





Paris, France

Paris makes a fair energy transition by tackling fuel poverty and engaging its residents

Paris is a city with a long history of climate action and climate leadership. Recent efforts direct the City’s attention to creating a successful and fair energy transition towards carbon neutrality. Particularly, the City is working to address fuel poverty to benefit low-income residents and has created new forums for all Parisians to participate in climate actions.

Parisians rally around environmental protection



Case Study Type:	 Plan	Primary Sector:	 Urban Planning
ICA Pillar:	 Policy	Primary Impact:	 Quality of Life & Urban Livability

What are the key lessons learned?

Paris’ new Climate Action Plan 2030, released in May 2018, sets an ambitious vision. By 2050, Paris aims to be a zero local emissions city. This will not only need significant investment to renovate buildings and public transit, but also a rapid change in behaviors and lifestyles. In focusing this plan on a fair energy transition, the City recognizes that climate action is only effective and successful if social issues are tackled at the same time.

This is why the City puts a specific emphasis on tackling fuel poverty, which is defined as those households that spend more than 10% of their household incomes on energy.

It is estimated that nearly 77,000 households in Paris suffer from fuel poverty and with recent spikes in gas prices by more than 20%, energy poverty is becoming an even greater concern.

Set forth in the Climate Action Plan, Paris is targeting a reduction in fuel poverty through subsidies, energy retrofits, and better management of home energy consumption. A reduction in fuel poverty will alleviate stressors

for low-income communities across Paris and improve access to more affordable energy and energy efficient homes, helping to improve the economic situation of low-income Parisians.

To achieve its vision to become a zero local emissions city, Paris however also recognizes that the City’s local government is only responsible for 2% of Paris’ carbon footprint in the area and that it is essential to mobilize other stakeholders. To this purpose, Paris has created a campaign following the release of its Climate Action Plan in May 2018 where it asked Parisians to express their support to the plan by voting and/or signing up as a volunteer at one of three levels: resident volunteer, engaged volunteer, or expert volunteer. The referendum was a great success as nearly 75,000 Parisians came out to vote with a 95% approval rate.



Climate

As part of the Climate Action Plan, the City has set ambitious targets for 2030 and 2050: It aims to reduce its energy consumption by 35% by 2030 and halve consumption by 2050 compared to 2004 levels. By 2050, Paris also aims to be a zero local greenhouse gas emissions area. This means all energy consumed will need to be of renewable origin.



Inclusivity

Paris recognizes that this energy transition cannot happen without paying attention to social inequality. It therefore commits to a solidarity-based energy transition that excludes no one and focuses, in its new Climate Action Plan, on combatting fuel poverty. In addition, the Plan recognizes that all Parisians need to be involved in implementing climate actions. It therefore created a volunteer program that allows all of Paris’ people to participate in climate actions to different degrees – from being informed to becoming leaders.

How might these lessons be used in your City?

Define fuel poverty and address it with diverse actions

Fuel poverty is not a new phenomenon and the City of Paris has worked on energy retrofits in its publicly-owned housing stock since 2008. However, making it a central focus in its new Climate Action Plan with a defined target of reducing fuel poverty by 20% by 2020 shows the City's determination to make this energy transition towards a carbon-neutral Paris a fair and socially inclusive one.

There are three main considerations when tackling fuel poverty: (1) household incomes, (2) energy prices, and (3) household energy efficiency. Paris has developed programs to assist with each of these considerations. Since 2012, the City has disbursed national subsidies for low-income residents to pay their energy bills. The City also works with energy suppliers to identify households at risk of energy poverty and helps them decrease the impact of their energy bills. As for energy efficiency, the City has developed a retrofit program to target public housing.

The program, started in 2008, has a goal of retrofitting 55,000 flats by 2020 and Paris is on track to meet that goal. The program works to improve the energy efficiency of these buildings to reduce energy consumption by up to 50% and reduce costs by approximately €360 per year per household. In addition to the retrofits, the City provides programs to help people manage and monitor energy usage in their flats. The program is on-going, and will continue beyond 2020, with an objective to retrofit 5,000 flats per year for a 60% increase in total retrofitted flats.

The continuation of the program is driven by the positive impact it has created so far: energy demand has been cut in half and the number of people asking the City for help with paying energy bills has been significantly decreasing. Each year, the program costs the City nearly €35M to €40M. To assist its funding, the National Bank has been offering low-rate loans to the City's public housing dwellers for improvements.



Reach out to the private sector to prompt action

Retrofitting homes efforts have first focused on public housing as the City owns these buildings and because it is easier to justify public spending on public housing. However, not all Parisians experiencing fuel poverty are living in publicly-owned housing. Many live in private-owned housing units. Paris has therefore been working to integrate the private sector into the retrofit program through a variety of incentive programs to landlords. The City cannot force landlords to retrofit their buildings, but landlords in Paris are by law forced to clean property façades on a regular basis. The City tries to engage landlords and make them aware that façade cleaning provides an opportunity to also thermally retrofit the building. The City is offering free energy audits for privately-owned buildings and has hired a third-party organization to communicate to building owners the benefits of energy efficiency and to walk them through the potential energy efficiency improvements applicable to their specific buildings, as a result of the energy audits. And ultimately, the City also provides financial aid as a percentage of the investment undertaken by the landlord through its ECO-RENOVONS ("Let's retrofit") program.

Engaging and empowering everyone in the implementation of climate action

For the development of the new Paris Climate Action Plan 2030, nearly 700 people were engaged in 100 hours of debates, resulting in 280 proposals received from citizens for climate actions. Additionally, 300 proposals were received from economic, academic, and non-profit sectors^[1].

These included, for example, proposals to promote renewables, develop active forms of mobility, and improve the referencing of eco-friendly tourism structures. The goal of the Plan was to make it one that represented the desires and aspirations of Parisians.

Participatory budgeting

In 2014, Paris began piloting a participatory budget program that would allow the general population to propose projects and ultimately vote on projects for funding in next year's budget. Between 2014 and 2020, Paris has committed to reserving €500M, or about 5% of the City's total funds, for allocation through participatory budgeting. According to the new Climate Action Plan, at least 20% of its funds should finance climate initiatives. For each cycle, there are 20 participatory budgets allocated for each of the City's Districts and another single participatory budget to cover Paris-wide projects. In 2016 alone, nearly 159,000 people voted on how to spend €100M^[2]. Through the program, Paris is breaking down barriers between the public and the government and working to enhance the relationship and trust between the two groups. The program so far has been a success with large numbers of people participating and a growing sense from the people that their voices are heard.

Moving towards a fair energy transition



Retrofitting 55,000 flats by 2020

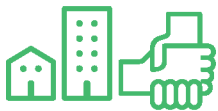


Reduced energy consumption by up to 50%



Reduced energy costs (~€360 per year per household)

Three considerations when tackling fuel poverty: (1) household incomes, (2) energy prices, and (3) household energy efficiency



Partner with private sector

to ensure retrofitting in more than just public housing



Work with energy suppliers

to identify households at risk of energy poverty



Provide subsidies

to low-income residents



Climate Volunteer Program:
15,000 citizens have expressed their interest in becoming a volunteer



Participatory budgeting:
In 2016, ~159,000 people voted on how to spend €100M



Engaging everyone for implementation:
700 people were engaged, resulting in 280 proposals from citizens

To create momentum around the release of the Paris Climate Action Plan, Mayor Hidalgo organized a referendum for the new Plan which took place from May 25th to June 3rd, 2018 at ‘Ville de Paris’ to engage citizens in climate action. The referendum asked the population for support with the Climate Action Plan with an option to volunteer in the creation and implementation of climate actions throughout Paris.

Finally, an entire section of the Plan is devoted to the mobilization of stakeholders and citizens in supporting and contributing to the energy transition. The Climate Volunteer Program, in addition to the participatory budgeting process, are particularly innovative and exciting.

Climate Volunteer Program

With the release of the Climate Action Plan, Paris residents were asked to sign up as volunteers supporting the energy transition. Three levels of volunteers were available:

- 1. The resident volunteer** commits to make behavioral changes on a daily basis, such as eating more seasonal and local fruits, taking the bike or walk more often, and reduce waste.
- 2. The engaged volunteer** commits to incentivize others to make behavioural changes through small projects in their building or neighborhood.
- 3. The expert volunteer** actively participates in neighborhood or city forums.

15,000 citizens have expressed their interest in becoming a volunteer to progress the Paris Climate Action Plan and the City is currently developing a range of initiatives to get them involved. The program has started by educating these volunteers on heat risks and vulnerabilities so that they can check on their elderly neighbors during heat waves. Similarly, they will be trained on fuel poverty and impacts for the winter season in the hopes they can help the social workers with outreach and support for those fuel-impooverished community members. Generally, the volunteers are activated through monthly newsletters, workshops, and other events. The volunteer program is driven to engage and increase the awareness of the general public. The intention is for those interested in climate action to participate and have a say in the future of climate action in Paris.

Project milestones



Lead the way with community support

With a group of climate volunteers ready to act and a new set of strategies for addressing climate change, Paris has set the stage for the coming years. The specific strategy to alleviate fuel poverty will likely bring about multiple benefits for the low-income communities and shows the City’s devotion to a fair energy transition. Ultimately, tackling climate change improves Parisians’ quality of life.

References

- 1 <https://api-site-cdn.paris.fr/images/101081>
- 2 <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/pbparis>