IEA DSM TASK XXIV
Closing the Loop - Behaviour Change in DSM:
From Theory to Practice

Why Behaviour Change?

It is estimated that up to 30% of energy demand is locked in the so-called 'behavioural wedge'. This 'wedge' includes people's energy-using habits, as well as their purchasing decisions of energy (in)efficient technologies. The best ideas, policies, and programmes have failed again and again in achieving a lasting reduction of energy consumption. This 'market failure' of energy efficiency is often due to the vagaries of human behaviour and choice. Even so, promoting energy saving behaviours is still not regarded as a major solution to transition to a sustainable energy system.

These issues are due to some fundamental challenges. For example, humans rarely behave economically rational and understanding what drives human behaviour is incredibly complex. Behaviour change researchers from different disciplines don't interact much, and their research often fails to get translated into smarter policy making and programme design. In addition, it is extremely hard to evaluate ongoing behaviour change outcomes.

This Task sets to uncover, unravel and define these challenges, to break down inter-disciplinary silos, and to provide clear recommendations to policy makers and DSM implementers. Our goal is to develop a framework that clearly links behaviour change research theory to successful policy implementation and outcome evaluation. Ultimately, we want to show that large, ongoing changes in our energy-using behaviours are perfectly achievable and of crucial importance to meeting the world's energy and climate targets.

Main Activities - Objectives and Scope

The main objective of this project is to create a global expert network and design a framework to allow policy makers, funders of DSM programmes, researchers and DSM implementers to interact, share learnings and build up a common interdisciplinary and international knowledge base. This should lead to better decisionmaking around funding and designing DSM programmes and policies, and will include recommendations on how to monitor and evaluate ongoing success.

It is critical to draw as wide a research scope as is manageable - if the wider dependencies are not taken into consideration, the options and recommendations will be flawed and are unlikely to gain lasting traction. We hope to develop context- and country-specific recommendations for each of the subtasks.

Why Participate?

Want to:

- Know how and why to prioritise behaviour change research and DSM implementation?
- Share best practice and learnings and build strong international expert network?
- Prove ongoing, lasting success and long-term behaviour change from DSM policies and programmes?
- Design policies and programmes that better suit the national context to effectively target households and SMEs with the right DSM interventions?
- Build capability of multi-disciplinary research networks and better collaboration with research end users?
- Increase ability to secure funding for DSM research and programmes?
- Achieve better DSM interventions to improve energy system security, energy affordability, economic efficiency and meeting environmental and climate targets?

Then join this Task as country participant or become a national expert.

Task Work
The Task is broken into 6 distinct subtasks, which follow a logical structure from 1) behavioural research theory, 2) DSM best practice, case studies and learnings, and 3) ongoing outcome evaluation of actual changes in energy-using behaviours.

Subtask I - Development and Utilisation of Expert Platform
- Overall project coordination and management.
- Design, development and running of international expert platform.

Subtask II - Theoretical Inventory of Models, Frameworks and Disciplines
- Identify the range of behavioural models, frameworks and disciplines that have relevant insight into human behaviour and energy demand side management in a variety of end-use sectors.
- Understand the benefits and limitations of applying different models/approaches/frameworks to different contexts (target group, targeted behaviour, country, scale, technology, timing, etc.).

Subtask III - Praxis, Context and Case Studies
- Collect 5 exemplary DSM cases per participating country (preferably in different end-use sectors).
- Make a country- and sector-specific inventory of all contextual factors influencing effectiveness of DSM programmes.
- Identify key approaches to solving, circumventing or using contextual issues on the local, regional and national level and share learnings and best practice.

Subtask IV - Analysis
- Conduct a detailed analysis of data collected in subtask 1 and 2.
- Validate the collected data.
- Set up a database that will be available online for continuous use after completion of the Task.

Subtask V - Monitoring and Evaluation
- Develop practical, context-specific monitoring and evaluation tools for DSM projects and programmes.

Subtask VI - Recommendations and Guidelines
- Develop guidelines for different types of stakeholders/countries/sectors/goals/types of DSM activities and disseminate them.

The Task began in February 2012 and will end in January 2014.

Participating Countries To Date
Netherlands
Switzerland

**New countries are welcome to join.*

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