

Addressing energy poverty at the local level: The case of multi-apartment buildings

Factsheet n° 1



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To equip stakeholders with an up-to-date overview of current knowledge and practices in energy poverty research and policy at regional and local levels, with a particular focus on multi-apartment buildings (MABs), the LOCATEE project has developed the report "[Understanding energy poverty at the local level and the role of multi-apartment buildings](#)".

This factsheet summarises key results and findings of the report, drawing directly on the insights generated through its multi-layered approach.



The role of Sustainable Energy & Climate Action Plans (SECAPs) - Enablers & Barriers



Enablers

- The **establishment of collaborative frameworks**, such as joint Sustainable Energy & Climate Action Plans (SECAPs) or joint actions through them, allows municipalities to pool their financial/ human resources. The latter can push smaller municipalities to overcome individual resource constraints by removing administrative boundaries as well as facilitating knowledge transfer with mutual cooperation.
- The **integration of SECAPs with other European Union (EU) and national policies** can provide methodologies, approaches, and strategies to meet emission reduction targets, so that local actions align with overarching EU neutrality goals.
- **Engaging stakeholders, community involvement through workshops, public consultations, and citizen-driven initiatives** are all more than essential to voice local concerns and transform them into local priorities, while also gaining public support.



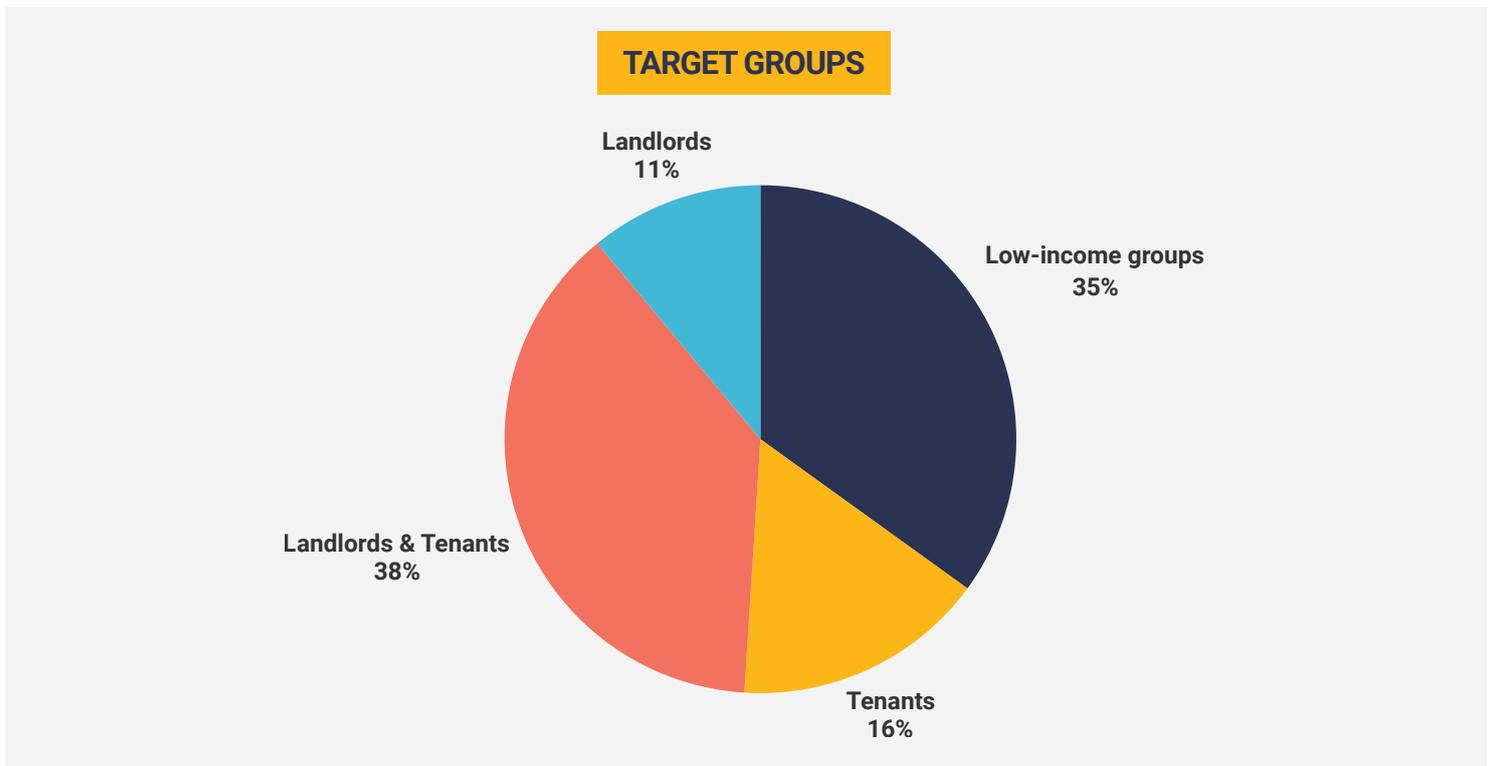
Barriers

- **Resource limitations**, particularly in smaller municipalities, with limited staff, technical expertise and funding to independently develop and execute strategies.
- **Data gaps and limited data accessibility (often due to GDPR issues) even from national registries**, along with the absence of standardised methodologies for tracking energy consumption, carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, energy poverty levels, and renovation efforts.
- **Lack of integration with other climate action strategies**. SECAPs are mostly focused on mitigation, while not focusing on adaptation-absence of the social dimension.

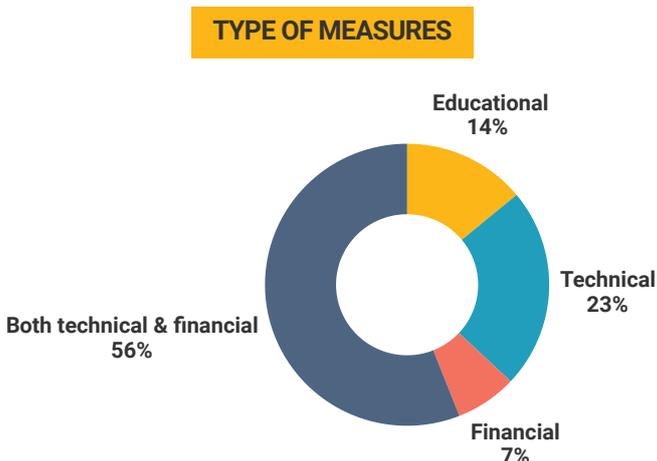
Existing policy landscape across Europe

The following figures complement the valuable insights from SECAPs with an analysis of more than **50 European policies** addressing **energy poverty** in **private multi-apartment buildings** at the **local** and **regional levels** - categorising them based on key parameters like target groups, types of measures, delivery mechanisms, implementing authorities, chronological extent, evaluation mechanisms and others.

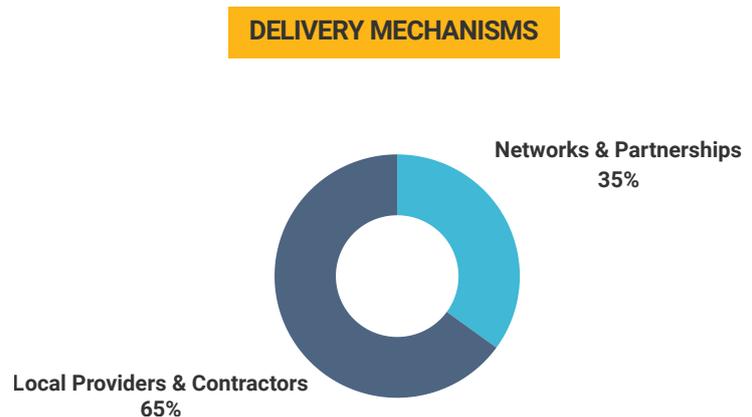
Breakdown of the analysed policies and initiatives based on the groups they target:



Categorisation of the analysed policies and initiatives based on the type of measures they include:



Categorisation of the analysed policies' and initiatives' delivery mechanisms:



Identification of barriers - a holistic angle

Barriers to addressing energy poverty in private MABs from different angles were examined, aiming for a holistic perspective. We start with barriers that affect **private MABs in general**, as these reflect structural challenges common across the housing sector. We then zoom into the **private rented sector**, a segment with a high share of MABs and unique characteristics that make barriers particularly pronounced.

Finally, we focus on barriers that **local authorities** face, whose role in addressing energy poverty is central.



Private multi-apartment buildings

- High **upfront costs**
- **Limited access to funding**
- **Hard to meet co-financing requirements** even when there are subsidies or grants
- **Consensus** among multiple actors may be required
- **Lack of specific group targeting** in ongoing policies
- Limited compliance with **energy performance standards** for private MABs
- **Lack of technological knowledge** when it comes to deep energy building retrofits
- **Some MABs are considered historical buildings** which make renovations more difficult



Private rented sector

- **Split incentives**
- **Increased rent following renovations** (which in many cases exceeds the overall energy savings)- Renovictions
- Even broader **vulnerability** in the sector/social exclusion
- **Political invisibility/ lack of energy poverty data** among tenants
- **Inadequate technical capacity** can delay or prevent implementation



Local authorities

- **Lack of available data** for identifying the most vulnerable households
- Unsupportive and **inconsistent policy setting** for especially for smaller municipalities
- Lack of robust **sub-national territorial frameworks**
- **Lack of funding** from financial institutions or national bodies
- **Insufficient integration** of policies with regional and local policymaking processes
- **Mistrust** of local citizens towards local government policies
- **Lack of access** to local marketing channels for local citizens
- Lack of dedicated agencies/**insufficient institutional capacity**
- **Shortage** of local energy efficiency workers or trusted contractors
- **Geographic isolation** in some municipalities

Energy efficiency measures in Greece, Poland, and Portugal



The EU has introduced a series of directives and strategies that provide the framework for the promotion of energy efficiency in the building sector. These provisions establish a baseline for action across Member States, but their practical impact depends on national and local adaptation.

Key elements include:

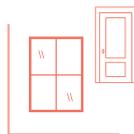
- Minimum energy performance standards for existing buildings undergoing major renovations, with requirements for improved insulation, efficient heating/cooling systems (e.g., heat pumps), and high-performance building materials. Nearly-zero energy requirements for new buildings, relying largely on renewable energy sources.
- Long-term renovation strategies, to decarbonise the building stock by 2050 while prioritising vulnerable households.
- Promotion of smart technologies, such as smart meters and intelligent heating/cooling controls, supported by the Smart Readiness Indicator.
- Phase-out of fossil fuel heating, in favour of renewable and efficient alternatives.
- Socioeconomic support measures, including targeted financial incentives through instruments such as the [EU Renovation Wave](#) and the [Social Climate Fund](#).

Each of the LOCATEE pilot countries (i.e., Greece, Poland and Portugal) has adopted measures that align with EU objectives, while tailoring them to national conditions.

Indicatively, such energy efficiency interventions that could be exploited by the LOCATEE approach include:



Improvement (or installation) of building **thermal insulation**.



Replacement of old doors and windows **with new energy-efficient ones**.



Integration of energy-efficient heating and cooling systems (e.g., heat pumps and air conditioners with high energy performance grade).



Installation of renewable technologies for electricity generation and domestic hot water (e.g., solar photovoltaics and solar boilers).



Utilisation of high-energy performance building materials, biomaterials, recycled materials and other nature-based solutions.



The role of intermediaries and best practices they can implement

Housing entities

Role

- 
- Regulating, developing, financing and managing housing infrastructure (**public housing entities**)
 - Constructing, selling and renting residential units for market-based housing (**private housing entities**)
 - Providing affordable or social housing (**non-profit housing entities**)
 - Managing collectively owned housing (**cooperative housing entities**)
 - Promoting **building renovations** and energy efficiency measures

Best practices

- **Energy-efficient renovations** in affordable and social housing
- **Affordable and sustainable energy supply models**
- **Integrated financial assistance** for energy efficiency upgrades
- **Tenant engagement and energy awareness** initiatives

Municipalities

Role

- 
- **Connective channels** between residents, financial institutions, national governments and technical experts
 - **Overcoming financial, technical and community-related barriers**
 - **Educating and supporting** stakeholders
 - **Managing** local subsidy programmes
 - **Helping homeowners** with fund accessibility
 - **Building trust and proximity** with citizens and stakeholders
 - **Bridging the gap** between policy and implementation

Best practices

- Comprehensive **energy poverty mitigation planning**
- Incorporating **energy poverty alleviation measures into local strategies**
- Setting up **one-stop-shops and resource centres**
- Perform **energy audits** for vulnerable households
- **Protect citizens from energy disconnection** due to unpaid bills (especially for vulnerable consumers)
- **Capacity-building** activities for key stakeholders - **Information and awareness measures**

Civil Society Organisations

Role

- 
- **Bridging gaps in energy efficiency programmes** (especially for marginalised communities)
 - **Providing direct assistance** to energy-poor households through **advisory services, financial guidance and technical support**
 - **Advocating** for policy changes and systemic improvements
 - **Facilitating cooperation** among stakeholders
 - **Offering holistic support** by combining social assistance with energy advisory services

Best practices

- **Community-based energy advice** for vulnerable households
- **Integrated counselling** and appliance replacement strategies



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