



Solution package 5:

Citizen-centred solutions

Problem-solving through citizen-centric solutions and co-creation

Session Summary

The second session of ASCEND's SP5 Community of Practice featured an online workshop focused on citizen-centric solutions and co-creation strategies that can help ASCEND cities overcome challenges in PCED implementation. Facilitated by Sebastián Oviedo from Energy Cities, the workshop provided a step-by-step approach for cities to improve existing solutions, develop concepts for new ones, and identify gaps for further implementation.

Resources

- Powering the energy transition at the district level. Architecture Workroom Brussels. 2023.

Common Challenges

- **Other priorities** concern citizens more than energy efficiency. While some of them, such as the inability to pay utility bills, are directly related to PCED measures, others are only indirectly related. This makes engagement more difficult, and reduces the motivation of citizens to participate, or even compromises the acceptance of energy measures.
- **Lack of resources** in terms of time, personnel, funding and expertise is the most common challenge. While technological aspects of PCED implementation are better funded and more thoroughly covered by the profiles of staff members, social dimensions are not.

Main Takeaways

- **Different priorities** shape citizen-centric solutions across ASCEND cities. While new additions emphasise acceptance and cohesion, interventions in existing districts require more attention to inhabitant needs. Different, tailored approaches are needed: social housing tenants, while not monolithic, have different needs and concerns than private homeowners.
- **Co-benefits of citizen-centric solutions and co-creation** need to be identified to leverage the energy interventions of PCEDs towards addressing the broader concerns, priorities and needs of local inhabitants. Since energy is perceived as a lower priority amongst citizens, their concerns need to be better understood to find potential synergies with PCED's explicit goals.

Quote

"Promoting citizen-centred action in areas with a high proportion of social housing is an additional challenge. Working on energy literacy or focusing the approach on younger audiences has proven important to reach these populations. The ASCEND cities have different target groups and have promoted different initiatives to involve the population in the development of the PCED. Sharing experiences on common (or different) challenges has allowed us to think more carefully about our approaches and learn new ways of working."

-Ana Silva, Porto Energy Agency

