

**SOCIAL**  
**INNOVATION**  
**TO TACKLE FUEL POVERTY**



## Feedback and analysis

## European call for projects

## Social innovation to tackle fuel poverty

2015, December 4th



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# Introduction

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## *Fuel poverty in Europe*

### *At least 13% of European households*

According to the Observatoire français des conjonctures économiques (OFCE), or French Economic Observatory<sup>1</sup>, the quantitative method used by the European Commission in 2010 put the number of individuals in fuel poverty at an estimated 65 million, i.e. **13% of households in the European Union**. These households spend a considerable amount of their income on energy, at around double the average of the country in which they live.

These figures vary according to the study, as **there is no standard definition of fuel poverty among Member States**.

### *No standard definition among Member States*

There are three different criteria for defining fuel poverty in the European Union:

- i) **Economic:** the portion of household income devoted to energy, including heating and household appliances and, in some cases, for rural areas, travel expenses.
- ii) **Standard of living:** feeling exposed to the cold and the consequences of fuel poverty, including its health effects.
- iii) **Administrative:** eligibility for financial assistance or support schemes based on socioprofessional criteria.

By way of an example, the United Kingdom currently has the most precise definition: it encompasses the fuel efficiency of the house, fuels costs and household income.

In France, the Grenelle Act provides the following definition: a person living in fuel poverty “encounters, in their home, particular difficulties in obtaining the energy required to meet their basic energy needs due to insufficient resources or housing conditions”.

In Italy, a precise definition does not yet exist. In Belgium, the defining elements are descriptive (the receipt of financial assistance or a disability level). They do not include the concepts of global income or energy effort according to law. The King Badouin Foundation, which publishes a fuel poverty barometer, supplements this definition with a measure of three levels of fuel poverty: measured, hidden, perceived.

### *The lack of a definition makes targeting more difficult*

Various countries are attempting to *segment the populations [sic] living in fuel poverty* more precisely, based on socioprofessional categories and/or housing types, in order to target them more efficiently. Although situations and trends have been identified statistically, concrete actions in

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<sup>1</sup> POUR UNE JUSTICE ENVIRONNEMENTALE EUROPÉENNE, LE CAS DE LA PRÉCARITÉ ÉNERGÉTIQUE [THE CASE OF FUEL POVERTY FOR EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE]  
OFCE Review/Debates and Policies - 120 (2011)

relation to the people concerned are harder to implement and there are two difficulties: accurate identification of those affected and the stigmatisation this categorisation may cause.

### *A growing affected population*

Despite the fall and/or stabilisation in wholesale market prices, domestic energy costs continue to rise, which reinforces the problem of fuel poverty. In fact, individuals' energy bills not only include the energy purchase price, but also transport and distribution costs, a contribution to the development of renewable energies, social welfare and other taxes. The latter have increased, thereby masking the fall in wholesale prices. Faced with this increase, States have developed two responses:

- the deployment of measures to reduce consumption volumes, by choosing to invest in active and passive energy efficiency solutions;
- financial assistance, including innovative methods for paying bills such as concessionary tariffs, energy vouchers, etc.

However, these latest initiatives have already reached their limits: they are curative rather than preventive, and do not help to solve the problem in the long term.

### *Working to put social innovation at the service of fuel poverty*

Given the scale of this problem, **Schneider Electric, via its foundation, and Ashoka, have decided to launch a major call for projects aimed at encouraging action and identifying innovative projects for dealing with the issue of fuel poverty.** By targeting social entrepreneurs and focusing on high-impact projects, it is a question of providing concrete solutions to curb fuel poverty.

Schneider Electric is the global specialist in energy management and automation. Its foundation, **the Schneider Electric Foundation**, created in 1998, under the aegis of the Fondation de France, has one mission: to reduce the world's energy gap. Whether in new or mature economies, Schneider Electric and its foundation identify and implement an ecosystem adapted to the specific context, which combines business and philanthropy, with non-profit, public and private partners.

> In emerging economies since 2009, via an energy access programme

> In mature economies, principally in Europe, a programme to fight fuel poverty has been launched

This European call for projects complements this initiative to address the issues of the energy gap within European countries in a different, operational way.

**Ashoka**, the largest network of social entrepreneurs worldwide with 3,000 members, develops initiatives and partnerships to promote the social entrepreneurship sector. These actions are intended to feed the citizen-based, solidarity economy and build bridges between various economic sectors in order to support structural changes in relation to different social issues. A member, or "Fellow", plays a role beyond their initiative or sector, since they are the link in an ecosystem that aims to support structural changes in society. These "Fellows" act as sentinels for new economic models, and witness the emergence of collaborative models at the heart of profound changes in the economy and society.

**This project, which sits at the meeting point between expertise in the energy management and automation sector and social entrepreneurship, can provide concrete and original solutions to the issue of fuel poverty in Europe.**

### ***Conduct of the procedure and call for projects***

A meeting to launch the procedure took place on 6 July 2015. It brought together 25 people from the world of social entrepreneurship or with “field experience” of fuel poverty in the six participating countries: Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom.

The day was an opportunity to establish a primary map of the initiatives and reflect on the categories of the call for projects. These reflections continued over the summer with around fifteen additional interviews being conducted in the six regions.

This active listening at European level made it possible to identify the correspondents and categories of the call for projects, which took place based on the following schedule:

Call for projects from 1 September to 30 October 2015

Selection procedure: November 2015

**The winners are officially announced during the COP21, on 4 December 2015, at Place to B**

These winners will then begin a development phase from February to June 2016 with active mentoring sessions put in place by Ashoka in home countries and as a group. These sessions are intended to develop projects, trim or reinforce a business model and support a deployment strategy on a larger scale. The Schneider Electric Foundation, via the Schneider Electric Teachers Association, will make the expertise of voluntary collaborators available according to individual projects' needs.



An event marks the end of this phase in June 2016.

# Part I: Overview of initiatives in the six European countries

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Before the call for projects, **the main social entrepreneurship trends related to fuel poverty were mapped** to identify existing approaches, compare initiatives between countries and understand the dynamics and expectations in fuel poverty.

75 initiatives came to light in the six participating countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom).

This mapping provided five major lessons about fuel poverty.

## *The importance of correspondents*

Initially, the identification of initiatives through conventional documentary approaches was not conclusive... The support of correspondents from the Ashoka network was therefore vital in defining trends and identifying outstanding actions. These correspondents made it possible to identify initial contacts in each country and then make use of these initial contacts' networks to complete the overview.

The correspondents are themselves social entrepreneurs or people working in public agencies or associations involved in the issue of fuel poverty, poverty or energy. They are on standby to create synergies between the different actions on the ground and promote the handover between the upstream detection of households to be targeted and the implementation of actions among those households. They also play a pivotal role in unifying the launch of collective projects, particularly in relation to calls for projects or European funding.

**Mapping therefore confirmed the importance of the concept of local networks and the importance of their European coverage** in identifying country initiatives, and above all, giving them a European dimension.

## *Interpenetration with public agencies*

Public agencies are an almost indispensable underlying factor in the development of entrepreneurial initiatives.

**In three countries - Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom - the existence of former public policies** with visible strategies addressing the issue of fuel poverty **have clearly fostered the maturity**

**of local actors and the development** of opportunities that favour the emergence of social entrepreneurship on the issue.

During mapping, the most initiatives were identified in those countries. Those countries also had the highest number of entrepreneurial projects relating to awareness raising and education. From the point of view of local actors, as soon as the issue of education is covered by a certain number of initiatives, this constitutes an asset for developing other areas. This migration towards other areas can be seen in the responses to the call for projects. For example, Belgium and Great Britain are beginning to focus on the topic by looking beyond energy to identify synergies with related sectors that are affected, such as health, thereby opening the field to new project opportunities.

**The situation is different in the other countries.**

**Italy addresses the broader issue of energy efficiency, without specifically targeting low-income households.** Households experiencing fuel poverty are part of the households to be addressed, in the same way as other targets. Furthermore, there are many initiatives aimed at increasing energy efficiency, including education efforts in particular, but they are less targeted on a specific population. As a result, the correspondents highlight the need to raise awareness about fuel poverty among the public authorities.

**In the Czech Republic and Poland,** the situation is different again, and is not entirely comparable between the two countries. There, the fuel poverty debate is diluted by the bigger problem of **energy self-sufficiency**. The reliance of these two countries on fossil fuels and the increasing price of access to energy, regardless of the target population, provides an incentive to develop initiatives, which vary according to the country.

In Poland, for people on a low-income and the rest of the population, the priority of local initiatives is the decentralised generation of renewable energy, which often takes the form of community-based auto-generation approaches.

In the Czech Republic, the initiatives are much further upstream, and are focused on awareness raising.

### *Six fields of action identified from differences between countries*

The differences between countries had two main explanatory factors:

- **the degree of maturity of the public authorities** on the issue of fuel poverty (whether or not there were existing policies targeting this population);
- **the local energy situation:** energy self-sufficiency, condition of buildings, etc.

Nevertheless, despite these differences, six common fields of action falling under social entrepreneurship were identified:

- 1) **SYNERGIES** the development of SYNERGIES with healthcare systems and health insurers, or SYNERGIES with other sectors in the industry
- 2) **NEW FUNDING MODELS:** the provision of resources and partnerships within the context of private high-energy efficiency building or appliance construction/renovation initiatives (such as loans, equipment rental, third party funder, and guarantees, for example)

- 3) **TARGETING**: the collection or sharing of DATA in order to improve the identification of populations experiencing fuel poverty and their needs, or AWARENESS RAISING among the public authorities
- 4) **ENERGY EFFICIENCY** the adoption of more efficient SOLUTIONS (such as decentralised generation solutions, for example)  
The sub-category « Community Engagement » refers to a collective way of actions, especially in the production of renewable energies (Poland) and education (the United Kingdom).
- 5) **EDUCATION**: the category comprising initiatives that reinforce collective involvement
- 6) **SKILLS AND JOB DEVELOPMENT**: the creation of new skills and jobs in relation to energy efficiency or renewable energies

These categories are not necessarily disconnected and projects often fit into several categories.

The main trends referred to above were mapped according to these categories for each country.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	SYNERGIES	INNOVATIVE FUNDING	IDENTIFICATION	ENERGY EFFICIENCY (COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)	EDUCATION	SKILLS and JOB development
<b>Belgium</b> 	+	++	-	+ ((+))	+	-
<b>France</b> 	-	++	++	+ (-)	++	+
<b>United Kingdom</b> 	+	--	-	+ (+)	++	+
<b>Italy</b> 	--	+	++	+ (--)	+↗	--
<b>Czech Republic</b> 	--	--	--	+ (--)	+↗	--
<b>Poland</b> 	-	-	-	+ ((+))	-	--

The table shows the trends in terms of initiatives observed in Europe and by country in the field of fuel poverty, based on interviewees and documentary research. It shows the strength of the trends in each country: ++ (high), + (medium), - (weak) et -- (no trend).



### Putting the six countries' needs in relation to these six categories in perspective

As indicated, the six countries showed different degrees of maturity regarding fuel poverty, which was primarily correlated with whether or not there was a public policy targeting and providing support against fuel poverty and its length of existence. Furthermore, the energy situation in certain European countries has meant that energy self-sufficiency is the priority issue, rather than the fuel

poverty experienced by some target populations, even if these populations already represent more than one in eight people.

These differences in context and maturity create different initiative requirements in each country: on one hand the “needs expressed” (▲) by the country correspondents, and on the other hand the “needs estimated” (△) based on analysis of the interviews conducted by Ylios. For this second category, it is a question of identifying the country's needs based on an analysis of its needs, its maturity and the progress of the other countries.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	SYNERGIES	INNOVATIVE FUNDING	IDENTIFICATION	ENERGY EFFICIENCY	EDUCATION	SKILLS and JOB development
Belgium 		▲				
France 	△	▲				
United Kingdom 	▲		▲	▲		
Italy 					▲	▲
Czech Republic 		▲			△	
Poland 				▲	△	

*ylios*

Belgium and France express innovative funding needs: they rightly make this the key to the sustainability of economically viable projects and the solidity of fuel poverty initiatives.

France expresses little or no need in relation to projects that capitalise on synergies between actors. One would have thought that the many field actors in fuel poverty and the many existing health correspondents would have developed their synergies and enhanced their economic value, such as the United Kingdom is attempting to do. This avenue, which has hardly been explored in France, is in contrast highly rated in the United Kingdom, despite the fact that the latter seems to have less actors on the ground than France.

The United Kingdom is acutely aware of the potential of synergies with several related sectors, including health in particular. It is considering initiatives that would enable these synergies to be developed through the improved targeting of low-income populations and the collection of information making it easier to identify and support them. At another level, the United Kingdom is committed to renewing its building stock and is seeking innovative energy efficiency solutions.

Italy defines its priorities as education and skill building/development. The correspondents clearly identify the fact for fuel poverty, the challenge lies in raising awareness about the issue, so as to make a distinction between it and the broader issue of energy efficiency.

As regards Poland, the correspondents highlight the requirements in terms of community-based models, which straddle the line between specific resource pooling models (resembling *innovative funding*) and models to develop decentralised generation. These initiatives would target fuel poverty opportunistically within the context of the call for projects, but address decentralised generation in an area more broadly. In addition, given the low levels of awareness about fuel poverty, it seems important to develop awareness raising/information initiatives.

The challenge is the same for the Czech Republic on this last point. The correspondents are not very aware of the issues to be raised/highlighted regarding fuel poverty and awareness raising initiatives seem to be an underlying need. The correspondents express innovative funding needs.

**In summary and cross-divisionally:**

- **awareness raising initiatives:** their deployment is very advanced in the more mature countries (France, the United Kingdom and Belgium). There are ongoing needs in the other countries, whether these are consciously expressed (Italy) or underlying (Czech Republic and Poland).
- **creative funding initiative need:** these are strongly expressed regardless of the maturity level of the country: France, Belgium and the Czech Republic. The United Kingdom expresses less need in this respect: In effect, limited public aid has obliged entrepreneurs to intrinsically focus their efforts on making their economic model stable and viable, outside of public aid.
- **initiatives based on synergies with related sectors:** these are eagerly anticipated in the United Kingdom and are the result of the view as characterised in France.
- **energy efficiency initiatives** are not anticipated in themselves. They are anticipated within the context of innovative financial approaches and within the context of awareness raising activities. Only the United Kingdom highlights these kinds of requirements, justifying them by the nature of its building stock, which needs innovations.

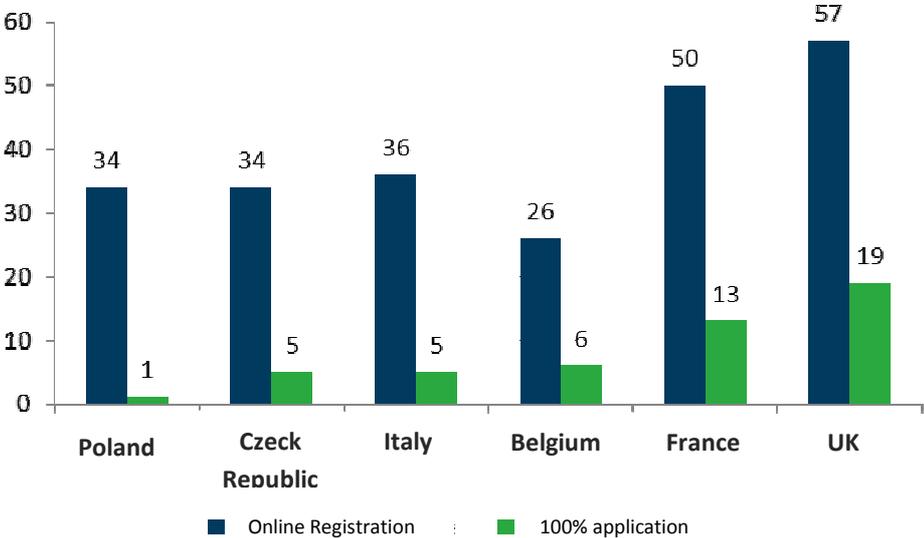
We are now going to compare the overview and the needs with the results of the call for projects

# Part 2: Contributions to the call for projects

## *Assessment of countries' responses and contributions the impact of the countries' maturity on the type of applications submitted and approved*

Over a two-month period, 237 applications were created on the platform, and 49 applications were completed.

These two figures show the considerable response to the issue, despite differences between countries.



In two months, the United Kingdom and France respectively submitted 19 and 13 complete applications, all within the precise scope of the call for projects.

Belgium submitted fewer applications (6), but they were very complete and original. According to the correspondents, the relatively weak response can be explained by the fact that Ashoka had already organised a call for projects on the issue less than 18 months previously.

The results for the other countries may reflect lower level of maturity on the issue of fuel poverty, which takes second place to housing/energy efficiency issues (Italy) and energy self-sufficiency issues (Czech Republic and Poland).

The previous paragraph already shows the impact of the country's maturity on the number of applications. This also affects the type of project submitted.

### Breakdown of the 49 completed applications compared with the needs mapping

“needs expressed” (▲) by the country correspondents, “estimated needs” (△) - Ylios analysis

	SYNERGIES	INNOVATIVE FUNDING	IDENTIFICATION	ENERGY EFFICIENCY (COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)	EDUCATION	SKILLS and JOB development	OTHERS
Belgium 	1	▲ 3		1			1
France 	△ 1	▲ 3	1		2	5	2
United Kingdom 	▲ 3	1	▲ 1	▲ 9	4	1	
Italy 	1			1	▲ 1	▲ 2	1
Czech Republic 		▲ 1		5	△ 1		
Poland 	1			▲ 1	△ 1		

*ylios*

The expectations expressed by the correspondents before the call for projects were:

- largely **in line with** the type of applications received (type of responses ticked by the project leader) for **the United Kingdom, Belgium and France**.  
For France, in addition to the applications in the expected category (innovative funding), the jobs/skills category received many unexpected applications (but these were not strong enough to be successful).
- **in line with some of Italy's needs**: 2/5<sup>ths</sup> of applications in one of the expected categories (jobs/skills), but no applications in the education category, which was also expected.
- **at odds with the vision of the needs and the market for Poland and the Czech Republic**: the correspondents expressed needs that the market is clearly not mature enough to provide in relation to fuel poverty. Thorough analysis of these applications showed, above all, most of the applications were “outside the scope” as they targeted access to alternative energies for the entire population rather than fuel poverty.

We are now going to analyse the successful applications: For these applications, the categories were reclassified after analysing the application’s content.

### Breakdown of the 14 winners (after category reclassification) compared with the needs mapping

“needs expressed” (▲) by the country correspondents, “estimated needs” (△) - Ylios analysis

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	SYNERGIES	INNOVATIVE FUNDING	IDENTIFICATION	ENERGY EFFICIENCY	EDUCATION	SKILLS and JOB development
Belgium 		▲ 2				
France 	△ 2	▲ 1	1	1		
United Kingdom 	▲ 1		▲ 1	▲ 2		
Italy 				1	▲	▲
Czech Republic 		▲			△	1
Poland 				▲	△	1

*ylios*

In the **Czech Republic and Poland**, the final judging panel ultimately selected just one successful application per country (from five and two applications shortlisted by the local judging panel respectively). The two winners have comparable project profiles: they are **lobbying initiatives to enhance the visibility of fuel poverty**.

In Poland, the initiative involves ensuring that an awareness raising/lobbying activity aimed at building professionals is structured to support recognition of the issue of fuel poverty in buildings.

In the successful Czech application, the initiative was proposed by a federation of professional building and construction organisations. Its aim is to prepare and influence regulatory deadlines to promote the renovation of social housing by incorporating energy efficiency requirements.

In **Italy**, two winning projects were selected by the local judging panel (out of five applications), and one project was ultimately selected by the European judging panel. It should be noted that the unsuccessful applications were too far off topic from the strict subject of fuel poverty: the less mature situation surrounding the topic in the country, identified during the initial overview, translated into the low number of projects targeting the issue of fuel poverty. The successful project involves **promoting the circular economy in a loop of local energy generation** employing workers living in fuel poverty. Originally, this project did not specifically target households experiencing fuel poverty as users of the energy generated either. The judging panel decided to select the initiative, subject to the entrepreneur targeting the abovementioned population as a pilot.

In **Belgium**, two of the five initiatives shortlisted by the local judging panel were selected by the European judging panel. Both of them related to initiatives on **innovative funding**: in one case,

the initiative involves increasing the amount of energy savings as security for a loan financing energy efficiency solutions on buildings. In the other case, it involves securing funding for low-consumption electrical equipment, always with the logic of a repayable advance based on savings made making it possible to secure and guarantee funding.

In France and the United Kingdom, the initiatives are more diverse and in line with the expressed needs.

In **France**, there were five successful initiatives, which responded to the needs expressed in the initial overview: **innovative funding approaches and two original approaches focusing on synergies** between the different actors, from targeting to supporting households experiencing fuel poverty. There is also a project focused on collecting data and targeting households and a community-based approach with Compagnons Bâisseurs.

In the **United Kingdom**, there was at least one winner for each of the needs expressed in relation to “data gathering”, “synergies” and “energy efficiency”. In addition, two energy efficiency initiatives that propose community-based models were successful.

**In Belgium, France and the United Kingdom, the projects are in line with the identified needs and enrich them with novel approaches, not necessarily anticipated by the correspondents.**

**In Poland and the Czech Republic, the needs covered by the winners are still further upstream than the expressed needs, with lobbying actions aimed at enhancing the visibility of fuel poverty.**

### ***Synergies on the ground: new area and actor networking perspectives***

On the subject of fuel poverty, the correspondents in the most mature countries (the United Kingdom and France in particular) wished to prioritise the development of synergies to make the measures on the ground more efficient.

For the United Kingdom, synergies should be made with related sectors, such as the health sector, which is gradually becoming aware of the impact of fuel poverty, as a priority.

This is the exact challenge for the winner SHINE: it is a network that detects people living in fuel poverty, which is capable of warning about health issues (Great Britain is highly sensitive to winter deaths caused by the cold) as well as social or energy issues, and putting vulnerable individuals in contact with the appropriate people from each of the support services concerned.

This initiative will enable possible synergies between the two sectors to be demonstrated on the ground, and will provide concrete feedback about fuel poverty through the prism of health.

For France, the need for synergies was identified in relation to the diversity and number of actors. Two initiatives were selected from among the candidates to increase synergies between actors in every link of the chain, from targeting to supporting households. The Ecohabitat and Camel initiatives propose introducing a single point of contact to undertake a renovation project. The first, which relies on the Caritas network, integrates the detection of modest-income households very far upstream and then advances in the value chain to proposing the sourcing of biomaterials. The second demonstrates greater interpenetration with the private sector. The two initiatives might also

complement one another through mentoring which would make it possible to aim to open them up even further.

**These initiatives, which aim to open up the topic of fuel poverty, are highly anticipated: they will enable an economic model to be built based on avoided costs.**

### ***Concrete solutions to improve identification and targeting are made sustainable through the online provision of dedicated software***

The preceding initiatives incorporate targeting as one of the links in the value chain, using a presence on the ground (such as Caritas for detection, for example). In addition, two initiatives propose the development of software to better estimate needs alongside the presence on the ground.

In France, the SLIME initiative, supported by the CLER network, aims to detect households in everyday places and networks, and deploy software to estimate consumption, which can make actions to target fuel poverty sustainable.

In the United Kingdom, the SHS (*Sustainable Homes Survey*) initiative develops a methodology and a tool for identifying and assessing households experiencing fuel poverty. This software tool will soon be accessible online.

**Therefore, within a global approach, the winners also propose IT tools to better identify households.**

### ***The emergence of the concept of community translates into projects***

Five of the 14 winners propose an original approach to the concept of community in their project:

- Plymouth Community, United Kingdom: cooperative model to pool purchases and usage,
- Energy Local, United Kingdom: pooling of decentralised energy generation and pooling of consumption to organise withdrawal at the level of the collective implemented, and thereby generate income,
- Citta Verde, Italy: circular economy with a short decentralised energy generation loop
- SLIME, France: correspondents acting to raise awareness about fuel poverty in everyday social networks, and at work, in regular leisure activities, etc.
- SOLIBAT, France: collaborative platform for the donation of items and donations in kind (expertise, rehabilitation, etc.) to promote housing renovation.

These original “collective” saving approaches organised around energy issues are relevant for exploring participatory models, with a key issue around increasing the reliability of their business model: do avoided costs, “best buy” and “buying together” stabilise autonomous business models over time?

The fact that there are five initiatives spread over three different countries enables the strength of the models to be studied in different public support contexts. In particular, the UK context with the

evolution of its feed-in tariffs will impose the need to find a new economic equation that is less reliant on public money.

The Italian example will make it possible to further develop short loop models of local energy generation.

**The challenge lies in increasing the reliability of these initiatives over time and studying the extent to which and under what conditions they can be adapted to other places.**

### ***The call for projects offers a real life experimentation area for innovative funding models***

Many innovative funding models were identified in the winning initiatives, some of which underlie the approaches, especially for the community-based approaches, while others represent an innovation in itself.

#### **Cooperative models**

The abovementioned community-based approaches make use of cooperative savings models: collective approach to purchases, pooling of resources, development of know-how, especially for renovation... these are cooperative models put in place within households experiencing fuel poverty aimed at reducing the fuel bill in euros.

#### **Enhancing the value of avoided costs**

A number of avoided cost models are used in the winning initiatives. Models that enhance the value of costs avoided through technical engineering are distinguished from those that enhance them through financial engineering:

- Model enhancing the value of costs avoided **through technical engineering**: this primarily relates to the withdrawal techniques put in place in the Energy Local project in the United Kingdom.
- Model enhancing the value of costs avoided **through financial engineering**: this relates to a loan guarantee technique/system of payable advances increasing the value of avoided costs relating to renovations or the purchase of more energy efficient equipment. Both of the Belgian initiatives study this kind of mechanism.

#### **Crowdfunding**

Equity provided by individuals to invest in renewable energies or renovation is not very prevalent in the winning initiatives given that the target population is low income. However, this financing method is envisaged as one of the possible solutions in the United Kingdom.

## **“Microdonations”**

The principle behind microdonations is based on solidarity, and involves households giving a small sum via their energy bill to put towards a fund for fuel poverty. This initiative is conducted on the basis of Enercoop members (1<sup>st</sup> cooperative to generate and sell its own green energy) in France by the winner Energies Solidaires. It will be interesting to monitor the feasibility and replicability of this model across other manufacturers apart from those in the cooperative.

## ***The potential to accelerate the deployment of innovative technical solutions with social entrepreneurship is on the books.***

Four of the 14 initiatives focus on changing behaviour or networking without a specific technological tool (lobbying, networking, change in behaviour).

Two targeting initiatives incorporate the development of software to assess the needs of a household and its level of poverty.

Four other initiatives address the traditional building renovation market, without any specific technological asset or prerequisite.

Meanwhile, two initiatives focus on decentralised renewable energy generation, using conventional technology.

Technological aspects are directly featured in two main initiatives: one of the two Belgian initiatives (Samenlevingsopbouw) addresses the electrical equipment market in the form of an innovative model of repayable advances based on the savings made by more energy efficient equipment. One UK initiative enhances the withdrawal of consumers with initiatives to organise and record it, alongside renewable energy generation (Energy Local)

Even if not all the winners have incorporated technologies into their initiatives yet, they lay the foundations for deploying more technological solutions over time. By proposing the stabilisation of economic models and modes of action, they prepare the ground for the adoption of even more innovative technology in the future.

# Conclusion

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## ***A call for projects that meets the expectations of local correspondents and offers sustainable prospects for households experiencing fuel poverty***

Analysis of the overview of needs before and after the call for projects shows that the winning initiatives meet the specific needs of each country.

The winning initiatives offer the prospect of sustainable models to fight fuel poverty on a lasting basis. Renovation actions, changing the means of access to energy or changing equipment... the solutions that are designed to be financially independent in the long term go beyond a curative approach to the issue and offer models that enable households to make sustainable changes to their energy equation.

## ***Dynamics to follow in terms of replicable practices***

The call for projects leads to six months of customised mentoring for each of the 14 winning entrepreneurs in order to strengthen their *business model* and reflect on the deployment of the successful initiative on a larger scale. This approach is going to enable monitoring of the social innovations applied specifically to the context of fuel poverty in the following areas:

- the links in the value chain, from targeting to setting up projects, and the first synergies with the health sector
- tools and networks to improve targeting
- community-based models to tackle fuel poverty
- innovative funding models
- the development of a technology/social entrepreneurship.

## ***The impact of the involvement of the Schneider Electric Foundation alongside Ashoka: a novel and galvanising approach***

The involvement of the Schneider Electric Foundation and Ashoka has therefore lent real meaning to social entrepreneurship relating to the issue of fuel poverty:

- better understanding of the actual degree of maturity of the countries in the field of actions to tackle fuel poverty and mapping of the initiatives already in place
- identification of motivated entrepreneurs

- a pool of diverse initiatives, that are both adapted to the maturity of the country and that have capitalisation and sharing potential for other countries.

The following stage, comprising six months of active *mentoring*, will enable the models to be stabilised and promote the sharing of experiences between projects leaders and countries.

**In summary, this multi-stage work has made it possible:**

**- first, to establish an overview of the existing innovations in fuel poverty, and identify the needs and trends in six European countries (Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic).**

**- secondly, during a European call for projects in these six countries, to identify the actual level of response and maturity of social entrepreneurs on the issue, and select 14 projects offering new, innovative models to tackle fuel poverty.**

**Through their diverse initiatives, networking on the ground and motivation, the 14 winners are sentinels of the shift towards tackling fuel poverty. On 4 December 2015, they begin a cycle of active mentoring to increase the reliability of their model and expand their scale of intervention.**

**As of today, this work has made it possible to identify actions embodying the paradigm shift in tackling fuel poverty in the fields of funding, community organisation, networking, etc. These actions offer concrete examples facilitating a shift from the curative, and providing solutions to bring about a lasting change the energy equation of households experiencing fuel poverty.**

**The winners have shown that a new energy equation is possible on a local or national scale.**

**What follows must enable them to be supported on a larger scale and in a context of greater financial independence from public aid.**