

Successes and barriers



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Project partners and websites

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About HACKS

The objective of the Heating and Cooling Knowhow and Solutions (HACKS) project is to achieve market transformation for heating and cooling (HAC) appliances and improve comfort and health of European citizens.

Across the EU almost half of all buildings have individual boilers that were installed before 1992 with efficiency of 60% or less. The expected energy savings from a speedy replacement are immense.

To achieve this goal, 17 HACKS partners in 15 countries are working together, thanks to the financial support of the European Horizon 2020 programme.

After scanning market actors, current policies and most commonly used products in each country, starting from April 2020 the HACKS partners will implement involvement campaigns to raise awareness of the economic and environmental benefits brought by good HAC products and solutions:

- HACKS will motivate households equipped with old and inefficient devices – boilers, water heaters, air conditioners, certain types of boilers and stoves, etc. – to replace them with new super efficient equipment.
- In each country, partners will set-up dedicated on-line platforms to assist consumers in their purchasing process. The platforms will propose: tools to assess households' needs and provide customised information; best product lists with technical specifications; direct links to suppliers of most efficient products; and advice on how to use and maintain equipment.
- For those households who need to improve their situation because they feel too hot, too cold, or too humid but who cannot invest in new equipment or can avoid getting equipped, HACKS will propose simple and low costs solutions. It is possible to reduce energy consumption and energy bills while improving winter and summer comfort, air quality and health conditions through the installation of shading devices, thermostats, water saving taps and showerheads, etc.

Beyond households, HACKS will target all relevant stakeholders (“multipliers”) that participate in the decision-making process of consumers by setting up strategic partnerships to facilitate the purchase of energy efficient appliances. HACKS places a strong emphasis on installers but also retailers and consumer organisations because of their proximity to consumers, their capacity to involve them and bring them guidance on energy efficient equipment.

More information on the HACKS project can be found at www.topten.eu/hacks

Executive summary

The document provides an overview of HACKS' campaigns targeting multipliers across Europe over the last year and a half. It reports the main constraints and barriers and the main strengths and opportunities partners faced during that period. Examples of successful activities carried out with different types of multipliers are briefly described and illustrated. In the last chapter there is a short discussion about the multipliers' engagement process, focusing on the strategies partners found to overcome expected and unexpected drawbacks.

Last year exceptional pandemic situation created some obstacles to the development of most of activities that partners had carefully planned ahead on their multiplier involvement campaigns. Nevertheless, the efforts and strategies adopted to overcome the limitations in communication and dissemination paid off for most partners and 142 collaborations were established.

Already difficult to reach multipliers, as installers, are in the current situation even harder to engage. Due to their time and resources limitations, intermediaries had to be found to make the link between them and partners.

The pandemic situation has created a momentum for advocacy work regarding climate change, air pollution, energy efficiency, which has to be seized in collaboration with some stakeholders. Participation in EU campaigns was successful, and the same is currently occurring with the exchanges with other H2020 projects.

The way HACKS message is conveyed to consumers and multipliers had to change, in face of the circumstances, and has become more digital. This may narrow the variety of communication channels and leave out some target groups. However, it also shows online potentialities which partners are exploring and perhaps had never considered before.

Even if limited and less visible, the activities never stopped. The next project outputs, such as the HACKS calculator, the experience and capacities raised during this period and the new communication channels, will help boost dissemination and the project visibility.

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Acronyms

HAC: Heating and Cooling

1 Introduction

The success of HACKS in achieving market transformation for heating and cooling appliances lies deeply on the participation of several key stakeholders - called multipliers because they relay the HACKS' messages to their own target groups. Their wide variety of expertise, network, communication channels and connection with consumers contributes to the development of different and important activities together with the partners.

Multipliers herein described include¹ retailers, installers, national authorities, environmental organisations, utilities and housing associations, universities, professional and trade associations, professional buyers, among others. Each one has its own specific characteristics that will be brought to the partnership, such as contacts network, inputs, language, communication channels, audience and that will improve the project's capacity building. Also their expectations differ between them and require different approaches and collaboration methods and tools which partners have to take into consideration.

Retailers and installers are key actors for this project as they make the direct link between HAC products manufacturers and consumers. Their influence on both is very relevant and crucial for the project, but the technical way to engage and cooperate with each one is very distinct and challenging for installers.

National authorities and decision makers as responsible for policy design and definition of financial mechanisms, their involvement is important to boost market transformation towards more efficient HAC products on the basis of real market data.

Environmental and civil organisations support consumers decision making and have direct contact with specific special needed target groups. Their contacts network is usually very broad and organised and additionally they usually have well established projects, campaigns and communication channels where these issues can easily be integrated.

Utilities and housing associations are focused on their brand reinforcement and on their clients' satisfaction. Participation in projects like HACKS is appreciated because it is good for their image in the market. Moreover, utilities have legal obligations regarding energy efficiency.

Universities and investigation centres can provide the technical knowledge essential for the development of project specific content and activities and for the collaboration with some stakeholders. They benefit from updated market data.

Professional and trade associations, though generally not energy efficiency-oriented, may profit from the project simple language and overall reach, to promote their associates technological investments and expertise. They represent a good starting point to contact and engage retailers and installers.

Professional buyers (private and public) can profit from detailed specifications and tailored information to be used in their calls for tenders in order to reduce their operating costs. Green procurement is globally progressing at a low pace and price is still the prevalent factor in the decision making. That is why, when they exist, shining examples are important for market transformation.

At the beginning of the project, each partner has prepared a multiplier involvement campaign where they have designed a target activity plan with the identified relevant stakeholders necessary for the successful implementation of the project. This plan is in constant adaptation and reporting until the end of the project.

The following chapters describe and illustrate the main activities, successes and barriers reported by partners during the first half of the project, i.e. between September 2019 and February 2021.

¹ Consumer organisations are included in the consumer involvement campaign

2 General overview

All partners have developed activities with multipliers and engaged with new ones. However, the fact that six months after the beginning of HACKS project, a general lockdown was forced due to coronavirus pandemic had a huge impact on most of the programmed activities. The delays were inevitable and almost all partners have quoted this.

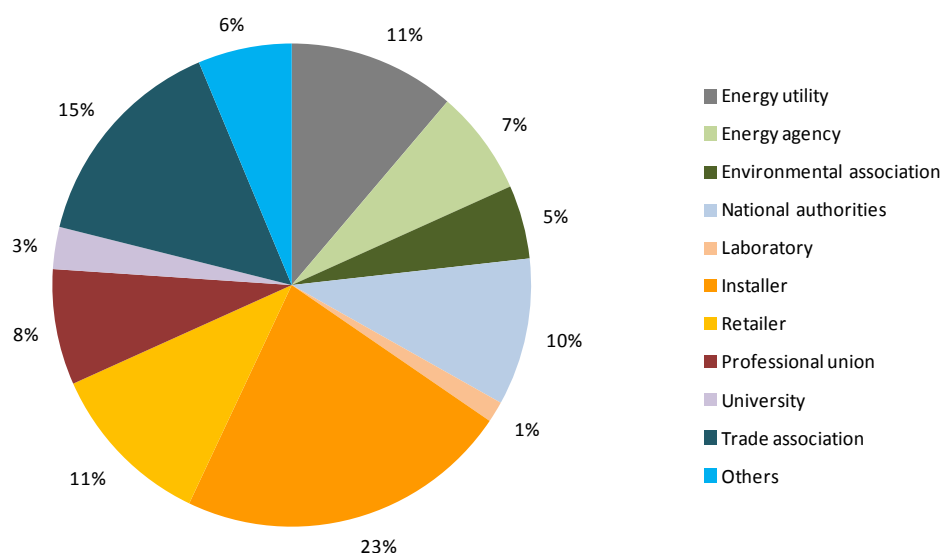
Indeed, 80% of partners admitted to have fulfilled only 50% or even less of the foreseen activities, indicated in their multiplier involvement campaign plan, during the first half of the project. These figures are explained by the fact that public meetings, participation in events, face-to-face contact campaigns were put on hold, affecting certain activities important to favour new contacts, dissemination and also visibility.

Aside from this unexpected drawback, reaching and involving relevant stakeholders is often complex and time consuming. To support this task, partners rely on previous partnerships to boost the project development and outcomes, which represent around 22% of the 142 partnerships reported, or on ongoing partnerships started for other projects, national or European, corresponding to 40%.

Synergies between current energy-related H2020 projects, such as Label2020, HARP or BELT, are common in several countries whether the partners participate in the consortium of those projects or not. These joint efforts favour information exchange and increase the outreach of the projects.

Moreover, some partners collaborate with European organisations, such as Coolproducts and ECOS, related to energy labelling and ecodesign with the intention of making advocacy work. These campaigns are relevant because the products, the concerns and the audience are shared with HACKS message, which can be amplified and enhanced, both to consumers and decision makers.

Graph 1: Distribution of HACKS partnerships established with multipliers

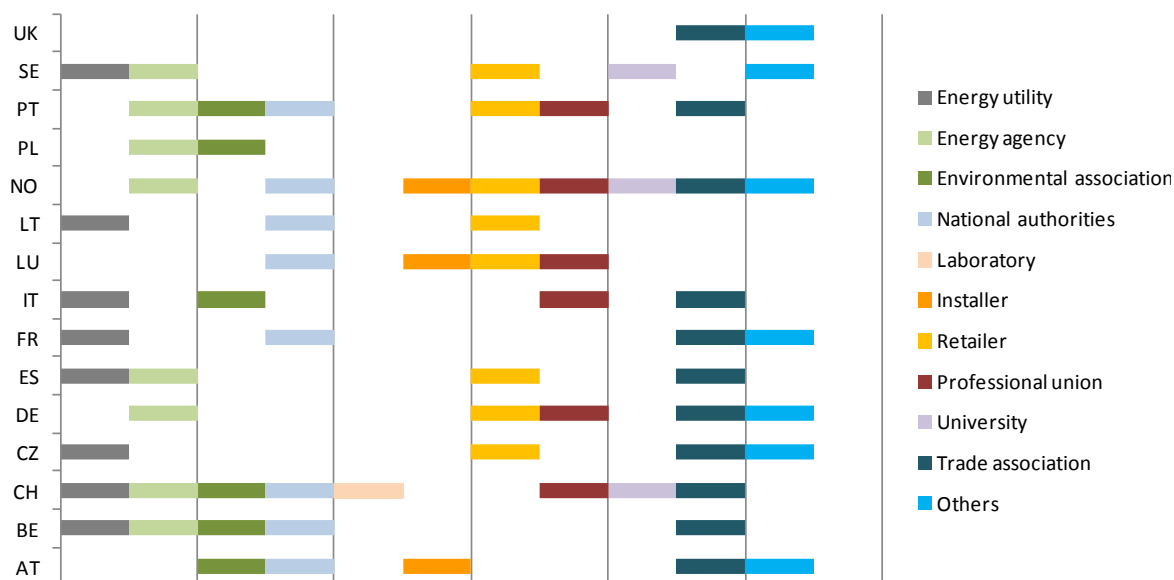


Installers have been qualified by partners as not very accessible and as the hardest multiplier to involve. In fact, only three partners have established partnerships with them so far, even though in the Graph 1 this category represents the majority of the partnerships. This high figure corresponds to a large installer network that one of the partners could engage - which is an exception among all. Regarding the most accessible multiplier, there is not a prevalent

opinion, as it depends on the partner's network and ongoing projects, but in general they are those in direct contact with end-users.

However, even under the current circumstances, partners have achieved a diversified stakeholders portfolio, covering already the most relevant multipliers for the project, as shown in Graph 2. It is worth mentioning that these figures correspond only to the established partnerships and exclude first contacts which have not yet produced any development.

Graph 2: HACKS Partnerships ongoing by country



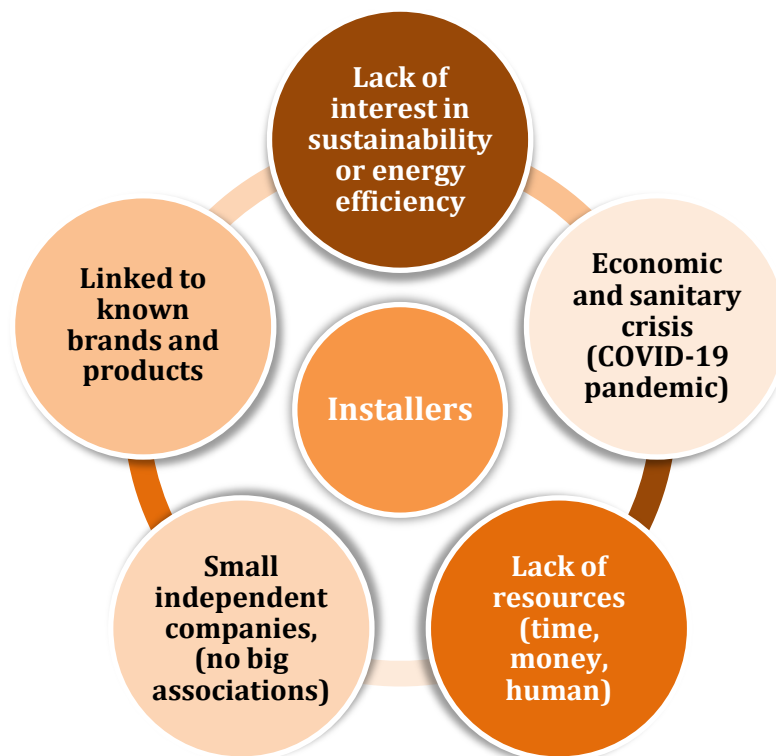
It is expected that partnerships will evolve and be more numerous until the end of the project. On one hand this exceptional situation will hopefully be lightened, and on the other, partners are already developing new strategies and ideas to overcome the difficulties and limitations found so far. Moreover, the project outcomes will start to be released and the project visibility will increase.

3 Main constrains and barriers

The main constrain during the first half of the project was the pandemic situation. Over the past year, organisations either closed down or reduced their working capacity which changed and delayed communications and activities. Fairs, workshops and other events ideal to make connections and enlarge networks were cancelled. Initial contacts were put on hold. Sustainability and energy efficiency, already difficult issues to deal with some stakeholders in a normal situation, are definitely not a priority for them under a sanitary and economic crisis.

Stakeholders that were already difficult to address before the coronavirus pandemic became harder to contact and involve (see Graph 3). Installers are nominated, by consortium countries, as the hardest multiplier in terms of engagement. The main reasons stated are the fact that, in general, they are not organised in big associations and work as independent technicians with products and manufacturers/brands already known to them. A lot of installers are not present on internet which makes it more complicated to find the contact details. This professional group is generally overloaded with work and too busy complying with different sanitary and safety regulations to dedicate time to areas from which they do not recognise any benefits. The lack of economic, time and human resources and their inexperience in these themes might be another reason for being so closed when approached by HACKS partners. In most cases, the information provided does not seem attractive enough for them and there is no guarantee that it will be conveyed to consumers.

Graph 3: Main barriers associated to installers



Although the HACKS project has developed lists of best products in categories that were new for most partners, their creation was not greatly impacted by the lockdown. However, the planned project activities that should follow the launch of these product lists were substantially affected, not only because engaging multipliers was somehow compromised, but also because the ones already programmed, within partnerships, could not be fully finalised. Partnerships including dissemination activities were whenever possible carried out through online channels. Other actions like trainings and seminars were difficult to organise and were therefore postponed, but new alternatives, such as e-learning, are being considered.

4 Main strengths and opportunities

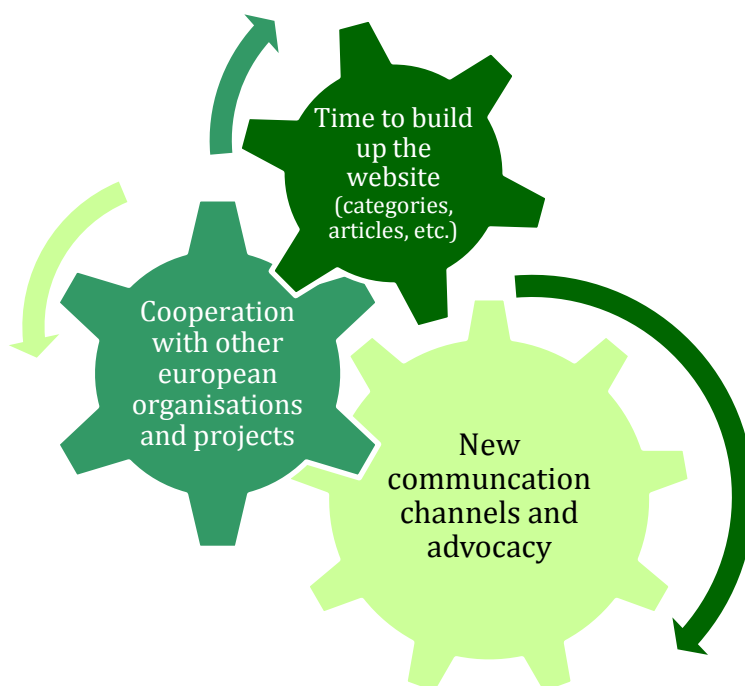
Despite the many barriers encountered, some opportunities have occurred (see Graph 4). A new momentum for policy work was created helping HACKS being more active in subjects like energy poverty or air pollution: some partners are seizing this new prospective to advocate for efficient heating system as part of the solution. These actions were maximised through the collaboration in campaigns coordinated with other European organisations and adapted at the national level.

The lockdown, which started a few months after the beginning of the project, did not restrict the HACKS websites update work. New product categories, articles, information and new features, crucial for multipliers engagement, were developed by partners reinforcing the existing platforms and allowing the development and fulfilment of new and planned activities. Multipliers, already involved in partnerships, dealing with end-users in particular were interested in dissemination work and in using some of the project information and outputs. Under the circumstances, these activities mainly relied on social media channels and internet. Actually, the fact that face-to-face events were cancelled compelled partners to invest in new ideas and materials for communication, used in digital channels.

Some partners are connected directly or are stakeholders in other H2020 or national projects which, under the circumstances also tried to keep their activities and therefore seek for collaboration to boost their results.

When dealing with stakeholders it is important to understand the advantages they want to obtain from a possible partnership with HACKS and remember that their timing and flexibility might not be ideal for partners. Usually they seek free content for their associates or clients, publicity, to be associated with a renowned agency or NGO, cooperation in projects of their own, or they have to fulfil legal obligations. The energy utilities, for example, must demonstrate to the national energy regulator their efforts in improving energy efficiency among their clients, so usually they are receptive to engage in the project. Some partners have been successful in approaching them. Environmental NGOs and energy agencies work on these issues and may find useful to join forces with HACKS partners. The next chapter presents examples of good opportunities and successful activities.

Graph 4: Main strengths and opportunities



5 Successful activities carried out by partners

Despite the limitations described above, partners managed to carry out interesting and relevant activities, examples of which are presented below according to multipliers typology.

5.1 Activities with Energy utilities

ENERGY UTILITIES



Partner: EWZ is an energy utility of Zurich, also operating in areas of Eastern Switzerland

Activities: Rebate programme for comfort fans compliant with the HACKS/Topten selection criteria, financed by EWZ and implemented on Topten.ch. They have planned a similar new rebate programme for heat pump water heaters

Partnership image: Submission form on [Topten.ch](https://topten.ch) for rebate programme



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Partner: Centropol Energy is a Czech supplier of electricity and gas

Activities: On their website this energy utility provides their clients a set of tips to promote energy savings. The tips are inspired by the HACKS project and they announce the partnership with the link to the project website

Partnership images: Link on website tips



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Technical questions

For large customers

Energy statement

ABOUT COMPANY

Contact

What are we doing

They wrote about us

Centropol website

[illegible]



Partner: Fundación EDP is the foundation of the electricity company EDP in Spain

Activities: Workshops organised together for vulnerable people

Partnership image: Workshop presentation screenshot



5.2 Activities with Energy agencies

ENERGY AGENCIES



Partner: ENOVA is the Norwegian energy agency working in energy and greenhouse gas emissions

Activities: Development and distribution of 800 letters to oil heating owners, inviting them to an open meeting (attended by 100) about energy efficient HACKS solutions²

Partnership image: Meeting picture



Partner: Energikontor Väst is a Swedish regional energy agency, supporting organisations and individuals to move towards sustainable energy systems

Activities: Topten Sverige is a standard tool in their work, providing knowledge and support, not only on HAC equipment

Partnership image: Presentation screenshot



² The Municipality of Bodø (National Authority) was also involved in the organisation of the event

5.5 Activities with Installers

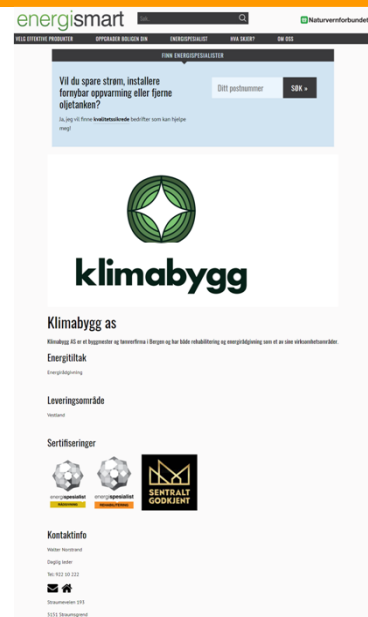
INSTALLERS



Partner: Klimabygg is a Norwegian local installer, approved as Energyadvisor

Activities: Installers web profile on energismart.no (Norwegian Tipten) where they receive online requests through a contact form. Approval of installers through qualifications and experience with customers checking is done beforehand

Partnership image: Screenshot of installer profile on energismart.no



5.6 Activities with Retailers

RETAILERS



Partner: Idealo is an online platform for products selling

Activities: Online checking by co2online and deep links on topeffizient.de

Partnership image: News on beginning of cooperation



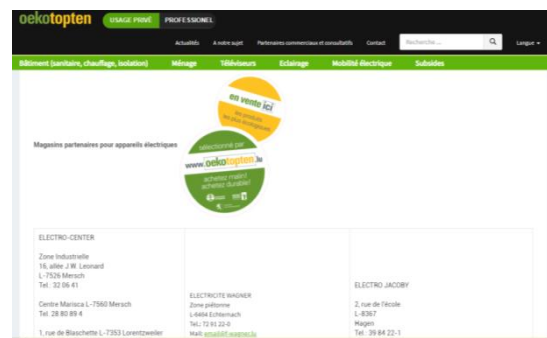
Activities: Meetings with several retailers' associations to discuss the project have showed initial results. Some of their members, in particular those already involved in other H2020 projects, are joining as partners.



Partners: Hoffmann-Freres is a Luxembourg retailer of construction materials

Activities: Raising customers' awareness on the project messages. Information exchange. Regular visits are made to the retailer shops

Partnership image: Partnerships list on website



5.7 Activities with Professional unions

PROFESSIONAL UNIONS



Partner: ANQIP is a Portuguese technical-scientific association that promotes quality and efficiency in building services

Activities: Sanitary tapware new category criteria were based on their national voluntary label criteria. Joint press release and green minute on national TV



Partnership image: Green Minute announcing new category and collaboration

5.8 Activities with Universities

UNIVERSITIES



Partner: Fachhochschule Graubünden is a university in Eastern Switzerland focused on architecture, engineering, digital sciences, mobile robotics, among other areas

Activities: Research project to test viability of air conditioner units on roofs³

Partnership image: University laboratory facilities



³ Project supported by EZK (energy utility)

5.9 Activities with Trade associations

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS



Partner: ATTB is the Belgium Association for Thermal Technicians

Activities: ATTB is part of a core group, created with several trade associations, that meet and exchanges information relevant for the HACKS project. Afterwards ATTB presented the project to its 23 heat pumps industry and 2 circulation pumps industry members

Partnership image: Online core group meeting



Activities: Initial calls/meetings with several relevant trade associations interested in working on development of content and awareness raising on the product categories but also in sharing data which has already initiated.

5.10 Activities with Other multipliers

OTHERS



Partner: Klimaaktiv is the Austrian climate protection initiative that promotes climate-friendly technologies and services

Activities: Networking with professionals. Online article for the heating season (published on klimaaktiv website and social media channels)

Partnership image: Heating season flyer



6 Discussion and Conclusions

The first half part of the HACKS project has been very challenging. Selecting and engaging key multipliers is critical for the success of project but due to the pandemic, most partners could not align with their initial plans. To overcome the delays some strategies were conceived to adapt and reschedule the project developments given the multipliers' specific constraints and timeframe.

The value of the project lies also on the websites content so the effort to create new categories, updates and other relevant information that could enrich them became a priority, which could be implemented during the lockdown.

Relying on and strengthening partnerships established before the project or running for other projects proved to be effective in starting and keeping some activities ongoing.

The challenge to involve installers, the less accessible multiplier, is being bypassed with the involvement of their associations and other intermediaries, in direct contact with them, that can convey the project message and make the first step into a partnership.

Another approach regarding communication materials and channels had to be considered, by most partners, in face of the constraints. For example, face-to-face activities were replaced by online meetings and workshops, and leaflets were kept only in digital form. In future, e-learning activities will be carried out more frequently as well, since partners are exploring opportunities perhaps never considered before.

Some project tools, like the online calculator for HAC energy saving, which are soon to be released, will give more visibility fostering the interest in the project.

In conclusion, adjustments of working methodologies, networking and communication were and are required, at this stage under present circumstances, but their implementation should grant a more powerful consortium and a stronger project.