

Summary of the project/activity

The SEACS project aims to test and experiment with new ways to engage and raise people's awareness regarding saving energy.

The Conseil Général des Côtes d'Armor decided to trial engaging groups of employees on the theme of saving energy, involving them not as staff but as members of the public. To this end an appeal for volunteers was launched during sustainable development week.

Fifteen people responded and a group was formed. The group met up eight times during 2012-2013 to discuss energy issues, but also to discuss sustainable issues in a more general manner (food, saving money etc.). In June 2013, some households decided to visit their English neighbours to see the changes that transition groups made in their hometowns. In September 2013, members of the group attended training on the "Transition Street" programme.

Following the success of this pilot, two completely independent groups have formed in St Brieuc, and another new group was set up with employees from Conseil Général in 2014.

Project objectives

- To support and empower a group of householders and create a group dynamic where tips and solutions and new ideas are sought and shared collectively.
- To improve household awareness of global energy use issues and, more generally, of their carbon impact
- To promote long-term changes in behaviour and energy use so as to reduce household energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions

Methodology/approach

The project offered four workshops over the course of the year, based on the following approach: measure to understand, understand to act, act to reduce, reduce to save energy. Another four workshops were scheduled and during

these workshops the issues covered were chosen by the group itself.

The workshops lasted two hours, with an authorisation from the Director-General of Services at the council to permit an additional half hour of lunch break. The activity was therefore taking place mostly during break time and not work time and required personal commitment.

Description of the energy saving workshops:

1. Assessment and training on the use of small measuring devices that the employee had installed at home so as to understand the consumption level of his/her appliances. Collection of bills for the last three years. The workshop took place in June.
2. Feedback on readings of measuring devices, information on energy saving actions concerning appliances, domestic hot water, etc. and drawing up an action plan: the workshop took place in September.
3. Feedback on trials, information on energy saving actions concerning heating and drawing up an action plan: The workshop took place in December.
4. Information on insulation work: approaches, tradesmen, financial assistance, etc.: The workshop took place in February.

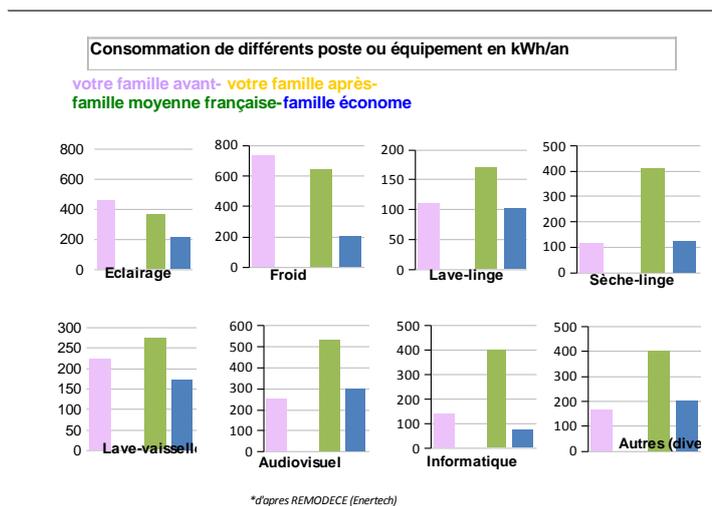
During each workshop, there was a general information session followed by a discussion period, and lastly an action plan was drawn up.



The tools used

Various tools were used:

- Measuring instruments: [watt meters](#), [small portable appliance meters](#), thermo-hygrometers with instruction manuals
- Excel tables for entering energy consumption bills: gas, fuel oil, electricity, wood and water, transforming the units into kWh so as to obtain data for the last three years and generate a consumption total for the household
- Tables for entering data collected from the watt meters and meters on the various appliances
- Benchmark information so that the families could compare their consumption with the French national average. This enabled households to determine areas for improvement. See image below.



How much did the project cost and how was it financed?

As part of the SEACS project, 50% of the project was financed by the ERDF.

This covered the Climate and Energy Ambassador's time (around fifty hours) and the cost of minor measuring equipment.

What have we learned from this project?

The evaluation of this pilot project shows that this trial went well, especially for the personnel who attended the workshops regularly. The group dynamic (the feeling that you are not alone) and the discussions were particularly important factors in driving through changes in behaviour.

Using the measuring equipment is not straightforward for everybody. However, the fact that people were in groups enabled the personnel and their households to progress nonetheless.

The participants believe that they have improved their knowledge of sustainable issues during the project either a little (60%) or a lot (40%). The majority (80%) believe that they have learned new practices during the project, together with an ability to change their behaviour.

The obstacles encountered were a lack of time for many participants, the cost of certain actions (e.g. insulation), a lack of discipline and resistance from family members.

Contact details for further information.

Conseil général des Côtes d'Armor
Service Eau Potable Déchet- Energie-Climat
Marie de Bressy
+33 (0)2 96 62 27 30

debressymarie@cg22.fr

- An [assessment matrix](#) enabling a qualitative assessment of the change in behaviour before and after the trial.

How was the project managed?

The initiative was led by the Climate and Energy Ambassador.