

*Lessons learnt from the  
SocialWatt schemes*

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# SocialWatt

Energy companies designing and implementing  
schemes to alleviate energy poverty

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# SocialWatt in a Nutshell

SocialWatt aims to:

- ▶ Enable **utilities, energy suppliers and energy service companies** across Europe to develop, adopt, test and spread **innovative schemes to alleviate energy poverty**
- ▶ Develop **appropriate tools** for helping them identify energy poor households and work towards alleviating energy poverty
- ▶ **Build their capacity** and **promote collaboration** with social services and other stakeholders



# Examples of SocialWatt Schemes

## **Photovoltaics for social housing buildings – Naturgy in Spain**

- ▶ Installation of PV panels and smart meters in social housing buildings to reduce energy bills
- ▶ Partnership with social organisations & collaboration with suppliers/contractors

## **Helping hand - Grant competition – CEZ Vanzare in Romania**

- ▶ Grant competition to identify and finance locally inspired projects that aim to reduce energy poverty
- ▶ Partnership with local charity to design the competition

## **Portal providing information and consultancy on energy efficiency – PPC in Greece**

- ▶ Portal on energy efficiency that will support customers through an exchange of information
- ▶ Service for residential and business customers



The SocialWatt project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 845905



# Lessons learnt

## • Targeting & engaging energy poor

- ▶ **The absence of a national energy poverty definition does not have to be a barrier** – e.g. “vulnerable customers” or customers in receipt of benefits can be used as a proxy
- ▶ **There is no one perfect indicator of energy poverty** that is suitable for all countries and contexts
- ▶ **Utilities and energy companies can have a unique role in addressing energy poverty** as they have pre-existing relationships with vulnerable customers and access to granular data on actual energy consumption
- ▶ **There is a need to raise general awareness** of the importance of energy efficiency measures and the issue of energy poverty. Two-way communication can more effectively raise awareness and build knowledge on how to best achieve energy savings



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# Lessons learnt

## • Designing and delivering schemes

- ▶ **It is important to establish strong partnerships and collaborations** with key stakeholders (e.g. social services) to be able to effectively engage with energy poor households (e.g. overcome trust issues) and design appealing schemes
- ▶ **Schemes should be offered at no cost to energy poor customers**, as these tend to be more successful and have a higher uptake, given that cost continues to be a barrier for the implementation of sustainable energy interventions.
  - ▶ There is a need to build experience in using alternative financial mechanisms.
  - ▶ Energy poverty schemes should facilitate combined funding/financing
  - ▶ Different types of support offered for different levels of energy poverty/vulnerability



# Policy recommendations

- ▶ National policy and legislation should require and support the **development of more comprehensive renovation packages**
- ▶ **More stability is needed in national legislation** to facilitate the design of more efficient, and more sustainable schemes
- ▶ **Energy poverty schemes need to be prioritised** in national legislation.
- ▶ If utilities/energy companies are to have a key role in energy poverty alleviation, a **firm obligation** should be introduced.
- ▶ **Utilities/energy companies can be well placed to engage with and advise government** on energy efficiency and energy poverty alleviation



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