

**“One-Stop-Shops to empower citizens: Involving communities to help alleviate energy poverty”**

Energy Poverty Advisory Hub Annual Conference  
20 September 2023, Warsaw



**UP-STAIRS** Uplifting  
**Energy Communities.**

# The experience of Cork City in UP-STAIRS

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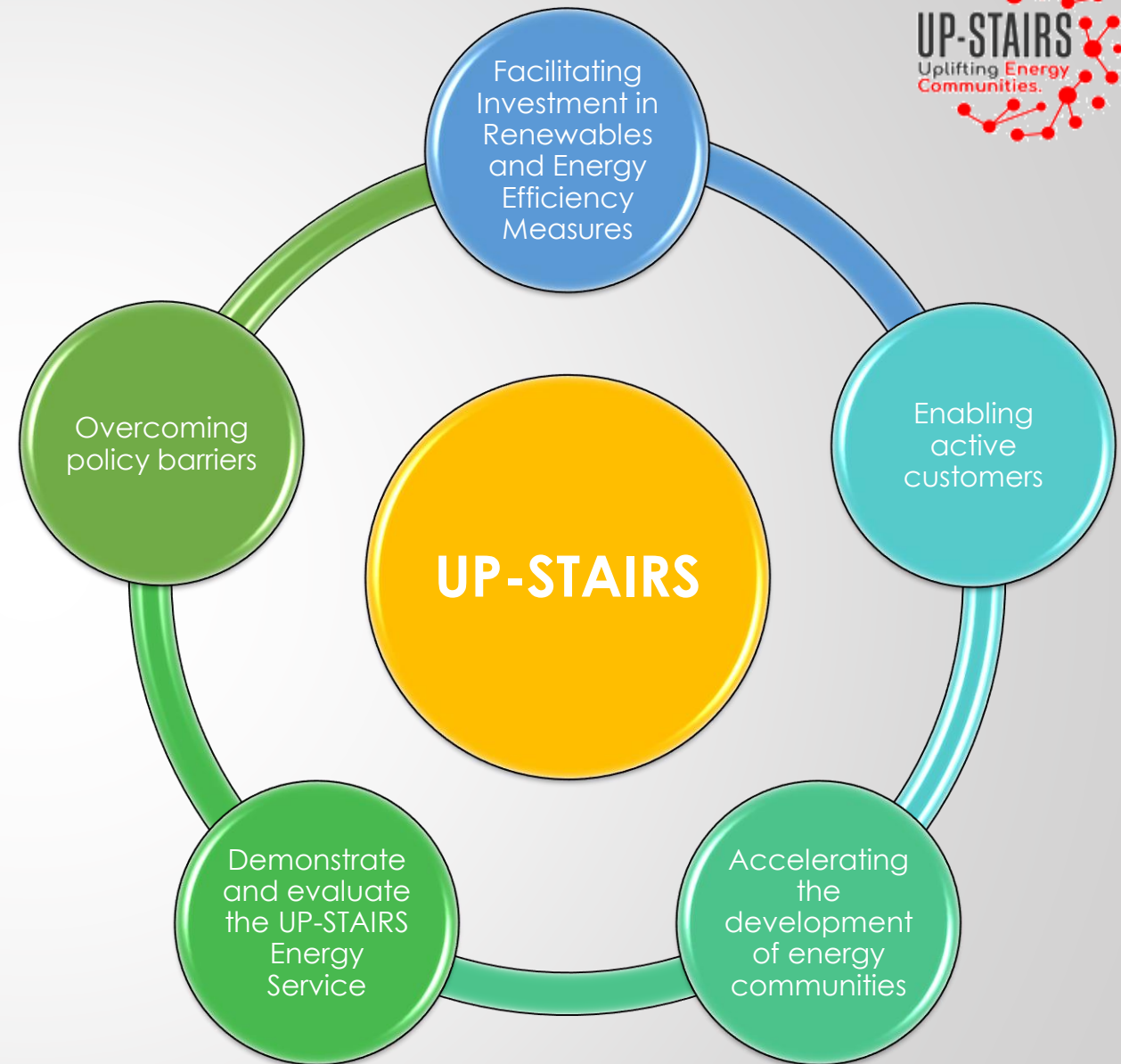
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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 891775

# Project Overview

- UP-STAIRS accelerates the creation of energy communities and collective action by setting up One-Stop-Shops in 5 pilot regions across the EU
- Horizon 2020 Call: Building a Low-Carbon, Climate Resilient Future: Secure, Clean and Efficient Energy
- 11 partners from 7 countries
- Project Coordinator: IERC
- Duration: September 2020 – November 2023
- Overall budget: € 2,018,307



# UP-STAIRS Pilot Regions



- Cork City, Ireland
- Barcelona Metropolitan Area, Spain
- Region of Upper Austria, Austria
- Municipality of Asenovgrad, Bulgaria
- Rhodope Region, Bulgaria



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# Cork City

- Located in South-West Ireland, **Cork** is the **second largest city** in the **Republic of Ireland**
- **Area:** 187 km<sup>2</sup>
- **Population:** 211,000
- **Project partners:** Cork City Council (CCC) and International Energy Research Centre (IERC)



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# Cork OSS Progress



Providing advice to citizens on energy upgrades to their homes and the establishment of energy communities:

- Financial advice
- Organisational, legal and technical support
- Energy Efficiency and RES
- Single and multifamily buildings
- Advice onsite and through UP-STAIRS Digital Platform



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# Cork OSS Last Results (31/08/23)



UP-STAIRS LOG IN SIGN UP

- **751** people engaged
- **7.9 GWh/year** to be saved
- **93,444 m2** to be refurbished
- **1.3 MW** of PV energy to be installed
- **2.9 MEuro** of expected investments
- **287 energy communities** to be established or inspired by OSS work

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CORK CITY T12 CKV9

REGISTER FOR FREE



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# Cork OSS and Energy Poverty

- Low density and dispersed population in Ireland. Many people live in detached houses in rural and isolated areas.
- Overall poor quality of the housing stock in Ireland.
- People over 65 with low incomes the most vulnerable group.
- Energy poverty rates in Ireland have spiked during the energy crisis. It is one of the key points tackled in the NECP.
- The increase of energy prices have made people more concerned about energy, motivating them to looking for solutions.
- Retrofitting and community energy are receiving more attention in this context, seen as a vehicle that can help to alleviate energy poverty.



# Cork OSS interaction with different population sectors: lessons learnt



- Older generation (65+), which were unaware of what they were entitled to, find OSS information very helpful.
- New homeowners/first time buyers value to get information on how to access the grants available and technical guidance around where to start.
- Local businesses and commercial appreciate advice on possible upgrades and grants available.
- Protected buildings look for grant information to preserve the cultural integrity of Cork and its older buildings.





# Identified barriers during the set-up and running of the Cork OSS



- Lack of key information available for homeowners around where to start, especially on establishing an energy community in their area.
- Lack of clarity in the process to get financial help or support.
- Lack of promotion of community energy benefits.
- Lack of awareness by citizens of the existing policy framework and where to find it.
- Capacity in the construction area is impacting on the amount of work that can be completed in a reasonable timeframe across all grant routes.
- There are numerous regulatory barriers in place to establish energy communities in Ireland: problems with DSO, grid connection limits, energy storage, etc.



# THANK YOU!

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# UP-STAIRS – The Case of Asenovgrad

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Warsaw, 19-20 September 2023



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# UPSTAIRS in Asenovgrad Municipality

- ❖ OSS ASEN created, 5 employees of the municipality (ICs), who have undergone appropriate training;
- ❖ Operational from 1 July 2022, main focus – homeowners in multifamily residential buildings;

## Why:

- ❖ A lot of buildings in the municipality are multi-family buildings (mainly prefab panel type) whose inhabitants are often exposed to the risk of energy poverty;
- ❖ Citizens would like to save money and energy, but they often do not know where to start and how to proceed;
- ❖ This is where ASEN OSS come into action





# OSS ASEN Services

- ❖ Assistance for application for funding of EE and RE measures from different available sources – national and European;
- ❖ Offered on site in physical premises in municipality building, by phone and by email;
- ❖ Aspects of energy refurbishment covered:
  - Organizational;
  - Administrative;
  - Legal;
  - Technical;
  - Financial.
- ❖ Focus on creation of energy community for the entire building – Association of Owners (AO);
- ❖ Focus on EE and on installation of RES;
- ❖ OSS ASEN assist citizens and representatives of AO during the entire cycle of building energy renovation process.



# OSS ASEN Results

- ❖ **People recruited/assisted: 7 309** people living in multifamily residential buildings whose representatives received consultation and advice from OSS ASEN (69 buildings with 2 420 dwellings);
- ❖ Expected **primary energy savings: 9.6** GWh/annum;
- ❖ Expected **building area to be refurbished: 227 374** sq m of buildings that received assistance and advice;
- ❖ Expected **investments: 13.5** MEuro





# OSS ASEN and Energy Poverty (1)

Identified profile of **people at risk** of energy poverty:

- ❖ Demographic profile: over 50, female and male;
- ❖ Live in multi-family pre-fab panel type buildings;
- ❖ Own their apartments from socialist times;
- ❖ Low income or unemployed, socially vulnerable;
- ❖ Need assistance in funding possibilities to implement EE and RES, mainly grants;
- ❖ Motivated to take action by cost savings and improved comfort.



# OSS ASEN and Energy Poverty (2)

**OSS ASEN help alleviate energy poverty** through:

- ❖ Focus on multifamily prefab panel buildings, privately owned, with significant share of inhabitants at risk;
- ❖ Assistance and consulting on funding options and grants available for low-income residents in multi-family private residential buildings to apply energy refurbishment and implementation of RES in buildings;
- ❖ Participation in collective actions leads to energy and cost savings by modernizing old buildings and thus helping people at risk of energy poverty.





**For more information:**

**<https://www.h2020-upstairs.eu/>**



Проектът е получил финансиране от Програма  
Хоризонт 2020 на ЕС с договор No 892037

EPAH International Annual Conference  
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# Thank you for your attention!

**Ivanka Pandelieva-Dimova (SEC)**  
**Georgi Angelov (on behalf of ASEN OSS)**



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