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// *GiDomus* – Regional One-Stop-Shops Municipalities in Catalonia, Spain

Short Description

GiDomus is a customer-oriented Integrated Home Renovation Programme to boost energy efficiency and renewal energy of the housing stock in the province of Girona, implemented and operated by the Catalonian *Fundació EUROPACE*. It basically centred around the concept of one-stop-shops (OSS) and started in early 2021 as the second phase of the previous project *GarrotxaDomus*. It is currently being institutionalised in cooperation with five municipalities in the Girona region, where one-stop-shop offices is being set up. A total of 16 model municipality in the region participated in the first phase of the project.

Year // duration

Implementation & operation throughout 2021. Institutionalisation of OSS offices ongoing in five model municipalities in the Girona region.

Objective

Scale up energy-efficient renovation of buildings owned/inhabited by homeowners and homeowner associations (HOA) in the Girona region. Contribute to decarbonisation and energy efficient upgrading of the building stock in line with the EUROPACE Foundation mission.

Initial situation

Before the action (first and second phase) started, there was a notable reluctance and ignorance on the side of homeowners to deal with the topic and issue of renovating their building to improve its

overall condition and energy performance. Refurbishment rates in the region are low and need to significantly increase to reach national and European climate and energy efficiency goals. However, access to and dialogue with the target group of homeowners often proves difficult. Homeowners perceive the process of refurbishment in their homes as complex, difficult, slow and stressful – which it is if there is only scarce assistance and guidance. Consequently, there is a lack of demand, which can only be solved if benefits are clearly communicated, and thresholds are lowered through easily available information and expertise.

Implementation & measures

GiDomus and the preceding first project phase started with a social marketing campaign, reaching out to homeowners in the places where they lived: exhibitions and information stands on squares and in busy streets offered the opportunity for everyone to talk to the *GiDomus* experts and learn about energy-efficient refurbishment processes and benefits. These events focused on the specific needs and problems of homeowners rather than just presenting general data.

The initiative was not drafted on the desk but developed in dialogue and exchange with homeowners and stakeholders such as energy experts, contractors, building managers, public bodies, or financial institutions. It also showed that the question of financing is not the main barrier for refurbishments. Funding is mostly in place and available to the target group. Rather, it is lack of

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knowledge, process-related and technical barriers that keep most homeowners from getting active. Consequently, the *GiDomus* OSS model and services are also based on the findings and insights from personally exchanging with homeowners.

When homeowners turn to *GiDomus* for refurbishing their home, the building, its energy performance and need for refurbishment are assessed to start with. The *GiDomus* team observes the desires expressed by the homeowner regarding the focus of renovation and presents all refurbishment measures possible. Aspects like improving the quality of living, economic (e.g. energy bills) and health impacts (e.g. building climate) are pointed out and energy-related measures are recommended along with cosmetic ones. Homeowners are always given the choice to work with another institution after being presented the assessment and recommended measures. To work with *GiDomus* and use their service, though, HOAs must include at least one measure of energy upgrading. During the process of organising and implementing refurbishments, *GiDomus* offers all related services, provides comprehensive (technical, administrative, and financial) personal assistance, interacting with contractors, helping OH to select, them, managing the administrative process as well as all concerns around grants/finance.

GiDomus is a learning, flexible OSS model, so very suitable to test approaches and technologies and adapt its structure to changing focus and demands. To constantly improve the model and offer, it is a set procedure to ask HOAs that used *GiDomus*' service to fill in an evaluation questionnaire after the process is concluded.

Results

GiDomus is very well perceived and refurbishment actions in the region have notably increased. The project municipalities are very content with the development. Five municipalities have agreed to proceed with the design of their own OSS offices following the *GiDomus* model and assisted by Fundació EUROPACE. *GiDomus* provides a detailed regional market assessment, specifies needs and demands, helps designing the office in terms of structure, HR and technical resources and specifically trains the office staff. However, municipalities remain free to cooperate with a different institution to set up the office. During the two years *GarrotxaDomus* and *GiDomus* were operating, the Fundació noted a

visible shift from rather cosmetic refurbishments to energy-related ones. This presumably results from raising energy prices as well as of an increasing public debate and awareness around environmental protection and sustainability.

Parties involved

Fundació EUROPACE, 16 municipalities in the Girona region/Catalonia, in *GarrotxaDomus* plus 5 cities, regional contractors, building managers and financial institutions

Beneficiary parties

Participating municipalities as they are supported in fulfilling climate and energy requirements and in developing the labour market and local economy. Homeowners as their living and housing conditions are improved and energy costs reduced. Local contractors as they are commissioned with renovation measures and services (local contractors are prioritised by *GiDomus*).

Financing // Funding

Available grant schemes are being tapped. *GiDomus* used EUFC grants and *GarrotxaDomus* used grants from Catalan Energy Agency.

Lessons Learned

Required framework conditions

Outreaching counselling, interacting with the target group face-to-face to understand their needs and reservations and adjust offers and services accordingly – these are key factors for successfully promoting and increasing refurbishment rates.

Digitalisation is still an underestimated factor for progressing with refurbishments. Digitalising processes related to paperwork, grants, analyses will be key to scaling up and widely extending building refurbishment – on the side of HOAs as well as of companies. Against this background, *GiDomus* is piloting an online platform to tender, manage and commission contracts. Through transparent information and process management provided online, it is easier for contractors and HOAs to decide on offers and cooperation.

Multiplication effects

The *GiDomus* model is currently being adopted by five municipalities that install their own OSS offices.



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