



European Construction Sector Observatory

Policy measure fact sheet

Greece

'EnergyHUB for All' (Greek Retrofit Hub)

Thematic Objectives 1, 3 & 4

March 2018



In a nutshell

Implementing body:	Centre for Renewable Sources and Energy Saving (CRES)
Key features & objectives:	EnergyHub for All (EH4A) is an online information and communications hub that provides a one-stop-shop on energy efficiency in the Greek residential sector. It provides resources and tools for a broad range of stakeholders to increase awareness of the benefits of efficiency measures, to connect supply and demand side actors, to monitor the implementation of EPC recommendations and to inform policy-making.
Implementation date:	December 2015
Targeted beneficiaries:	Homeowners and tenants, investors, product manufacturers and suppliers, installers, tradespeople, technical experts, local government and policymakers.
Targeted sub-sectors:	Residential, retrofits and related trades, energy efficiency.
Budget (EUR):	Not published

The European Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings (EPBD, 2002) was transposed into Greek law in 2008 and was given effect by the Greek government through the 'Regulation on Energy Performance in the Building Sector' (KENAK) in 2010. Through this legislation, Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) became a legal requirement in Greece in 2011 for rental properties and in 2012 for property sales¹.

An EPC is an information tool that enables owners, occupiers and all property stakeholders to understand the energy efficiency of an individual property and compare it with other properties. The ultimate goal of EPCs is to create a demand-driven market for increased energy efficiency in buildings.

In 2011, the Greek Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change established a centralised EPC database system to record all issued EPCs in Greece. The database is hosted by the Centre for Renewable Energy Sources and Savings (CRES). EPC data is a valuable source of information that when analysed can help to inform government policy-making and help to formulate policy measures to improve building energy efficiency.

As the Greek national centre for promoting renewable energy sources, the rational use of energy and energy conservation, CRES is an active contributor to environmental and sustainable development policy-making and legislation in Greece. Following the introduction of EPCs in Greece in 2011, CRES has been exploring opportunities to exploit EPC data in order to increase public awareness of energy consumption and potential savings in residential buildings, and to encourage homeowners to invest in efficiency measures.

Between 2014 and 2017, CRES took part in the Request2Action project, which brought together the national energy agencies of nine EU countries to improve energy efficiency in the residential sector. Co-funded by the Intelligent Energy for Europe Programme, the project developed pilot projects to:

- Monitor the uptake of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) recommendations;
- Improve self-assessment guidance for homeowners;
- Provide EPC data to national and regional/local stakeholder organisations to help them build an understanding of energy saving opportunities in their country or region;
- Develop national hubs to make data and information available and to link supply and demand side stakeholders.

The national energy hub for Greece – **'EnergyHUB for All' (EH4A)** – was created as one of the 'Request2Action' pilot projects and was officially launched by CRES in December 2015. EH4A is an online information and communications hub that is intended to provide a one-stop-shop service to all stakeholders in the residential sector. It aims to inform homeowners about the potential benefits of energy efficiency measures and increase their uptake, to connect homeowners with qualified tradespeople and service providers, and monitor EPC trends and the implementation of EPC recommendations to inform policy-making.

The EH4A has attracted 8,290 unique visitors to its online resource and the general consensus of stakeholders is that it has been successful so far. However, some improvements are recommended by stakeholders to enhance the visitor experience, especially in the blog section, and the news and communications section.

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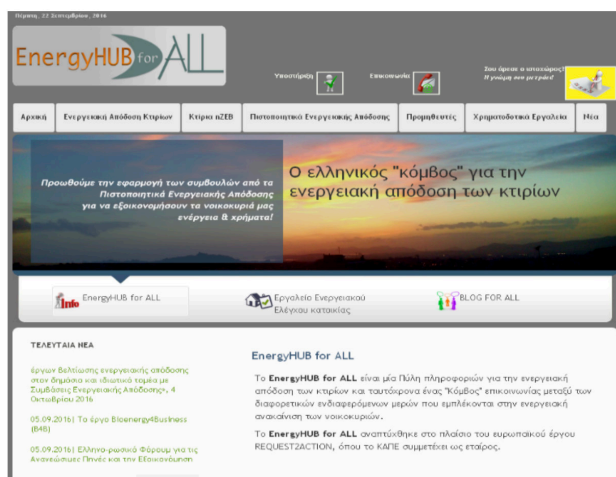
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General description

'EnergyHUB for All' (EH4A) is the Greek Retrofit Hub that is designed to be a one-stop-shop on energy saving building renovations in Greece. It acts as an information gateway on energy efficiency in buildings and a communications hub for all stakeholders involved in energy saving renovations in the residential sector.

It provides an online market and meeting place that connects supply and demand side actors, and it provides information, advice and assistance to inform consumers about the potential savings and benefits that energy saving building renovations can achieve. Figure 1 shows the EH4A homepage.

Figure 1: EnergyHub for All



Source: EnergyHub for All ²

Launched in December 2015, EH4A is being run by the Centre for Renewable Sources and Energy Saving (CRES), with three main objectives:

- Encourage the use of the recommendations contained within Energy Performance Certificates;
- Create trust between the consumer and the market, explaining and raising awareness of the potential advantages of energy renovations, and providing detailed information on costs and depreciation;

- To provide supply chain support, design housing promotion strategies, identify potential customers and build partnerships to implement the measures, with the ultimate goal of reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

The EH4A platform provides a broad range of resources for a wide range of stakeholders³:

- The 'building energy performance section' provides information on residential energy consumption, the status of the Greek building stock, and key policies and regulations that are relevant to energy saving renovations;
- The 'Nearly Zero Energy Building (nZEB) section' provides information on nZEB building characteristics, European standards and roadmaps, and success stories drawn from EU projects and national initiatives;
- The 'EPC statistics section' presents EPC recommendations and monitors the trends and actual implementation of EPC recommendations in housing renovation projects, with the support of statistical data and analysis;
- The 'trades person search facility' enables homeowners and tenants to find qualified energy efficiency professionals and tradespeople that they can contract to implement home retrofits;
- The 'financial support programme section' provides information on national and European support programmes, open calls for proposals, funding mechanisms and important initiatives;
- The 'news and events section' provides regular communications on building energy efficiency;
- The 'support section' includes a list of the SMEs and associations that are supporting the EH4A;
- The 'Home Energy Check (HEC) tool section' provides homeowners with an energy auditing tool. Users (homeowners) are required to follow a few simple steps and input some data on their home, such as the building type and the characteristics of their heating/cooling systems. The purpose of the tool is to show homeowners the benefits of energy saving measures and encourage them to implement them in their property;
- The 'Blog for All section' provides a special forum to enable interested parties to exchange useful information and advice on EPC recommendations and energy saving. Each new item posted has a 'tag' to make it easy for users to search for the posts that interest them and provide comments.

Table 1 indicates the main target groups for each resource provided on the EH4A website.

Table 1: EH4A resources and target groups

Data / Information Resource	Main Target Groups for Each Resource		
	Owners / Consumers	Trades People / Supply Chain	Policymakers
Building energy performance	✓		✓
Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (nZEB)			✓
EPC statistics			✓
Trades person search facility	✓	✓	
Financial support programmes	✓	✓	
News and events	✓	✓	✓
Support	✓	✓	✓
Energy audit tool: 'Home Energy Check'	✓	✓	
'Blog for All' section	✓	✓	✓

Source: A.V. Androutsopoulou, A. Spanou, CRES, 2017⁴

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Achieved or expected results

The latest evaluation data that is available on the EH4A is provided by the Final Report of the Request2Action project. It shows that over its first 18 months of operation, between December 2015 and May 2017, the EH4A received 8,290 unique visitors⁵.

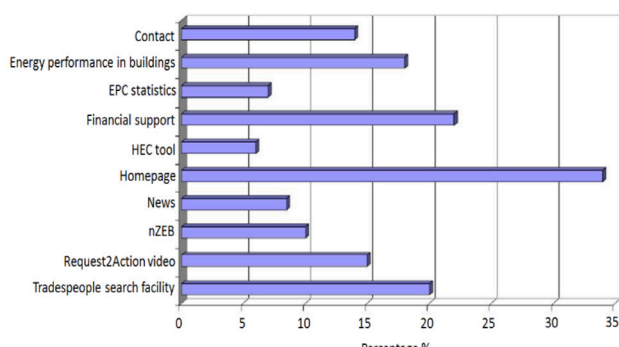
Figure 2 provides an indication of the types of resources that have proven to be most in demand by visitors in the first 18 months. Other than the homepage, which is the principal entry point for visitors, the most visited resources were:

- Information on energy performance in buildings;
- Information on financial support options;
- Contact information; and
- The tradespeople search facility.

This pattern of access indicates that many visitors were using EH4A resources to learn about energy efficiency in the home, as well as practical information on how measures could be implemented, by exploring the financial support measures available, accessing contact information to seek advice, and using the tradespeople search facility to find a suitably qualified service professional.

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Figure 2: The most visited sections of EH4A online resource



Source: CRES Presentation, May 2017, Request2Action⁶

CRES also reports that it has brought on board 13 official supporters from the construction sector, government and local authorities, NGOs for sustainable and energy efficient buildings, energy consultants, and the technical press.

In addition, six national associations have signed agreements with CRES with a commitment that they will participate in the EH4A, providing technical information and best practices, and providing advice to homeowners in the online Blog for All section. CRES will continue to seek partnership agreements with all relevant associations in Greece, as well as with research institutes, energy service companies (ESCOs) and energy media companies⁷.

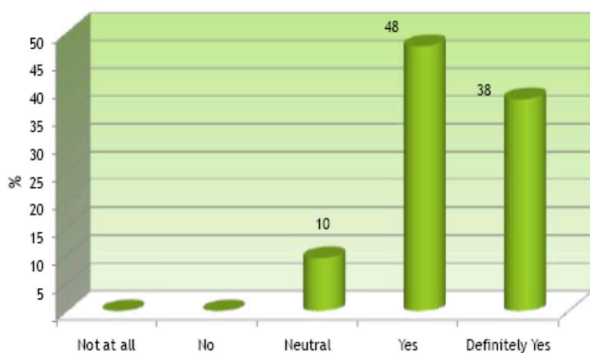
To evaluate the impact of the EH4A, CRES ran workshops with stakeholders in June 2016 and May 2017. In the June 2016 evaluation workshop, 23 out of 85 participants completed a feedback questionnaire. The vast majority (87%) of respondents said that the information provided by the EH4A had met their expectations and that they had learned something new and useful from the EH4A. Whereas 26% of respondents said that they may recommend the EH4A to a friend or colleague, 74% said that they definitely would. Most of the respondents (69%) learned about the EH4A at a conference or an event, compared to those who discovered it through a search engine (17%) or in a newspaper / magazine article (14%)⁸.

When asked about the frequency of their visits to particular sections of the EH4A, 35% of stakeholders visited the Home Energy Check tool section frequently or very frequently, whereas 30% were either not aware of it or did not answer. 43% of stakeholders visited the nZEB Buildings section frequently or very frequently, whereas 17% were either not aware of it or did not answer. 39% of stakeholders visited the EPC Statistics section frequently or very frequently, whereas 26% were either not aware of it or did not answer. 30% of stakeholders visited the Suppliers (tradesperson search facility) section frequently or very frequently, whereas 22% were either not aware of it or did not answer. By way of contrast however, 52% of stakeholders said that they had visited the Blog for All section occasionally or only a few times, whereas 39% were either not aware of it or did not answer⁹.

In the final evaluation workshop (May 2017), 31 out of 55 participants completed feedback questionnaires. The vast majority (77%) of respondents said that the information provided by the EH4A is useful, whereas 43% consider the structure and content of the EH4A satisfactory and 57% think it is easily accessible.

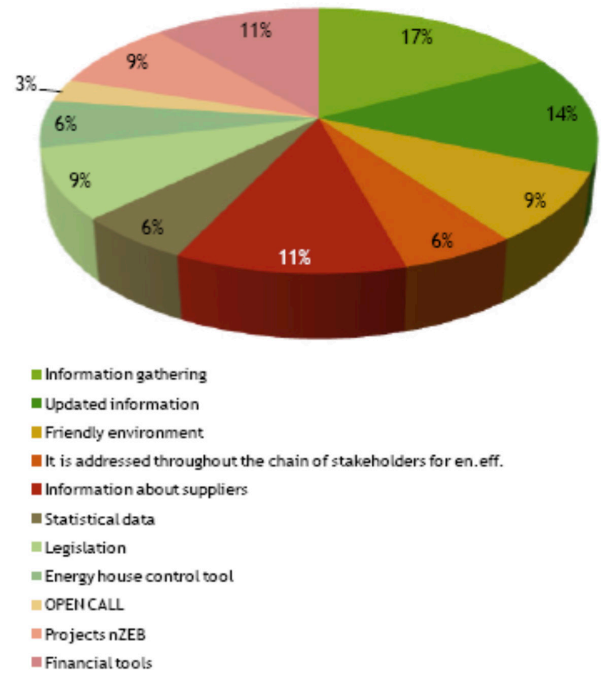
Figure 3 shows that the vast majority (86%) of stakeholders think that the EH4A is an effective online platform through which to promote and support energy efficient upgrades in the residential sector. 81% also classify the EH4A content as either useful or very useful to their organisation.

Figure 3: Stakeholder views on effectiveness of EH4A



Source: Request2Action, Stakeholder Engagement¹⁰

Figure 4: Stakeholder views on EH4A strengths



Source: Request2Action, Stakeholder Engagement¹¹

Figure 4 indicates the EH4A sections that the stakeholders view as strengths. The greatest strengths identified are that the EH4A provides useful information (17%) that is regularly updated (14%). Other leading strong points include information on suppliers (11%) and financial support options (11%), followed by information on nZEB projects (9%) and legislation (9%).

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Perspectives and lessons learned

From an **implementation perspective**, CRES is broadly satisfied with the development of the EH4A, but also recognises that improvements are needed to increase public awareness about the hub and to attract more visitors.

The hub development phase was challenging because CRES needed to ensure that it would meet many different requirements. For example, it had to be generally appealing to the public while meeting the specific information needs of different types and levels of users with varying levels of knowledge, as well as providing a monitoring platform for renovation activities.

Engagement with and feedback from EH4A supporting organisations and stakeholders has been central to EH4A development and implementation work. CRES has invited feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, including homeowners, energy efficiency professionals, product and service suppliers and installers, local authorities and policy makers. Some of the key lessons learned thus far are:

- Face to face engagement with stakeholders can provide particularly valuable feedback on external expectations for the hub;
- Supporters can be very useful dissemination partners;
- Improvements to the EH4A are needed to improve the visitor experience, for example, with the use of a special landing page and/or cross linking¹².

From the **perspective of the stakeholders** that were surveyed by CRES, the EH4A was viewed positively overall by the vast majority of stakeholders (>75%), as conveyed in the previous section.

In terms of lessons learned, the stakeholders have also highlighted a number of areas that are in need of improvement. They include, for example, more frequent news and better communications content, an improved blog section to enhance supply and demand side communication and learning, and more information on European level activities¹³.

Looking forward, 20 out of 21 Companies are willing to contribute to the further development and dissemination of the EH4A. 43% say they will recommend the EH4A to their network members, 19% are willing to link the EH4A to their website, and to disseminate news, data, information and events published on the EH4A, and 14% say that they will provide data and information for publication on the EH4A¹⁴.

Endnotes

- 1 Energy Performance of Buildings – EPBD in Greece:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236895505_Energy_Performance_of_Buildings_-_EPBD_in_Greece
- 2 EnergyHub for All website: <http://www.energyhubforall.eu>
- 3 A.V. Androutsopoulou, A. Spanou, CRES, Energy Efficiency Actions to Uptake Energy Retrofitting Measures in Buildings, 2017:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316052847_Energy_Efficiency_Actions_to_Uptake_Energy_Retrofitting_Measures_in_Buildings
- 4 Ibid
- 5 Request2Action, Final Report, August 2017:
http://building-request.eu/sites/building-request.eu/files/request2action_publishable_report_final.pdf
- 6 CRES Presentation, May 2017, Request2Action: http://building-request.eu/sites/building-request.eu/files/201705_-_r2a_-_cres.pdf
- 7 Request2Action, Stakeholder Engagement, Final Report, June 2017:
http://building-request.eu/sites/building-request.eu/files/d5.7_stakeholders_engagement.pdf
- 8 Request2Action, Stakeholder Engagement, Final Report, June 2017:
http://building-request.eu/sites/building-request.eu/files/d5.7_stakeholders_engagement.pdf
- 9 Ibid
- 10 Ibid
- 11 Ibid
- 12 Request2Action, Recommendations on building Hubs report, August 2017:
http://building-request.eu/sites/building-request.eu/files/d4.1_recommendations_report_final.pdf
- 13 Request2Action, Stakeholder Engagement, Final Report, June 2017:
http://building-request.eu/sites/building-request.eu/files/d5.7_stakeholders_engagement.pdf
- 14 Ibid