



PRESS RELEASE

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SHIFFT: Sustainable Heating: Implementation of Fossil-Free Technology

The declaration of a climate emergency means we must all look at how we can make big changes within our own communities. The current COP25 meeting in Madrid will highlight the society wide approaches which must be taken across the industrialised countries. Europe has an urgent need to change how it heats its houses and public spaces. Heat accounts for 79% of energy consumption in the typical European household yet most customers and cities know little about low carbon alternatives for keeping their homes warm and their bills down. If the EU cannot change this, it will fail to meet its targets for carbon emissions. The SHIFFT project – Sustainable Heating: Implementation of Fossil-Free Technology – represents a €5.7M investment by the EU's INTERREG 2 Seas programme into decarbonising heat in existing buildings. SHIFFT combines expertise from four countries to deliver best practice in working with domestic consumers in developing practical strategies, minimising costs and delivering real low carbon heat projects. SHIFFT is a state-of-the-art project where politics, science, housing corporations and citizens engage and cooperate in real projects to reduce real CO₂.

Many EU Member States have adopted building regulations to reduce carbon output from new homes and community buildings. Retrofitting large volumes of existing buildings will be tougher but is essential - most buildings that will be around in 2050 have already been built. We have three related key goals:

1. We will develop best practices in co-creation of strategy for other communities to follow – we see community buy-in as essential to find a best fit technology for the people using a building.
2. This will feed into our second goal, of working with towns and cities to develop strategies for making the leap to low carbon heating systems. We will develop city strategies for four local authorities and use this to inform guidance for other cities to take action. It is essential that all cities plan for securing a low carbon heat future.
3. Finally, we will develop practical low carbon heating solutions for four projects across the four countries. These retrofitted systems will act as beacons at the centre of communities and as exemplars for local authorities wishing to act in their own cities and towns.

Associate Professor in Sustainable Energy Policy Peter Connor, University of Exeter, said,

“Right now, most of our homes and buildings are heated by burning gas, with much of that heat lost due to poor insulation – this is unsustainable. We need a rapid, large-scale shift to renewable heating technologies and a programme of energy efficiency measures to hit European carbon targets. The SHIFFT project will set an example by working with communities and residents to design new heating systems as well as producing guidance for local authorities developing their own Sustainable Heating Strategy across the UK, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. Crucially, this project demonstrates the idea that the transition to low carbon heating in our buildings must be done *with* the people living in them, rather than being done *to* people.”

The ten SHIFFT partners will develop sustainable heating strategies for four partner cities, the cities of Mechelen and Bruges (both BE), the city of Middelburg (NL) and the city of Fourmies (FR). The UK’s University of Exeter, French consultancy CD2E, Belgian energy agency De Schakelaar and the Dutch Delft University of Technology will provide technical support and work with local communities to co-create plans to put low carbon heat systems in buildings in all four target countries. Installation of selected low carbon heating technologies will then be made by partners. These include major social housing provider People for Places (Norwich, UK), public care provider Zorgbedrijf Rivierenland (Mechelen, Belgium), the City of Fourmies (France) and Middelburg (Belgium).

Our website at www.shifftproject.eu will go live shortly.

Notes to the Editor

1. [EU Parliament Declares Climate Emergency](#)