



Brussels, 20 February 2018

## Reduced energy costs and ecological footprint thanks to unique online application by KBC with Energyville/VITO

- **Market research: 80% of Belgians want independent advice for energy-saving renovation**
- **Scientifically based energy-efficiency tool provides four objective, individualised energy optimisation alternatives (including potential improvements, anticipated cost price and feasibility based on likely payback period).**
- **The energy standards that homes will have to meet by 2025 impose a not-insignificant extra investment for people with building/renovation plans. For that reason, KBC will offer a highly competitive rate of 1.59%<sup>1</sup> on Green Energy Loans, as of 22 February.**

KBC is putting the finishing touches to its Energy and Renovation Check – a user-friendly tool that will enable clients to review their home and future-proof it in terms of energy efficiency and consumption. Based on parameters provided by clients themselves, it calculates the possible savings in terms of energy consumption and suggests the relevant investments.

The advice is 100% neutral and objective, as KBC is not affiliated to any suppliers, producers or installers. It is scientifically underpinned by Energyville/VITO. The tool is currently undergoing thorough testing by KBC staff and will be uploaded in KBC Touch in the months ahead for clients of KBC and KBC Brussels.

The application will be free of charge until the end of September. After that, the cost price will be 40 euros for comprehensive completed and individualised advice. Energy renovation advice can be provided for homes in Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia. For technical reasons, KBC will only be able to offer the tools to its clients in Wallonia later in the year.

**Karin Van Hoecke, KBC's General Manager for Mass Retail**, explains why KBC is offering this instrument: *'Sustainability is one of our four strategic pillars. The Energy and Renovation Check dovetails perfectly with our ambition to offer our clients solutions to today's sustainability issues and tomorrow's social challenges.*

*We also want to grow further in the market for energy-efficient building and renovation. We can achieve that thanks to a combination of many years of expertise with home and renovation loans, the wide group of experts in our branch network and KBC Live, a comprehensive online range of specific products and services, and highly competitive rates for Green Energy loans. All this means we can offer our clients optimum solutions when it comes to energy-efficient renovation. Our unique and fully personalised Energy and Renovation Check is an*

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<sup>[1]</sup> Loan type: instalment loan Lender: KBC Bank NV, 2 Havenlaan, 1080 Brussels; VAT BE 0462.920.226; RLP Brussels, FSMA 026256 A. Subject to your credit application being approved by KBC Bank NV. Representative example: for an instalment loan of 10 500 euros to be repaid over 60 months at a fixed annual percentage rate of charge and fixed actuarial debit interest rate of 1.59%, you pay 60 monthly instalments of 182.11 euros (or 10 926.60 euros in total). Rate applies from 22 February 2018 for terms up to 60 months, for an instalment loan to finance energy-saving investments in your home.

*important strength in this regard, which will help our clients make judicious and well-informed financial decisions when planning significant renovation projects.'*

**Leen Govaerts, Unit Manager Smart Energy & Built Environment at EnergyVille/VITO** continues: *'The transition to a sustainable energy supply for our urban built environment is a highly complex challenge, which demands the right choices as a matter of urgency. Buildings account for 40% of our energy consumption and so this theme is central to EnergyVille/VITO's research. Our interdisciplinary teams are building the knowledge and algorithms we need to pick the right balance between energy efficiency, renewable energy and flexibility. The aim is to achieve an optimum trade-off between affordability, environmental-friendliness and security of supply.'*

*End-users will play an active role in the energy management of their own homes. KBC's Energy and Renovation Check, with EnergyVille/VITO algorithms as its backbone, fits this philosophy perfectly. It will allow end-users to monitor the energy management of their home based on accurate and personalised advice and to make the right choices when it comes to renovation or the use of renewable energy technology.'*

### **Market research shows that environmental awareness is an important trigger for energy-saving home improvements, but that the financial implications are a major barrier.**

A recent KBC study of the national market (Profacts, February 2018) among over 1 000 respondents revealed that:

- Half of house owners are not planning to carry out energy renovations. The high cost of such investments, allied with a lack of financial resources, are the main obstacle. All the same, energy-efficient homes not only offer residents a reduced energy bill, they also improve the living environment and offer enhanced domestic comfort. They increase the building's future resale value as well.
- 63% of potential renovators cite a lower energy bill as their principal motivation and one in two placed the increased value of the property in their top three. In other words, those who are planning to invest will mainly do so because of the financial benefits.
- The payback period is another key financial parameter: 85% of potential renovators stated that the investment must pay for itself within no more than ten years. For one in three, the period was as little as five years. Francophone Belgians evidently expect a shorter payback period than Flemings do.
- Environmental considerations likewise play a not insignificant role in the decision to make energy-saving home improvements. It was noticeable that 29% of the francophone respondents cited environmental concerns as their primary motivation, with no fewer than 58% putting it in their top three (compared to 20% and 51% respectively for Flemings). The percentages endorsing the argument of a future-proof home showed a similar pattern: top three motivation for 49% of francophones compared to 26% of Flemings.
- The energy standards that homes will have to meet by 2025 impose a not-insignificant extra investment for people with building/renovation plans. 70% of the respondents want to use their own savings to fund the investment. 43% of francophones would also consider taking out a loan, as opposed to 34% of Flemings.

The Profacts survey showed that no fewer than eight out of ten respondents would like advice on the possibilities in terms of energy-saving renovation, preferably from independent organisations and experts. KBC and Energyville/VITO's neutral, independent and scientifically based Energy and Renovation Check therefore offers an unmistakable added value to clients seeking to optimise their energy consumption. The tool not only provides a clear indication of the potential savings, it also relates them to the cost of the investment and the payback period, based on scientifically underpinned analysis and parameters.

### **Fully individualised and scientifically based energy-saving renovation advice**

The analysis algorithm behind the KBC tool is based on the European EN13790 standard. This is also used for the common EPC and EPB calculations, but the KBC tool takes a more refined approach. Since the quality of an analysis stands or falls by the quality of the entered parameters, KBC advises users of the tool to gather a number of documents before getting started: energy bills, building plans, construction/renovation bills, etc. It will then take about 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The more complete the information, the

more precise the advice will be. If the client does not have all this information immediately to hand, the tool will work provisionally with average values. The client can always add the more specific information later to further refine the advice.

The final advice that the client receives is entirely tailored to this real data and the specific features of the dwelling. If any of these parameters change, the advice also changes automatically, making the final advice a fully personalised and unique document.

The information provided by the client remains entirely confidential and is used by VITO on a purely anonymous basis for the underlying technical analysis and the associated advice. The information is not shared or stored beyond this.

For technical reasons, the tool only provides advice for individual homes (detached, semi-detached or terraced). Flats cannot be considered, since energy-saving improvements frequently have to be approved by the co-owners.

### **Clients decide themselves what to do with the energy optimisation advice and non-binding financing proposal.**

When the client completes the Energy and Renovation Check, they are presented at the end with four possible energy-optimisation scenarios. Each of these examines the client's energy profile from a specific angle: high-priority quick wins, maximum return, ecological footprint, and conformity with future building energy standards. In each case, the client is provided with an integrated overview of potential improvements, the estimated cost and feasibility in terms of the probable payback period. KBC presents a non-binding financing proposal for each scenario at a personalised rate that takes account of the client's specific credit situation.

KBC does not refer clients to suppliers, producers or installers and has no preferential relationship with any of them. The client retains total freedom in terms of any parties they wish to approach afterwards for a specific quotation or implementation. The tool does, however, include various links to information on possible subsidies in the client's region.

### **KBC wants to contribute actively to a better environment by offering clients attractive interest rates on green energy loans**

As of 22 February, clients wishing to invest in energy-saving home improvements can enjoy an even more competitive interest rate at KBC and KBC Brussels<sup>2</sup> of 1.59% (compared to 1.90%) for a Green Energy Loan.

KBC expresses its commitment to addressing energy issues in other ways too. KBC, in collaboration with a specialist partner, has, for instance, been offering its business clients a thorough energy audit with tailored forms of finance since the autumn of 2017. We are also playing an active role, for instance, in 'Leuven 2030' – a non-profit organisation that invests in a climate-neutral Leuven – and, with Leuven 2030, we participate in the European Investment Bank's ELENA fund, which helps partners to invest in energy efficiency. In mid-2017, KBC also endorsed the European Energy-Efficiency Mortgages Action Plan (EeMAP), which seeks a form of finance for energy-efficient building or to encourage owners to make their homes more energy-efficient.

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<sup>2</sup> CBC pursues a separate commercial policy with its own schedule of rates.