topten

**D2.7**

**Steering committee activity report**

**(2012-2013)**

Febuary 2015



Coordinated by



**The Project in brief**

Topten is part of the international Euro-Topten-Max initiative supported by the European programme Intelligent Energy Europe and several national institutions (energy agencies, WWF, consumer associations, research institutes). On global level, Topten is coordinated by TIG, the Topten International Group. This association promotes to the Topten Charter, TIG statutes and Rules of Procedure (www.topten.eu).

Topten is a service that supports the market for energy efficient products. It aims at making energy efficient products the first choice for consumers, by offering them a user-friendly tool for product comparison and selection. The key element is an online information platform for consumers presenting the most energy efficient appliances currently available in various product categories, including household appliances, office equipment, consumer electronics and cars. Information on energy consumption and performance of products as well as several other characteristics (i.e. brand, model, price, picture) is provided. Product data is based on labels and standardized declarations as well as tests from accepted well-known institutions. The service is independent of manufacturers and retailers.

**Consortium**

The project is co-ordinated by the Agence de l’Environnement et de la Maitrise de l’Energie (ADEME). The other 19 project partners are:

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| **Project Partners** | **Country** |
| Austria: Austrian Energy Agency | AT |
| Belgium: Bond Beter Leefmilieu Vlaanderen vzw, | BE |
| Croatia; REGEA, | HR |
| Czech Republic: SEVEn, o.p.s | CZ |
| France: Guide Topten | FR |
| Finland: Motiva Oy | FI |
| Germany: Oeko-Institut e.V. | DE |
| Germany: Wuppertal Institute | DE |
| Germany: ICLEI, European Secretariat | DE |
| Greece: WWF Greece | GR |
| Italy: WWF Italia Onlus | IT |
| Lithuania: LNCF, consumer federation | LT |
| Luxemburg: Oeko-Zenter, asbl | LU |
| Norway: Norges Naturvernforbund | NO |
| Poland: FEWE Polish Foundation for Energy Efficiency | PL |
| Portugal: Quercus | PT |
| Romania: ICEMENERG | RO |
| Spain: ADENA / WWF | ES |
| Sweden: Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, | SE |
| United Kingdom: Keep Britain Tidy | UK |

**Contact**

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The goal of the Euro-Topten-Max Steering Committee is to gather organisations which can bring valuable experience to the project on specific aspects and/or which will multiply the communications opportunities for Topten, but that cannot join the Topten project as IEE partners for various reasons. Involving these organisations has proven very useful in developing effective communications approaches and in cooperating on product testing issues, for example.

It had been planned that Steering Committee members should be able to join two Euro-Topten Max meetings over the project's duration – according to the central themes of the meeting, but that, however, members of the Steering Committee would be welcome to join other project meetings, at their own expense.

The Euro-Topten Max Steering Committee is of particular importance (the project cannot afford to pay for their time but the fact that their travel was reimbursed was a very good incentive for them to participate in the Steering Committee):

* In the past it allowed to welcome new organisations that eventually became project partners, such as Portugal, Spain, Luxembourg, Croatia and Sweden which created their own Topten project, or ICLEI which joined the Committee because of its interest in efficient product and eventually became a partner in charge of helping the Topten teams to structure their activity around public procurement at the national level.
* More importantly, the Steering Committee allowed to include in all developments 2 crucial organisations from Switzerland: the inventors of the Topten concept, www.topten.ch, which shared all of its experiences and best practices with the European network, and WWF CH which supported many WWF offices to join the Euro-Topten project and which supported additional related projects, such as an evaluation of the Topten project, the production of the Topten Global reports, etc.

Becoming a Steering Committee member is the easiest way to have a look in the project and be aware of the amount of work to build up a Topten website, benefiting from the feedback of the project’s partners, without any pressure of success. On the one hand there is no contractual commitment with the European Commission which means no obligations, but on the other hand there is no payment for the heavy work, buying product data, etc. Only the travel costs to join the meetings were taken care of by the Euro-Topten Max project.

During the project, the Euro-Topten Max project has welcomed 3 different types of Steering Committee members:

* Newcomers who are willing to develop a website
* Organisations who already have a Topten-like website and want to exchange experiences without obligations, or wanted to be part of the project but could not for various reasons
* Organisations intending to support the Euro-Topten project with their own expertise and / or willing to collaborate with the Topten network on a specific topic.

For newcomers, the coordination team provided specific trainings (and sometimes dedicated meetings) to explain the Topten daily work and introduce the Topten charter and principles. As mentioned above, this worked very well for Quercus (Portugal), WWF Spain, Oekozenter (Luxembourg), dena and Oekoinstitut (Germany), who joined the Topten family at the time of the Euro-Topten project (2006 - 2008) as a Steering Committee member and became partners of the next project. The same happened to Sweden SSNC and Reggae (Croatia) later on.

For organisations with a Topten-like website, such as Topten Switzerland and dena this time, the coordination team included them in all relevant discussions to benefit from their experience undertaken at the national level.

For supporting organisations, such as ICLEI in the past who eventually became a Topten IEE partner, or WWF CH, the coordination team provided dedicated slots in the meeting programmes and exchange contact details and ideas on cooperation projects.

In the future, we plan to involve more external experts and invite them to provide input to the Topten network, for example experts in digital communication and in digital marketing (to check on the solutions we want to adopt to increase professionalism in cooperating with retailers), from manufacturer unions (to check on new ideas), etc.

To date the Steering Committee has the following members:

* Denkstatt (Bulgaria) as a potential newcomer
* Topten.ch (Switzerland) and dena (Germany) as organisation with a Topten-like website
* WWF CH as a supporting organisation
* Contacts were made with a potential member from Hungary during the eceee conference where a specific meeting was held in 2013.

The relation with Denkstatt was very promising at the beginning but due to financial problems unfortunately they could not pursuit the project to build up a website. Indeed, a critical issue for a Steering Committee member is to look for a sustainable funding. Without at least seed funding, it is impossible to create and maintain a Topten website.

Topten.ch is the creator of Topten first launched in 2000 and of the Topten International Group (TIG) together with SOWATT. Being based in Switzerland, they could not be a formal partner in the Intelligent Energy Europe projects, but they are an essential piece of the European Topten network as they are the oldest and one of the largest Topten websites, with a lot of experience and ideas that they are testing as a pioneer before the Topten network would follow (fortunately, they will become former partners under the H2020 programmes, which accept Swiss organisations).

The team from Topten.ch is also responsible for the pan-European website Topten.eu - Best products of Europe. On this platform the most energy efficient products available in Europe are displayed on the product lists. The Topten.eu product lists and selection criteria serve as an important source of information for national Topten teams. Especially when adding a new product category national, they can use the product lists from Topten.eu as a starting point.

In this context, the Topten.ch team was informing the Euro-Topten Max partners in regular mailings about updated or new product lists, tightened selection criteria or new, innovative models. Eric Bush, director of Topten.ch, is part of the Euro-Topten Max coordination team.

The Topten.ch team further provided technical support to the Euro-Topten Max partners: e.g. by informing about new standards and labels, with tools to calculate the Energy Efficiency Index (EEI) for the new Energy Labels for washing machines, dishwashers and tumble driers, or by answering any technical questions.

Topten.ch is also very much involved in TIG, a global, independent, not-for-profit network of national organizations promoting the most energy efficient appliances, electronics, building components, and motor vehicles online in their respective markets. Its mission is to mitigate climate change by catalysing market transformation.

dena participated in the 4th and 5th Euro-Topten Max meetings. dena wanted to join the project as a partner, but it was too late when they made a decision. They run "Topten-like" website called Toppgeräte. They were a former partner in the Euro-Topten Plus project. They came as a Steering Committee member to 2 meetings to benefit from the exchange of experiences with the other countries having a website, how to approach manufacturers, retailers, and ideas regarding communication.

WWF Switzerland is a long lasting supporter of the Topten concept: it has participated in its launched in Switzerland and made it possible for several WWF offices in Europe (but also in China and the USA, and now in Latin America) to participate in the Euro-Topten Projects. It also helped in concluding a partnership between WWF and Topten at the Global level. It does not only use its financial resources to support Topten but also its communication impact (when the Panda logo is involved) and resources to help the Topten project evolve and find funding sources. For example, it supported an evaluation of the Topten project and produced the Topten global reports for 3 consecutive years (Topten annual report 2012, <http://www.topten.eu/uploads/File/Topten-global-annual-report-2012.pdf> and Topten Global Annual Report 2013 http://www.topten.info/uploads/File/Topten\_AnnualReport\_2013.pdf)

Beyond active participation in the project meetings, the Steering Committee members have undertaken the following activities.

**Topten.ch**

**2012**

Work with retailers

* In March 2012, VDE, the Association for Electrical, Electronic & Information Technologies and Topten started the cooperation on behalf of consumers in the European market.
* Retailer links from product list direct to retailer shops: Starting with coffee machines, vacuum cleaners and TVs, the retailer logos with direct link to their online shops are implemented on topten.ch. The Euro-Topten group will learn from this work and first results for its future activities.

Website

* New products in „professional refrigerators“ for topten.ch and topten.eu
* 2012, Cooling Appliances with A++ and A+++ were on the market and listed on topten.ch. For Topten.eu, the limit for A+++ could be reached during 2012.
* New category of air dehumidifier are selected and listed on topten.ch.
* Criteria’s for lamps were tightened, also for Computer Monitors, max allowed on values are lower than in 2011 as for printing advices, more restrictions are included.
* The product lists on topten.eu are used as a basis by the Euro-Topten Max partners who can ask questions on technical issues.

Testing

* Testing of efficiency of different cooking methods at S.A.L.T.
* Testing of set top-Boxes together with VDE and Swiss TV programme „Kassensturz“
* Together with HSLU (University of Lucerne) a testing method was implemented and producers can test their products can test their products to be able to be on the list ( for example for air dehumidifier)

Public procurement

* The concept of a leaflet for procurement was proposed to the Euro-Topten Max partners staring with cold appliances „Professionelle Beschaffung: Energieeffiziente Kühlgeräte“

Communication

* „Kassensturzsendung“ (18. September 2012). (TV)
* „Espresso-Sendung“ (18. September 2012). (Radio)
* Leaflet for washing and drying in apartment houses are produced in August 2012
* Lessons learnt on communication, especially with the media, were shared with the Euro-Topten Max partners

Work on EU level

* Topten gives advices to the EU-Regulations, concerning standby-regulation and coffee machines. More infos here: ww.topten.eu/english/recommendations/recommendations\_coffee

Work on international level India

2012, some research for feasibility for Topten India were made. Starting of Topten India is foreseen in 2015

**2013**

Website

* Cooling Appliances with A++ and A+++ were on the market and listed on topten.ch. from 2013 only A+++ models are listed
* New label on Tumbler, also condensation class is relevant. We start with declaration A++/B, minimal requirement from October 2013

Public procurement

* In Switzerland, there is a promotion programme for professional refrigerators. This will last until mid 2016 The leaflet is translated in French (see above)

Communication

* New Recommendations for „cool washing 20°”, German and French, leaflet for Migros staff also translated in French
* EEDAL Conference 2013: Paper and presentation „Cold Washing“

**Dena**

**2012**

The Toppgeräte database was extended with a comparison function. Users have the opportunity to compare their own equipment with high-efficiency appliances. The expected electricity cost savings over 10 years are shown.  
  
A smartphone application was provided that accesses the Toppgeräte database. Using the application, customers can check at the point of sale whether the chosen device is energy efficient or whether there are more efficient appliances on the market.  
  
**2013**

Cooperation with the price comparison portal “billiger.de” was established. Through an interface the most cheap on the market (online and stationary) price appears for each appliance of the Topgeräte database.

In 2014

In 2014, a tool was provided indicating users of the Topgeräte database, the so-called “cash-back” promotions, for example when municipal utilities offer a rebate to their customers of 50 to 100 € if they buy a high-efficient household appliances

**WWF CH**

**2012**

Cooperation with the University of St Gallen for the development of an impact assessment methodology: “Topten International: Developing comparable measures to evaluate impact on market transformation towards energy efficient products”,

This methodology supported the production of the web-visitor feedback survey undertaken in the Euro-Topten Max project.

Production of the Topten global annual report 2011 and 2012 in which the Topten European activities are reported and disseminated

Coordination of WWF offices for Topten collaboration

Funding and coordination of the Topten Global meeting in Zurich in 2010 and Washington DC in 2011

**2013**

Production of the Topten global annual report 2013 in which the Topten European activities are reported and disseminated

Together with TIG, support for an Experience Exchange from Topten China to Topten UK for two months, during which Topten UK won a Google Grant for AdWords

Coordination of WWF offices for Topten collaboration

Funding and coordination of the Topten Global meeting in Beijing

Annex

Letters of the euro-Topten Max Steering Committee







