

# Policy Brief

## Executive Summary

The OSR Coop project delves into the concept of a Renovation One Stop Shop (OSS) and emphasizes the significance of energy cooperatives and citizen involvement in the renovation process. The project recognizes the diverse definitions of OSS and focuses on delivering comprehensive and integrated renovation services to homeowners offered by local energy cooperatives and communities. The One Stop Shops by definition are a model of work that integrates varied services; a (physical or virtual) hub providing information, coordination, financing, among other activities. Citizen-led Renovation on the other hand advocates for citizen involvement, local adaptation, and fostering partnerships in a process of collective and cooperative renovation. Thus, the OSR-Coop project is developing One Stop Shops renovation services that strengthen the citizen-led renovation movement.

The research and current project activity identifies key elements, tools, and stages in the renovation process with the purpose of creating the best One Stop Shop models; emphasizing attributes such as citizen engagement, whole life cycle sustainability, and affordability. The cooperative advantage is highlighted, showcasing how citizen-led renovation brings broader economic, social, and environmental benefits to a local area. The approach in the first year of the project has focused on categorizing services, identifying common elements, and typifying service archetypes. Based on the work done so far and faced with the challenges our case studies in their context have, the following policy recommendations emerge:

- Standardize OSS Definition
- Formalize the 'End-to-End' OSS model
- Enhance Regulatory Alignment
- Promote Citizen-led Renovation
- Facilitate Information Sharing
- Optimize Grant Aid Systems
- Monitor and Evaluate

## Introduction

In a landscape increasingly defined by the imperative for sustainable living, the OSR Coop project is a natural progression to home renovation approaches. The OSR Coop project seeks to revolutionize home renovations through improvements to the renovation One Stop Shop (OSS) concept, emphasizing citizen engagement, environmental impact reduction, and affordability. This discussion introduces the project's core elements, including OSS definitions, service components, citizen-led approaches, and the broader regulatory landscape.

The project examines diverse case studies, comparing approaches and deriving key learning points. Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative (ECTC) exemplifies community-led retrofit services, emphasizing citizen engagement and inclusive benefits. Les 7 Vents in Normandy adopts a publicly funded cooperative model, offering advice and support for low-energy retrofits. Energent in East-Flanders focuses on citizen-owned renovation services, utilizing technology for efficiency gains. People Powered Retrofit (PPR) in the UK emphasizes a user-centered delivery model for deep retrofit renovations.

The comparison of these cases reveal commonalities and differences, with all services engaging in recruitment, offering advice, utilizing ICT tools, and connecting to the Energy Communities agenda. The case studies highlight the adaptability and effectiveness of the Citizen Led Renovation model.

## Case studies

### Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative (ECTC)

Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative (ECTC) has established itself as a key player in home renovations in Ireland, offering a community-led One Stop Shop Retrofit Service, contributing significantly to local employment and community benefits. With a focus on 'empty nesters' and a citizen-led nature, ECTC's eleven year track record includes programs beyond renovations such as behavior change and community renewable projects. The organization's community led One Stop Shop Retrofit Service simplifies the renovation process for homeowners, offering a comprehensive range of services and has offered a blueprint to the Irish government's national One Stop Shop program.

ECTC's approach begins with a technical assessment to identify the pathway to achieve a B2 energy rating, subcontracting assessors for this purpose. Upon receiving the assessment, ECTC collaborates with contractors to develop specifications for the quotation stage, selecting local contractors through an e-tender process every two years. Having upgraded over 920 homes since 2012 and secured over €12 million in investment, ECTC exemplifies its commitment to reducing carbon footprints, eliminating fuel poverty,

and promoting community-owned energy. The organization's citizen-led nature is evident in its mission driven by its membership governance, functioning as a non-profit board overseeing its operations.

## **Les 7 Vents - Espace France Rénov'**

Les 7 Vents, as a publicly funded cooperative in Normandy, France, where it plays a crucial role in promoting a sustainable future in Normandy. Their "Espace France Rénov" service, partly funded by both national and regional subsidies and sold to local authorities, provides advice and support for households aiming to retrofit their homes to low-energy standards. This service is extended to businesses and municipal buildings as well. With over 20 years of operation, Les 7 Vents operates in the La Manche department for home retrofitting and the Normandy region for community energy support and private contracts.

The client demographic primarily includes middle to high-income homeowners, and the service's success is underscored by its engagement with more than two thousand clients annually. The cooperative's citizen-led nature emerges from its commitment to offering independent, objective, and ecologically-driven advice for energy consumption choices. Les 7 Vents sees itself as a link between the public sector, providing technical retrofitting expertise, and private contractors, offering quotes, explanations, and training. Noteworthy aspects of Les 7 Vents' services include a robust research and development team working on European projects, a 'block chain' system within the La Manche department, an internal ecosystem emphasizing governance, and a horizontal business model.

## **Energent - "Groepsaanbod Renovatie"**

Energent's 'Groepsaanbod Renovatie' in East-Flanders, Belgium, assists homeowners in improving energy performance, with a citizen-led approach and integration of automation tools for energy efficiency of dwellings. The service covers a variety of renovation measures, offering flexibility to clients based on their preferences and budgets. By providing support for both straightforward and more complex renovation measures, Energent ensures a low entry threshold for homeowners.

The service's success is reflected in its engagement with 900 clients annually, attracting early adopters motivated to tackle climate change, those aiming to lower their energy bills, and individuals renovating for aesthetic or quality reasons. Energent's citizen-led approach is evident in its cooperative ownership by over 2,000 citizens, emphasizing impact over profit. Energent stands out for its integration and automation of tools, leveraging them to streamline processes such as solar panel calculations, subscriptions, and advisory reports. This not only saves time but also facilitates upscaling and professionalization.

## People Powered Retrofit - Householder Service

People Powered Retrofit (PPR), operating in North West England, United Kingdom, provides a householder service that facilitates deep retrofit renovations. Owned by 350 founding members and developed by the citizen-led energy services co-operative Carbon Co-op, PPR focuses on delivering quality retrofit services complemented by bespoke ICT tools and extensive technical expertise.

PPR's clientele, around 150 clients per year, consists of those 'able to pay,' with budgets of €40,000+, primarily motivated by climate change and home improvement. The service has been operational for 1.5 years and offers additional services such as retrofit contractor training, and a replication service for like-minded organizations. PPR's citizen-led nature is evident in its community-based delivery model, which includes local supply chain skills development and training. The organization has successfully raised €800,000 from 350 individual and institutional members, showcasing the potential for community finance to support One Stop Shop services.

## Comparisons and analysis

The case studies of ECTC, Les 7 Vents, Energent, and PPR showcase the diversity and flexibility within the Citizen Led Renovation model, providing unique approaches to home retrofitting. Each case study demonstrates unique approaches to addressing the challenges of home retrofitting, emphasizing citizen-led principles and sustainability. The comparative analysis of the One Stop Shop services indicates the adaptability and effectiveness of the Citizen Led Renovation model. The success factors of each service - including automation of tools, regional coordination, effective use of government incentives, and capitalizing on fee-earning services - provide valuable insights for replication and improvement.

In evaluating the aforementioned One Stop Shop services, several commonalities and differences have emerged: All services engage in recruitment activities, offer advice, have bespoke ICT products, and are connected to Energy Communities. The variations lie in the degree of support provided throughout the customer journey and the value propositions that each offers. ECTC and PPR represent 'End-to-End' services, engaging clients in the entire renovation process. Les 7 Vents carries out 'Facilitation' activities, offering advice, while Energent plays a Coordinating role, providing support up to the assessment stage.

An important difference was identified between so-called 'Full Service' and 'End-to-end' OSS models. There is an expectation that the OSS will take full contractual liability for carrying out works in the case of a 'Full Service'. This has the effect of excluding citizen-led renovation cooperatives as it imposes onerous insurance costs and liabilities - as has been the case with the Irish government OSS programme. In 'End-to-end' services, OSS support stretches the full length of the customer journey, but contracting is carried out by

trusted, Third Party local construction firms - offering OSS independence and trust for the client, as well as additional local economic benefits.

With the exception of PPR, all services benefit from local regulatory incentives. The Citizen Led Renovation model stands as a dynamic and adaptable approach to home retrofitting, offering valuable lessons for stakeholders, policymakers, and organizations seeking to enhance energy efficiency and sustainability of the built environment. Therefore, the project has decided to propose several policy recommendations based on the analysis of the case studies, that would greatly support emerging renovation OSS if considered.

## Policy Recommendations

The OSR-Coop Project identifies challenging areas analysing the case studies from three different EU countries, pending an improvement in a more favourable legal and policy frameworks. Thus, this policy brief serves as a strategic roadmap for EU officials and policymakers, guiding them toward fostering a standardized, citizen-centric paradigm for building renovations. The blueprint ensures a future marked by sustainability, inclusivity, and operational efficiency across diverse member states.

1. **Standardize OSS Definition** - we propose a standardized EU-wide OSS definition, comprehensively encompassing businesses, community buildings, and renovation activities. Such a holistic definition will serve as a lighthouse, guiding Member States toward a unified vision for comprehensive renovation services, simplifying consumer recognition and offering citizen confidence.
2. **Formalize the 'End-to-End' OSS Model** - we propose to formalize the model within the OSS definition, to maximise the number of entities that can play the role of an OSS, whilst promoting citizen trust and local economic and social benefits.
3. **Enhance Regulatory Alignment** - we advocate for a robust EU-wide regulatory alignment designed to streamline building renovations specifically, conducted by energy cooperatives and communities. Such alignment not only reduces bureaucratic hurdles but also cultivates an environment conducive to citizen participation and a consistent approach to energy efficiency.
4. **Promote Citizen-led Renovation** - we urge Member States to actively embrace citizen-led renovation approaches as part of the broader Energy Communities agenda, accentuating the importance of local partnerships and cooperative models. This should be done by creating an EU-wide enabling framework for citizen-led renovations, as it was done for energy communities in the Renewable Energy Directive. This recommendation seeks to embed sustainability and democratisation at the heart of inclusive renovation strategies.
5. **Facilitate Information Sharing** - we propose the development of an EU-wide dynamic platform for the seamless exchange of best practices, innovative tools, and successful service archetypes among Member States and energy

communities working on CLR. This platform would serve as a repository of knowledge, fostering a collaborative ecosystem for efficient renovation initiatives.

6. **Optimize Grant Aid Systems** - we encourage Member States, drawing insights from OSR-Coop Project case studies, to undergo a thorough evaluation and optimization of their grant aid systems and other financial tools. Accessibility, affordability, and inclusivity should be the guiding principles to ensure a robust framework supporting energy upgrades and deep renovations, and the placing of a value on the additional benefits realized by Citizen Led approaches.
7. **Monitor and Evaluate** - we advocate an establishment of sophisticated monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, tracking the impact of national incentive frameworks. This recommendation ensures an evidence-based approach to policy evolution, and allows citizens and policy makers to track energy efficiency and climate goals in the field of home renovations.