



Report on Dissemination Activities (months 19-42)

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Topten ACT aims to transform the European market of energy-using products towards higher energy efficiency. Topten ACT identifies the top energy-efficient products in 16 European countries, and makes this information available to consumers and large buyers on tailored national websites. The top models in different product categories (such as household appliances, lighting, office equipment, consumer electronics, cars) are presented with comprehensive product information based on official labels and standardized declarations. Topten works with manufacturers and thus increases both the market offer and consumer demand of the most efficient products. Topten is entirely impartial and independent from manufacturers and retailers and product selection criteria is always published online. Topten ACT is supported by the European Commission's research and innovation programme Horizon 2020, and many national organisations (energy agencies, environmental and consumer organisations and research institutes). The Topten ACT project involves 17 partners in 16 European countries. It is coordinated by ADEME (Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise de l'Energie). More information and access to all national websites on the European site: www.topten.eu

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Background

Topten ACT, through its network of 17 European partners, provides listings of the most energy efficient household products on the market, as well as cars and professional energy-using products. It aims to both educate consumers on the benefits of upgrading to more efficient models, and facilitate actual purchases of listed products by forming partnerships with retailers.

Each national partner was tasked with a variety of dissemination strategies to promote national websites and the Topten initiative, as well as best practice in energy efficiency in general, in the media, online, and through competitions and events. This report, covering months 19-42 of the project (September 2016 - August 2018), gives details of these activities, covering:

- Experiences of the different strategies
- Best practice examples of dissemination
- Challenges and barriers encountered to engagement

This report summarises partners' activities and numbers reached, with key dissemination examples detailed.

Top Level Dissemination Figures

Number of articles

Overall, Topten ACT partners achieved over 550 pieces of coverage in months 19-42, with 55 press releases and 27 newsletters put out. This resulted in a total of over 1,000 pieces, 90 press releases and 50 newsletters during the entire project, broken down as follows:

Type	Months 1-18	Months 19-42	Total
Print article	211	244	468
Web article	192	246	425
TV appearance	12	18	30
Radio slot	17	16	33
Newsletter	23	27	50
Press release	35	55	90
Other	10	19	31
Paper	12	7	19
Total	512	632	1,144

Estimated reach of media dissemination¹, entire project

Media type	Estimated reach
Print media and web articles, newsletters, papers, other	122,362,468
TV	13,104,000
Radio	3,238,167
Social media	1,672,796
Total	140,377,431

Estimated cost of media dissemination

At the start of the project, partners in Switzerland, Germany, Spain, France, Italy and Poland estimated the equivalent cost of their media coverage. It was estimated that for the 6 partners monitoring this, that equivalent media coverage would be worth around €2.1 million per year. Estimates calculated showed this to be lower than expected, at around €1.5m per year. However,

¹ See Appendix for explanation of assumptions of estimated media reach.

this is still a significant figure and measurement of the added value of the project, when considering the cost to reach this audience through advertising means.

Partner	Estimated cost of coverage	% of media pieces where coverage could be estimated	Estimated amount for all articles
Switzerland	€ 307,670	26%	€ 1,475,006
Germany	€ 1,874,109	46%	€ 2,883,777
Spain	€ 147,264	70%	€ 191,602
France	€ 364,140	98%	€371,648
Italy	€ 267,794	61%	€ 371,259
Poland	€ 6,800.00	96%	€ 7,092
Total estimated cost of coverage			€ 5,300,384
Average per year			€ 1,514,396

Dissemination Responsibilities

Partners were originally assigned dissemination strategies to undertake as a minimum, but these were adapted to national context as the project continued and opportunities were identified. Activities detailed in the amended grant agreement are detailed below. Additionally, several partners carried out activities beyond these.

Partner dissemination activities

	AT	BE	CH	CZ	DE	ES	FR	IT	LT	LU	NO	PL	PT	RO	SE	UK
Journalists	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓			✓		✓			✓
Press releases	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Social Media	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓
SEO	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				
Newsletters	✓	✓			✓							✓		✓	✓	
Conferences						✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		
Videos/TV					✓	✓			✓				✓			
Competitions	✓					✓			✓			✓				
Partnerships		✓					✓							✓		

Activities by partners further to this included:

Further activity	Partners
Journalists	ES, DE, LU, PL, SE,
Press Releases	FR, PL, RO, LT
Social Media	CZ, LU, DE
SEO	CH
Newsletters	PT
Conferences	UK, SE
Videos/TV	FR, CH
Competitions	UK
Partnerships	DE, CH

Building a network of journalists

Building on the first project period, partners continued to engage journalists in months 19-42. During this period:



- 4 partners reached out to over 20 journalists
- 3 partners made contact with 10-20 journalists
- 1 partner reported fewer than 10 interactions with journalists

A wide range of publications covered Topten and related energy efficiency topics. Sections of the media that showed the most interest included lifestyle and home publications, which were cited by over 80% of partners as an engaged media platform. Over half of partners fed back that daily news outlets showed interest in Topten. Guide Topten, Eliante and SSNC also were covered in energy and green media publications. Content that referenced Topten was varied - common topics, explored in more detail below, included:

- Advice on saving energy in the home, related to buying more efficient products
- Advice on sustainable living
- Recognition of manufacturers and products that displayed high efficiency
- Test methods for energy labelling, trust in environmental claims of products
- Updates in EU eco-design and energy labelling regulations, and the effect on the consumer

Topics of interest to the media

Partners reported that journalists found some product types more interesting than others as the subject for stories. Over 80% of partners surveyed reported interest from the media on lighting. White goods (reported by over 70% of partners) and electronics (over 40% of partners) were reported as having the next highest interest level for the media.

Topten Switzerland, AEA and Guide Topten engaged with journalists on professional refrigeration; whilst this was outside the consumer demographic, this is an important channel for influencing this particular market. Achieving coverage in the trade press for this product type was considered a good result for the projects communications, as this can be expensive. As a product group with relatively large scope to improve in efficiency, there may be further opportunity to raise awareness of energy savings for commercial and professional refrigeration.

An interesting observation was the lack of media engagement on energy efficiency related to connected and IoT (internet of things) devices such as routers, connected home hubs, smart light bulbs and appliances, soundbars and virtual assistants (such as the Amazon Echo). These product types are generally not areas of focus for Topten website categories, but are popular products for the mainstream press as well as technology and home publications, although product features are often seen to be of greater interest to the media than energy saving aspects. Whilst this may be an area where projects such as Topten can influence in future, given the current share of emissions attributed to computing and data servers, at the current time partners found appliances, electronics and lighting to be of higher interest to the media than these newer product types when discussing energy use.

Five partners reported that products subject to changes in eco-design requirements were of particular interest to journalists, such as vacuum cleaners (limits for input power were lowered from 1600W to 900W in September 2016) and lighting (halogen spotlights were phased out in September 2016 and non-directional halogen lamps in 2018). EST's press release on the 2018 halogen phase-out was picked up by 6 of the main UK national newspapers, with 5 of these referencing Topten.

Partners in Germany, the UK and France and also reported receiving media enquiries related to energy label test methods, in particular where there was suspected circumvention or 'gaming' of test procedures, or where test methods were considered non-reflective of real-life conditions.

As a general theme, partners reported that mainstream news publications preferred to cover energy-using products in the context of how they directly affected readers' day to day lives, particularly if it was perceived consumers might be impacted in a negative way. Cost savings were often of greater interest than energy savings, with Topten generally quoted as a source of data or for an opinion, rather than the subject of the story. However, a number of partners also achieved coverage in environmental publications that addressed energy efficiency policy as the topic of articles, often profiling Topten sites more directly.



Minimal coverage was reported by partners on the rescaling of the energy label and product database. AEA provided an update on the label revision for specialised media, and SEVEN were consulted for a half-page newspaper article on ‘The Future of Energy Labels’. AEA reported that it was not feasible at the current time to provide a strong message on the benefits of the legislation – experiences suggest that this topic is not yet ‘media-ready’.

The tone of pieces

Partners were surveyed on how they perceived the tone of pieces that mentioned Topten, denoting articles as either ‘positive’, ‘neutral’ or ‘negative’. Overall, in months 19-42, where partners were able to categorise this, 87% of articles were reported to have had a positive tone about the project or associated topics. This was compared to a percentage of 94% in the first 18 months. Combining figures for the whole project, 90% of all articles published were described as positive by partners.

Over the entire project, the tone of articles was broadly positive when it came to energy saving in the home and the role that more efficient products play, but the second half of the project saw more negative articles, with eco-design legislation the most common topic. AEA, SEVEN and EST reported that whilst many publications (often public and broadsheet media) were balanced and unbiased in their reporting, there were several instances seen of sensationalist reporting (often from an anti-EU perspective) from the tabloid press on this subject. In the UK, against the backdrop of Brexit, EST reported 5 articles covering eco-design changes for vacuum cleaners and halogen lamps negatively, in some cases publishing information that used incorrect comparisons or could be considered misleading. EST also noted that the 2018 non-directional halogen phase-out appeared to attract much more negative reporting nationally, compared to the 2016 halogen spotlight phase-out.

However, such articles did present the opportunity to counter some of these opinions and promote the benefits of more efficient products, which ultimately enabled better coverage opportunities for Topten. EST saw web sessions increase by 48% between July and August 2018, largely due to mentions of Topten UK in mainstream news coverage of the halogen phase-out.



Examples of negative press coverage from the UK's tabloid press related to the 2018 non-directional halogen lamp phase-out.

Successes

In terms of exposure, some of the best examples of media coverage for Topten in months 19-42 were as follows:

- Topten Italy was featured in a full page article on lighting in *Donna Moderna*, a consumer magazine with round 270,000 readers
- Guide Topten (FR) was featured in a full page, general energy advice article in *60 Millions de Consommateurs*, a consumer publication with around 600,000 readers
- Topten Norway was referenced in a full-page ‘green living’ feature in *Us Over 60*, which has around 290,000 readers

- The new website for Topten Portugal was profiled on the website of Jornal de Notícias, one of Portugal's largest national newspapers, with a circulation of around 75,000.

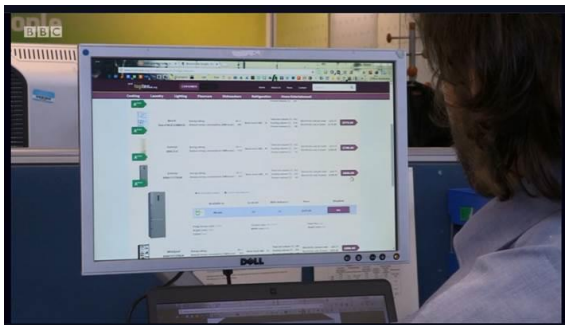
In terms of shorter pieces that reached a large audience, highlights included:

- As a result of a press release on the energy consumption of American style fridge freezers, Topten UK was referenced in a piece in The Metro, a free UK newspaper with 3.1 million daily readers
- Topten Spain saw their 'La NeverA+++ Guay' (The Cool Refrigerator) competition advertised in Supertele, a newspaper with around 40,000 readers

Seven partners were also able to gain TV coverage during months 19-42, resulting in a total of 18 appearances. These were mainly on news programmes, including national news. SEVEN achieved two pieces of coverage mentioning Topten on major Czech news channels with over 770,000 viewers.

In Portugal, Quercus gained continued coverage through the news environmental section *Minuto Verde*, with 5 separate appearances covering lighting, air conditioners, vacuum cleaners, washing machines and a demonstration of the new website. *Minuto Verde* generally has over 400,000 viewers. These were highly effective in driving visitors to the website – Quercus reported that one particular appearance resulted in around 1,300 web hits on that day, accounting for 42% of the month's visitors.

EST appeared on the UK daytime consumer affairs show *Rip-off Britain* (average of 1.17 million viewers) to talk about the energy efficiency and test methods of refrigerators, enabling Topten to be featured in the broadcast.



(Left) Topten featured on Rip Off Britain in the UK, and Minuto Verde in Portugal (right)

As was seen in the first half of the project, radio continued to be a strong channel to promote the project, with 16 broadcasts in six countries featuring or mentioning Topten. Two appearances of note took place in the Czech Republic, with one piece on the national Czech Radio news (reaching around 1 million listeners) discussing the 2018 halogen lamp phase-out. A second on the *Káva o čtvrté* (Coffee at Four) program on Radio 2 consisted of a one-hour show solely on the topic of household lighting, interviewing SEVEN's Michal Stasa and giving Topten CZ exposure to an audience of around 360,000 listeners.

WWF Spain gained coverage for Topten in 8 radio pieces including a 25-minute slot on *Servimedia radio* which reached an audience of over 54,000.

Challenges

In terms of whether interactions with journalists yielded a story, partners experienced a relatively low success rate. According to over 55% of partners surveyed, fewer than half of interactions resulted in stories; only two partners (Austria and Germany) reported a conversion rate over 50% for interactions achieving coverage.

As was informed in the interim report, energy efficiency remains a fairly inaccessible, niche topic for many non-specialist news outlets, and journalists in some cases reported receiving such a high



volume of press releases that energy efficiency was not a priority topic. Quercus and AEA reported that it was often necessary to simplify information and avoid technical language to maintain the interest of journalists. SEVEN and Oeko Institute reported it was difficult to engage journalists on a new energy-related theme or subject, with journalists often keen to stick to their original thematic focus, or more established home energy and policy topics.

In one case, EST reported an interaction with a technology magazine interested in the energy performance of soundbars and home cinema equipment, that was keen to publish an article. However, without a Topten website category or a suitable framework to develop one quickly, EST was unable to provide enough information to generate an article. A learning from this could be that partner's development of categories should attempt to consider current trends of popular energy-using product types as well as more traditional ones, even if eco-design and energy labelling requirements are not in place – soundbars and games consoles would be a good example of this. However, this may also prove difficult if there is insufficient reliable energy performance data available.

Another difficulty encountered was a lack of reliable sales figures for products. Journalists were in several cases interested in how sales of the different energy classes of products compared, but often partners did not have access to sales figures (from organisations such as GFK) to be able to quantify the cost and energy savings between classes on a macro level.

Writing Press releases

Topten partners put out 55 press releases during the second project period. Partners cited the following events and times of year as key moments when they wrote press releases:

- Christmas/Black Friday (IT, UK)
- Sporting events such as 2016 Olympics and 2018 World Cup (IT, UK, FR)
- Changes in eco-design/energy labelling legislation (AT, UK, PT, FR)
- Launch of new website (PT, FR)
- Launch of competition (PL)
- Product category update (PT)

Partners in Italy and Sweden reported success with a 'seasonal' approach to press releases. With Europe experiencing one of the hottest summers on record, content from these partners on air conditioning received increased coverage numbers from news outlets. In the UK, EST received coverage related to the energy efficiency of refrigerators prior to Black Friday and Christmas, as did Guide Topten in France on TVs prior to the 2018 World Cup.

Several partners moved to the new website design in the second half of the project, with partners in Switzerland, Portugal and France receiving strong coverage on this. In Portugal, Quercus reported this topic resulted in coverage in 6 of the main national newspapers' websites in August 2018, which more than doubled their visitors compared to the previous month.

Increasing web visibility on search engines

Successes

WWF Spain reported successful activity to increase not only the quantity of visitors, but also the 'quality'. This included:

- Improving the site's ranking against certain search terms, such as "energy efficiency", "energy label" and "domestic appliance"
- Reducing robot visitors, thus enabling a better picture of users and their behaviours
- Optimisation of the load speed, and improving the compatibility of the site on tablets and mobile devices.



WWF Spain reported these changes had a gradual effect, but made an improvement. Between 2015 and 2017 Topten Spain saw a significant increase in pages viewed and time on site, and a decrease in average bounce rate from 85% to 69% in the second period. Topten Switzerland also reported that optimising search terms was one of their better SEO strategies.

Other strategies employed by partners involved partnering with other platforms to increase outbound links. Oeko Institute reported some success collaborating with the app ecoGator² to link to products on their website, and AEA leveraged links with Klimaaktiv³ to increase web traffic.

Most partners reported conducting essential platform maintenance to improve search engine rankings. Fixing broken links, updating sitemaps to improve page indexing, ensuring content was regularly updated, and modernising website designs (including making websites mobile enabled) were all reported by partners as necessary to maintain visitor numbers through search engines.

In particular, the move by eight Topten partners to new website software was key to maintaining search engine position. Rankings are generally higher for more modern and recently updated platforms, and most partners were using platforms that were over 5 years old at the mid-point of the project. The new websites were fully mobile enabled, which has been an important aspect of SEO since the 2015 'Mobilegeddon'⁴ ranking algorithm change, which further optimised the position of such sites. In May 2017, only 9 out of the Topten EU network's 17 sites were mobile-friendly, with this number increasing to 13 by the end of the project.

As shifts to the new website happened relatively late in the project for some partners, the full benefit of the new website in terms of visitor numbers was not able to be completely realised during the project period. Partners did generally see that once the new software and website front end was live, and any early stage problems fixed, that web hits did increase due to the superior functionality, look and feel, and faster load times. For example, Guide Topten reported an interesting observation that product listing pages became their most popular pages following the upgrade, when previously the text-based recommendation pages had received the most visitors, according to analytics data.

Challenges

Some partners experienced an initial drop in web visits after installing the new software. EST, Eliante and SEVEN actually saw their web hits drop initially by around half compared to the previous month after installing the new software, with the main issue being broken links and page indexing. Ultimately problems were fixed relatively quickly, but moving to new websites, despite being a longer term improvement, did initially reduce web visitors in the short term in these cases. In addition, for some partners (including Guide Topten) intending to move to the new website software, this delayed the possibility to perform SEO activities on current websites, whilst prioritising the 'go-live' for the new site.

Two partners gave feedback on using Google Adwords, reporting mixed success. Eliante reported that whilst it increased web visitors, the quality of visitor was significantly decreased (i.e. more robot visitors). And whilst FEWE did report an increase in web hits as a result, this was not considered significant.

Most partners using social media accounts did link these to websites but on the whole reported that social media, whilst a good general communications tool, was not a strong driver of web hits. Ultimately, whilst some SEO strategies were deemed effective by partners, and ensuring basic maintenance was shown to be important, other communication activity such as press releases, competitions, links to rebate programmes and increasing the number of outbound links to Topten sites were considered better strategies by partners to increase web visits.

² <http://www.myeconavigator.eu/mobile-app/the-mobile-app-ecogator/>

³ <https://www.klimaaktiv.at>

⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobilegeddon>

Competitions for consumers and manufacturers

Partners tasked with competition activity continued this action in the second half of the project.

- FEWE ran three competitions, two for boiler manufacturers and one for window manufacturers rewarding the most efficient products
- WWF Spain ran a consumer competition about refrigeration, consisting of an interactive photo competition on social media. Entrants were asked to send in pictures of their fridge, with WWFs selecting their favourite (in terms of magnets and pictures on the appliance). This helped them engage a younger demographic and engage consumers on appliance efficiency. Prizes consisted of a folding bike and a solar backpack.
- EST ran two consumer competitions in the UK, one giving away an energy monitor, the second offering LED filament lightbulbs and a retailer voucher for energy saving products
- AEA ran a competition aimed at Environmental Ministry staff through the ecoGator app, related to energy efficiency behaviour change
- LNCf ran a competition for local product manufacturers, rating their most efficient products

Overall, partners reported this activity to be a positive driver for developing relationships with manufacturers and retailers. In Poland, FEWE promoted their competition activity strongly, conducting an awards ceremony and producing a video of the event. The Polish Government noticed the activity, enabling FEWE to present the results during two meetings, including one with the Ministry of Environment. This further triggered the opportunity for FEWE to meet with further Government and Regulatory bodies to discuss issues related to compliance and market surveillance. Thus, Topten provided a useful vehicle to enable improvement in policy delivery. The Ministry of Environment also was made aware of FEWE's Topten lists and product catalogues as a useful tool for municipalities.



(Left) FEWE's 2017 competition for efficient windows. (Right) WWF Spain's photo competition in November 2017.



Competitions were also an effective tool to increase web hits. WWF Spain saw a six-fold increase in web hits as a result of the competition in November 2017, and EST's competition in February 2017 caused web hits to double (both figures as compared to the previous month).

24th January 2017

Win an OWL micro+ energy monitor in our competition

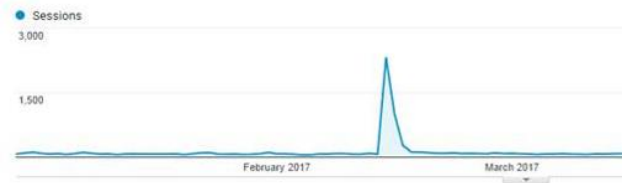
If you're trying to get your electricity bills under control, knowing how much energy you're using in real time can help.

Topten UK has teamed up with Ecotopia to offer the chance to win an OWL micro+ energy monitor from their energy saving product range. See how making small changes at home and upgrading to more efficient products can instantly save you money.



Ecotopia is one of Topten UK's partner retailers, stocking several of the energy saving LED bulbs in our lighting section. You can also check out their website for a range of eco-friendly products for your home.

[Go to the competition](#)



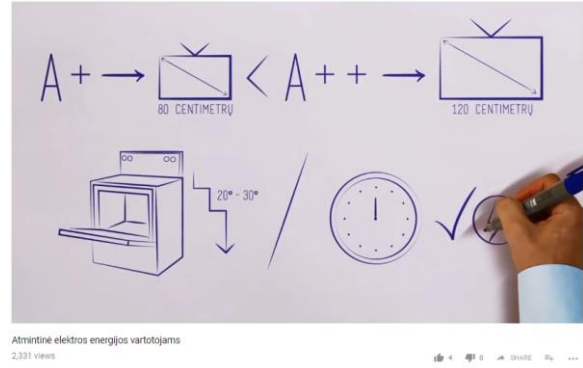
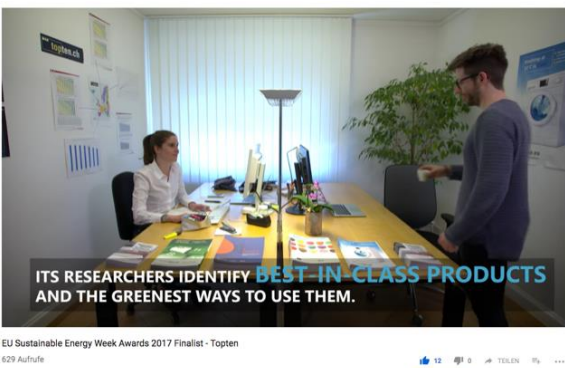
EST's competition in early 2017, giving away an energy monitor (left), and the effect on web visitors (right)

As a relatively low-cost strategy, competitions appeared to be an effective means of boosting web hits. EST received prizes free of charge from two companies who subsequently signed co-operation agreements to be partner retailers. Competition questions also enabled the opportunity to engage consumers on topics related to household energy efficiency.

Producing videos and TV advertisements

Further to TV appearances mentioned above, partners from Portugal, Lithuania, Germany and Poland produced promotional video content, mainly for online dissemination.

- FEWE produced online videos from their competitions in 2015 and 2017 for windows. These videos helped to engage and promote the companies receiving award.
- Oeko Institute were able to use a video on energy efficient lighting produced under another project through Topten channels
- LNCF published a series of videos in October 2016 related to product energy efficiency, with each film achieving over 2,300 views. The most successful was viewed just under 6,000 times.
- As part of Topten ACT's nomination for the 2017 EU Sustainable Energy Awards, Topten ACT won the opportunity to make a professional video, giving details of the network, that received 629 views and reached 2,219 people on social media. This provided useful content for consumers to better understand Topten, as well as providing content for national websites.



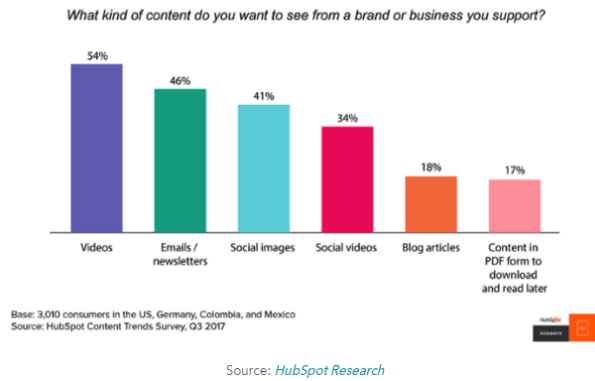
Clockwise: Videos from Poland showing Okna 2017, FEWE'S efficient windows competition; video featured on EcoTopTen in Germany advising on efficient lighting; LNCF's video series on efficient products; the video produced for Topten ACT's 2017 EUSEW nomination.

Partners generally reported videos to be a powerful tool for providing engaging content. FEWE's 2017 film received over 440 views on YouTube and provided an engaging means of informing consumers about the competition and recognising the companies participating. Some partners indicated a desire to produce more video content, which is considered more engaging in today's current news and social media trends. Showing how to choose efficient appliances for the home, and efficient day-to-day use of appliances is an area that can sometimes be better communicated by visual means than by only reading about it. As ever, cost is a factor when producing videos. Whilst fairly simple videos for social media can often be produced on a low budget, to make a professional looking film is often costlier. Oeko-Institute reported that the video they utilised cost around €6,000 to make, WWF Spain's around €1,400 and FEWE's around €1,800.

With the energy label now due to undergo a rescale, effective consumer communications on energy will be key over the next few years. Topten ACT showed that visual means of communicating on energy efficiency can be a useful tool to attract consumers' attention as well as educate on energy consumption. It would appear that there is scope for further engagement with consumers by this means (particularly a younger demographic), even if content is produced at a lower budget.

Since the project began, the general use of visual media in marketing has been reported to increase. Hubspot’s survey in 2018⁵ showed that mobile video usage has increased by nearly 10 million daily viewing minutes in the last two years, and that video was the most preferred type of content that consumers wanted to see from a brand or business they supported. Social media platform Hootsuite’s 2017 article on social media reported that tweets with videos are “six times more likely to be retweeted than tweets with photos, and three times more likely to be retweeted than tweets with GIFs”⁶.

For brands, video content is preferred



Hubspot survey figures on preferred user content.

Therefore, it is recommended that in future visual media plays a strong part in communicating energy efficiency to consumers, particularly through mobile platforms. As user preferences for accessing content change, and the use of mobile technology increases, more value should be attributed to this type of platform as its own entity, and not only as a means of driving traffic to a separate website.

Building a Social Media Presence

Several partners used social media to promote websites, as well as increase the level of general engagement with the public on household energy efficiency. The below partners set up Topten-specific social media accounts to promote the project, achieving a following as below:

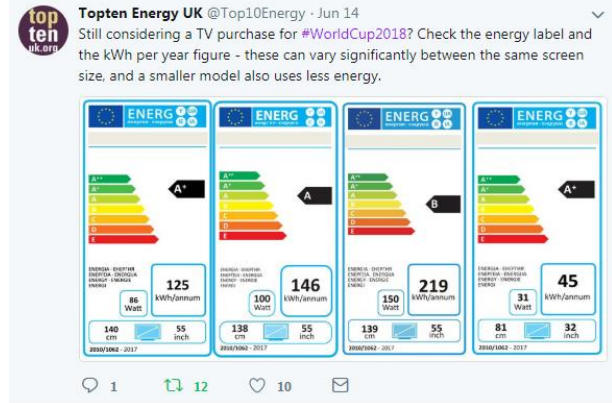
Partner	Social media channels used	Total following by end of project
AT	Facebook	2,200
CH	Facebook	367
CZ	Facebook, Twitter	1,317
DE	Twitter	292
FR	Facebook, Twitter	1,378
NO	Facebook	352
LU	Twitter	75
RO	Facebook	207
UK	Twitter	591
EU	Twitter	82
Total		6,861

Other partners also used their organisation’s social media to promote the project with WWF Spain, Eliante and Quercus among the most active partners who did not utilise a project specific media account.

In terms of content that was most effective, partners reported that infographics, videos and posts providing short energy advice gained the most engagement. Well-known contacts in the energy efficiency community (both at policy level, and those with strong media reach) did in some cases engage with partner’s social media posts (in particular on Twitter), multiplying their effect.

⁵ <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/visual-content-Marketing-strategy>

⁶ <https://blog.hootsuite.com/twitter-statistics/>



Clockwise: Social media posts from Guide Topten, Topten UK, Topten CZ and Topten CH that achieved strong engagement

Presenting Topten at conferences, seminars, exhibitions and fairs

Partners continued activity to present Topten in person at events in the second half of the project. The majority of events attended or organised by partners were described as being mainly aimed at consumers. Partners also presented at events addressing government and municipalities, schools, industry and policy makers.

Examples of note included:

- WWF Spain presented Topten at CONAMA, the largest environmental conference in Spain, operating a kiosk for the full three days of the conference. This enabled WWF Spain to demonstrate the Topten website and provide energy saving advice to delegates. Over 7,000 members of the public and professionals attended the conference.
- FEWE were particularly active in this capacity in Poland, representing Topten as either organiser, presenter or delegate at 23 fairs, seminars and conferences. These included the competitions for window and boiler manufacturers whose products made the lists and addressing municipalities and those involved in public procurement. In particular, FEWE's Topten stand at the 3rd Energy Day in Katowice gained strong exposure for the project among the general public, reaching around 2000 delegates.
- Topten Switzerland presented at the trade fair IGEHO in November 2017 in Basel (Switzerland), informing about Topten in general (function, product lists, neutrality) and about local and national rebate programmes based on Topten product lists. This enabled strong engagement with retailers and business procurers.
- Topten ACT in general was represented to government as part of serving on an energy-efficiency task force mandated by the parties of the Montreal Protocol, presenting a report on energy efficiency opportunities in the refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump sectors. The report was delivered to over 500 government officials from 197 countries, providing

Topten with a global platform to not only discuss energy efficiency, but also linking with the key area of refrigerant management.

- Topten Luxembourg presented workshops on the project to high schools as part of an event on energy consumption, recycling and global climate impacts.
- Topten Sweden presented the project at the Gothenburg Boat Fair, which was a useful platform as efficient boat motors was one of the most popular categories nationally.
- At the EU level, Topten ACT was nominated for the European Sustainable Energy Week award in June 2017. As a result of being a shortlisted project, the team won the opportunity to make a video, ran a social media campaign as part of the voting, and was invited to the ceremony, receiving a diploma.



(Left) Topten being presented at the National research and invention stock-exchange at the Palace of The Parliament, Romania; (middle) Eliante's Riccardo Nigro presenting Topten Italy to regional administrators, (right) Topten Sweden presented at the Gothenburg Boat Fair.



(Left) WWF Spain present Topten at CONAMA, the largest environmental congress in Spain for the general public, with over 7,000 attendees. (Right) Topten ACT receiving a diploma at the EUSEW award ceremony.

Producing Electronic newsletters, leaflets and other promotional materials

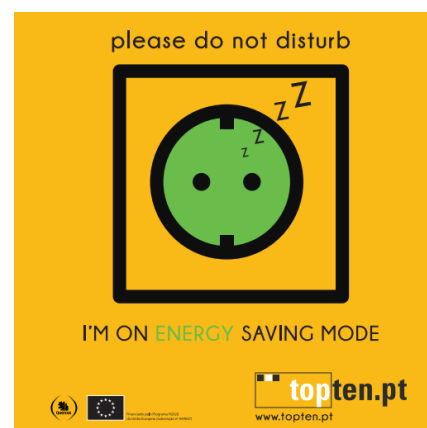
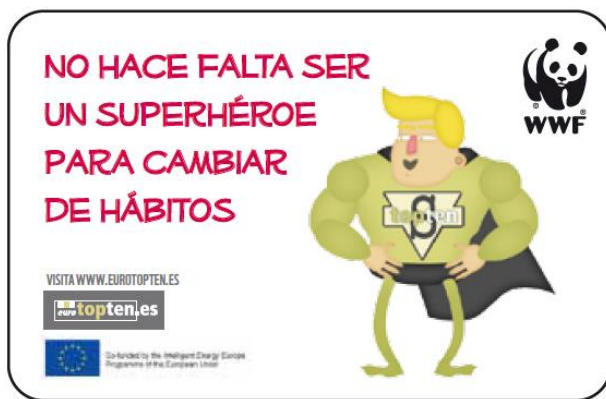
Partners produced and distributed a range of promotional materials in the second half of the project.

These included the following:

Material	Partners
Flyer with infographics	RO, PL, CH, UK
Magnets, cotton tote bags	PT
Book with tips/advice	PT
Newsletter	PT, DE, AT, RO
Stickers for Topten products	LU, CH
Posters	SE

Partners reported quite positively on the use of promotional materials. FEWE were very active in conferences and promotional material was used as a key engagement tool. Quercus reported that their approach was to ensure promotional items were actually of use to people receiving them, so as to better promote the project (and not create extra waste) – materials such as magnets and cotton tote bags were reported as being well received. Quercus also collated their input to *Minuto Verde* into a book for a schools campaign on energy saving.

Topten Switzerland developed an extensive range of POS material for rebate programmes for luminaires and fans. These were displayed in 17 stores overall, with discounts for products that carried the Topten label.



Examples of promotional material produced by the Topten ACT consortium in Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Portugal

Oeko Institute (around every quarter, to around 2,500 subscribers) and AEA (around 10 per year, to around 7,000 contacts) put out regular e-newsletters to consumers, informing of project developments.

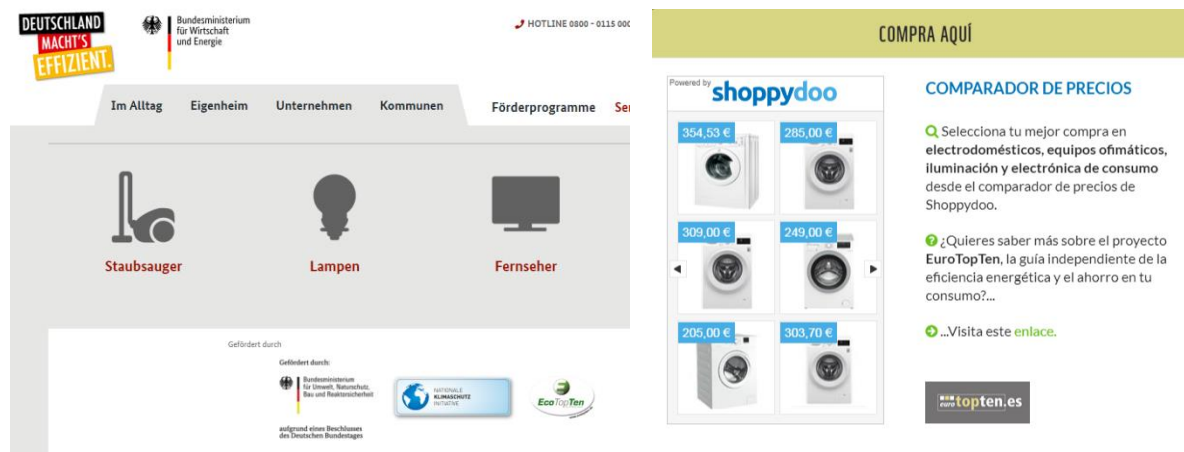
Establishing links to existing communication campaigns

Partners reported some useful partnerships with other programmes that increased the reach of national Topten activities. In Romania, ICEMENERG collaborated with the LIFE-funded project

GPPbest. Experts from Topten Romania were invited to various activities to promote Green Public Procurement in Romania, in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, and national GPP training sessions also promoted Topten. A second collaboration took place with ENERO who run the START2ACT project, promoting energy efficiency to young SMEs and startups (mainly based around office energy-using products). ENERO used Topten Romania as the main source of information for providing advice under this project.

In Germany, the National Top Runner Initiative (NTRI) of the Federal Ministry of Economics continued to collaborate with Oeko-Institute, with EcoTopten forming the basis of Top Runner's product search tool. Oeko-Institute also collaborated with the UTOPIA project (a platform for advising on sustainable consumption), as well as with co2online for a campaign on encouraging householders to understand their electricity consumption.

WWF Spain collaborated with Shoppadoo, a price comparison tool, by embedding its functionality within the Topten Spain website, displaying prices from different retailers for featured products within the site.



EcoTopTen collaboration with Top Runner in Germany (left). Topten Spain collaborated with Shoppadoo (right) to provide price comparisons for listed products.

In Switzerland, Topten continued a fruitful partnership with WWF.ch, who provided an excellent platform to promote the project and energy efficiency in general through their press releases.

For partnerships with other campaigns and projects, the ability of Topten to provide ready-to-go efficient product listings was a valuable resource. Household appliances and lighting were reported as the product types that other projects were most interested in receiving information about.

Summary of best practice activities

The second project period saw partners exceed the amount of coverage in the first period. Some of the most successful dissemination activities in the second period were as follows.

Maintaining a consistent presence in the media

Partners in Switzerland and Germany were able to achieve a strong level of exposure in the media, not only in terms of the reach of articles, but also the frequency. Oeko-Institute gained coverage for the project in every month of the second period of the project, and Topten Switzerland was featured in the media in 19 of the final 24 months. This positioned Topten as a consistent, established resource for publications to come back to for energy-related stories. In Germany, publications such as *Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Stuttgarter Zeitung* and *20 Minuten*, *Mieten & Wohnen* and *NZZ* in Switzerland were among the sources with a large readership (239,000 to 710,000) that covered Topten on a regular basis. In addition to this, both AEA and Oeko-Institute put out regular e-newsletters to a consumer audience.



In Portugal, Quercus' continued regular appearances on *Minuto Verde* helped position Topten.pt as a reliable and expert source of information for consumers on home energy use. As well as covering specific product types in detail, the appearance in August 2018 gave a full demonstration of the website for viewers and significantly boosted web hits for that month.

Individual appearances, campaigns and competitions

Topten does not have the same presence in every country for varying reasons. These may include the length of time of operation, different consumer profiles and the degree of support from government, making it difficult to achieve a consistent level of media coverage. A number of examples were seen where partners were able to achieve significant spikes in coverage through individual dissemination activities.

In the Czech Republic, SEVEN's appearances on national TV news and radio reached a wide audience, with the length of pieces bringing good exposure to the project. TV appearances reached an audience of over 550,000; the broadcast on Czech Radio 2 was for an hour, with efficient lighting and Topten CZ the sole topic and guest. 360,000 people listen to this programme, of an age demographic (over 35) that would purchase appliances and lighting.

WWF Spain's *La NeverA+++ Guay* campaign was one of the best examples of engaging a younger audience. Using social media in an interactive way with the incentive of good prizes, enabled Topten Spain to also reach people who might not otherwise be interested in energy efficiency. The competition resulted in 5,400 web hits that month, against the 2017 average of around 1,300 per month.

In the UK, EST gained important positioning for Topten UK on the 2018 halogen lamp phase-out, with coverage in 5 of the main national newspapers. Whilst the headline and tone of such articles was at times negative, in some cases these same articles quoted a number of sources in favour of the phase-out, of which Topten was one, emphasising both the environmental and economic case for more efficient lighting.

Digital dissemination

Keeping web platforms up to date to compete for search engine rankings was a necessary activity, which the project was able to achieve by moving a number of partners to newer sites in the second period.

The project also displayed a strong social media presence, not only to increase web traffic but also to discuss and advise on energy efficiency in general, with 14 dedicated Topten social media accounts in operation.

Influencing national policy implementation

In Poland, FEWE's competitions for boiler and window manufacturers were an important tool to gain industry engagement with the programme. Additionally, the competitions provided the basis for Topten PL to engage with government on the issue of compliance in labelling and testing. Following meetings with the responsible bodies, further attention was given to the testing protocols for boilers, identifying the fact that more third-party testing would improve compliance. Thus the project was able to improve the implementation of national eco-design policy in this area.

Collaborations with other programmes and platforms

Topten Switzerland's criteria formed the basis of eligibility for 22 support schemes. These enabled rebates to be received against a suite of products, including cars, appliances, fans and heat pumps, and enabled a multiplier effect for dissemination. The continued collaboration with the reinsurance company Swiss Re, where models featured on Topten UK were eligible for rebates also was a beneficial driver of traffic to the Topten UK website.



Topten Romania made excellent links on European level with their collaboration on Green Public Procurement projects, again facilitating a connection with national government.

Conclusions

Several themes reported in the dissemination activities report (D4.8) for months 1-18 were again seen in the second project period. Energy efficiency of household products continues to have a presence in the news and consumer media, and several key lessons were learned on the dissemination of the topic. It is essential that complex technical and policy-related information on energy can be broken down and applied to the lives of consumers in an accessible way. Partners who were able to do this in interactions with the media generally achieved better coverage. Projects operating in this space must be capable of effective communication of what can be a niche topic to a mainstream audience, and be able to evolve and adapt messages quickly alongside changing technologies, consumer preferences and legislative changes. In addition, future projects in this space should attempt to address the barriers seen to increased media dissemination, such as the inaccessibility of sales data.

Mainstream news appearances continued to be evident as a strong driver of visitors to Topten websites – the interest is still clearly apparent. It was pertinent that the more well-established product categories, such as appliances, remain of strong interest to media outlets, even though consumers may not change these products regularly in the home.

Lighting was shown to be perhaps the most widely discussed topic, due to it being a fast-moving technology, one that is lower-cost and bought regularly, and was subject to legislation changes at a politically sensitive time. Recommending particular lighting products can be challenging, given the large market size and varied quality, but having a clear message, trusted expertise and a consistent platform to recommend the best lamps enabled a large opportunity for Topten partners to engage in the dialogue on lighting in the months 19-42. Going forward, projects in this space should attempt to capitalise on the opportunity to lead similar discussions in this area.

As well as mainstream news appearances, an effective digital presence to disseminate this topic is key, especially if communications budgets are limited. As a medium, visual online content, that is often short in length continues its rise, and ensuring this is engaging, but also informative and accurate is an essential strategy that projects must master.

With the revision of the energy label and implementation of the EPREL database imminent, and digital platforms specified by legislation as a means for increasing the amount of information available to consumers, there has never been a more important time for effective communication on this aspect of energy saving policy. Challenges to this legislation may be encountered (as was seen with the negative press accompanying various eco-design legislative updates) which must be met with a strong message and robust evidence to maintain credibility and support for the policy.

The transition period of updating energy labels, and the early days of the new policy will be a key time to ensure that communications strategies are well prepared and informative. Several of the examples detailed in this report profile the best topics and strategies that can reach a large audience, which should be leveraged to address the next set of challenges related to communications in this area.

Appendix

Links to videos and TV appearances – months 19-42

Portugal – Minuto Verde	LED lighting Efficient washing machines Efficient air conditioners Efficient vacuum cleaners Topten.pt new website
Czech Republic	News appearance
UK	Rip-off Britain
Poland	Topten Poland Windows competition, 2017
Switzerland	2017 EUSEW Award Video
Germany	EcoTopten efficient lighting film
Lithuania	Energy efficiency videos

Events and fairs organised and attended by the project consortium – months 19-42

Partner	Role	Event name/description	Audience type	Audience size
Poland	Presenter	Information about Topten project during 2nd Energy Days in Katowice	Other	73
	Presenter	2nd Energy Days in Katowice. Promotional stand of Topten - rollup, leaflets	Other	2000
	Organiser	Award Ceremony of Topten Boilers Competition 2016 in Katowice	Retail	250
	Presenter	Information about Topten project and competition for boilers' manufacturers + rollup (Katowice, Energy Efficiency Forum infoEnergia)	Other	61
	Organiser	Award Ceremony of Topten Windows Competition 2017 in Warsaw	Retail	40
	Delegate	Information about results of Topten Windows Competition 2017 during SAPE meeting (Association "Energy and environment conservation" SAPE-Poland, FEWE is member)	Other	16
	Presenter	Boiler 5 class and Topten project for municipalities in Szczyrk	Other	19
	Presenter	Debate about low emission, 5 class boiler, presentation Topten (Katowice, Euro-Centrum).	General Public	65
	Presenter	Green public procurement, Topten criteria for energy managers in Częstochowa	Other	120
	Presenter	3rd Energy Days in Katowice. Promotional stand of Topten - rollup, leaflets	Other	2000
	Presenter	LCC in practice, Topten as source of knowledge (Public Procurement Office, Warsaw)	Policy makers	45
	Presenter	LCC in practice, Topten as source of knowledge (Public Procurement Office, Warsaw)	Policy makers	37
	Organiser	Award Ceremony of Topten Boilers Competition 2017 in Katowice	Retail	200
	Organiser	Energy management in municipalities - clear air. Workshop in cooperation with Danish Embassy. Topten was presented as source of knowledge.	General Public	50
	Presenter	LCC in practice, Topten as source of knowledge (Public Procurement Office, Warsaw)	Policy makers	100
Delegate	Information about results of Topten Windows / Boilers Competition during SAPE meeting (Association "Energy and environment conservation" SAPE-Poland, FEWE is member)	Other	16	
Portugal	Presenter	Session on Sustainability	Civil Society	57
	Presenter	Session on Energy Efficiency	Civil Society	10
	Presenter	Session on Energy Efficiency	Academic	52
	Presenter	Session on Energy Efficiency	Academic	30
	Presenter	Session on Energy Efficiency	Academic	26
	Presenter	Session on Energy Efficiency	Academic	30
	Other	Session on Energy Efficiency	Academic	15
	Presenter	Session on Energy Efficiency	Academic	50
	Other	Presentation of Green Minute book where Topten is indicated at Bookshop Buchholz in Lisbon	General Public	50
	Presentation	Session on Forests	Academic	107
	Presentation	Session on Forests	Academic	130
	Presentation	Session on Climate Change	Academic	15
	Presentation	Session on Recycling	Academic	82
	Other	Pedy paper on biodiversity	Academic	10
	Presenter	Session on Resources savings	Academic	88
Other	Dissemination of Topten.pt materials for raising awareness campaign the militaries were organising	Civil Society	20	

	Other	Guarda Office (Topten.pt materials to disseminate in their activities)	General Public	Unknown
	Other	Green Cork campaign is promoted by Quercus (Topten.pt materials to disseminate in their activities)	Academic	Unknown
Germany	Presenter	Presentation about showers in the framework of the symposium "Hot water" (Fachtagung „Warmwasser“) 30.08.2017, Verbraucherzentrale NRW, Düsseldorf	General Public	50
	Presenter	EnergyDay in Lahr/Germany ("Energietag in Lahr"), a presentation demonstrated how EcoTopten can help finding ecological products	General Public	about 50
Luxembourg	Presenter	Both OekoTopten	General Public	14000
	Presenter	local Climate Day	General Public	1500
	Presenter	Climate Week	General Public	2000
	Presenter	Festival (Oekofestival)	General Public	6500
	Presenter	Workshop "Our consumption. Influence and effects on other countries"	Academic	75
Romania	Presenter	International Conference FOREN 2016 (Costinesti, Romania)	Industry	>500
	Presenter	GPPbest project launching conference - Romanian Ministry of Environment	Policy makers	>30
	Other	International Conference "ENERGY OF MOLDOVA 2016. REGIONAL ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT." (Chisinau, Republic of Moldova)	Policy makers	>100
	Presenter	INVENTIKA 2016 - Romanian Research Invention and Innovation Show (Bucharest, RO)	Academic	>1000
	Presenter	"Increasing the energy efficiency to the consumers - From words to action on energy efficiency" (Bucharest, RO)	Industry	>50
	Presenter	"Contributions to the development of knowledge in the field of energy" (Bucharest, RO)	General Public	>50
	Delegate	"Bursa nationala a inventiilor" (Bucharest, RO)	Policy makers	>200
	Other	"National Energy Fair" (Bucharest, RO)	Industry	>100
	Other	IEAS 2017 - International Electric & Automation Show (Bucharest, RO)	Industry	>400
	Delegate	CIEM 2017 - 8th International Conference on ENERGY and ENVIRONMENT (Bucharest, RO)	Academic	>300
	Organiser	"Romanian Research in Energy" - Bucharest, Romanian National Institute for the Study of Energy Sources	Industry	25
	Organiser	Round table - "Research results for 2017: Achieved goals, weaknesses and prospects for 2018"	General Public	>50
	Other	Expo Energie 2018 (Bucharest, RO)	Industry	>300
	Presenter	"New trends in energy research and development" (Bucharest, RO)	Academic	30
	Delegate	14th WEC CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE REGIONAL ENERGY FORUM - FOREN 2018 (Costinesti, Romania)	Industry	548
	Delegate	Dissemination workshop organized by Politechnica University of Bucharest	Academic	>20
Delegate	National Seminar organized by ANRE - Romanian Energy Regulatory Authority - "The Odyssey-Mure Project - an important tool in coordinating the energy efficiency policy in Romania" – Bucharest	Other	>50	
Sweden	Other	Gothenburg Boat fair	Industry	20
WWF Spain	Presenter	CONAMA is the biggest environmental congress in Spain. Topten held a kiosk there during the three days of the Congress	General Public	7,000
UK	Presenter	Responsible Retail Conference	Retailers, Industry	80
Norway	Organiser	The Norwegian Consumer Council and our NGO had an event at Arendalsuka (Norway's largest meeting place/festival for politics) where we talked about electronics, life-cycle/planned obsolescence/ energy efficient products and our campaigns, among them energismart.no	Policy makers	150
	Presenter	The Norwegian Consumer Council had an event at Arendalsuka (Norway's largest meeting place/festival for politics) where we participated and talked about how we can work together towards a greener future. We had several topics and one of them was energismart.no	Policy makers	100
France	Presenter	Topten had a booth at the Paris city new place to discover sustainable and circular economy initiatives	Civil Society	150
Italy	Organiser	Workshop about GPP	Policy makers	50
Switzerland	Presenter	Topten, professional procurement and rebate programs for Association Green IT	Industry	15
Total estimated audience reached through events				41,357
Number of events attended or organised				66

Summary of Dissemination – months 19-42

Partner	Total	Print	Web	TV	Radio	Newsletter	Press release	Other	Paper
AT	52	20	16	1	0	15	0	0	0
CH	87	34	24	2	1	1	22	2	1
CZ	26	7	10	3	2	1	3	0	0
DE	151	141	1	1	1	6	1	0	0
ES	44	4	29	1	8	0	1	0	1
FR	47	9	31	2	0	0	0	0	5
IT	22	1	17	0	0	0	3	1	0
LT	5	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	0
LU	15	13	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
NO	17	7	9	0	0	0	1	0	0
PL	49	5	43	0	0	0	0	1	0
PT	50	0	31	7	3	4	4	1	0
RO	25	0	0	0	0	0	11	14	0
SE	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
UK	38	1	30	1	0	0	6	0	0
Total	632	244	246	18	16	27	55	19	7

Summary of Dissemination (entire project period)

Estimate of media coverage achieved – press articles

Partner	Number of Articles*	Estimated Reach
AT	93	8,210,466
BE	2	205,000
CH	124	22,018,900
CZ	33	1,811,900
DE	269	62,816,775
ES	77	7,895,509
FR	90	3,148,530
IT	88	3,888,235
LT	7	2,850
LU	26	1,447,500
NO	17	294,239
PL	91	71,830
PT	72	1,566,333
RO	46	240,344
SE	6	635,000
UK	40	8,109,851
Total	1,081	122,362,468

*Includes print media, web articles, papers (eg conference, industry), newsletters.

Estimate of media coverage achieved – TV and radio

Partner	TV		Radio	
	Number of appearances	Estimated Reach	Number of appearances	Estimated Reach
AT	1	Unknown	-	-
CH	4	1,700,000	1	450,000
CZ	3	1,611,000	3	1,360,000
DE	1	Unknown	1	Unknown
ES	1	Unknown	14	772,167
FR	5	3,523,000	1	126,000
LU	1	Unknown	6	Unknown
PL	-	-	1	Unknown
PT	13	5,100,000	4	220,000
RO	-	-	2	310,000
UK	1	1,170,000	-	-
Total	30	13,104,000	33	3,238,167

Estimate of media coverage achieved – social media

Partner	Social media		
	Platforms utilised	Followers	Estimated Reach
AT	Facebook	2,200	220,000
CH	Facebook	367	36,700
CZ	Facebook, Twitter	1,317	131,700
DE	Twitter	292	29,200
ES	Partner organisation's social media	Unknown	838,287
FR	Facebook, Twitter	1,378	137,800
IT	Partner organisation's social media	Unknown	48,470
LU	Twitter	75	7,500
NO	Facebook	352	35,200
PT	Partner organisation's social media	Unknown	29,217
RO	Facebook	207	20,700
UK	Twitter	591	129,822
Topten.eu	Twitter	82	8,200
Total			1,672,796

Assumptions

Calculation of media reach

In some cases, the number of readers of an article was known, and in others, it has been estimated from average readership figures. In reporting progress against the indicative target of 100 million media contacts, figures reported aim to give an estimation of the reach of media featuring Topten, rather than assessing exactly how many people are expected to have actually accessed the media.

To calculate the estimated figure:

- Where the number of article readers is known, this has been included in the overall estimation
- The frequency of a publication has been taken into account in estimating figures. For example, if a typical daily readership figure is available, and an article is featured in print media, the daily readership figure is taken as the 'reach'. This may result in an underestimation for web articles, as these generally remain available beyond the date of publication

- If only monthly readership figures are known, these have been corrected to give an estimate of daily readership for when an article would only have been seen on a particular day
- If an article was featured in a monthly print periodical, the figure for monthly readers is taken as the estimate of 'reach'
- TV and radio figures are reported as the average number of people who watch/listen to that programme – viewing figures for a particular episode were generally not available.

Care has been taken to avoid overestimation in quantifying figures, and it should also be noted that the audience of a significant number of coverage pieces was not able to be quantified by the project.

The estimate of persons directly reached by the project could be increased by including an approximate figure for the coverage not quantified.

Media	Number of pieces		
	Audience known	Audience estimated from readership/Viewers/listeners	Audience unknown
Press, newsletters	241	547	293
TV	0	21	9
Radio	0	22	11

The audience could not be quantified for around 30% of pieces. Increasing the figure of 140 million by a conservative amount of 20% would result in an estimate for overall media contacts reached of around 168 million.

Where figures are estimated, assuming 1 in 3 people reached actually read an article, or watch/hear a broadcast, estimated people directly accessing media featuring Topten could be around 56 million, broken down as follows:

Type	Total reach	Correction factor	Estimated people directly reached
Print and web articles	121,884,690	33%	40,221,948
Known article views	477,778	100%	477,778
TV	13,104,000	33%	4,324,320
Radio	3,238,167	33%	1,068,595
Social media	1,672,796	33%	552,022
Unknown coverage estimate	28,000,000	33%	9,240,000
Total	168,377,431		55,884,663

Estimation of social media reach

- Reach is reported here as 'impressions'
- For Italy, Portugal, UK and Spain, this has been reported from Twitter analytics data
- For other partners an estimate has been taken. The UK's Topten Twitter account had 591 followers at the end of the project. During the entire period, 129,822 impressions were recorded, an average of around 220 per follower. For other accounts, a conservative estimate has been applied, assuming 100 impressions per account follower (as Twitter followers or Facebook likes).
- To estimate people who may have been directly reached, a correction factor of 33% has been applied to the impressions figure.