

# IMAGINE A BUILT ENVIRONMENT THAT ENABLES A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL



## CO-CREATING AN AMBITIOUS NATIONAL RENOVATION STRATEGY FOR IRELAND

Mini Workshop

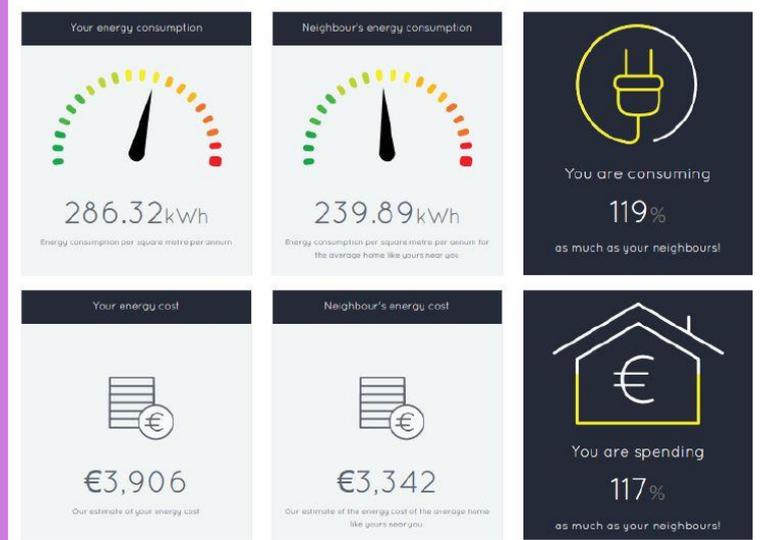
Making deep renovation as easy as possible

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Irish Green Building Council – Dublin

Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016

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Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment

# SUMMARY

In early 2016, the [Irish Green Building Council \(IGBC\)](#), in conjunction with the department of communications, climate action and environment organised a series of workshops on Ireland's National Renovation Strategy V.2. These events were attended by over 170 key stakeholders and led to the publication of a "[Declaration in 10 Points for a Better National Renovation Strategy](#)".

Since the beginning of the consultation process, workshops participants have consistently said that for large scale deep renovation to happen in Ireland, it has to be made as easy as possible for end-users. In particular, the online survey conducted among workshop participants in September 2016 and the group discussions organised as part [workshop 5 in Cork](#) confirmed a high level of support for entities that would provide local independent advice at all stage of the renovation process (planning, execution and post-renovation) to homeowners, landlords and homeoccupiers. On Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016 the IGBC organised a follow-up event to explore these ideas further.

## Key suggested actions

- Providing end-users across the country with comprehensive / accessible information through the renovation process
- Creating a national deep renovation framework connecting national and local campaigns / support mechanisms
- Investing more in communication and mentoring
- Making information on local construction workers and professionals who have upskilled in deep retrofit widely available

As per previous workshops, participants reiterated the importance of providing end-users with comprehensive and accessible (jargon free) information through the renovation process.

This information should be provided by entities which are trusted, accessible (have a local presence) and knowledgeable. Beyond technical skills, they also need good financial skills for projects costing, as well as excellent communication skills. In particular, they should be able to adapt their message to suit various groups' needs (e.g. first-time buyer couple vs. pensioners willing to retrofit a home they own outright).

Yet, workshop's participants could not reach any agreements on who these intermediary organisations should be, or whether they should be fully independent. According to them, local energy agencies are the most obvious candidates. However, it's also clear that any support mechanism should be sustainable in the long term and that most local energy agencies currently do not have the level of resources required.

As the support must be timely, energy suppliers, financial institutions and upskilled BER assessors could also have a role to play. The idea of a local partnership between architects, banks and organisations such as Citizens Information was also mentioned. Beyond that basic level of support, home buyers, landlords and homeoccupiers willing to renovate should be referred to architects that have upskilled in deep retrofit.

Furthermore, it was clear from that session that this "network of excellence" should be part of a strong national framework. Some participants expressed their concerns that the approach that has been taken so far is too much of a "piecemeal approach". References to Ireland's rural electrification scheme and to the switch to digital television campaign were made. According to the workshop's participants, what is required is a planned, multiscale, long term approach that would better connect national and local actions.

Finally, some participants said that more funding should be allocated to communication and visibility. Soft skills such as marketing and mentoring have perhaps not been appreciated enough in the past. If large companies spend substantial amounts on marketing to sell their products, how can we expect deep renovation to take-off without proper communication campaigns? With that regard, participants highlighted the importance of leading by example - i.e. when the state deep retrofit a building it should widely communicate about it in an honest way, and perhaps used some of the deep retrofitted homes as demonstration homes.

## Providing homeowners with customised energy-efficient upgrade options

The second part of the session started with a presentation by Deirdre Lee, CEO, [Derilinx of DataSparks Retrofit](#). The DataSparks Retrofit platform enables users to track their actual energy consumption alongside their BER and that of their peers, while providing customised retrofitting and grant information for easy customer decision-making, lower energy-wastage, and increased savings.

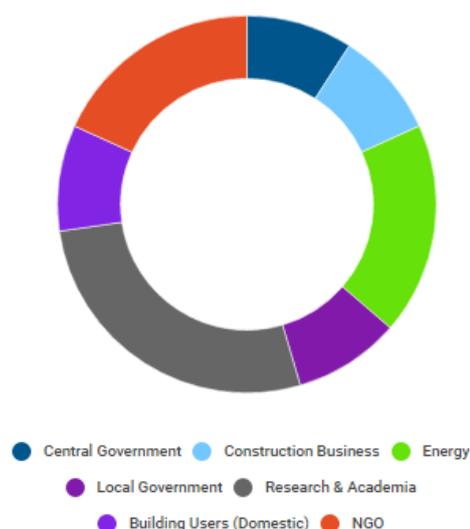
Participants welcomed this approach as it was very much in line with suggestions made at previous workshops – i.e. [making deep retrofit as easy as possible](#) and [empowering people](#). In addition, the platform can allow people to compare actual building energy use as well as asset-based energy use (BERs), if [quality data](#) from utility companies is accessible.

DataSparks helps homeowners make energy-efficiency upgrade decisions by providing customised recommendations, while also delivering information on available financial supports and what contractors can carry out the renovation. The impact of the platform could be even higher if it was integrated with the network of excellence suggested in the first part of the workshop, and with a [comprehensive skills card system \(or a register\) allowing end-users to quickly identified construction workers and construction professionals who have upskilled specifically in deep renovation](#).

Beyond end-users, the platform could also be used by financial institutions - to evaluate the risks associated with green loans, real-estate agents – for marketing purposes, and landlords interested in the impact of deep retrofit on property and rent values.

## WORKSHOP'S PARTICIPANTS ANALYSIS

### Mini WS3 Attendees



## COLLABORATING ON WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS:

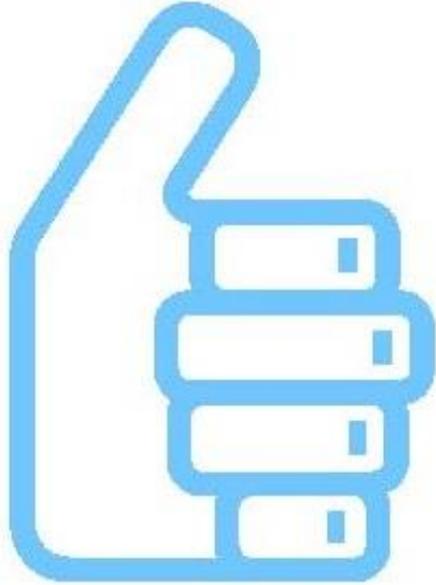
A series of over 80 events in the 13 project countries will bring stakeholders together during the project. As part of this process, six high level Energy Efficiency Building Renovation Workshops will be organised across Ireland by the Irish Green Building Council. The workshops are supported by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and are a must for anyone who wants to ensure their voice and views are heard in Ireland's National Renovation Strategy Process.

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