

Economic Commission for Europe

Committee on Housing and Land Management

Seventy-fourth session and Ministerial Meeting

Geneva, 7 - 9 October 2013

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Review of the implementation of the programme of work 2012-2013

Thematic discussion on energy efficiency in housing

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This note provides background information on the thematic discussion on energy efficiency, based on the Case Book on “Good practices for energy efficient housing in the UNECE region”. The thematic discussion will take place on 7 October in Geneva, as part of the ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management 74th session.

The discussion will review key challenges and opportunities in energy efficiency as well as case studies from different countries. It will also explore potential activities of the Committee on Housing and Land Management to support member States in addressing these challenges.

The note includes information on the speakers and guiding questions for the discussion following the presentations.

The Committee is invited to discuss issues related to the realization of energy-efficient housing and make recommendations for future activities in this programme area.

I. Background

1. In the ECE region, buildings are responsible for over 30 per cent of the total final energy consumption. Much of this energy is used by the residential sector. The problem affects both developed countries and ones with economies in transition. Being a high consumer of energy, the residential sector also provides a good opportunity for savings. If modern technologies are applied, they can reduce the energy consumption of buildings by between 30% and 50% without greatly increasing investment costs.
2. To achieve these targets, countries need to undertake a series of legislative reforms. They also need to set up mechanisms for financing energy efficiency in the housing sector, particularly with regard to retrofitting the housing blocks. In addition, policies need to be in place to promote the establishment of management systems for multi-family apartment blocks.
3. The draft Case Book on “Good practices for Energy-efficient housing in the UNECE region” shows that countries in the UNECE subregions are often at different stages with regard to developing and implementing policies and programmes on energy efficiency:
 - (a) Western European countries have developed a comprehensive regulatory system on energy efficiency.
 - (b) Member States that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 started on energy-efficiency issues later than Western European countries. They therefore have less developed national legislation and fewer initiatives promoting the modernization of multi-family apartment blocks or the construction of energy-efficient houses.
 - (c) Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia mostly focus on implementing pilot projects but are unable to establish nationwide programmes.
4. Enhancing energy efficiency in housing is a prerequisite to fulfilling national and international commitments aimed at resolving many of today’s problems climate change, energy security, economic development and poverty.

II. Energy efficiency in the housing sector addressed at Global, regional and national levels

5. The results of a survey of challenges and priorities in housing and land management (ECE/HBP/2013/2)¹ conducted among ECE member States showed that *inefficient use of energy in the housing* sector ranked first out of 27 potential challenges across the ECE region. Respondents also considered this topic together with the topic of *maintenance, management and refurbishment of the housing stock* as the two first priorities to be addressed by the Committee. Therefore, energy efficiency in housing and management and refurbishment of the housing stock, are included as objectives and targets in the draft

¹ Available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=32586>

strategy for sustainable housing and land management in the ECE region for the period 2014-2020 (ECE/HBP/2013/3)².

6. A number of initiatives and programmes on energy efficiency exist at Global and regional levels. Energy efficiency is one of the three objectives of the UN Secretary-General global initiative on Sustainable Energy for All.
7. The Europe 2020 strategy provide some key benchmarks targets of 20% greenhouse gas emission reduction, 20% renewable energy sources, and 20% improvement in energy efficiency.
8. The UNECE report *Green Homes: Towards Energy-efficient Housing in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Region*³ recognizes that enhancing energy efficiency in housing is a prerequisite to fulfilling national and international commitments aimed at resolving many of today's problems: climate change; energy security; economic development; and poverty.
9. The UNECE *Action Plan for Energy-Efficient Housing in the UNECE Region*⁴, provides a framework for the member States of the region to raise energy efficiency in the housing sector. Through a range of measures aimed at removing barriers to energy, it provides an excellent tool for developing national action plans for energy efficiency.
10. The *National Action Plan of Montenegro for Energy Efficiency Measures in the Residential Sector*⁵ is the first spin-off of the UNECE Action Plan, followed by that of Georgia, which is under preparation.
11. The Case Book on *Good Practices for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE region* is another milestone in the Committee's work on energy efficiency. Using practical examples from countries across the UNECE region, it illustrates what has worked, where and why. It provides Governments and stakeholders with hands-on ideas and guide them in creating the framework for improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock. It also provides an excellent background for preparing workshops, training courses for capacity-building and national action plans.

III. Thematic discussion

12. To address the priority challenge of the member States on energy efficiency in the residential sector, a thematic discussion will be held during the seventy-fourth session of the Committee. The aim of the thematic discussion is to review key challenges and opportunities in energy efficiency and case studies from different countries, as well as to elaborate recommendations for Committee actions starting in 2014.
13. Two keynote speakers will present the publication and highlight the principal challenges and opportunities to increase energy efficiency in multi-family apartment blocks in transition countries, as well as ways to address them.
14. The following speakers have been invited:

- (a) Sergey Sivaev – Member of the Executive Board, Director of the Municipal Economy Department, The Institute for Urban Economics.

² Available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=32586>

³ Available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=30772>

⁴ Available at http://www.unece.org/hlm/publications_recent1.html

⁵ Available at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=29427>

Sivaev is the principal author of the Case Book “Good practices for Energy-efficient housing in the UNECE region”. He will present an overview of the chapters of the Case Book, as well as the main messages and lessons learned for countries with economies in transition of East and South-East Europe, Central Asia and Caucasus.

- (b) Mr. Marc Lutz – Financial Expert, Inogate.

Mr. Lutz will present the activities of ESIB on energy efficiency in the housing sector, with a focus on financing for housing associations and condominiums.

- (c) (Back-up) Ms. Elena Szolgayová – Director of the Department of Housing Policy and Urban Development, Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of Slovakia.

Ms. Szolgayová, will present her experience in energy efficiency in the housing sector and in retrofitting multi-family apartment blocks. She will present the challenges of the main steps from legal reforms to project implementation, and the Government’s policies and action to address them.

IV. Questions for discussion

15. After the presentations, the Committee is invited to discuss this matter and to address the following questions:

- (a) Which are your country’s major challenges for developing an energy-efficient housing sector?
- (b) Which steps has your government undertaken to address those challenges?
- (c) How could the Committee support member States in addressing those challenges?

V. Expected outcome

16. The Committee may take into account developing a set of recommendations for future activities to address the challenges of energy efficiency in housing and refurbishment of the housing stock, resulting from the discussions. Such activities, may include: developing national action plans; training and capacity building and organising seminars and workshops for exchanging experience and information on best practices.

17. It is also expected that Member States declare their contribution for the implementation of such activities, especially for countries with economy in transition.

Further reading

UNECE (2012): *Green Homes: towards energy efficient housing in the UNECE region* (ECE/HBP/159/Rev.1), available online at:
www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/green.homes.rev1.eng.pdf; [last accessed on 19 June 2013]

- UNECE (2012): *National Action Plan of Montenegro for Energy Efficiency Measures in the Residential Sector*, available online at:
www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/Publications/ee.ap.montenegro.pdf; [last accessed on 19 June 2013]
- UNECE (2010): *Action Plan for Energy-efficient Housing in the UNECE Region* (ECE/HBP/164), available online at: www.unece.org/hlm/publications_recent1.html; [last accessed on 19 June 2013]
- UNECE (2009): “Report of the first workshop on energy efficiency in housing” (ECE/HBP/2009/6) , available online at:
www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/documents/2009/ece.hbp.2009.6.e.pdf [last accessed on 19 June 2013]