



European Conference on Local Energy Action
The Annual Event of Energy Management Agencies in Europe
28-29 November 2002

Conclusions from the Conference Workshops
by Mr Gonzalo Molina Igartua, Head of Unit for Demand Management

Conclusions in seven points:

1. Community Legislation

Conference participants recognised the importance of Community legislation and other Community initiatives for their work. It was considered that legislation was an essential tool to achieve local objectives but that other tools are necessary to support legislation. This integral process has already been accepted by local actors but there appears to be a need for training in matters that are rather new for local and regional energy agencies.

2. Think globally – Act locally

The same principle applies to what was said about ‘think globally - act locally’. The concept is understood more and more among energy agencies but comments were made that we should go deeper into this relationship of global thinking and local action. Also, although energy agencies are starting to understand the role of the Reflection Group, its role needs to be further clarified.

When it comes to acting locally, it is clear that agencies are in a unique position to support Community policies and initiatives at local level. Moreover, energy agencies are in a unique position to influence energy consumers in all market aspects, particularly in the behavioural aspect, which was considered a very important part of local action.

3. Financing

As far as the financing of energy agencies is concerned, the Commission has a clear position in not financing the existence of energy agencies as such but to finance good ideas, initiatives and proposals in line with the approach ‘think globally - act locally’.

As far as the financing of different kind of activities and projects is concerned, which in some cases could even be investment projects, in many circumstances it still remains a major problem for energy agencies. However, there is a lot of experience among energy agencies and networks, for example in project contracting, in networking and in using advanced financial instruments, such as third party financing or investment funds or other. The role of ESCOs was underlined but it is not fully clear on how to work with them. There is a need for training in the field of Energy Service Companies. In general, exchange of experience was considered essential for learning about different financing opportunities.

4. Networking

It was stated that energy agencies should be constituted in local networks and be integrated together with larger networks e.g. in EnR or FEDARENE or the like or, as it was said, they should exist in a kind of a spider network; in a network of networks. It is important that energy agencies act in their own networks directly associated to local actors and concrete projects based on co-operation. This provides an important forum to learn from each other.

Information and communication tools were considered essential and it was underlined that we need to go into the depth in testing and using virtual facilities based on new information technology. Virtual facilities are a must for our future co-operation.

5. Training

First of all, and in addition to what has been already said above, it seems to be clear that the thematic approach adopted within managEnergy workshops is a good one and needs to be continued. This is not only important on technological issues but there is also a need for training in non-technological issues, e.g. in financial mechanisms, administrative or in management aspects. In some cases it was demonstrated that projects were successful when action took place with certain administrative practices and management structures. One of the main elements for success in the case of concrete projects is the preparation of proposals under calls for proposals. Training is important also in these aspects.

We should highlight the transport sector in this context. Until now, transport issues have been badly covered by local and regional energy agencies. Of course, the aim of the Commission is to cover the transport sector at the same level as energy efficiency and renewables in the buildings and industry sectors. This is why it is necessary for all energy agencies to increase activities in the transport sector and to get further training.

6 Citizens and Citizen Organisations

As citizens are the final energy consumers it is clear that energy agencies should utilise much of their time in transforming citizens from being passive energy consumers to becoming active energy savers. This is also in line with the messages of the White Book on European Governance.

7. Role of Energy Programmes

It was agreed that the role of technological programmes is important. However, it was considered that additional effort is needed, e.g. in developing CHP or other activities. Anyway, energy agencies see that the IEE Programme is the facilitating programme that offers possibilities to integrate legislation, technology and other market tools in local energy and transport activities.

To conclude, managEnergy has been considered as a useful initiative but we all need to continue going deeper in its activities. It is a joint activity although the Commission took the initiative to launch these services based on your requests in last year's conference. We need to act together to make this co-operation work.

End of Conclusions