



Assessment of accessibility of informational materials about use of energy resources (energy efficiency, saving of energy) in municipal information centers and libraries in the Baltic States

Report has been prepared within the frame of the project
„Exchange of information and promotion of cooperation for increasing energy efficiency
of energy resource use and facilitation for changing consumer patterns in the Baltic
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Within the project **“Exchange of information and promotion of cooperation for increasing energy efficiency of energy resource use and facilitation for changing consumer patterns in the Baltic States”** by the Baltic Environmental Forum, 17 information centres in local authorities and 33 libraries in towns and cities of **Latvia** have been surveyed with the aim to assess the availability of informative publications on energy efficiency and energy saving measures to the population. As found, information centres in towns and cities mostly act as the information centres of city councils and provide information mainly on the activities of the city councils, e.g. organized events, employees of the council, municipal institutions, NGO's, business issues etc. Therefore, after questioning the centres it seemed that inhabitants do not request information on energy efficiency in the information centres, also publications in most information centres are not available or poorly available. Questioning showed that inhabitants ask for information on energy saving issues municipal services, particular experts, companies managing heat supply network. In few municipalities, municipal agencies have been set up where the population may request information, e.g. in Ogre town (municipal agency “Mālkalne” carries out different projects, as well as informs the society). The results of the survey let conclude that the population mostly seek for information in the libraries of towns and cities where more information and different informative resources (books, magazines, brochures, internet services, etc.) are available. Nevertheless, the survey concluded that mostly students and pupils searched for such information, rarely other inhabitants. In many libraries, visitors had not been interested in these issues at all. After surveying libraries of local authorities, in overall comparatively many informative publications are available. Of course, more information is available in district centres and largest cities. Libraries mostly offer books (both popular and scientific readers: text books, scientific publications), magazines and newspapers (“Enerģija un Pasaule”, “Enerģētika un Automatizācija”, “Vides Vēstis”), summaries of workshop papers, in a smaller number – brochures, publications, etc. Nevertheless, most of the informative materials have been published comparatively long time ago and are outdated. Also, most of the questioned librarians mentioned that informative materials on energy efficiency and energy saving are not in sufficient amount in the libraries, and new informative materials should be published.

Most of the information centres offer freely accessible information stands, also libraries mostly have either information stands or a table with free of charge materials. During questioning nearly no information centre of the local authorities offered materials on energy efficiency and energy saving except few information centres (in Ventpils, Cēsis, Rēzekne, as well as Daugavpils where it was not available at the information stand, but at the personnel of the information centre. Also in the libraries such materials mostly can be found on shelves, not at

the information stands. In most of libraries, the information stands are EU information stands where materials on energy issues are not available.

Regarding sufficiency of materials, the thoughts of respondents are different. Some think that materials are in a sufficient number in the information centres of local authorities but they could not be found. In the libraries, most of the respondents stated that materials on the energy issues are not sufficient and should be available in higher numbers. Regarding the question which issues should be included in informative materials on energy efficiency, many employees (22%) in the information centres of local authorities did not want to respond, because considered they were not competent on the issues. Nevertheless, most of the respondents (31%) mentioned that materials on energy efficiency should include practical advice how to improve energy efficiency in houses, flats, using electric appliances. Many mentioned that issues related to economic aspects should be included (19%). Smaller number replied that issues related to health aspects (18%) and state policy for improving energy efficiency (10%) should be included.

The survey clarified that all information centres and libraries of Latvia has an information phone number, which people can call and try to clarify issues of interest.

In general, there were differences in the responsiveness of the respondents in the information centres and libraries of Latvia. Most of personnel from the information centres of local authorities was not open to talk and mostly suggested to search for information in other organizations. Some considered they were not competent about the issues and did not respond to all questions. In libraries, the respondents were more open to talk about information materials and suggestions.

After the survey, it could be concluded that information materials in the information centres of local authorities are not in sufficient numbers, and information should be available also there in the form of publications and consultations, not only in libraries and Internet. Nevertheless, new materials on the energy issues should be supplied also to libraries.

The following information centres have been surveyed in Latvia: Information Bureau of Daugavpils City Council, Information Agency of Jelgava City Council, Visitor Service Centre of Jūrmala City Council, Population Information Centre of Ventspils City Council, Population Reception and Service Centre of Rēzekne City Council, Visitor Service Centre of Valmiera City Council, “One Stop Agency” in Jēkabpils (Information Centre of City Council), Population Information Centre of Ogre District Council, Population Service Centre of Cēsis City Council, Visitors Consultation and Information Centre of Salaspils City Council, Information Centre of

Dobele City Council, Visitor Reception and Information Centre of Kuldīga City Council, Visitor Reception and Information Centre of Olaine City Council, Client Service Centre of Saldus City Council, Visitor Service Centre of Talsi City Council, Visitor Service Centre of Gulbene City Council, Visitor Service Centre of Liepāja City Council, **as well as libraries the following municipalities**: Tukums, Sigulda, Krāslava, Bauska, Ludza, Alūksne, Madona, Aizkraukle, Limbaži, Preiļi, Balvi, Lielvārde, Saulkrasti, Smiltene, Salacgrīva, Aizpute, Baldone, Baloži, Grobiņa, Vangaži, Auce, Kandava, Ikšķile, Pļaviņas, Viļāni, Rūjiena, Brocēni, Cesvaine, Ilūkste, Dobele, Rīga, Daugavpils, Ainaži. Also, a survey on the availability of materials was carried out in the libraries of large cities: Rēzekne, Ventspils, Liepāja, Jelgava, Jūrmala, Valmiera, Jēkabpils, Ogre, Cēsis, Salaspils, Kuldīga, Olaine, Saldus, Talsi, and Gulbene. Similar surveys have been carried out also in Estonia and Lithuania.

Analyzes of surveys in Estonia

2 information centres and 19 libraries have been questioned in Estonia. The results of the surveys allow concluding that materials on those issues are poorly available in information centres and libraries. Materials are not available in information centres. In libraries, most information is being obtained from Internet resources. Popular is the magazine “Keskonnatehnika” (translated as “Environmental Technics”). It was clarified that just one library (Jõgeva local authority) offers few books on the issue of energy resources: Energy-efficient maintaining of the dwelling, 2000; About energy, electric car and living environment, 1980; Small environmental reference book, 2007; Energy, climate, waste, 2008.

Mostly, the population of Estonia has been interesting on those issues. Particularly, interest covered practical advice on the improvement of energy efficiency in houses, flats, using electrical appliances. Many residents have also been interested in materials regarding economic aspects, less health aspects. Interest has appeared also on other environmental issues.

Most information centres and libraries in Estonia have freely available information stands. Before, information materials related to energy use and energy efficiency of buildings have been situated only on information stands of two Estonian local authorities. Nevertheless, the respondents could not specify the particular titles of the publications. Most respondents have replied that the number of information resources on energy use, energy efficiency of buildings and energy saving issues is not sufficient. Only information centres and libraries of seven local authorities have responded that materials are in a sufficient number. In most of the centres, residents have not asked for information on the issues.

On the question what issues should be included in informative materials on energy efficiency, most respondents answered that all proposed issues should be included: practical advice on improvement of energy efficiency in buildings and flats, issues related to health aspects, economic aspects and state policy on improving energy efficiency. Many respondents replied that only practical advice on improvement of energy efficiency in buildings and flats, and using electrical appliances should be included. Some mentioned that economic issues should be included along with practical advice. Just few respondents mentioned that also health aspects are significant.

Most libraries in Estonia do not possess informative phone number. The respondents have mentioned their contact phone number.

The Environment Information Centre in Valga was one of the surveyed information centres in Estonia, which offers information related to environmental issues. In the Centre, the population has searched for information related to practical advice on improvement of energy efficiency in buildings and flats, as well as state policy on improving energy efficiency. Nevertheless, there is no information stand in the Information Centre and also informative materials on energy efficiency and related issues are not available in sufficient numbers. Regarding the issues that should be included in informative materials on energy efficiency, the respondent has mentioned all offered: practical advice on improvement of energy efficiency in buildings and flats, issues related to health aspects, economic aspects, as well as state policy on improving energy efficiency.

The following information centres have been surveyed in Estonia: Environment Information Centre of Valga, Information Centre of Tartu. **Libraries have been surveyed in the following local authorities of Estonia:** Tallinn, Pärnu, Paide, Põlva, Rakvere, Sillamäe, Tapa, Valga, Viljandi, Võru, Haapsalu, Jõgeva, Kuressaare, Narva, Mardu, Kohtla- Järve, Kiviõli, Keila, Jõhvi.

Analyzes of surveys in Lithuania

Information centres of 20 local authorities in Lithuania have been surveyed.

The results of the survey conclude that nearly all information centres of local authorities offer information/help to the population on the issues of renovation of buildings and energy saving. Some information centres provide information also in heating issues (prices, etc.). The Information Centre of Plunge local authority does not offer information on those issues at all. Mostly, the information is provided in the form of consultations.

In most information centres of local authorities of Lithuania, residents have searched information on the issues related to energy efficiency and energy saving. Only in two information centres, the population has not looked for such information.

The biggest interest from the population relate to renovation of buildings, possibilities to save costs for heating, energy saving, as well as bank loans. In one of the information centres, residents have been interested in modernization of buildings, as well as practical advice on improvement of energy efficiency in buildings and flats, and using electrical appliances.

There are no freely accessible information stands in most information centres of local authorities of Lithuania. The personnel of information centres has to be asked for information or materials. Freely accessible information stands are available only in two information centres - in Kaunas and Vilnius. Only the Information Centre of Klaipeda offer a publication on energy efficiency issues „The new wear for the old building”, 2003. The Information Centre of Šauliai offers brochures on the renovation of apartment houses. Informative materials in the form of publications are not available in the other information centres. However, it was clarified in the information centres that different workshops and meetings are being organized for the population with participation of competent officials, managers of apartment houses. It is also advised to look for information on the websites of local authorities. Different articles about the renovation of buildings and related issues have been published in local newspapers. In some other information centres of local authorities, only press releases on the issues of building renovation are available.

When questioned whether information materials are in a sufficient number or not, a half of the respondents in the information centres of Lithuania responded positively, but the other half negatively. In the information centres that answered positively regarding sufficiency of materials, on the whole no publications on the use of energy resources and energy efficiency in buildings have been found.

As regards the question what issues should be included in informative materials about energy efficiency, most respondents mentioned wish to see more information on economic gains (model of repayment period, forecasts about changes in energy prices, how to save energy and money, options for choosing the best energy source, why residents have to renovate houses, real examples regarding renovation as efficient way to save money, etc).

Respondents in three local authorities have mentioned that informative materials should include practical advice on improving energy efficiency in buildings and flats, using electrical devices. In two local authorities, respondents wanted to include issues related to health

aspects (e.g., informing dwellers about possible poisoning with gas due to old ventilation systems). The respondents have mentioned also other issues that should be included in information materials: simple explanation to the population about renovation possibilities, choosing the best energy resource, real numerically grounded examples about gains from building renovation, what projects related to energy issues have already been carried out in the country, what are the most significant problems, what means are most efficient for the improvement of building energy efficiency, bank loans, choice of most appropriate company for renovation and insulation works, necessity for best practice examples with real estimation of expenses and demonstration of repayment periods.

All surveyed information centres of local authorities in Lithuania possess informative phone number, which the population may use and ask questions. **The following information centres of local authorities in Lithuania have been surveyed:** Klaipėda, Kretinga, Marijampolė, Mažeikiai, Panevežys, Alitus, Elektrėnai, Jonava, Kaunas, Plungė, Radviliskis, Šauliai, Silutė, Tauragė, Telšiai, Ukmergė, Utena, Vilnius, Visaginas, Kedainiai.

Within the project, also investigation of **the websites of local authorities** has been carried out, whether they have enough information on energy efficiency and how easily it could be found. The investigation has been carried out in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

Mostly superficial information about the use of energy resources, renovation of buildings and related issues is available on the websites of local authorities of Latvia. The websites of 12 local authorities do not offer information on these issues at all. The information has mainly informative character: on tenders organized by local authorities; many websites provide development programmes for cities and districts; environmental action programmes or strategies, environmental policy plans where energy efficiency and efficient illumination issues are mentioned, specific targets for the use of energy resources and energy efficiency are set up; as well as different projects related to the use of energy resources and description of aims of the projects.

After analyses of information materials available on the websites of local authorities, it may be concluded that mostly materials reflect economic criteria – how to reduce expenses, information about the possibilities of crediting and financial possibilities. On some sites, also environmental, technical and social aspects are mentioned. Information on energy efficiency improvement measures at educational institutions, hospital, boiler houses, etc. could be found on websites of many local authorities. On the website of Ogre local municipality, residents are invited to elect the heads of houses: benefits are described; the regulation for the heads of houses is annexed. Thus, it is seen that the local authority is informing the population. On the

website of Sigulda local authority, an interesting article about the importance of thermal vision can be found. Also the website of Alūksne local authority provides valuable tips in relation to the measures of improving energy efficiency. Additionally, other resources of information are noted. On the website of Līvāni local authority, one can find article on the possibilities of biomass use. The websites of Ludza and Preiļi local authorities offer information about executed projects that are related to the issues of energy efficiency of buildings and public information. The website of Jelgava local authority provides description about the project on the development of Zemgale Regional Energy Agency (produced in 2007).

In general, information about the use of energy resources, energy efficiency of buildings and energy saving can be comparatively difficult found on the websites of local authorities. It takes a long time to search for it. No website has a separate section for the corresponding topic. The websites of local authorities of Latvia lack information of recommendation character – different practical tips, extended information, information on energy saving electrical appliances, etc.

Websites of local authorities of Estonia and Lithuania have also been surveyed. The websites of local authorities in Estonia also mostly offer general articles about the topic of the use of energy resources, as well as press releases about workshops. Mostly information on the websites of local authorities of Estonia can be hardly found, or cannot be found at all. Only the website of the Regional Environmental Centre provides easy accessible information. Similarly for the websites of local authorities of Lithuania, information about the use of energy resources, energy efficiency of buildings and energy saving cannot be found on 13 websites out of 20, and information is easily accessible on 7 websites out of 20. Only websites of four local authorities have a separate section for topics related to energy. E.g., the websites of Klaipėda, Marijampolė and Šauliai have a section called “Renovation of apartment houses”, but the website of the Renewable Energy Information and Consultation Centre (ATEIK) has sections “Renewable energy resources” and “Ecological building”. The amount of available information is rather small also under other sections of the websites of local authorities of Lithuania. The website of Vilnius local authority has a section about dwellings, the section “News” offer few articles about energy efficiency. The websites of Klaipėda, Šauliai and Marijampolė local authorities provides information only about possibilities of building renovation. Also after careful inspection of the websites of Jonava and Tauragė local authorities, one can find information about possibilities of house renovation. The website of Radviliškis local authority offer articles about energy efficiency also under section “News”. As regards the website of the Renewable Energy Information and Consultation Centre (ATEIK), information mostly relates to renewable energy resources, but nothing is available on energy saving or energy efficiency. In total, the websites of the information centres of 13 local authorities have no information on energy efficiency issues.

It may be concluded that information about the use of energy resources, energy efficiency of buildings and energy saving is comparatively little available on the websites of local authorities in the Baltic States, and mostly this information is very superficial.

Detailed information on survey results are available in the Annexes I (Estonia); II (Latvia); III (Lithuania).

Summary

During the implementation of project „*Exchange of information and promotion of cooperation for increasing energy efficiency of energy resource use and facilitation for changing consumer patterns in the Baltic States*” carried out by the Baltic Environmental Forum, a **survey of municipal information centers and libraries** in the Baltic States took place. The survey was carried out in order to clarify whether informational materials about energy efficient buildings, saving of energy, etc. are available to the people. In **Latvia** 17 municipal information centers and libraries in 33 cities were surveyed. The results showed that informational materials about mentioned subjects in libraries are available in quite large quantities (although in most cases in form of relatively old books), but are very scarce in municipal information centers.

In **Estonia** 2 information centers and 19 libraries were surveyed. From the obtained results it can be concluded that in the information centers such materials are available very seldom and most of the information in libraries is gained from Internet resources (only one library had books about the subjects in question).

In **Lithuania** 20 municipal information centers were surveyed. Results of the survey showed that almost all of the centers are offering information and help with building renovation and energy efficiency issues. This information mostly is given through individual consultations.

As it is showed in the results of the survey, in general, both in libraries and municipal information centers there is a lack of informational materials about energy efficiency and other related issues.

During the implementation of this project, a **survey of municipalities' web pages** was also carried out. The goal of this was to find out if these pages contained information about energy efficiency and renovation of houses, saving of energy resources and intelligent use of energy,

with an emphasis on how easy this information can be found. This survey was carried out in all three Baltic States in cooperation with project partners in Lithuania and Estonia.

During the survey it was confirmed that information about energy efficiency and other issues related to it, in municipal web pages is quite general, focusing on possibilities of getting bank loans for renovation and energy saving purposes. A limited amount of press releases informing about seminars and conferences were also found. In **Lithuanian** municipal web pages information mostly concentrates on housing renovation; some **Estonian** municipal web pages offer information about energy auditing, passive houses and energy saving. Apart from this, it can be concluded that the majority of municipal web pages do not contain such information. In most **Latvian** municipal web pages short articles about planned and implemented energy efficiency projects can be found, along with information about possible financing resources for renovation of buildings.

Energy efficient houses and saving of energy resources are a common part of strategic development and environmental management plans in many municipalities. In all three Baltic States information about these topics in municipal web pages is difficult to find and in some cases is missing at all. Information about these topics can be found in 38 out of 50 **Latvian** major municipalities' web pages.

In **Estonian** municipal web pages information could be found in 7 cases out of 20, among them a special section about „Passive buildings and saving of energy” in Valga municipality web page. In **Lithuanian** municipal web pages information could be found in 7 cases out of 20. In three cases a special section about renovation possibilities of apartment houses (municipalities of Klaipeda, Sauli, Mariampole). The web page of Lithuanian consultation centre of renewable energy was also investigated and as a result it was concluded that most of the available information there concerns only renewable energy sources but not energy efficiency in houses.