

## European Union Consultation

### (1) Addressing market failures

**(a) Are the barriers identified in this document the most important ones? If not, which barriers are missing and why are they important?**

According to our experience, an important barrier is the lack of urban planning about the renovation and the restoration of buildings, especially in ancient town centers where the buildings have particular architectural characteristics. It would be necessary to introduce new planning tools dedicated to the ancient part of town in order to support planners, architects and engineers to project the renovation of ancient and traditional buildings (like alpine buildings). These new urban plans for town centers should contain norms and rules to help designers to introduce a high energy efficiency quality in old buildings. To support an energy-saving renovation process also for traditional and ancient buildings, guidelines with indications about the typology of buildings, materials, technologies of constructions, features of envelopes etc. could help both the designers and the construction companies (mainly SMEs) to better address the renovation.

Moreover, in alpine villages, the property of historical and traditional buildings is extremely fragmented: this is an important matter especially when people would like to renovate their houses and flats and cannot do it without the agreement of the other owners. Municipalities should support citizens in order to reduce the fragmentation before renovation both with incentives for the property reassembly or with penalization of the lack of renovations.

Another point to discuss is the Life Cycle of every material that is necessary to improve the energy saving in buildings. Often, people choose thermal insulators without looking for information about material origin or energy consumption for the production; a sustainable choice of insulation materials has to include the whole life cycle of the good from the beginning to the end of material life. Therefore, building renovation process have to be considered actually sustainable taking into consideration every above mentioned factor.

**(b) Which market failures would be most urgent to address? At what level (i.e. EU, national/regional/local) would these failures be best addressed?**

The market failures that would be most urgent to address are the information failures, the poor quality level of training and often the lack of knowledge regarding energy efficiency issues. It would be important to study and improve new planning tools in order to help local administrations and designers to make better choices in planning buildings renovations. It would be necessary an EU intervention that could lead to guidelines for European Countries and Regions so that every country and region could follow these indications for the writing of new regulations and measures on training, information campaigns, urban planning and local sustainable development.

According to research activities carried out in AlpHouse Project, it is possible to affirm that the main market failures, that it had better to address, are the following:

- Energy prices don't embody each environmental and social cost (air pollution, greenhouse effect, impoverishment of energy and natural resources);

- The failure of information don't allow a capillary spreading of energy efficiency technologies;
- Many actors in the building sector don't have a proper background and knowledge regarding to energy efficiency topics;
- There is a lack of guidelines and rules for local energy planning to lead the renovation e restoration of town centers and abandoned built-up area both as an opportunity to preserve local culture and as a possibility to start a new virtuous circle for local economy.

These purposes should be addressed at every level and in particular:

- General guidelines could be provided with some general criteria at European level;
- At national level, every country should promulgate laws and norms in order to develop the indication provided in the European strategies paying attention to the national features;
- At local level, it should be introduced new supporting strategies for training, information campaigns and territorial planning that consider the local features (e.g in alpine regions).

**(c) How could these failures be best addressed? For example; how could behavioural change needed for quicker uptake of energy efficiency measures by society be triggered at the national level? What could be done to increase awareness raising and promotion of energy efficiency in buildings? How could the business community (e.g. building sector, ESCOs, local banks, etc.) be better supported in delivering energy efficiency in buildings?**

1. A change of behaviours and habits at a national level could be pushed through the improvement of information campaigns both with information and training events to a wide public (e.g. in collaboration with schools) and training courses for professionals, like engineers, architects and planners, on technical aspects about energy saving in order to sensitize the public regarding social and environmental costs because of wrong behaviours. In any case, each event/action should be focused on specific territory-related topics (regional approach matters);
2. fiscal incentives to support high quality renovations and restorations of buildings could support and help the promotion of energy efficiency in buildings;
3. the building sector itself, Esco companies and local banks could be supported to improve tools and methods for the activation of different kinds of incentives and funds in the matter of the renovation of historical and traditional heritage.

## **(2) Improving access to financing**

**(b) How could more private financing (both from institutional investors as well as building owners) for energy efficiency projects be mobilised? What would be the role of public funding (both at EU and national level) in this context? Is access to (project development) technical assistance an issue and how could it be provided most efficiently at the national, regional and local level? How could both national and EU financing schemes be improved to best cover all segments of the market (residential, commercial, public buildings, etc.)?**

Technical assistance for project development is certainly an important matter and it could be faced through a proper training for engineers, architects and planners especially focusing on economical evaluation of very high quality renovation projects in terms of energy saving for a better choice of proper solutions in order to get the best point on the cost-benefit curve.

### **(3) Strengthening the regulatory framework**

**(a) Is there any need for further EU-level regulation to stimulate energy efficiency investments in buildings beyond the Commission proposal for a new Energy Efficiency Directive? If so, what should these measures entail?**

It could be promulgate new regulations regarding renovation projects in alpine/mountain regions for town centres and abandoned build-up areas and energy renovation of traditional buildings improving the following points:

- Preservation and development of cultural Alpine (or mountain and rural) heritage that is represented by vernacular architecture, traditional structure, regional materials and local building technologies;
- Optimization of energy efficiency and life cycle costs in buildings and built-up areas which could be obtained through the use of current technologies and specific knowledge about local conditions and ecological aspects of construction activities;
- Restraint of urban sprawl and highest exploitation of historical and traditional building stock.

**(b) What could be specific measures to be taken at national level to implement and complement most effectively the EU-level regulatory framework for energy efficiency?**

It would be important to introduce norms for the creation of local databases that could be managed by local administrations. These databases should contain information about best practices, energy consumption of buildings, building criteria for sustainable projects and be the basis for a DSS for municipalities and citizens for the choice among different kind of renovation projects. These norms could provide tools helping engineers, architects and planners in terms of knowledge and skills about economical aspects, climate data, physical geography data of the territory.

AlpHouse Project strives to develop a common methodology to register architectural and geographical data that can be applied throughout the Alpine Space. By this instrument the diversity of the regions can be recorded in a common grid and subsequently the findings will be made transnationally accessible and applicable by the qualification and information offers of the project. AlpHouse compiles the general fundamentals of alpine architecture and energy efficiency and at the same time pays particular attention to regional specifics. This way different regions can learn from each other and benefit from concerted action, while the diversity of their architectures and educational measures is kept alive.

**(c) What are the specific needs for policy guidance and awareness raising among different stakeholder groups?**

Different actors of building sector need:

- Clearer norms at National level to invest money in building renovation;
- Reduction of bureaucracy in order to better plan the renovation of buildings and most of all regarding the presentation of plans and projects to local administrations and getting of fiscal incentives;
- More controls about planning and certification of every renovation activity;
- More fiscal incentives and tax benefits for energy efficiency activities regarding renovation of buildings;
- More information in terms of opportunities that market can give and about the value for money of energy efficiency;
- Tools that could help local and regional administrations, building owners and common people to get right information to define their targets and to take exhaustive and correct decisions;
- Necessity of coordination among national and local levels for the management of focused public funds;
- Creation of networks to support exchanges of knowledge and experiences in building renovation sector and realization of public events focused on practical topics and hands-on experiences.