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Promoting Energy efficiency to Local Organisations
through dissemination Partnerships in Europe
Best Actions for Collaboration in Countries
for a High efficient Use of energy in Structural funds

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Model Municipal Ordinance Regulating Solar Systems - Catalonia - Spain

Legislative instrument for the incorporation of solar collector systems at municipal level which has been drafted by La Xarxa de ciutats i pobles cap a sostenibilitat and disseminated to all Town Councils included in it to inform them about the terms and possibilities of its implementation

Target Groups	Sector	Field
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local authority - Regional authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Energy supply - Buildings (including municipal properties) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Renewable energy

ANALYSIS

CONTEXT

La Xarxa de ciutats i pobles cap a sostenibilitat (Cities and Villages Network towards sustainability) is an association of Catalanian local bodies, currently numbering 190, whose aim is to develop sustainable management at local level. It was created in 1997 with the backing of the Diputació de Barcelona, with a view to combining municipal resources and efforts in order to achieve common sustainability goals.

The Xarxa comprises several working groups, of which one the Metabolic Flows group focused on three issues: energy, waste and water. In this context, energy was mainly centred on RES and energy saving. Within these fields, Xarxa, by drawing on the precedent of a regulating successful ordinance for the incorporation of solar collector systems in Barcelona, decided to prepare a similar model suitable for wider application.

The experience of the Barcelona Solar Ordinance, an innovative initiative implemented in 1999, was widely disseminated and taken up, and it represented an effective and proactive tool to promote the application of this mature but still under-utilised technology in such a favourable climatic context as that of Catalonia.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The aforementioned Solar Ordinance is a simple publication which has been prepared for distribution to the municipal authorities included in La Xarxa so as to inform them about the possibility of their approving an ordinance on the installation of solar panels in new buildings comprising a minimum of 5 residential units.

It is therefore a proposed model which needs to be discussed, approved and applied by local authorities prior to implementation.

It was largely based on the Barcelona example and it is very detailed in defining uses, terms and fields of application, while at the same time leaving considerable space for flexibility and adaptation to each local authority's specific needs.

This means that some councils have already approved it and have made it mandatory, others have approved it on voluntary basis, and most are still studying the possibilities of implementing the ordinance in the near future.

The initiative was launched at the end of 2001 and the precise number of bodies that have already implemented it is not yet available. However, numerous town councils have expressed their interest and are working on implementing it.

COST AND BENEFITS

EVALUATION IN TERMS OF COST AND BENEFITS

As the choice of whether the Solar Ordinance is to be compulsory or voluntary is up to each individual municipality, the costs and benefits of the model ordinance regulating solar collector systems could vary in relation to these and other factors.

In towns where the ordinance is already compulsory, it has been found that installing solar collectors on the roofs of new houses during their construction has not increased the price home-buyers pay. This has been the case in areas where there is a scarcity of available building land, therefore the most expensive factor in the construction of a new home is the cost of land per square metre and not the cost of the solar collectors.

In the towns involved, the awareness and participation of citizens has played an important role in the success of the ordinance.

In other municipalities where the ordinance is voluntary, initial monitoring has shown that approximately 1% of the building permits granted include solar collectors in their plans.

A debate is still ongoing about whether municipalities should make the ordinance compulsory or not and if the city council should make the use of renewable energies compulsory or whether it should leave it to the market to decide. In the case of Xarxa the choice is left to the elected representatives of the towns who, together with their citizens, can choose the way they want to proceed towards sustainable management. In this sense, providing information and running an appropriate and effective awareness campaign are key factors in the successful implementation of the Ordinance.

On the other hand, when the town council opts for a voluntary decision, the choice is in the hands of the builders and it is residents who to decide when they demand the installation of these technologies through the market tools.

In both cases, the ordinance, whether compulsory or voluntary, is a definite step towards sustainability and its application has been a clear success.

PARTNERSHIP

MAIN STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES AND NETWORKS

The main stakeholders are the Metabolic Flows working group and the 190 Town councils included in the Xarxa.

The Metabolic Flows working group has promoted the implementation of this ordinance among the 190 town councils included in the Xarxa. Prior to drafting the model ordinance, a series of meetings took place. Finally, in the Xarxa General Meeting, the model was presented and subsequently sent to all the member town councils.

The activity as a whole has been undertaken with the support of a strong communication and information network between the participating councils: the Xarxa itself was constituted in order to strengthen this communication and the multiplier effect of implemented initiatives in the network.

In this particular case, a central co-ordination unit prepared the ordinance and distributed it to all the councils involved. It then centralised all the information, questions and advice coming back from the councils wishing to receive more details.

This has enabled an exchange of knowledge and experience among all stakeholders in the area, and this has been one of the keys to its effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the key elements of the project, and something which can be taken as a positive example for other schemes, was the power of a proposed model ordinance, through its implementation and application, to slowly overcome many of the existing barriers to the implementation of solar thermal technologies.

The positive impact of seeing the results of application of the ordinance in neighbouring municipalities, together with the enhanced standing of those political groups applying the ordinance in the eyes of their voters have gradually spread the information and created an interest in finding out more about the ordinance.

Moreover the proximity of Barcelona, the region's main city, which offered a positive example of a measure of this kind which smaller councils were interested in emulating, was another extremely important factor.

This was enhanced by the attention paid to citizens' participation and to their involvement into the whole process of accepting and deciding between the compulsory or voluntary model. In both cases the initial results are very positive and encourage the implementation of similar initiatives.

TO KNOW MORE

USEFUL INFORMATION

List of Publications

MODEL MUNICIPAL ORDINANCE Municipality / Municipality / Spanish / 1997
REGULATING THE
INSTALLATION OF SOLAR
COLLECTOR SYSTEMS /

THIS CASE HAS BEEN REALISED BY

Organisation : IDAE E-mail : iblanco@idae.es Internet : <http://www.idae.es> Published : 19/11/2002

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