs of the project. Then that national partners were in charge of planning and running those events, adapting to the local context.

Target Groups

The target groups were identified based on their capacity to produce multiplying effects, the capacity to affect change towards investment in RES-HC. This means that those groups that are able to have an impact on consumers' decisions. This can be done by changing a framework (policy level) or by being able to reaching out to consumers and affect their choices.

Four groups were identified by the FROnT partners has the most relevant to be the beneficiaries of capacity building actions:

- Policy-makers
 - Considering how decentralised the sector is; different levels of intervention are relevant, namely national, regional or local levels;
- Technical staff and energy experts
 - This is a rather broad group. It can include architects, engineers working, training and teaching about heating and cooling systems, energy consultants, ESCOs, companies involved in refurbishing and professionals and professional organizations related to the heating and cooling sector;
- RES-HC industrial sector (industry):
 - manufacturing companies and manufacturing industrial organizations
- Consumer and environmental NGOs
 - This can also be a broad group, with different activities and range. Therefore, it can consist of organisations at national, regional and local level. In the extent that they also provide advice and guidance to consumers, energy agencies can also be included in this group.
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Contents

The content of the capacity building events had to be adapted to the national needs. Using a common starting point which are the resources and information generated by the FROnT project, that are more relevant to the activity of that group.

Hence, the focus was the following:

Policy-makers: to raise awareness of politicians, at different levels, of the strategic policy priorities for the RES-HC sector in Europe and the key success factors for RES-HC integrated support schemes.

Technical staff and energy experts: raise awareness about RES-HC and to present the common methodology for estimating the value of energy supplied by RES-HC systems and the assessment of levelised costs for heating and cooling and to present and discuss the key decision factors of end-users and the tailored tools to empower them.

Industry: raise awareness of the strategic policy priorities for the RES-HC sector in Europe, the key success factors for RES-HC integrated support schemes, and to present and discuss the key decision factors of end-users.

Consumer and environmental NGOs: present and discuss key decision factors of end users and the tailored tools to empower them. Present also of the common methodology for estimating the value of energy supplied by RHC systems and the assessment of levelised costs for heating and cooling.

Resources

The resources to be used are based on the work done on the framework of the FROnT project. These resources are available online and will continue to be available after the conclusion of the project. It is important to consider the validity of the resources. It varies according to the type of content. Some may remain relevant for some months or a couple of years; others are expected to endure for much longer.

The report on support schemes or the survey on key decision factors may become outdated in the coming years. The methodology for calculating the Levelised Costs of Heating and Cooling, on the other hand, is expected to last for a long period. The online calculation tool will be useful and usable for a longer period. The calculations are still feasible based on the data inserted by the user, though its usability will benefit from the update of default and reference values used for the calculation. This update is ensured at least for a period of two years.

Typology of events

The type of events varied according to circumstances. CBAs can consist of training sessions addressing key persons, as described above: policy-makers at the national, regional, or local levels, technical staff and energy experts, industry, consumer organisations and environmental NGOs.

It should also be noted that such events shall be more than just addressing dissemination, in the sense that they need to pass on not only information but also competencies that will allow multipliers to use and transfer the information and knowledge.

The number of participants in the capacity building actions within FRONt varied depending on different factors. Still, a number around fifteen participants for a half-day session was considered a good balance in terms of quantity of participants and quality of the results.

Organising future events

It is encouraged that FRONt project partners continue organising capacity building actions after the conclusion of the project. Likewise, they should encourage other entities to also organise such actions.

The size, the duration and the content of the sessions may vary. There isn't a one size-fits-all solution. These actions need to be adapted to the goals and available conditions and resources.

Organising a specific session is a possibility but it is not necessarily the most efficient way to do it. The availability of the participants, the costs related to their participation (travel costs or time used) and with the organisation of the meeting (room rentals, catering for meals or coffee breaks, trainers' time/fees) are factors to take into consideration.

The size of the session, in terms number of participants and its duration shall also be considered. For such actions. The balance between the quantity of participants and the quality of the session is important to assess. A session with a smaller group allows for more interaction, a more practical approach, and more flexibility, adapting the message to the receivers.

Therefore, it is often easier and more cost effective to gather participants in connection with other events, instead of organising a dedicated one. For instance, it may be a session within an annual meeting of energy agencies, or an additional module on training for installers or a training session within a trade fair on construction products or heating systems.

SUMMARY OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIONS

The following table summarises the actions organised within the FRONT project.

The following keys were used:

Target groups:

- A. Policy-makers at the national, regional or local levels
- B. Technical staff and energy experts
- C. Industry: manufacturing companies and manufacturing industrial organizations
- D. Consumer and environmental NGOs at the national, regional and local level, energy agencies (management level)

Contents:

WP2: Integrated support schemes for RES-HC

WP3: Estimating RES-HC energy costs

WP4: Market facilitators

WP5: Strategic policy recommendations for RES-HC

Country	Target Group planned	Target groups reached details	Contents	Date	No. of participants
Austria	A., B., C.	Technical staff and energy experts, Policy-makers at the national, regional or local levels, industry	WP2, WP3, WP4 Other: information on heat pumps in combination with PV, storages and solar thermal energy.	14 November 2016	20
	A., B., C.	Technical staff and energy experts, Policy-makers at the national, regional or local levels, industry	WP2, WP3, WP4 Other: information on heat pumps in combination with PV, storages and solar thermal energy.	29 November 2016	20
	A., B., C.	Technical staff and energy experts, Policy-makers at the national, regional or local levels, industry	WP2, WP3, WP4 Other: information on heat pumps in combination with PV, storages and solar thermal energy.	5 December 2016	19
Netherlands	A, B, D	Acceleration group energy agreement Renewable Heating: main players in renewable H/C: Installers, NGO's, Agency, Ministry	Results FRONT project and relevance to Dutch renewable support policy. Especially WP2, WP5, WP3	25 November 2016	19
	A	Ministry, Agency	Good practices support schemes and energy policies and relevance to the Netherlands: WP2, WP5	16 January 2017	3
Poland	B, C, D	Representatives of municipality, scientific institutions, branch associations, industrial companies, banks, consumers	WP2, WP3	21 October 2016	39

Country	Target Group planned	Target groups reached details	Contents	Date	No. of participants
	A	Policy-makers at the national, regional or local levels	WP3, WP4, WP5	13 September 2016	7
	B	Technical staff and energy experts	WP3	12 April 2016	6
	C	Industry: manufacturing companies and manufacturing industrial organizations	WP3, WP4, WP5	30 March 2016	15
Portugal	D, C	Local and Regional Energy Agencies	Integrated support schemes in the country & summary of the results (WP2 -); Estimating RHC costs - Presentation and simulation of the costs tool (.WP3)	29 September 2016	12
	C	Industry	Integrated support schemes in the country & summary of the results (WP2 -); Estimating RHC costs - Presentation and simulation of the costs tool (.WP3)	20 October 2016	10
Spain	D	Local and Regional Energy Agencies	Estimating RHC costs & LCoHC tool (WP3) and End user centered tool - Key decision factors of consumers (WP4)	3 November 2016	13
	B	Technical staff and energy experts	Estimating RHC costs & LCoHC tool (WP3) and End user centered tool - Key decision factors of consumers (WP4)	16 November 2016	11
	C	Industry: manufacturing companies and manufacturing industrial organizations	Estimating RHC costs & LCoHC tool (WP3) and End user centered tool - Key decision factors of consumers (WP4)	1 December 2016	14
UK		Supply chain (webinar event)	End user tools - fact sheets & video (WP4) & cost estimation tool (WP3)	1 December 2016	21
	A, D	Housing Associations, community groups, local authorities (webinar)	End user tools - fact sheets & video (WP4) & cost estimation tool (WP3), plus wider consumer insight and policy work (WP2 & WP5)	2 December 2016	27

EVALUATION OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIONS

Overview

Until the end of 2016, sixteen capacity building actions (CBA) took place in six EU countries: Austria, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. These actions involved approximately 256 attendants from different sectors.

In general feedback from the participants regarding the FROnT project and its tools and resources were positive. The majority of the CBAs have been rated either excellent or good. The sessions covered the work done in the project with regard to Integrated support schemes for RES-HC (WP2); Estimating RES-HC energy costs (WP3); Market facilitators, including consumer surveys and consumer centered tools (WP4) and the Strategic policy recommendations for RES-HC (WP5).

In general participants were especially interested in the online cost estimation tool and expressed their interest in any future updates. They have referred that they would like to use it in their work. In several cases, it was also referred that it would be useful to have the opportunity (or more time) to use the tool during the session.

Participants also provided feedback and inputs for improvements that will be considered by the consortium at the regular updates, as part of the follow-up actions of the FROnT project.

Due to the delays in the implementation of the action, the CBAs were done at the very last stage of the project, which also affected the time available to collect additional feedback on the actions.

Finally, partners reported that it was very difficult to motivate professionals from industry, consumer organisations and planners to attend the national consultation platform and capacity building events.

Summary of evaluations at national level

Austria

39 from 59 participants provided feedback via an evaluation questionnaire, filled in on the spot after the 3 CB actions. After the evaluation of the events it was observed that the attendance was very satisfied with the events, as over 95% mentioned that the events met their expectations and all of them felt that the content was appropriate for them. 6 participants found excellent the information received, while 21 considered it good quality and 10 average while 2 did not answer. 25 participants felt that their skill have been significantly enhanced by the CB actions while 13 attendees felt that their skills improved only in an average level (1 answer was missing). Except 5 participants everybody felt that they will use the knowledge and skills gained at the meetings in their future work.

United Kingdom

11 from 48 attendees provided their feedback via an online survey after the 2 CB actions held as webmeetings. 9 were satisfied with the CB actions and their content while 1 expected different information and 1 did not answer this question. 2 attendees from 11 felt that the training was not appropriate for their level of experience as it is included complex information. The other attendees have been satisfied with the level of content. The information provided at the meetings have been rated useful in general by all participants. All the attendees are most likely will use the tool in their work according to their feedbacks. Regarding expectations attendees would have wanted to see more calculations via the tool during the webinar.

Spain

The presentation of the On-line tool to estimate the costs for the different technologies was received with great interest as it was considered to be the first online tool which shows the LCoHC and allows to compare fairly different technologies. 8 feedbacks have been received from 38 attendees. All of the participants who have answered the common online survey found the sessions useful and appropriate and will use the skills gained at the workshops in their work. Request was made to provide additional information later if further developments will be made regarding the tool.

Netherlands

According to the participants at the events, the FRONt documents, deliverables and tools are very useful as a source of information and can provide good practices in other European countries. From 22 attendees, only 3 provided written evaluation via the common online survey, all ranking the sessions with the highest values: either excellent or good. Regarding expectations attendees would have been interested to see more calculations via the tool which was not possible due to time constraints.

Portugal

The provided information was well received and according to the feedbacks installers can have a more constructive role to play and more reliable information to circulate to their customers as a result of the actions.

From the 22 participants at the 2 CB sessions 12 gave their feedback via the common online survey, all giving the highest ranking (excellent and good). Regarding expectations attendees would have wanted to see more calculations via the tool.

Poland

Participants highly evaluated the FROnT results, in particular results of survey on end-user's awareness. Participants pointed out the importance of costs calculation harmonisation and fair comparison of different fuels. It is important that FROnT gives tools and information for associations to be effectively utilised by them and via different associations the message could be addressed to end-users. Branch organisations were effective multipliers of FROnT concept and tools.

CONCLUSION

The Capacity Building Actions held in the framework of the FROnT project tried to enhance the project results, using multiplying effects. As such, they targeted multipliers, key actors that can have an impact on consumers' decisions regarding heating and cooling solutions.

These are different from dissemination activities, in the sense that they need to pass on not only information but also competencies that will allow multipliers to transfer that knowledge on.

Until the end of 2016, sixteen capacity building actions (CBA) took place in six EU countries: Austria, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. These actions involved approximately 256 attendants from different sectors.

In general feedback regarding the tools and resources provided by FROnT were positive, in particular the online cost estimation tool. In some cases, particularly regarding the tool, more time and opportunity to practice with the tool would have been welcomed.

Capacity Building Actions can be continued by partners or other entities after the end of the project. The resources available will maintain its relevance for some time and the online tool will continue to be updated for at least two years, until the end of 2018.



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