



SYNTHESIS OF THE WORKINGPAPER

THE CHALLENGE OF ENERGY RENOVATION FOR HOUSING

How to get households to commit to action

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Why don't more households renovate their houses, when they have so many factual reasons to do so? The discrepancy is huge between their intent to act and their actual commitment to action. Profusion and inconsistency of available information, lack of confidence in professionals and absence of desire to switch to energy renovations constitute the main obstacles.

The context of the economic crisis and the lack of households' visibility for the next 5 to 10 years do not make things any better. Neither environmental awareness nor the promise of a return on investment are decisive in their commitment to action, which is rather triggered by considerations related to aesthetics, well-being, comfort, gain in heritage value and decrease of monthly instalments. These motivations differ between collective and individual housings.

To overcome this analysis, this working paper details some structuring measures to quickly widespread renovation over time: developing a strong branding strategy, generalizing "health cards" for housing, constituting financial reserves for renovation works and introducing a restrictive mechanism for energy leaks which engender public health problems. Cities have a big part to play in renovating buildings and housing.

First, we need to create and develop a branding strategy dedicated to the general public to clarify links between professionals, products, diagnostics or loans, in the same perspective than what has been done for the wood sector with FSC and PEFC labels. To succeed, a large group of stakeholders (companies, States, local authorities, associations, trade unions, etc.) should fly this brand's flag and adopt positive marketing in order to promote renovation among households.

The second proposal is to generalize "health cards" for housing. On the model of vehicle technical controls, each house will have a follow-up document, which will need to be accessible on the Internet. The energy part of such "health cards" – which will need to be achieved within the next 10 years – will recommend, while putting a cost on them, many types of energy renovation works and will enable households to quickly access customized data about their housing. The making of such health cards being a key convincing moment for households, experts in psychosocial behaviours will be implied in the process.

Eventually, a third proposal will be to give strong economic and regulatory signals and to announce them a long time ahead. Financial reserves would be constituted and dedicated to energy works, fuelled by house owners during each real estate transaction. The deposited sum would depend on the necessary investments to enable housing to get better energy rankings. It would increase through time. In the specific case of "energy leaks", a restrictive mechanism would be implemented to avoid the development of public health problems in some housing lacking energy stability.

