

BEHAVE

The average individual European citizen has little influence on the source and the application of the daily energy demand, and the impact of human behaviour is generally not very present in debates on energy policy issues. But without the understanding and co-operation of the public, all attempts for large-scale changes towards more CO₂-friendly energy routines are likely to fail. Suppose the public starts to believe that a smart meter will invade their privacy: a potentially useful tool to enhance efficiency is then left with very little chance to survive in the open market. Energy policy-makers should take the public interests much more into account as they have done so far.

It is not that the European population – if there is such a thing – needs motivation to change energy routines. Prices have gone up, effects of climate change are no longer debated, and even supply is no longer always a certainty. The demand is there for efficient appliances and renewable applications. The challenges today are far more adequate information, availability of products, and effective financial impulses. Policies that address any one of these factors are very likely to be successful. These are some conclusions that one could draw from the recently concluded IEE BEHAVE project.

Policy-makers concerned with energy behaviour

Policies relating to aspects of behaviour derive from a spectrum of motivations, from a need to raise citizens' awareness and understanding of the need for concern about energy in society – important in gaining acceptance of other major policy measures that may be unpopular or controversial – to a desire to win indi-

viduals' commitment to the idea that they have a role to play in reducing energy demand, and to a recognition that individuals' habitual and/or investment behaviour is itself an essential component in reducing consumption patterns.

The BEHAVE project is related to the last category.

Programmes to implement these policies will only be successful if they are well planned, well focused, and built on the collective experience of earlier programmes, as well as on scientific insights into behavioural change interventions. Policy-makers and programme managers need to enhance their understanding on how to enable citizens to change towards a more energy-friendly behaviour. Within BEHAVE, a series of guidelines¹ were developed as an attempt to meet this need, but more work needs to be done. One suggestion is to establish a virtual knowledge centre on energy behaviour change, so this learning will become more effective.

BEHAVE: evaluation of behaviour change programmes

The BEHAVE project aimed to enhance the performance of behavioural change programmes and projects in the household sector by adopting a scientific approach to the evaluation of a wide range of recent programmes, and by developing an effective model for designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes, for use by policy-makers, programme designers/managers, and consumer organisations. The main steps in the project included: development of a framework for the comparison and evaluation; selection and evaluation of recent programmes and projects; development of recommendations


Intelligent, pan-European efforts to enable energy related behaviour change...

and guidelines, including independent evaluation of these guidelines; and dissemination of the results and training of policy-makers and programme managers.

The evaluation covered 41 cases in total, gathered in as many countries as possible, selected out of an inventory of 100 examples of various types of behaviour programmes, such as education, mass media campaigns, feedback, personal advice, community network approaches and innovative use of ICT tools. BEHAVE tried to make theoretical insights explicit and facilitate learning from experiences.

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¹ Guidelines for Development of Behaviour Change Programmes: downloadable at www.energy-behave.net



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