

Name: CLEAR 2.0

Award category: Engagement

Organisation: Test-Achats

Location: Brussels, Belgium

Other countries involved: Portugal, Italy, Spain, Slovenia, Czechia

Duration: 2018-2020

Website: <https://www.clear2-project.eu/>

Factsheet:

CLEAR 2.0 - Connecting consumers to renewables

Popularising renewables

Renewable energy technologies designed for people's homes – like solar panel rooftops and heat pumps – are not widely used today. Convincing consumers to switch to home-based renewables is a significant barrier to the progress of Europe's energy transition. This Horizon 2020-funded project CLEAR 2.0 took on the challenge of helping consumers become 'prosumers' of renewable energy by addressing the reasons behind their hesitations, better informing them and supporting them through all the steps of converting to renewable systems.

As a first step, the project carried out consumer surveys in Spain, Portugal, Italy and Belgium. Through a questionnaire, people answered questions on their energy use, how concerned they are about environmental impacts of fossil fuels, and what they think about buying renewable energy together as a group of households instead of on their own. The results of these questionnaires helped CLEAR 2.0 understand why home-based renewables are not yet popular.

The project also communicated the survey data to EU policymakers designing the Clean Energy for all Europeans Package. This improved policymakers' awareness of behaviours and concerns that are stopping consumers from switching to renewable energies at home. The results helped policymakers design consumer-friendly EU Ecodesign standards for pellet stoves, domestic batteries and heat pumps.

Trusting the installer

Cost is a key concern among potential renewable energy consumers, but many also have doubts about which installers and which technologies they can trust. Aiming to overcome this barrier, CLEAR 2.0 laboratory tested the home-based renewables available on markets in all the beneficiary countries.

The project published the results of its testing on the project partner's websites in all countries enabling consumers to read product reviews and make informed choices. The project also built an open-access website tool to advise consumers about the different technologies.

Buying renewables in bulk to save costs

CLEAR 2.0 organised 17 successful bulk purchases in the 6 beneficiary countries – Belgium, Czechia, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. People bought renewable energy systems, like photovoltaic panels, batteries, pellet stoves and heat pumps for heating and cooling, together as a group to lower costs. “We were able to offer the 17 groups a product testing service, check the necessary contracts were in order, get a good price and provide an after-sales service – all factors which boosted citizen’s confidence,” says Giorgia Caroli, Programme Manager of CLEAR 2.0.

The project also carried out awareness raising campaigns to help influence consumer behaviour, as well as monitoring how people used energy in 4,000 homes in order to offer personalised energy saving tips.

“Our project motivated nearly 30,000 households in 6 different EU countries to go for renewable energies in their homes, triggering a total investment of €129 million,” says Caroli.

In Slovenia and Czechia, the project attracted widespread consumer and press attention. In both countries, CLEAR 2.0 has been credited with being the first-ever project to purchase domestic renewables as a group.