

CONSULTATION PAPER

"FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN BUILDINGS"

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Consultation questions

The barriers identified by dena coincide for the most part with the barriers identified by the EU. dena would like to point out some barriers which might explain the low rate of energy efficient refurbishment of buildings.

Market failures

Lack of transparency regarding the market of energy efficiency

Even though the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is mandatory when renting, selling or leasing houses, it still doesn't have the desired effect on market transparency regarding the energy consumption of buildings.

One of the reasons is the existence of two different EPCs: the EPC based on consumption and the EPC based on calculated energy demand. The former takes the energy consumption per household into account, while the latter analyses the technical conditions of the dwelling. Most owners do not understand the differences between the two models. The different approaches of gathering data might also lead to a confusion and, even worse, to different outcomes.

The dena advocates the sole use of the EPC based on the calculated energy demand. It provides reliable data according to the technical conditions of the dwelling and therefore cannot vary depending on consumer behaviour.

Lack of profound and precise information concerning financing, cost-effectiveness and construction cycle for house owners

There are many different players on the market of energy efficiency: architects, manufactures and the different trades involved in constructing a building: every one of those with a different attitude on how to refurbish a building. This leads to different communication messages instead of precise action guidelines. dena advocates a concerted information campaign involving all actors in the process of energy efficient building and refurbishment which is jointly led by politics, economy and associations.

Insufficient training of the relevant actors in the building sector causes mistrust amongst house owners

The professional expertise of experts on energy efficiency in buildings and the combination of different professions can still be improved. There is a need for a systematical approach in regard to the process of refurbishment and building. Professional training must be focused on the state of the art techniques to guarantee the highest qualification possible for all experts.

Nationwide, there is no real legally certified profession for experts working in the field of energy efficiency in buildings. Nevertheless there is a need for a trustworthy access to qualified experts. Consumers must be able to rely on the information concerning the quality of their chosen expert.

Since 2008, dena has been offering a database with specific quality requirements.. Since 2011, a new database from KfW Bankengruppe and Bundesamt für Wirtschaft und Ausfuhrkontrolle (BAFA) operated by dena has been providing access to experts who are actively engaged in specific state programs for highly energy efficient constructions and refurbishments. Both databases are available nationwide and offer data for consumers seeking specially qualified experts.

Confusing and unstable subsidies due to various offers on different political levels (state, municipality, counties).

There are many different financial support mechanisms in Germany, from State to counties, cities and municipalities, each with different requirements on finance, energy efficiency standard and techniques and therefore adding extra uncertainty and confusion to the market. Furthermore, the subsidy is subject to political change which leads to a “wait-and-see-position” of house owners.

The system for financial support must be precise in its requirements and should be clearly structured as to provide house owners in every part of Germany a reliable understanding on how and what to invest. The system should be open for all technologies and focused on measures for reducing energy consumption in buildings.

dena recommends financial support by the state focused on three pillars: credits, grants and tax depreciation. There is a need for a continuous, reliable subsidy including a significant increase for energy efficient refurbishment to provide house owners with planning reliability.

Financial systems based on incentives mobilise private capital. This financial system must be flexible to be able to adjust to the different needs of the various dwelling and owner structures. In combination with the regulatory framework, subsidy ensures an economically worthwhile contribution to climate protection.

Highly complicated process of refurbishment and the lack of reliable outcomes discourage house owner

Although consulting services and monitoring during the refurbishment process are offered on the market, they are not well known to the broad public. Nor are they standardised. As a result, house owners are insecure and overwhelmed by the various and complex requirements and steps that need to be taken. The process of energy efficient refurbishment must be significantly easier and more reliable.

dena established a quality mark for energy efficient buildings: Efficient House Quality Mark is awarded to newly built and refurbished homes which have particularly low energy requirements. A plaque attached to the building ensures that energy-efficient houses are instantly recognisable. For this quality mark to be awarded, the building's particularly low energy requirements must be demonstrated in a quality-assured procedure developed by dena.

For potential tenants and buyers, dena's Efficient House Quality Mark provides a reliable basis when choosing an energy-saving home; the mark provides builders and refurbishers with reliable guidance. Companies which build, sell, rent or refurbish efficient houses can also advertise the fact that their houses have been awarded with the dena Efficient House Quality Mark as long as they comply with dena's inspection procedure.