

Description of the programme

The USmartConsumer is a European dimension project aimed at both:

- empowering European consumers to use their own smart meter information, supporting them to save energy and being aware on where they consume the energy
- supporting the market in taking decisions by understanding the consumer interests, the exchange of knowledge and advising on actions in the field

Target groups

- Consumers and consumer representatives
- Utilities and smart metering information providers
- Public bodies
- Regulators

The project with budget of aprox 1,3mio€ was cofinanced by Intelligent Energy Europe programme (EC) and the project partners.

Start date: March 2014

End date: February 2017

Critical success factors

Two factors which should be highlighted to obtain the results are the involvement of both the key utilities and consumers' representatives in the project and to prepare the information in the right way so the project presents it in the "language" of the target audience.

The main risk faced and overcome was gaining the momentum of smart metering rollouts and being able to prepare information for consumers to save energy based on their data.

Innovation

This was the first project non-technological focus on smart metering, but really putting the focus on the customer-consumers, the so-called "consumer centricity". Also, it is much linked to the smart grid and smart city topics, as smart metering constitute one of the core systems to allow this innovations.

Key achievements

- Issue of the European Smart Metering Landscape Report (2 editions) with information from EU28+Norway, and 40 factsheets in 7 languages on consumer information systems based on SM.
- Campaigns and actions in the field benefitting over 1 million Europeans informing and advising them on how to use their smart metering information, reaching average 2 to 5% savings for electricity and 1.2% for natural gas.
- 120.000 MWh/year energy savings in 8 EU countries, 260 consumer representatives trained and 5.800 Europeans participated in the project international communication actions

Changes you would make in the future

- Smart metering varies from country to country in rollout strategy, technology and services for customers. Since the project start it is needed a deep market knowledge to prepare realistic targets and schedule for each EU country.
- Networking with other national and EU projects benefit the share of updated knowledge.

Lesson learned

- There is a strong diversity among EU countries in smart metering rollouts, both in the utilities targets and consumers role
- Learning from the experiences of more advanced countries as Finland, Spain, Italy or The Netherlands is highly recommended for new entries
- Several organizations are key for the success of smart metering in EU countries: utilities, regulators, consumer representatives, technology providers and media. Policy makers support in the EU (as the EC Directives) and national level are needed.

Replicating your approach

- Having a clear smart metering strategy (for which customers, which technology, what services based on them, etc.) and involvement of all the key actors presented will support the success of a new smart metering rollout
- Take advantage from the experiences from other EU countries, particularly those with similar strategy



Final comments

- UsmartConsumer has provided a deep understanding of the smart metering market in the EU + Norway, linking the utilities plans with the consumer-customer benefits.
- Real actions in the field and national campaigns have resulted in energy savings, CO2 emissions reduction, increase in capacity building of consumer representatives and utilities, the support to the EU and national targets in this field and sharing of experiences among European public and private organizations.
- Even when the project has gained clear conclusions in some areas (and for some countries), smart metering as well as smart grids or cities is a live topic. This project has the capacity of supporting new smart metering projects by using the project outcomes and deliverables.
- Countries like Germany, Eastern Europe countries and those with starting smart metering rollouts will benefit from the project.

Further information

- www.usmartconsumer.eu
- Google: “usmartconsumer” + “escan” or “usmartconsumer” + “Francisco Puente” to find updated news

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